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Are central statistical offices prepared to track the impacts of climate change?

Central statistical agencies have been essential to tracking economic and social phenomena for the past 90 years. Over the past 30 years, they have developed some capacity for analysing environmental phenomena and linking them to the social and economic trends. Recently, statistical agencies have been improving their understanding and measurement of the linkages and consolidating these relationships in sets of environmental accounts.

Climate change has the potential to create a wide range of social and economic impacts. The paper will highlight (a) the range of expected biophysical, social and economic impacts due to climate change (b) and examine Statistics Canada's environmental accounts and other statistical and data frameworks to evaluate their ability to track these impacts. The paper will conclude with a discussion of what is missing and suggest priorities for filling perceived gaps.