

Taking stock of natural resources



Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) recently hosted the first stakeholder consultation meeting on Natural Capital Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services.

The Natural Capital Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services Project is a three-year partnership project funded by the European Union (EU). The project was launched by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), UN Environment and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Other partner countries are Brazil, China, India and Mexico.

Michael Manamela, Acting Deputy Director-General (DDG) for Economic Statistics, opened the meeting. Further opening remarks were given by representatives from UNSD, UN Environment, EU delegation to South Africa, South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) and the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA).

The objectives of the meeting were:

- To officially launch the Natural Capital Accounting (NCA) and Valuation of Ecosystem Services project in South Africa;
- To identify, in consultation with national and local authorities and other relevant stakeholders, how the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA)

Experimental Ecosystem Accounting could support sustainable development policy initiatives in South Africa, building on existing initiatives and programmes currently taking place in South Africa; and

- To discuss and agree on the project management arrangements and the work programme for the project.

The main objective of the Natural Capital Accounting (NCA) and Valuation of Ecosystem Services project in the partner countries is to mainstream and valuation of ecosystem services in data-driven decision and policy making. The project is expected to influence policy-makers at national, regional and local level.

It was decided at the meeting that the South African project teams' next step is to develop a work programme for the South African NCA project and to compile selected accounts. Testing of SEEA ecosystem indicators for the South African context will also be carried out. So, watch this space!

- Robert Parry

