

Summary

This text deals with the issue of ecosystem accounting. This topic is the subject of much attention, on an experimental basis, but without a consensual solution at the moment. The text outlines the main solutions to be discussed:

1. a solution similar to that of (economic) accounting, ie full physical and monetary accounting of ecosystem services and ecosystems themselves (as elements of capital natural), to be integrated later on with the economic accounts. The monetary value of ecosystems would be estimated according to the general theoretical rule of the economic value of a capital as the present value of the whole series of services expected of it (SEEA-EEA 2012)

2. a solution centered on developed accounting of ecosystem assets (natural capital accounts) in physical terms, with the search for a non-monetary unit of ecological value. In this approach, the estimate in monetary terms is envisaged generally only for the fraction of ecosystems that is degraded by economic activity (ENCA - QSP)

3. a solution limited to estimating this degradation (also in terms of avoidance costs or restoration costs) in order to take it into account in the NA central framework, in the form of 'unpaid environmental costs' and thus leading to an estimate of the value of final demand at "total costs" (costs paid plus CENP)

In any case, the development of an information system on the state of nature is essential with the aim of carrying out an initial diagnosis of ecosystems as a whole (eg the EFESE operation for France), which should become in the future a permanent observation system. This requires extensive institutional arrangements.