

**Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation
National Statistical Office**

**Dated 8 Magha, Saka 1942
28th January, 2021**

NCAVES India Forum 2021

1. The NCAVES India Forum 2021, organised by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) in a virtual format, with live sessions on January 14, 21 and 28, 2021, concluded today on the January 28, 2021. The event covered a wide range of topics pertaining to the System of Environmental Economic Accounting (SEEA). The first live session was dedicated to the discussion on the efforts made by India and the international agencies in the domain of environmental accounting and the second live session held on January 21, 2021 focussed on the Policy Demand for NCA in India and emerging opportunities for NCA to support national priorities in India. The focus of concluding session today was the achievements in natural capital accounting at the sub-national level and the prospects of natural capital accounts in India. In addition, MoSPI released the India EVL Tool giving a synoptic view of the environmental valuation studies conducted in India during the past twenty years. The recordings of the live session for both the days are available at <http://ncavesindiaforum.in>.
2. The event witnessed enormous participation from all over the globe. Some of the highlights of the Forum are given in the following paragraphs.
3. The Hon'ble Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) of Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation and Ministry of Planning, Rao Inderjit Singh, emphasized that the Ministry's constant endeavour to provide timely, quality statistics would enable evidence-based policy-making.
4. The Hon'ble Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Prakash Javadekar stressed that a holistic approach should be adopted taking into consideration both the environmental conservation as well as growth of the country. He highlighted that the Government is firmly proceeding to guide the country on the path of sustainable development and looks forward to evolving a comprehensive view of the natural resources and ecosystems.
5. Hon'ble Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Babul Supriyo highlighted that the State Governments play a major role in the ensuring that the development activities are devoid of any negative effect on the environment and that the need of the hour is to work collaboratively with states and local governments to implement laws that protect environment.

6. In the first session on 14th Jan 2021, His Excellency Mr. Ugo Astuto, Ambassador of the EU Delegation to India, complimented MOSPI on its efforts and stressed the importance of natural capital accounting to build science-based, data driven policies and in monitoring their implementation. The importance of protecting the natural capital and addressing the concerns of sustainability were stressed by all the dignitaries including by Ms. Inger Andersen, Under Secretary General and Executive Director, UNEP, Ms. Elizabeth Mrema, Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and Mr. Elliott Harris, Assistant Secretary General and Chief Economist, UN. They endorsed the use of SEEA as an integrated information system that can help take the right decisions to counter the present day challenges, including those of climate change and the biodiversity crisis.

7. Emphasizing the relevance of environment accounting to the Indian context, Ms. Renata Dessallien, UN Resident Coordinator, pointed out that holistic growth or development can only be concretized by ensuring planetary well-being.

8. Dr. Kshatrapati Shivaji, Secretary, MoSPI highlighted that MoSPI is geared up to redefine its roles and responsibilities in line with the national priorities and to strengthen India's national statistical system to provide timely inputs for policy and stronger dissemination practices for public. He also informed that the adoption of the System of Environmental Economic Accounting (SEEA) is one of the initiatives taken up by the Ministry in this direction.

9. There were interesting presentations and deliberations on the use of the System of Environmental Economic Accounting (SEEA) by eminent dignitaries including Mr. Stefan Schweinfest, Director, UNSD, Ms. Susan Gardner, Director, UNEP, Ms. Karin Erika Kemper, Director, World Bank, Mr. Bert Kroese, Chair, UN Committee of Experts on Environmental Economic Accounting and Ms. Gemma Van Halderen, Director, UNESCAP. There was a general consensus that the SEEA framework can be used effectively to enable decisions that can ensure sustainability. The efforts made by MoSPI to implement the SEEA using a modular approach were complimented by all dignitaries.

10. The Forum witnessed the policy makers urging the statistical community to give greater impetus to the work of environmental accounting, since it could help make informed economic decisions. Representing the group of policy makers were Prof K. Vijay Raghavan, Principal Scientific Adviser, Dr. Sanjeev Sanyal, Principal Economic Adviser, M/o Finance, Shri Ram Mohan Johri, Director General, Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India and Ms. Chhavi Jha, JS(NRM), Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare. The same sentiment was echoed by the business sector and the academia as well, who were represented by CII and TERI.

11. During the Forum, efforts made at the sub-national level were also highlighted, with presentations on studies in Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan and Karnataka. In addition, the Forum witnessed deliberations from Organisations active in the field in India such as National Remote Sensing Centre, Forest Survey of India, Soil and Land Use Survey of India,

National Biodiversity Authority (NBA), Wetlands International, Wildlife Institute of India (WII) and World Resources Institute(WRI).

12. In the second session held on January 21, 2021, MoSPI announced its plan to develop a “Strategy for Environmental Economic Accounting for India”. The first round of deliberations on the content of this Strategy was initiated in the panel discussion on the “Prospects of NCA in India”. The panelists – Mr. Atul Bagai, Country Director, UNEP, Mr. Makoto Shimizu from SIAP and Mr. Thomas Danielewitz, World Bank – shared their perspectives on the matter and also discussed some of the initiatives taken up by their organisations aligned with the proposed MOSPI strategy.

13. Dr. Shailja Sharma, DG(Statistics), MoSPI gave insights into MoSPI’s future course of action planned for the implementation of the SEEA framework and described in detail about the efforts taken by the Ministry in alignment with the global objectives. She also announced the Ministry’s plans to develop a Strategy for Environmental Economic Accounting, that would be released on the National Statistics Day on June 29, 2021.

14. The web-portal developed for the Forum had about 150 resources on environmental accounting including regular data series and research publications. The Ministry expresses its gratitude to all the stake holders, national and international delegates for making the event a huge success. The Ministry looks forward to collaborate with the national and international organizations for enhancing the scope of the environment statistics and environmental accounts in India.
