



Natural Capital Project

Aligning economic forces with conservation

Ecosystems support our lives in countless ways; they purify our water, regulate our climate, reduce flood risk and pollinate our crops. We've begun to realize how depleting these valuable "ecosystem services" puts the communities, industries and economies that rely on them at risk.

If our health, food, shelter and economies are reliant on our "natural capital," why do governments and industries still make decisions that degrade ecosystems? Why aren't market forces working on behalf of nature?

One key reason is that decision makers do not have a reliable way to assess the true economic value of the many services their ecosystems provide. Gross Domestic Products are still calculated and development decisions made without accounting for the billions of dollars in benefits provided by nature.

The time has come to fix this problem and put conservation at the forefront of economic decision making. The Natural Capital Project is working to do just that.

Revolutionizing the way conservation is done

The Natural Capital Project—a partnership among World Wildlife Fund (WWF), The Nature Conservancy and Stanford University's Woods Institute for the Environment—is pioneering a new approach to conservation.

The project's goal is to align economic forces with conservation by making clear the value of ecosystems and by incorporating this value into resource decisions.

We bring scientists, economists and other scholars together with leaders in government and business to develop powerful tools that provide answers to urgent questions such as:

- Which areas in a region provide the most ecosystem services?
- What is the actual economic value of these services?
- Which people benefit most from them?
- How will certain resource management choices affect the economy, human well-being and the environment?
- How might individual ecosystem services—and biodiversity overall—change under future scenarios of land use, population shifts and climate change?

These answers will help decision makers understand the current value of their natural assets, and will allow them to consider the costs and benefits of development decisions facing them.



Early Results

The Natural Capital Project is just emerging from its development stage, but some pilot test areas are already demonstrating the power of the project's approach.

- **In Borneo:** Plans to build an enormous oil palm plantation would have eliminated almost 2 million hectares of unique tropical rainforest. Mapping the economic value of carbon storage and air quality showed the standing forest would contribute 2.7 billion dollars to the region over the next 30 years. The WWF network used these maps and value estimates in its campaign against deforestation. The result: The project was halted—a huge victory for WWF and conservation.
- **In Tanzania:** Agricultural development has been pushing the forests of the Eastern Arc Mountains ever further toward the peaks, threatening thousands of rare species, people's livelihoods, and water and power resources. The Natural Capital Project is currently working with over 40 collaborators in Tanzania, the UK and South Africa to map and value the mountains' many ecosystem services. WWF will use the maps to steer decisions and resources toward forest conservation and watershed management.

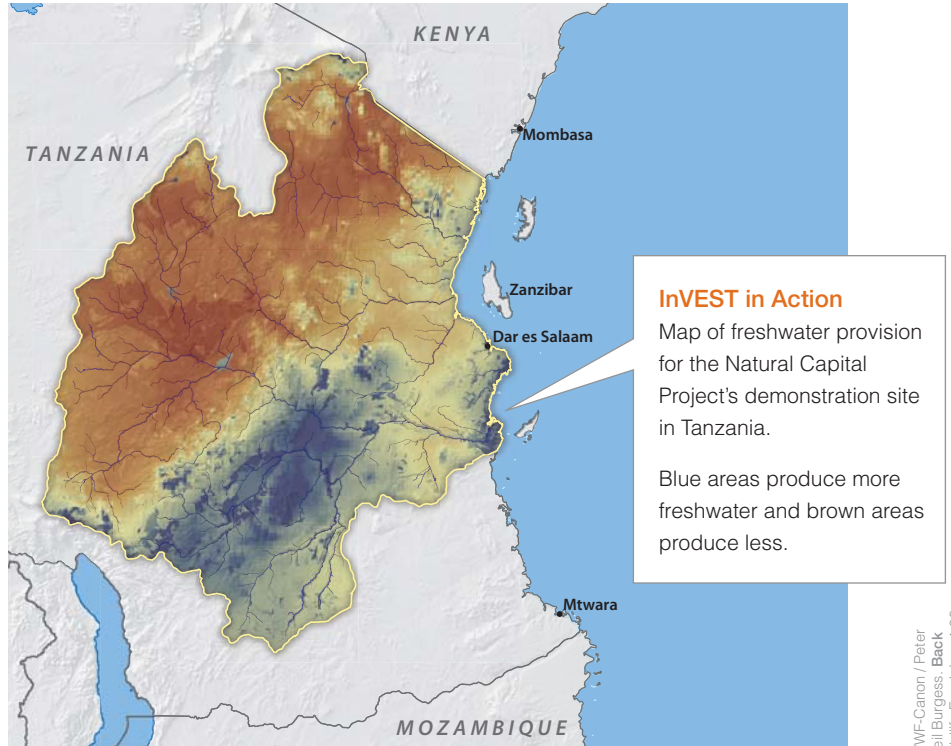




InVEST: Powerful Technology for Powerful Conservation

To advance this unique conservation approach, the Natural Capital Project has developed an innovative software tool called InVEST (Integrated Valuation of Ecosystem Services and Tradeoffs). This software can provide decision makers with accurate maps and economic values of the various ecosystem services in a region. Notable features include:

- **Current values, future projections:** InVEST can assess ecosystem services for a current landscape, as well as evaluate “scenarios” to project the costs and benefits of future policy choices.
- **Workable with different amounts of data:** Since environmental data are often scarce, InVEST has a two-tiered system. One model can be run with relatively simple data; or, if more information is available, a more complex, data-intensive model can be used.
- **Highly influential results:** Using InVEST’s maps and data, WWF field programs can show decision makers where ecosystem services are, estimate what they are worth and recommend fair policies to compensate people whose lands provide them.
- **Simple, engaging software:** InVEST’s easy-to-use interface is creating high demand for the tool among conservation experts, decision makers and other stakeholders.



Moving Forward with WWF

The Natural Capital Project is now turning a critical corner, as we complete our initial development phase and begin to provide practical tools for conservation. We plan to roll out version 1.0 of InVEST in late 2008, complete with a user's guide and an integrated user interface. Over the next three years, at least six to eight WWF field programs will be using InVEST to show decision makers why conservation is a good investment.

Investing in InVEST

InVEST can provide WWF with powerful new arguments in support of its conservation efforts. But to make this happen, WWF field programs and partners will need training and support in using the tool, and for that the project needs resources. A budget of \$1.6 million over 3 years will support a lean team of expert trainers, local capacity in each field program to use InVEST, workshops to involve decision makers and further improvements to the software.

In the hands of WWF's experienced field teams, the Natural Capital Project's tools and approaches can change the face of conservation. Using them, we will be able to demonstrate the economic value of ecosystems, align the goals of conservation and economic development, and guide global markets to work on behalf of nature.

You can help us protect our valuable natural capital. To learn more or to support Natural Capital Project's work, contact:



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