Measuring ecosystems goods and services: a national statistical accounting perspective

World Bank, WAVES Partnership Meeting

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Outline

- Activities in last year

- Lessons learned about applications

- Plan for next phase

- Major challenges

- Thoughts on partnership

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Activities in last year

- Proposal accepted May 2011 for $2.25M in funding over 3 years
  - Build on experience in environmental accounting and statistical infrastructure
  - Need to build common protocols for exchange of information and methods
  - Main client is federal government and focus is national ecosystem accounts; reaching out to provincial governments and universities
- Working Groups (technical): 6 groups, about 50 members (part-time)
  - Working Committee (operational)
  - Steering Committee (priority setting)
- Regular meetings (at least monthly)
- Workshops to develop common approach and build capacity of multi-disciplinary team
- Working towards standard land cover interpretation
- Focussing on four case studies on wetlands to demonstrate accounting approach

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Lessons learned about applications

- Spatial, biophysical and socio-economic data need effort to harmonize; insights are useful at local level, too.
- Not everybody understands what *statistical infrastructure* is (register, surveys, accounts, standards, prices, etc.)
- Limitations are not necessarily limitations (no data, local to national scaling, benefits transfer); working on methods to make estimates; know your confidence intervals → appropriate for type of decision
- Multidisciplinary teams need time to develop a common understanding; common goals, concepts
- Focus is on macro-economic decisions but also applicable to health, security, production, cultural policies

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Plan for next phase

- Complete
  - Case studies (wetlands, coastal communities, protected areas)
  - National delineation of "statistical units"
  - National identification of wetlands
- Research into
  - Defensible methods of benefits transfer (statistical meta-analysis)
  - Ecosystem potential and quality indicators (would like a small set)

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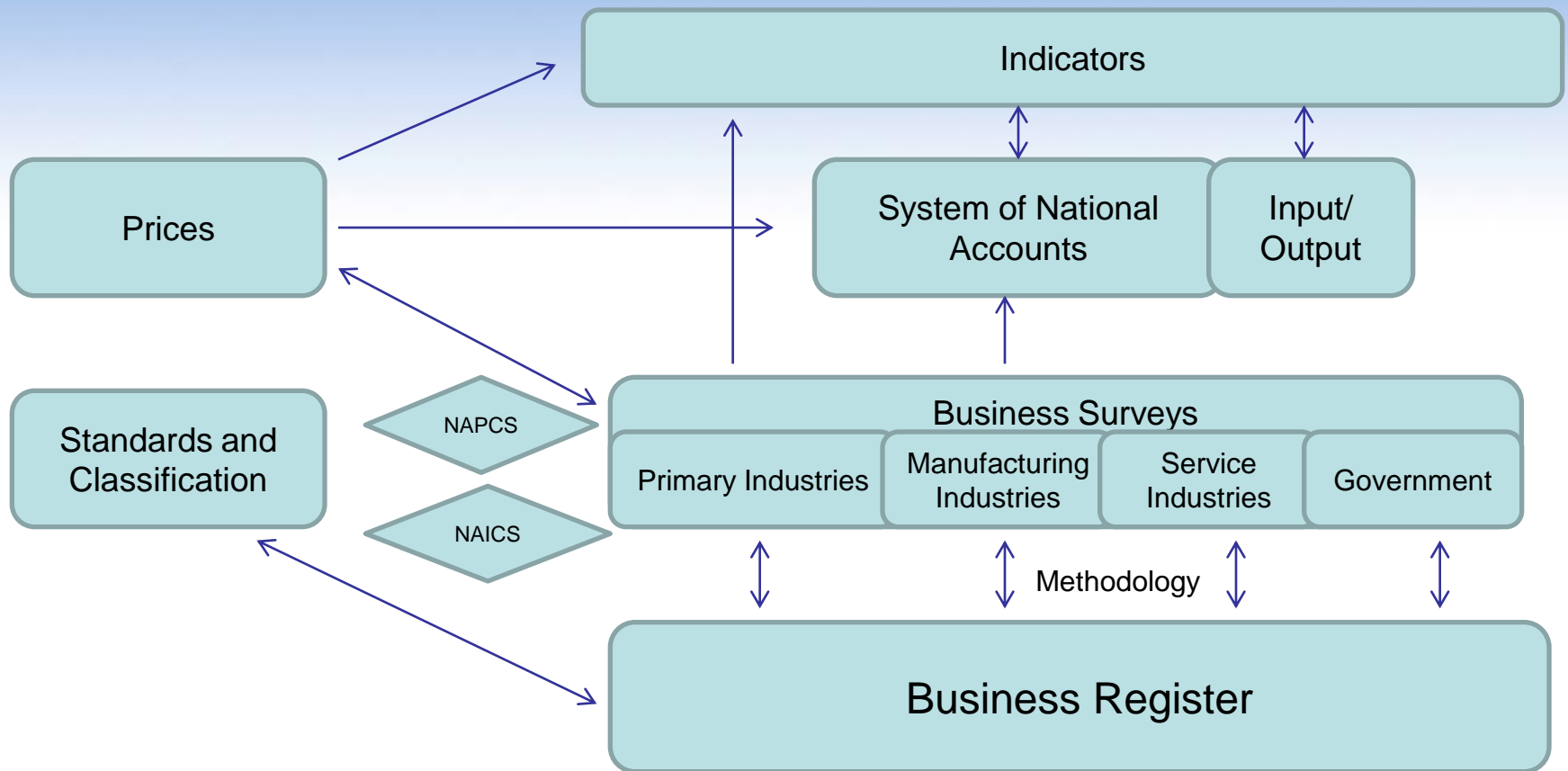
Major challenges and uncertainties

- Staff turnover due to changing government priorities
  - Building multi-disciplinary team needs skills and viewpoints
- Building bridge with practitioners to national level
  - Need to understand benefits of working within a national and international standard
- Explaining that national ecosystem accounts are "do-able"
  - Overcoming common misconceptions that there are no data, you shouldn't scale up local studies, every project is unique
  - Moving the yardstick forward as international standards are developing; First time is a pre-feasibility research project; second time will have a cookbook
- Maintaining experimental/practical balance
- Bringing in non-natural resource departments (finance, health, industry...)

Thoughts on partnership

- Needs simple explanations, processes to engage senior decision makers

  - SEEA Part 2 will still be a technical reference manual
  - Will need a "brochure" version

- Engage statistical agencies as full partners and not simply as sources of data:

  - Links to national accounts, accounting concepts, standards and classifications, quality standards, socio-economic perspective, building infrastructure, impartial

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Business Statistics Infrastructure (partial)

Indicators

Prices

System of National Accounts

Input/ Output

Standards and Classification

NAPCS

NAICS

Business Surveys

Primary Industries | Manufacturing Industries | Service Industries | Government

Methodology

Business Register

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Ecosystem Statistics (a roadmap)

Indicators (Users)

Valuation WG (values)

System of Ecosystem Accounts (all)

All (link Ecosystems to EG&S & values)

Data WG

EG&S

Eco-systems

Ecosystem Data

Wetlands | Landscapes | Coastal

Methodology (all)

"Ecosystem Register" (Spatial WG)

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