

SIDE EVENT OF THE HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM 2022
TRANSFORMING INSTITUTIONS TO BUILD BACK
GREENER: THE CASE FOR NATURAL CAPITAL
ACCOUNTING

12 July, 7:30 – 9:00 AM EST, Virtual

Meeting organized by the [Committee of Experts on Public Administration \(CEPA\)](#) and [Committee of Experts on Environmental Economic Accounting \(CEEA\)](#)

Registration: bit.ly/HLPF-SEEA



There is growing recognition that building back better must also mean building back greener. The twin crises of climate change and biodiversity degradation pose a dire threat to recovery efforts and economic progress. Effective and successful efforts to reduce global emissions and protect biodiversity require that public institutions work in partnership – across ministries as well as with civil society and the private sector – and design policies that protect the environment while enhancing livelihoods and wellbeing.

However, much decision-making and policies are fragmented and made in siloes, with government departments relying on different sources of data and often having different objectives in mind. This institutional and governmental fragmentation results in a lack of policy coherence, low transparency and unharnessed synergies. Institutional and governmental fragmentation is an especially significant issue for environmental issues such as climate change and reversing the loss of precious ecosystems. This fragmentation has been a factor in the slow progress on environmental Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 13,14, and 15), which have lagged far behind many other SDGs.

Natural capital accounting (NCA) is a valuable tool for measuring the value nature provides to humans. Natural capital can be defined as the world's stocks of natural assets – soil, air, water, grasslands, forests, wetlands, rocks and minerals – and all living things, from mammals and fish to plants and microbes.

Conservation experts estimate that these resources contribute more than [US\\$125 trillion](#) to the global economy every year.

This side event will examine how NCA can help to measure and track climate change and biodiversity, thus providing all institutions with a “common denominator” in the effort to address climate change and biodiversity. The UN has been a global leader in developing this set of tools and standards. This event will focus on NCA according to the international statistical standard, the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA). The SEEA provides an integrated statistical framework that brings together disparate economic and environmental data to provide a systems approach for understanding the environment-economy nexus and to go beyond GDP. This framework is essential to enable society to overhaul its concept of wealth to include “natural capital”.

The event will show how using the tools and measures developed from the SEEA, and recommended by CEPA as a basis for building the capacity of the public sector in natural capital accounting, will promote better partnerships and inter-institutional collaboration and help provide the kind of integrated data needed to build back greener from the pandemic, in support of Agenda 2030, the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and the Paris Agreement.

The event will focus on both the institutional perspective (for example, how to adopt and integrate the framework in support of environmental goals) and the technical issues (including specific examples, such as how to assess the value of ecosystems vital to improving the quality of land and water resources).

Speakers

Dieter Helm Professor of Economic Policy, University of Oxford and Fellow in Economics, New College, Oxford. Former Independent Chair of the UK Natural Capital Committee

Monica Medina Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, United States State Department

Shonisani Munzhedzi Chief Executive Officer, South African National Biodiversity Institute

M. Sanjayan Chief Executive Officer, Conservation International

Bert Kroese Incoming Chief Statistician and Data Officer and Director of the Statistics Department of the International Monetary Fund and former Chair of the UN Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting

Mauricio Rodas Visiting Fellow, University of Pennsylvania, Co-Chair of the Global Commission on BiodiverCities by 2030, former Mayor of Quito (2014-2019) and member of the UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration

Moderator

Linda Bilmes Daniel Patrick Moynihan Senior Lecturer in Public Policy and Public Finance, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Co-Chair of Economists for Peace and Security, and member of the UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration

Contacts

This event is supported by the Statistics Division and Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs

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