

Launch of the ARIES for SEEA Explorer

Virtual, 29 April, 2021, 9:00-10:00 AM NY time

Introduction and purpose

The Statistics Division (SD) of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and the UN Environment Program (UNEP), in collaboration with the international research and innovation platform Artificial Intelligence for Environment & Sustainability (ARIES) at the Basque Centre for Climate Change (BC3), are launching a pioneering Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered application for rapid natural capital accounting: the ARIES for SEEA Explorer.

The new open-source and user-friendly digital technology enables, for the first time, rapid, standardized and customizable ecosystem accounting anywhere on Earth. ARIES for SEEA is available on the UN Global Platform: a cloud-service environment supporting international collaboration among all countries in the world by sharing scientific knowledge, data, methods and technology.

The SEEA, short for the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting, is the international statistical standard for natural capital accounting. The newly adopted SEEA Ecosystem Accounting standard was adopted in March 2021. SEEA ecosystem accounts track the extent, condition and services provided by nature's ecosystems –such as forests and wetlands – in the form of physical and monetary accounts and indicators. The adoption of the SEEA Ecosystem Accounting has been heralded as a historic step forward for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to make nature count, moving beyond GDP in tracking global progress.

The launch event will explain how the ARIES for SEEA Explorer takes a new, ground-breaking, interoperable approach that uses artificial intelligence for ecosystem accounts compilation and provides a basis for the eventual customization of models. It will cover the role of the ARIES for SEEA Explorer in the big data landscape and the relevance of the platform for global initiatives such as the SDGs and post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework; provide a demonstration of the application; and include a question-and-answer session.

Programme

- Welcome messages
 - Mr. Stefan Schweinfest, Director of the United Nations Statistics Division
 - Mr. Risenga Maluleke, Statistician-General of Statistics South Africa and Chair of the UN Committee of Experts on Big Data and Data Science for Official Statistics
- Demonstration of the ARIES for SEEA Explorer
 - Mr. Ferdinando Villa, ARIES lead investigator
 - Q&A moderated by Ms. Alessandra Alfieri, Chief Environmental Economic Accounts Section
- Closing reflections
 - Mr. Bert Kroese, Deputy Director General of Statistics Netherlands and Chair of the UN Committee of Experts on Environmental Economic Accounting



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Resources

To find out more about the ARIES for SEEA Explorer in advance of the launch, please see the following resources:

- ARIES for SEEA Explorer home page (coming soon!)
- Factsheet ([English](#)) ([Spanish](#))
- [Blog post](#)



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