

From experimentation to mainstream

Taking ecosystem accounting forward in South Africa

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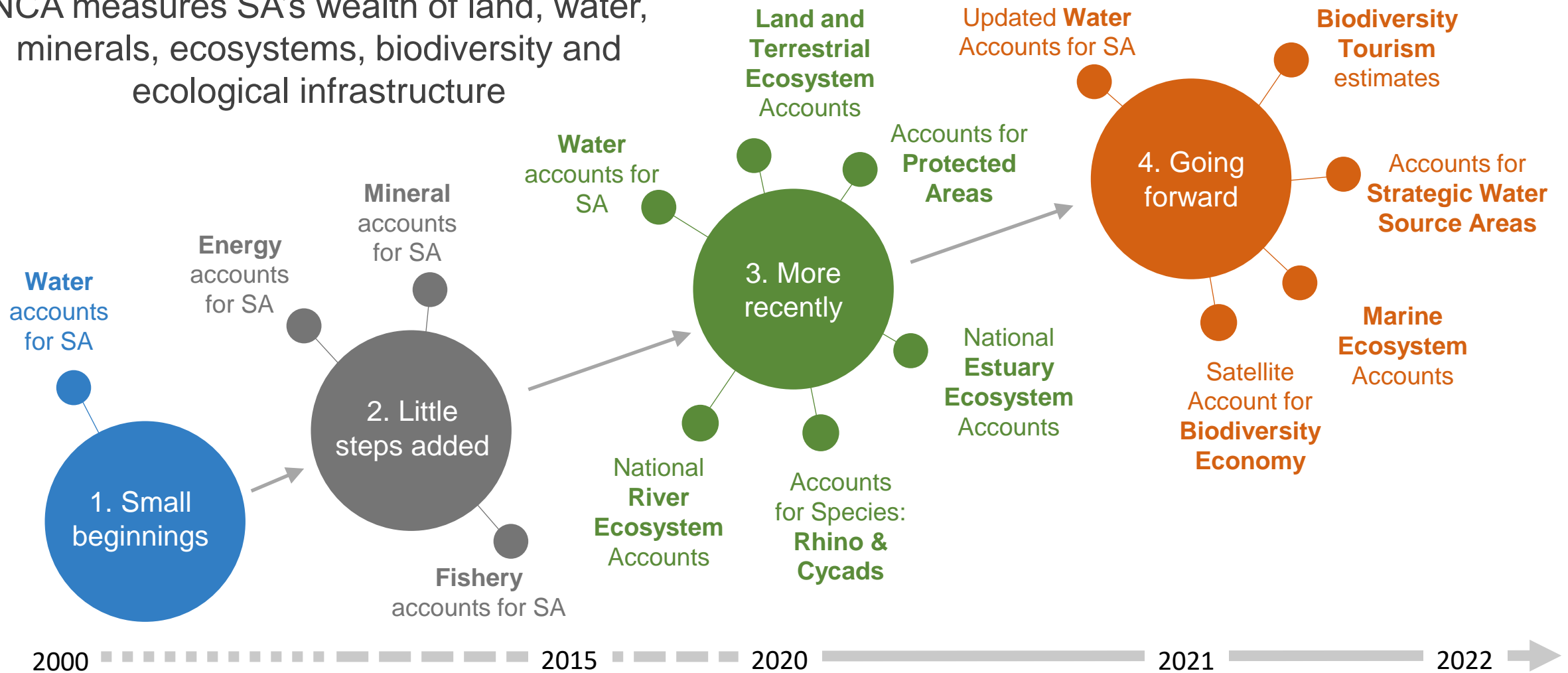
South African National Biodiversity Institute

Overview

- History of NCA in South Africa
- NCAVES in South Africa
- Lessons learnt about the process of compiling accounts
- A National NCA Strategy to take NCA forward in SA
- Institutional mechanisms and arrangements
- Take home messages

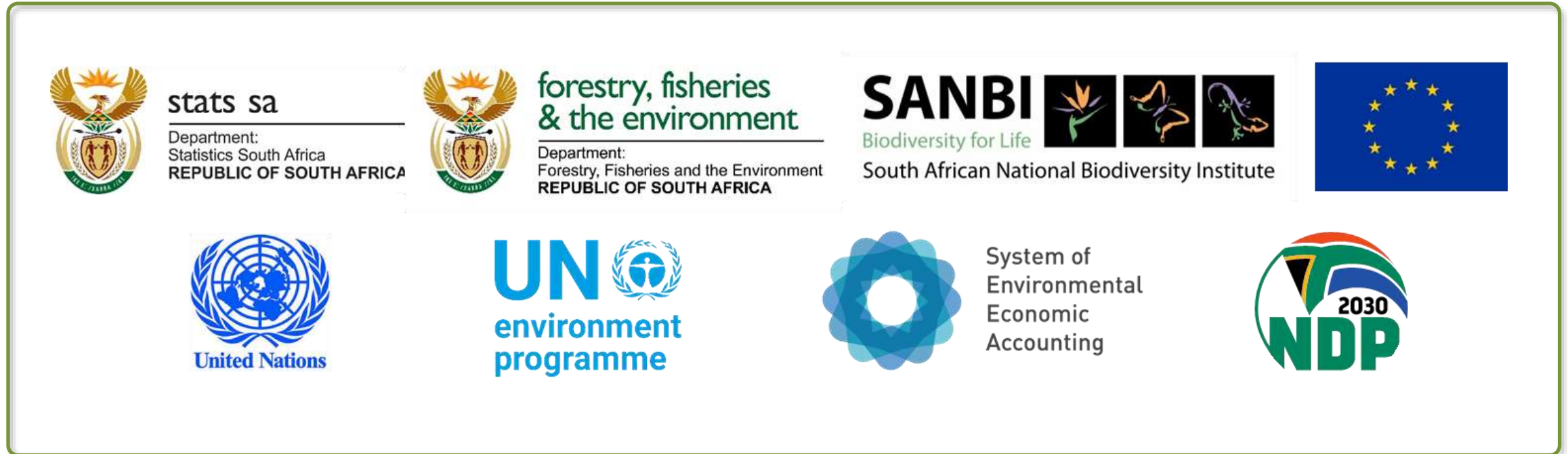
Snapshot of NCA in South Africa

NCA measures SA's wealth of land, water, minerals, ecosystems, biodiversity and ecological infrastructure



From early beginnings with national water accounts in 2000, momentum has grown. Since 2014, donor funded projects have helped to increase capacity, especially for ecosystem accounting.

Natural Capital Accounting & Valuation of Ecosystem Services (NCAVES) project

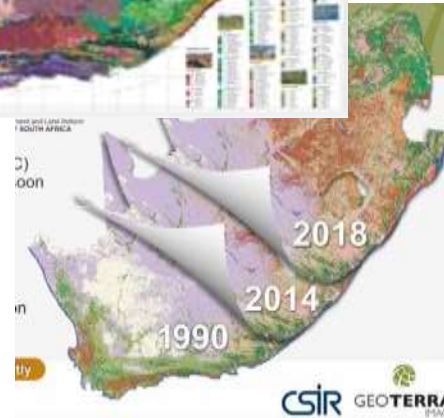
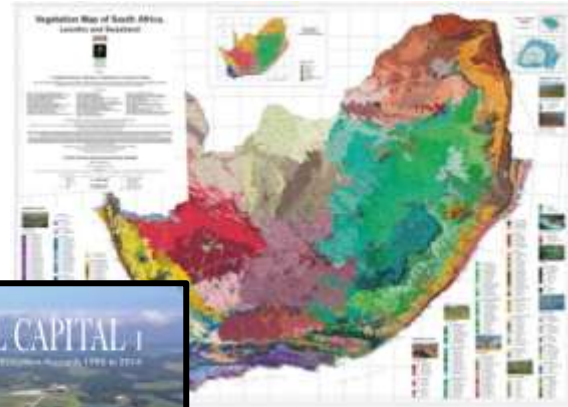


Five pilot countries: Brazil, China, India, Mexico, South Africa

Accounts produced in NCAVES Project in South Africa

National

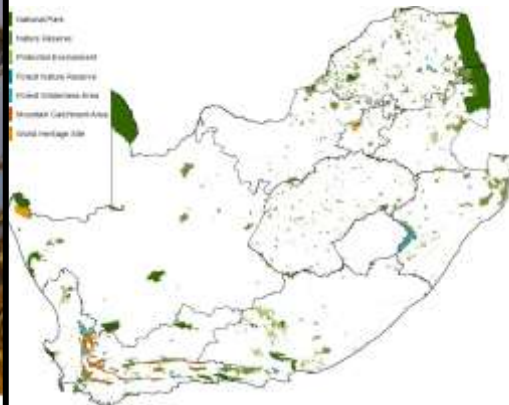
National land and terrestrial ecosystem accounts – extent



Accounts for Species – cycads & rhino



Accounts for Protected Areas – land-based



Sub-national

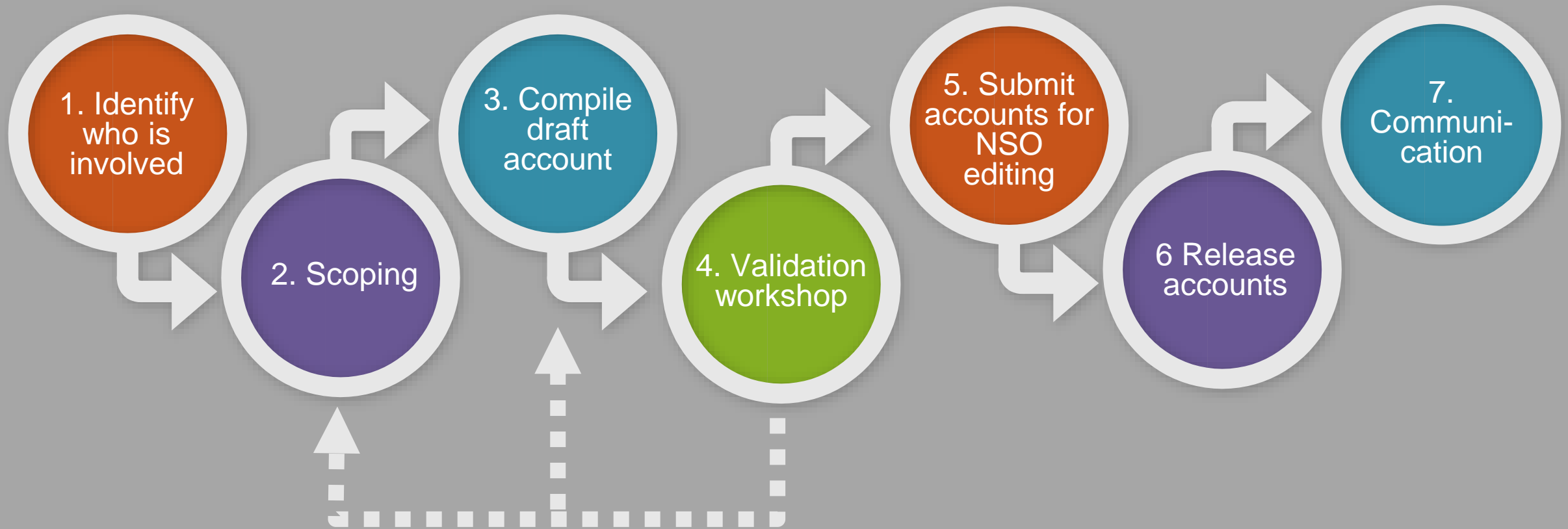
KZN: Full suite of ecosystem asset and ecosystem service accounts



Land accounts for selected Metropolitan Municipalities



Lessons learnt about the process for the compilation of accounts



National NCA Strategy to take NCA forward in SA



Published by Stats SA in June 2021



Vision:

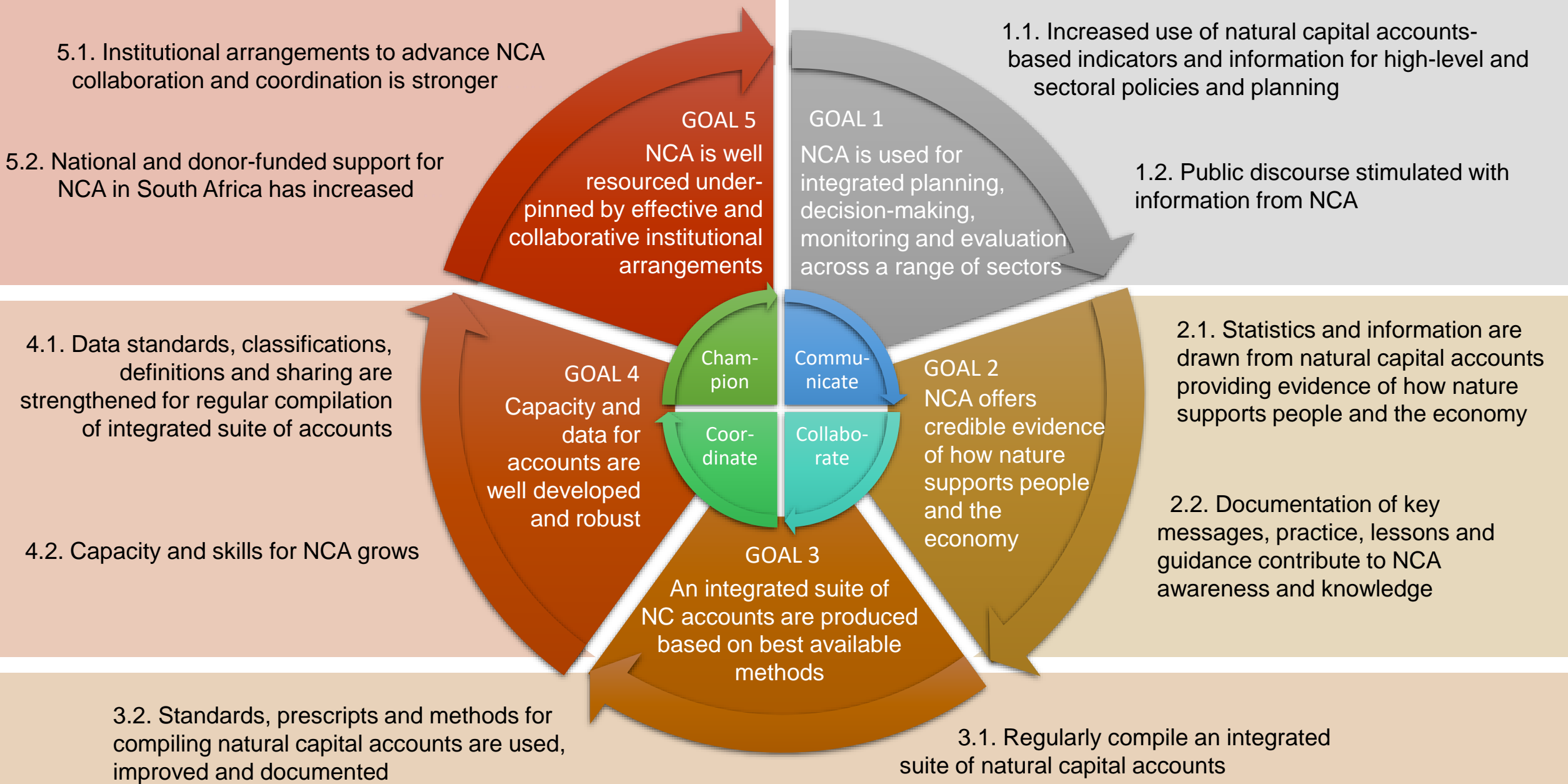
Natural capital accounting is widely used to provide credible evidence for integrated planning and decision-making, in support of the development needs of the country




Intensive co-development process with range of stakeholders over 3 years




VISION: NCA is widely used to provide credible evidence for integrated planning and decision-making in support of the development needs of the country



National NCA Strategy – two funding scenarios

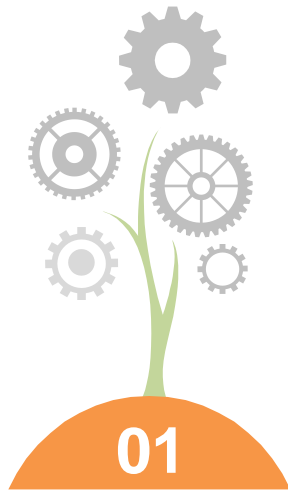
- Low-road activities: 
 - can be undertaken with existing human and financial resources
- High-road activities:
 - are only possible with additional resources

 Significant co-finance built into low road, could be supplemented by further investment (e.g. from donors)



Institutional mechanisms and arrangements

01 Stats SA Environmental-Economic Accounting Division will coordinate implementation and monitoring



02 Embracing partnerships and growing new working relationships to advance NCA



03 Three key institutional mechanisms are important to support the implementation of the National NCA Strategy:



Three key institutional mechanisms

NCA Strategic Advisory Group

- Convened by Stats SA. Meets once or twice a year.
- Giving strategic guidance on: principles to guide priorities, scheduling of accounts, strategic engagements, dialogues and events to support NCA, and linkages to policies.
- Makes recommendations that go to the NCA Community of Practice.

NCA Coordination Unit

- Coordination of the National NCA Strategy.
- The liaison point for NCA in SA.
- Will maintain low-road implementation of the strategy within constraints of available capacity.
- Will adaptively manage capacity spread across accounts and working groups, ensuring alignment and avoiding duplication of efforts.

Technical Working Groups

- Only established when accounts are being developed (specific to an account or set of accounts under development).
- Will meet as regularly as needed.
- Convened by Stats SA or delegate this responsibility.
- A subset of the Technical WG will be responsible for compiling the accounts and will meet more regularly.

Institutional arrangements for Natural Capital Accounting

- **NCA is led by Stats SA**, in terms of its mandate
- **Statistics Act (Act 6 of 1999):**
 - Advancing the planning, production, analysis, documentation, storage, dissemination and use of official and other statistics.
- **Line departments are key strategic users** of statistics published by Stats SA
 - Interpret those statistics that are relevant to inform their planning and decision making.
- Increasing emphasis on Stats SA as a custodian and coordinator of national statistics, working in **partnership with other organs of state**
 - Line departments such as Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment can also be providers of data and/or co-producers of accounts.
- NCA is guided by a **Strategic Advisory Group for NCA**, convened by Stats SA, with representatives from a range of national departments

Take home messages

- **It is not easy:** Due to the range of cross-sectoral role players involved
- **Aligning account compilation with core mandates** of institutions helps
- **The right institutional mechanisms** need to be found to support an NCA strategy
- **Involving the right people:** NCA is an emerging area of work, and the NCA Coordination Unit is regularly faced with additional requests and opportunities that it has not faced before. Good working relationships, technical expertise and management capacity are needed to be able to respond to these in a flexible manner
- **It takes time and collaboration:** The implementation of the NCA Strategy requires co-ordination and collaboration that depends on relationships that has been built over many years. Interpersonal relationships and the influence of champions are key, together with investment, capacity building and networks

Thank you



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