

**Developing ES classification(s)  
for ecosystem accounting:  
introduction to key issues & questions**

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# Key decisions for ES classifications

- Understand role of ES classifications in relation to SEEA EEA (ecosystem accounting)
- How important is it to connect ES-related work across different application domains (accounting, mapping etc.) ?
- Define scope of ES to be covered:
  - Environment/economy boundary (what is part of nature and what is a 'benefit' [*SNA v non-SNA*] ? )
  - What is part of the ecosystem (atmosphere, water etc.) ?
- Use of (ecological) production functions (to identify final ES, i.e. the contribution of nature in joint production)
- Identify best structural set-up for classification, e.g. what should be the entry points for a hierarchical set-up and how to characterise them?
- Develop statistical criteria for ES classification for SEEA EEA

# Classifying ES for ecosystem accounting

## - what do we need ?

- We need a classification of ES for the purpose of establishing a shared reference (a “standard”) that facilitates comparison across different research fields and application domains
  - > easier sharing of results, building of shared knowledge
- We need an approach / framework for identifying final ES for ecosystem accounting purposes (SEEA EEA – match of supply and demand)
  - > practical application of ES classification together with other SEEA EEA components
- What are the characteristics that match these needs, are they the same for both purposes ?

# Suggested characteristics (“criteria”?) for reference ES classification

- Purpose of ES flow as the main characteristic for identifying (and naming) ES flow classes and higher level aggregation categories (so what do they do to create a benefit, i.e. regulating a water flow, contributing to human nourishment etc.)
- Ability to connect to other ES classifications in different application domains
- Suitability for ecosystem accounting:
  - Help avoid double counting
  - Hierarchical organisation
  - Clear and concrete ES categories
  - Ability to compile a complete set of ES flows
  - Be practical and feasible

# **Suggested characteristics (“criteria”?) for “reference framework for identifying final ES” for ecosystem accounting**

- Be able to link supply and use in concrete terms
- Have clearly defined links between elements / modules on supply and use side
- Enable + identify a discrete match between modules so individual ES flows can be coded and hence aggregated/compiled per module or type of flow
- Cover all possible linkages relevant for ecosystem accounting
- Be designed to avoid double counting
- Be practical and feasible

# Overview of key methodological questions I

- “Multi-purpose” or SEEA-EEA focused ?
- “Scope”: Environment/economy boundary (where is it and how to define & measure it)
- “Scope”: What is part of the ecosystem (atmosphere, water etc.) ?
- “Scope”: What is a ‘benefit’ [*SNA v non-SNA*] ?
- Use of (ecological) production functions (to identify the contribution of nature) – what are they and how can we implement them?
- Economic production functions – their use in this context
- Key principles (“statistical criteria”) for ES classification(s)

# Overview of key methodological questions II

- What is the best suitable (hierarchical) structure
- What should be the entry points for a hierarchical set-up and how to characterise them?
- Aggregation – of what & how ?
- Metrics for measuring “end-products of nature” / the ecosystem contribution?
- Influence of scale on approach and metrics?
- Other ??

# Identifying next steps for comparative research

- What are the key conceptual issues to review?
- What is the best mechanism for that?
- Practical case study-based comparison:
  - How to set it up?
  - What are the key factors for comparison?
  - How to document the results – acad. paper, report to UN expert forum?
- How to feed the outcome of this work back into UN SEEA fora?



# The foreseen process for the workshop and documenting outcomes

- 1) Starting point: technical background document and presentations & identified key questions
- 2) Workshop discussions to be documented via amending the technical background document, in particular the outcome sections 3 + 4
- 3) Draft version of outcome section 3 to be tabled on Friday morning
- 4) After workshop the organisers will revise the technical background document & other material for documentation
- 5) Consultation among participants -> further revision
- 6) Feeding of final workshop outcome into draft technical recommendations for SEEA EEA and possible additional expert discussion