Summary of the Narrative session

Natural capital: why it matters to countries and how NC/A can support policy

(Policy Forum on Natural Capital; 26-27 November 2018)

Aim

The aim of this session was twofold: first, to present and discuss the draft narrative developed in the context of the Government Dialogue on Natural Capital, and, second, to identify concrete steps forward, both for individual country level and internationally.

Narrative

The narrative *"Natural Capital for governments. What, why and how"* is developed to show senior decision makers what natural capital is, why it matters for wealth and wellbeing and how governments can act on it.

To kick off the session Martin Lok from the Netherlands Ministry on Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality presented the draft narrative, focusing on four key messages:

1. Wealth & wellbeing depend on natural capital
2. Natural capital generates four returns that contribute to achieving policy ambitions
3. Governments have six levers to maximize the returns that natural capital delivers
4. Many governments already support natural capital approaches to support their ambitions and contribute to achieving SDGs

Discussion

Three key questions where tabled for discussion:

1. Which of the four returns of natural capital are most relevant and/or under pressure in your context?
2. Which of the six key levers for change provide the best opportunities in your context?
3. How can you use the narrative to mainstream natural capital into your national economic and social policy agendas? What can we do internationally?

These questions were first discussed in a panel with Claudine Uwera (Rwanda, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning), Vergez (France, Ministry for an ecological and solidary transition), Andre Andrade (Brazil, Casa Civil), and Katia Karousakis (OECD). Second, all participants shared their observations and suggestions in 12 round table discussions. The following outcome summarizes both panel and round table discussions:

1. *Four returns*: in general the concept of thinking in terms of multiple returns from natural capital was welcomed by participants. However, it was felt that the Policy Return is different from the other three and needs to be approached as a cross-cutting return that could help to identify trade-offs between the other three returns. The Environmental, Social and Economic Returns were sees as equally relevant, although relevancy can differ from country to country, depending

on the specific context. Given the previous remark on the position of the Policy Return the visual needs to be adapted; one of the suggestions is to change the 'pillars' into 'levels'.

2. *Six levers of change*: the levers of change were felt to be relevant but a bit generic; the 2nd level and possible actions described in the narrative are important. It was recognized that some of the levers are focused on information and planning, while others were more targeted towards levelling the playing field. However, all levers were recognized as valuable levers for government action, though different contexts again require different priorities. A majority of the participants called for a seventh lever of change regarding fostering stakeholder engagement.

3. *Use of the narrative*: participants felt that the narrative would gain effectiveness if the narrative it is adapted to different audiences and the key messages are summarized at the beginning of the document. The need for multiple narratives was stressed was stressed, as well as the use of green growth style macro-indicators and alignment with SDGs. Relevant stakeholders to approach should be identified outside the natural capital bubble; first candidates are Foreign Affairs, Planning and Finance.

Next steps

At the end of the session participants were invited to share detailed comments with the authors before 1 December 2018. Building on the discussion in Paris and comments received afterwards the draft narrative will be updated; the publication of the final documents is foreseen for the beginning of 2019.