Accounting for natural capital

Government Dialogue on Natural Capital: Workstream 1

3rd Policy Forum on Natural Capital Accounting for Better Decision Making

27 November 2018

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Workstream 1: Accounting

Purpose:

To explore links between natural capital accounting by governments and the private sector to determine how these approaches can complement and challenge each other, improve the quality and availability of data, and inform improved decision making in both sectors.

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Two different approaches to natural capital



System of Environmental-Economic Accounting:

- A global standard for public sector natural capital accounting.
- Standard terms and definitions for forms of natural capital.
- Designed to integrate with the System of National Accounts.





How do these approaches compare?

	AIM	OUTPUTS	LEVEL OF PRESCRIPTION	COMPARABILITY OF OUTCOMES	CONNECTIVITY WITH OTHER ACCOUNTS	MONETARY VALUATION APPROACHES	AGGREGATION
NATURAL CAPITAL PROTOCOL	Primarily designed for internal application and management decision making	Designed to be relevant to a broad range of business applications, and can be voluntarily reported externally	Allows approach to be tailored using different measurement and valuation techniques	Used to develop a standard, repeatable approach for use within a specific entity	Not assured	Allows for monetary valuation of non- market good and services, as well as social welfare	Allows for aggregation of fine-scale information on natural capital for application at corporate level
System of Environmental Economic Accounting	Primarily designed to provide a global standardized accounting framework	Resulting information designed mainly to be reported externally, ensuring global comparability	Promotes the use of standardised statistical approaches and valuations techniques	Produces results which are comparable within and between different entities	Produces results which are comparable within and between different entities	Promotes exchange values for use with National Accounts. Includes a range of valuation techniques for social and environmental welfare.	Allows for aggregation of fine-scale information on natural capital for application in macro decision making

Connecting these approaches

Common language

Standards

Common language between natural capital assessments and accounts through standards

- Increased consistency and comparability between public and private natural capital approaches
- Broadened application of private natural capital information

Information sharing

Creating a common resource

- Private natural capital assessments could draw on public accounts
- Sectoral policy making informed by insights into natural capital impacts and dependencies

Shared learning

Increased efficiency

Minimising costs through shared learning

- Opportunities for collaboration and innovation.
- Increases capability to produce both public and private natural capital accounts faster and at a lower cost.