



## Forum on Natural Capital Accounting for Better Decision-making

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Work undertaken within the World Bank led  
Wealth Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services (WAVES) Global Partnership<sup>1</sup>  
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### Introduction

From its inception the Wealth Accounting and the Valuation of Ecosystem Services (WAVES) partnership has intended to improve the policy use of NCA. As part of this a review to statistical offices on uses of accounts was commissioned (Smith, 2014) and a study on the links between policy and NCA supported (e.g. Vardon et al. 2016). Going-forward the WAVES+ program from 2017 will have a strengthened emphasis on linking policy and accounting.

These efforts aim to embed and consolidate the use of accounts in decision making processes in the WAVES Partnership countries. For this, the WAVES Policy and Technical Expert Committee (PTEC) in May 2016 proposed three streams of work:

1. **Learning:** synthesize country experiences of the interactions between NCA and policy;
2. **Guidance:** provide practical guidance to improve such interactions; and

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<sup>1</sup> Further information on WAVES can be found in <http://www.wavespartnership.org/>. The views expressed in this document are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the judgements of the World Bank.

3. **Leading and communicating:** developing messages productive policy-NCA interactions.

Discussions at the PTEC and the WAVES Annual Partners Meeting (APM) in June 2016 led to the idea of a forum to advance the NCA-policy linking work. In this it was proposed to gather both WAVES countries and representatives from higher-income countries with experience of NCA, to enhance learning and exchange of experiences.

The report From Statistics to Policy (Oosterhuis et al 2016), which examined the development and use of environmental accounts and statistics in The Netherlands, indicates both the richness of learning which could be shared, and the urgency of doing so. The Netherlands government subsequently offered to host a forum on the topic in The Hague.

A small working group was formed to advance the ideas emerging from the PTEC and the APM on how best to link decision-making to NCA and to plan for the forum. One of the first tasks was to set a date, balancing the need to urgency, with practical considerations an in particular the time needed to organise the forum and the inputs required from countries. The date 22-23 November 2016 was chosen.

## **Forum objectives and format**

The objectives of the Forum are:

1. Synthesize the experiences of applying natural capital accounting to policy and decision-making (learning).
2. Assess how best to assist countries better connect natural capital accounting to policy and decision-making (guidance)
3. Begin developing key messages for applying natural capital accounting to policy and decision-making (leading and communicating)
4. Plan for the on-going improvement of links between natural capital accounting, policy and decision-making (learning, guiding, leading and communicating), including regularly recurring Forums.

A workshop format will be used with presentations limited in length (six slides per presentation) to allow for discussion. A preliminary agenda has been developed and is found in Annex 1. The final agenda will respond to a rapid assessment of the diversity of lessons and guidance needs from participating countries, which will be ascertained through a questionnaire that has been sent to countries.

As indicated by point 4 of the objectives, it is intended that the Forum become an annual event for sharing experiences and building understanding between account producers and users within countries and enabling the lesson learned to be shared between countries.

## **References**

- Oosterhuis, F., Van Der Esch S., Hoogervorst, N. 2016. From Statistics to Policy: The development and application of environmental statistics and environmental accounts in the Netherlands. PBL Netherlands Environmental Agency.
- Smith, R. 2014. Uses and users of environmental accounts: A review of selected developed countries. WAVES World Bank Group.
- Vardon, M., Burnett, B., Dovers, S. 2016. The accounting push and the policy pull: balancing environment and economic decisions. Ecological Economics 124: 145-152.[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/296690387\\_The\\_accounting\\_push\\_and\\_the\\_policy\\_pull\\_balancing\\_environment\\_and\\_economic\\_decisions](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/296690387_The_accounting_push_and_the_policy_pull_balancing_environment_and_economic_decisions)