



## DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

# SIDE EVENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS 2023 WATER CONFERENCE WATER ACCOUNTING FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

## From promise to practice – How accounting for multiple water values can be used for sustainable development

**TUESDAY, 21 MARCH 2023**

**4:00 PM – 5:15 PM (NEW YORK TIME) | ONLINE**

*Organized by the United Nations Statistics Division, Australian National University's Fenner School of Environment and Society and Australian Bureau of Statistics*

*Event page and registration at <https://seea.un.org/events/water-accounting-sustainable-development-goals-side-event-un-2023-water-conference>*



The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015. The agenda has 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets that represent an ambitious plan for achieving sustainable development and serves as the basis for countries to shape their national policies and priorities.

Water, a key component of natural capital, is fundamental to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Water accounting has gained increasing traction in the public and private sectors as way to manage and balance the social, economic and environment needs.

The System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA), the international statistical standard for natural capital accounting, organizes water data and links them to economic data, turning raw data into information that can be readily used by decision makers in the public and private sectors. The SEEA provides a standardized suite of accounts allowing for international comparisons, industry benchmarking and a holistic approach to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) associated with water, climate change and biodiversity loss.



**United Nations**



System of  
Environmental  
Economic  
Accounting



The SEEA directly supports six indicators for SDG 6 “Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”. It provides important information on water efficiency, water quality, water scarcity, freshwater ecosystem extent and the reliance on water-related ecosystem services.

To realize the potential of water accounting a collaborative approach is needed. Account producers must better understand the needs of the water policy and management community, to co-design, develop and produce credible accounts to suit the needs of decision makers.

The meeting objectives are:

- Increase awareness and understanding of water accounting and its applications to water policy and management and the attainment of the SDGs
- Provide a platform of discussions between the water policy and management communities and the water accounting communities.
- Address the misunderstanding that accounting only records the value of water stocks and flows in monetary terms.
- Identify way that various values related to water can be recorded without converting these values to dollars (money).
- Develop partnerships between the water policy and management community and the water accounting community so that decisions makers have the best possible information for achieving the SDGs.

The side event will be an interactive dialogue between users and producers of water accounts and water related information, with high-level speakers, a panel discussion, and opportunities for questions.

The meeting will be conducted in English.

Contact

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## PROVISIONAL AGENDA

Chair: *Gemma Van Halderen, Australian Bureau of Statistics, and Interim Chair of the UN Committee of Experts on Environmental Economic Accounting (UNCEEA)*

Rapporteur: *Michael Vardon, Australian National University's Fenner School of Environment and Society*

1. Welcome

- *Gemma Van Halderen, Australian Bureau of Statistics*

2. Speakers

- *The Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP, Minister for the Environment and Water, Government of Australia*
- *The Hon. Carl-Hermann Schlettwein, Minister for Agriculture, Water, and Land Reform, Government of Namibia*

3. Introduction to water accounting

- *Bram Edens, Senior Statistician, United Nations Statistics Division*

4. Panel discussion on water accounting

Panelists

- *Juha Siikamaki, Chief Economist, International Union for Conservation of Nature*
- *Ana Manero, Research Fellow, Water Justice Hub*
- *Poolad Karimi, Irrigation Specialist, World Bank*
- *Arjan Ruijs, Senior Responsible Investment Officer, Cardano ACTIAM*
- *Kenneth Bagstad, Research Economist, United States Geological Survey*

5. Q&A