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# Measuring ecosystems goods and services: Canadian Project

**UNCEEA**

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# Outline



- Institutional arrangements
- Policy demand
- Information available and needed
- Implementation

# Institutional arrangements



- Statistics Canada received “venture capital” funding for development of prototype ecosystem accounts in collaboration with and for use of policy departments
  - Environment, Natural Resources, Fisheries and Oceans, Parks, Agriculture and Agrifood
- National statistical office seen to bring experience in accounting, standards, classifications and SNA
  - Seen as a necessity to harmonize existing data and concepts around ecosystem services and valuation
- Measuring Ecosystem Goods and Services (MEGS) project started in May 2011 with
  - Interdepartmental DG steering committee (6 members)
  - Interdepartmental Working Committee (12 members)
  - Six Interdepartmental Working Groups (50 members)

# Policy demand



- Many demands from resource departments:
  - Monetary values of ecosystems and their services to support discussions of protection, conservation, climate change, sustainability, pollution prevention, land use change...
  - Opportunity to raise argument beyond “environment” versus “economy” to understand the real contribution of ecosystems to human well being, sustainability and “green growth”
- Less interest from finance, industry and health departments
  - Although recognition of importance of ecosystem services (e.g., to business, health, security, etc.)

# Policy demand (2)

- Concerns about applicability of SEEA Part 2:
  - Environment Canada would prefer
    - Broader approach to valuation (i.e., include components of consumer surplus)
    - Explicit treatment of ecosystems that economy and well-being depend on, sometimes indirectly, as wealth
    - Recognition of role of landscapes in providing services
    - Better link between ecosystem services and well-being (rather than only economic value)
  - Canadian Forest Service concerned about
    - Non-UNFCCC approach to carbon accounts
    - Alternative definitions of “forest”

# Information available and needed



- Wealth of information exists but largely *ad hoc* and sectoral
  - For example, Ecosystem Status and Trends Report (Environment Canada, 2010) focuses on biophysical characteristics of ecozones
- Opportunities to create:
  - Common classifications of ecosystems and services
  - Common spatial framework (land cover, with more detail on certain ecosystem types such as wetlands)
  - Common approaches to valuation
  - Coherent indicators of ecosystem quality
  - Linkages with existing sustainability indicators
- Some information incomplete for Canada:
  - Wetlands, species ranges, ecosystem quality measures

# Implementation



- Creation of a “community of practice” one of the most important achievements
  - Knowledge developed will contribute to policy through experienced people and knowledge base
- Much work still at case study and prototype stage
  - Not ready for “official statistics”
- Intend to seek funding to continue to build more complete accounts as a statistical product that could serve a variety of users