
Media Release

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A new step forward for the management of Australia's natural landscapes

Accounting for Nature (AfN) has accredited the first regional-scale methods under its world-leading standard for environmental accounting.

These new regional-scale Methods provide cost-effective ways to monitor the condition of native vegetation, fauna, aquatic vertebrates, and waterways. These methods implement innovative and cost-effective approaches to assessing condition including on-ground data collection, models and expert elicitation, GIS and remote sensing, and environmental DNA (eDNA) technology.

Dr Adrian Ward, CEO of Accounting for Nature, said it's an exciting new step for natural capital management as an opportunity has been unlocked for Regional-land Managers to apply environmental accounts across regional scale, using these four new off-the-shelf Accredited Methods.

"These methods can now be applied to land areas typically greater than 250,000 hectares, allowing for further growth and positive outcomes for our natural environment through the adoption of environmental accounting," he said.

Environmental Accounting helps us to understand the condition of our environment, and its relationship with our economy. The AfN environmental accounting standard is backed by scientific rigour and requires all accounts to be developed in accordance with an AfN accredited method.

Dr Ward said, this approach allows AfN to uphold the highest standard; and is vital to our commitment to deliver the most credible and accountable environmental account standard, globally.

"AfN Methods are based on best-practice monitoring techniques and the latest research and technology. What makes AfN Methods credible is the gold standard AfN framework that requires the calculation of the 'Econd®'. Our 'Econd®' is the standard unit of measure between 0 representing the degraded environment and 100 representing the undegraded environment. It is the only standard, around the world, that applies this process to track changes in the condition of the environment over time. This approach enables the AfN standard to provide robust data and information to protect proponents against greenwashing.

"Another added layer of credibility to AfN's standard is the requirement for Methods to be reviewed and approved by independent experts. AfN has an established Science Accreditation Committee made up of Australia's leading scientists and environmental experts to endorse Method accreditation.

Mike Grundy, former CSIRO Scientist and Chair of AfN's Science Accreditation Committee, said these new regional-scale methods fill the gap in broadscale environmental accounts with innovative and robust methods.

"Four new methods have been added to Australia's toolkit for understanding the condition of our natural environment, it is exciting progress for the emerging practise of environmental accounting but more importantly the opportunity to make real and measurable steps towards the bigger picture; our impact on climate change," he said.

Dr Ward said another great outcome of the addition of these regional-scale methods is the cost reduction it will provide to Regional-land Managers adopting environmental accounting practices. The development of an accredited method can attribute significantly to the initial project costs, this is one less barrier to the pathway of valuing our natural environment in our economy, as AfN provides these new methods through a no-fee open licence.

"The AfN Science Accreditation Committee has now accredited 19 methods across four environmental asset classes, ten vegetation, five fauna, three soil and one freshwater.

"The new regional-scale methods are already being put into practice across 5.5 million hectares of land and will hopefully inspire others to standardise the way they measure and monitor environmental assets across their regions," Dr Ward said.

More Information:

Information on the members of the Science Accreditation Committee can be found here - <https://www.accountingfornature.org/science-accreditation-committee>

Accounting for Nature is a not-for-profit venture that provides a world-leading scientific environmental accounting standard. Learn more www.accountingfornature.org

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