



National Natural Capital Accounting (NCA) Forum 2024: Concept Note

NCA MAKING WAVES

7-8 August 2024

Statistics South Africa Auditorium

South Africa will hold its third in-person National NCA Forum on 7 and 8 August 2024, in the fourth year of implementation of the National NCA Strategy and just ahead of National Women’s Day. This document provides background as well as key information about the event for delegates interested in participating.

NCA Making Waves

Natural Capital Accounting (NCA) is not just about numbers; it's a systematic approach to understanding the intricate relationship between natural resources, ecosystems, and society. Just as the moon's gravitational force shapes the ebb and flow of the ocean's waves, information from NCA can exert a pull to empower change-makers, equipping them with the tools and knowledge needed to draw society towards a more sustainable future where nature is an important part of policy, decision-making and reporting nationally and globally.

NCA quantifies the stocks and flows of our natural assets, providing a lens through which we can recognize, understand, and integrate the value of nature into our policy, planning, and decision-making processes. It seeks to create waves that carry the potential to reshape the landscape, to stir curiosity, and to inspire action.

By harnessing the power of more integrated environmental, economic and social data, statistics and evidence, NCA enables more informed decisions that benefit both people and planet. Decisions that recognise investments in ecological infrastructure alongside those in built infrastructure as a crucial element of sustainability, risk reduction, and contributing to job creation and rural development. Decisions that recognise the connection between healthy ecosystems, people and the economy. Decisions that help the achievement of national and global commitments for land restoration, conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

NCA as an integrative framework:

Compiled through partnerships and collaborations and combined with other information, NCA and other natural capital approaches have the potential to disrupt conventional thinking and help us forge new pathways towards sustainable futures. NCA transcends disciplinary boundaries, calling for collaboration among diverse organisations to produce comprehensive environmental statistics and information. It challenges the traditional 'silo approach', emphasizing the need for holistic insights that extend beyond individual thematic areas. At its core, NCA serves as an organising framework for environmental information, bridging the gap between economic indicators like the gross domestic product (GDP) and the health of our ecosystems (and biodiversity) and society.

Globally recognised framework:

Drawing from the internationally recognised System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA), NCA provides a robust measurement framework for assessing our natural capital. In South Africa, where the importance of ecosystems and ecological infrastructure is increasingly acknowledged, NCA adds to the rich evidence-base available to decision-makers.

Join the Conversation:

As we convene for the 2024 National NCA Forum under the theme "NCA Making Waves," **we invite you to be part of this dialogue that seeks to harness more of the transformative potential of NCA.** In line with the National NCA Strategy, the National NCA Forum 2024 offers us an opportunity to reflect on our achievements thus far and look towards how we can chart a course for even greater impact. Let's explore how NCA is already or could be driving more impactful change - including consideration of the contributions of women and youth, indigenous values, business and policy. Let's delve even deeper into the current and future possibilities of harnessing the power of NCA to inform and shape our collective journey towards resilient, nature-positive societies.

Call to Action:

Are you making waves with NCA in your field/area of work? **We encourage you to share your experiences, insights, and aspirations at the National NCA Forum 2024** (refer to the section about the Programme on page 3). Dive beneath the surface to reflect on lessons learnt thus far and be part of charting a course for greater partnerships and collaboration, innovation, and impact through dialogue and sharing insights. Together, let's make waves and propel NCA in South Africa and globally towards its full potential as a catalyst for positive change and shape a brighter future for all life for generations to come.

National NCA Forum vitals

Objectives

The objectives of the National NCA Forum 2024 will be to:

1. Assess the advancement of the National NCA Strategy implementation since its release in 2021, reflecting on both achievements and challenges;
2. Explore the quality and applicability of information from NCA for informing policy decisions, with a focus on translating NCA findings into actionable insights – including how to more effectively communicate information from natural capital accounts for different audiences and make them more accessible for use;
3. Learn from global and regional NCA updates and experiences, identifying best practices and lessons learned; and
4. Discuss strategies for mainstreaming NCA into policy agendas and enhancing sustainability through capacity building initiatives.

Who should attend?

The National NCA Forum 2024 invites stakeholders from diverse backgrounds, including government agencies, development banks, private sector entities, researchers, non-governmental organisations, traditional leaders, traditional health practitioners, youth and civil society organisations. Additionally, we extend a special invitation to the African NCA Community of Practice countries to contribute their insights and experiences to enrich the discussions. Stakeholders may be compilers of natural capital accounts, data providers or users of information from natural capital accounts at local, national, regional or global levels. Whether you're a seasoned advocate or a curious newcomer, your voice matters.

Organisers

The event is being hosted by Stats SA and organised in partnership with DFFE and SANBI. It is supported by the *Ecological Infrastructure for Water Security (EI4WS)* Project and WRC.

Date and Venue

Date: 7-8 August 2024

Venue: Rholihlahla Auditorium, Statistics South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa

PLEASE NOTE:

There is no registration fee for the National NCA Forum 2024, but all travel and accommodation costs will be for the participants own account. As space in the Stats SA Auditorium is limited, registrations will be accepted on a first come first serve basis.

Programme

The National NCA Forum 2024 will feature interactive sessions designed to facilitate meaningful dialogue and knowledge exchange. Breakaway groups and plenary sessions will provide opportunities for participants to actively engage with the thematic areas and contribute to shaping the discourse on NCA.

The programme is currently under development and stakeholders are invited to **submit titles and abstracts (less than 100 words) by 5 July 2024**. We anticipate that the Forum will include focus sessions on:

- Water-related accounts to support water governance (with a significant focus on ecological infrastructure for water);
- Accounts to support biodiversity conservation and sustainable use;
- Mainstreaming of information from NCA into decision making process: barriers and opportunities
- Capacity building and sustainability (with a particular interest in the role of universities and research institutions, indigenous knowledge and resource mobilisation); and
- New waves (with a look at emerging areas for natural capital accounting linked to development finance and nature-related disclosures, as well as resource mobilisation).

Outcomes

The outcomes of the National NCA Forum 2024 will feed into multiple pathways, including the review of the National NCA Strategy in 2026, reporting obligations, lessons learnt through the E14WS Project, and insights from ongoing research on the impact of NCA in South Africa. These diverse perspectives will inform future NCA strategies and policy frameworks.

For further information about this event, please contact Robert Parry (Stats SA, Deputy Director: Environmental-Economic Accounts):
robertP@statssa.gov.za.