FACT SHEET

natural capital PROJECT

Ecosystems—habitats, species, and the interactions between them—are the source of nature's benefits. The natural capital concept is a way of thinking about the sources and sustainability of those benefits. As ecosystem degradation accelerates and human populations increase, institutions worldwide are awakening to the realization that humans and nature survive and thrive together. As a result, leaders everywhere are challenged to integrate nature into development decisions to sustain us—and future generations. But they lack the information and mechanisms to do so. We are collaborating with these leaders on world-class science, policy, and management to fill those gaps.

OUR APPROACH

Starting with listening, we work with decision-makers to develop solutions. We use iterative engagement to elicit the needs of stakeholders, so the new science and tools that we develop are immediately relevant and can be incorporated into existing decision processes.

We harness world-class research capacity and pair it with the latest technology and practical, local know-how. We engage in real decisions, advance the frontiers of science, convene leaders, and are building the Natural Capital Science & Technology Platform, which makes using natural capital understanding faster and easier.

SCIENCE AND SOFTWARE

NatCap has developed the world's leading free, open-source data and analytical platform for mapping and modeling nature's benefits.

Our team invented the tools and developed the science to value aspects of nature in real-world decisions. With a growing user base in over 80 countries, these tools reveal trade-offs under different scenarios and can optimize investments. PyGeoProcessing, NatCap's free and open source geospatial programming library, has been downloaded over 35,000 times since its launch in early 2015.

We hope that open access to high quality spatial information, developed collaboratively, will get us closer to a world where nature is a primary consideration in all decisions.

MISSION & GOALS

Our ultimate objective is to improve the well-being of people and nature by motivating investments in the natural assets that sustain us. We are focusing on achieving 5 major outcomes: sustainable development planning; securing freshwater; safe, resilient coastal communities; sustainable, livable cities; and standards for the private sector.

WE ARE

The Natural Capital Project is a team of optimistic and committed academics, software engineers, and practitioners from the Stanford Woods Institute for the Environment and Biology Department, the University of Minnesota's Institute on the Environment, The Nature Conservancy, and World Wildlife Fund, working together for over a decade to integrate the value nature provides to society into all major decisions.

WE REACH

We empower governments, communities, corporations, and multilateral investment institutions to map and measure the goods and services they depend upon.

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We work in a wide array of places and sectors, developing nature-based solutions. For example, we've collaborated with decision-makers to:

- Build resilience to climate and coastal hazards in Belize

- Guide development planning in Myanmar

- Secure freshwater through the development of water funds in Latin America, Africa, and the US

- Manage corporate risk in global sourcing decisions for Unilever

- Inform transportation loan decisions by the Inter-American Development Bank across Latin America

- Support massive government investments in conservation and human development in China.

THE NATURAL CAPITAL PROJECT

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