

# New Zealand's Progress on natural resource accounts: 2004 update

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## **Introduction**

Statistics New Zealand began developing natural resource account estimates and methodologies from 2000. The funding was initially for a developmental set of accounts, but it was recently confirmed that natural resource accounts for selected resources will be funded and produced on an ongoing basis.

## **Structure and Institutional Arrangements**

Statistics New Zealand is concentrating on the developing resource accounts that fill identifiable statistical needs. The accounts concerned are energy and water accounts. Forestry accounts are considered to be of slightly lesser importance, but will be maintained. Statistics New Zealand is also co-ordinating inter-agency initiatives to develop measures of sustainable development.

Statistics New Zealand released its Environment Statistics Strategy in March 2004.<sup>1</sup> The Strategy discusses New Zealand's environmental statistical goals and objectives, and clarifies Statistics New Zealand's national role in the provision of environmental statistics.

## **Energy Account**

A physical stock account for energy was published in 2002. Physical flow accounts (monetary and physical) were published in early 2004. A monetary stock account will be released by September 2004, including estimates of renewable energy stocks.

The New Zealand Treasury has shown interest in using the flow accounts for carbon tax policy modelling. The flow accounts include emissions estimates by industry, at a greater level of industry detail than has previously been available in New Zealand.

## **Water Account**

The water stock account (regional and national) was published in July 2004. The next project for water will be investigating the feasibility of a partial quarterly water account that is based around precipitation information.

## **Forestry Account**

Statistics New Zealand has published physical forestry stock and flow accounts, and a monetary flow account. A monetary stock account should be published in October 2004.

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<sup>1</sup> The strategy, and all published reports and tables, are available from the Statistics New Zealand web site, [www.stats.govt.nz](http://www.stats.govt.nz)

## **Other Accounts**

Statistics New Zealand has not yet developed land accounts and ecosystems accounts. Development of a land account should start in 2005.

Physical accounts for Fish have been published, but due to the low quality of the data available for the physical accounts, the development of physical Fish accounts has been suspended indefinitely. A monetary stock account is being developed however.

Environmental Protection Expenditure accounts will be released with estimates for 2002 and 2003 (as well as the already published estimate for 2001). This update will be released later this year. The New Zealand tax department is proposing tax breaks for 'environmentally beneficial' expenditure.

## **Conclusion**

New Zealand's environmental accounts are in a transition phase. The current published natural resource accounts are a developmental set of accounts that established the basic methodologies. From 2005 on, the accounts will be regularly updated and available in a more timely fashion. We believe that the usefulness of these outputs are becoming more accepted and recognised in New Zealand.