System of Environmental Economic Accounting

Introduction to concepts and methods related to the monetary valuation of ecosystem services and ecosystem assets (e-Learning course)

6 October – 7 November 2025

Guideline

ESCAP | UNITED NATIONS SIAP

1 OVERVIEW OF THE COURSE

It is well established that healthy ecosystems and biodiversity are fundamental to supporting and sustaining our wellbeing, our communities and our economies. Protecting and properly managing ecosystems is key to ensuring the continuous provision of ecosystem services such as pollination, carbon sequestration, flood protection, etc. Understanding the contribution of nature to our well-being and the impacts of our activities on the state of ecosystems are key for sustainable development. Besides the monitoring of ecosystem assets in physical terms, there is growing interest in providing monetary estimates for the value of ecosystem services and of ecosystem assets. Such information can provide a more complete picture of the contributions of ecosystems to the economy and our well-being and provide a link to economic production and the national accounts.

This e-Learning course introduces concepts and methods for the valuation of ecosystem services and ecosystem assets as described in the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting – Ecosystem Accounting (SEEA EA). The SEEA EA provides an integrated statistical framework for organizing information about ecosystems, measuring ecosystem services, tracking changes in ecosystem extent and condition, and linking this information to measures of economic and human activities. It supports the compilation of indicators for several global policy frameworks including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the associated indicators as well as the monitoring framework of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).

2 LANGUAGE

All course activities will take place in English.

3 TARGET PARTICIPANTS

Target participants are staff of national statistical offices, line ministries, other agencies working on issues related to the environment and those interested in learning more about the monetary valuation of ecosystem services and ecosystem assets. Participants should be familiar with ecosystem accounts in physical terms, preferably by having participated in prior course on SEEA Ecosystem Accounting.

4 LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, participants will be expected to:

(a) Have a general understanding of the principles and methods for the monetary valuation of ecosystem services and ecosystem assets;
(b) Understand the different methods to the monetary valuation of ecosystem services and the limitations of these methods; and

(c) Understand the net present value approach to monetary valuation of ecosystem assets and its limitations.

5 COURSE DESIGN AND CONTENT

The course is comprised of online modules and live webinars. Each online module is self-paced and consists of interactive slides with explanations. Participants are expected to attend regularly scheduled webinars. The webinars will provide an overview of the course topics and allow participants to ask questions; more details will be provided at the beginning of the course. Furthermore, participants are encouraged to actively post their questions and comments in the online discussion forum of the course. After all modules have been completed, participants will be required to complete a final test that will cover all modules. The course is expected to take a maximum of 15 hours to complete.

Outline

Module	Coverage
1. Introduction to valuation	• Purpose of monetary accounts • Valuation concepts • Key valuation methods and techniques proposed in the SEEA • Primary valuation methods • Secondary valuation methods • How to communicate monetary values
2. Valuing different types of ecosystem services	• Defining ecosystem services • How to estimate monetary values for different types of ecosystem services? • Summarizing monetary values for ecosystem services in supply and use tables • Data sources and platforms for monetary valuation
3. Valuing ecosystem assets	• Monetary values for ecosystem assets based on NPV of ecosystem services provided • Discount rates • Projecting future ecosystem service flows • Measuring ecosystem degradation • Monetary indicators

6 EVALUATION

Participants must receive a 70% or higher in the test at the end of this course. Participants will be given 60 minutes to complete the test. They may take the exam up to three times and retain their best score. Participants may not work together on the test. The course facilitator

reserves the right to deny course certificates to participants suspected of cheating on the test.