

About Us

The Natural Capital Project is a partnership among Stanford University, The Nature Conservancy, the World Wildlife Fund, and the University of Minnesota that works to develop and provide practical ecosystem services concepts and tools, apply these tools in select areas around the world, and engage influential leaders to advance change in policy and practice through mainstreaming the approaches.

InVEST



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InVEST 2.2.2
298 MB

Integrated Valuation of Environmental Services and Tradeoffs

(InVEST) is a free and open-source software suite developed by the Natural Capital Project to map and value the goods and services from nature that contribute to sustaining and fulfilling human well being. A new version of InVEST (2.3.0) will be released any day now, so check our website or [sign up to receive notice!](#)

China's Natural Capital

Greetings!

China has emerged as a titan of commerce, technology, and innovation. Amazingly, that innovation is now spreading to conservation - by many measures, China has the world's most pioneering policies designed to protect ecosystem services. Rapid industrialization over the past 30 years has led the world's most populous country to unprecedented economic growth, massive advances in physical infrastructure development, and large-scale alleviation of poverty. Many of these advances have come at the expense of China's natural capital. China's national leaders increasingly recognize how rapid development has contributed to devastating floods, severe water shortages, and increasing desertification, and that they must balance economic growth with conservation to improve and sustain human well-being. China's massive growth, interest in innovative solutions to environmental degradation, and demonstrated ability to get big things done, make China the perfect partner. The government is putting InVEST, our state-of-the-art software tool, to use in national policy applications and are inventing ways of mainstreaming the values of natural capital into decision-making.

The Natural Capital Project in China

HARMONIZING PEOPLE AND NATURE

While China harbors 10% of the world's plant and animal species, it is also home to 1.3 billion people (nearly one out of every 5 people on Earth) with needs that exert high pressure on resources. There is now corresponding pressure to find and embrace innovative solutions that make the link between nature and human well-being a central tenet of land and water use policy. The Natural Capital Project is working in China to map and value ecosystem services, communicate the essential linkages between people and the critical life-support systems that nature provides, and cultivate on-the-ground demonstrations of natural capital approaches to conservation at local, regional, and national scales.



The most ambitious new policy designates 24% of China's land area in new reserves, called Ecosystem Function Conservation Areas (EFCAs). EFCAs are designed to secure biodiversity, soils, and water resources, and to mitigate floods and prevent sandstorms. The EFCAs also have a major social goal of alleviating poverty, particularly in the rural areas of China. Our partner, the Chinese Academy of Sciences' Research Center for Eco-Environmental Science ([RCEES](#)) is leading this effort.

Researchers are improving and deploying our InVEST software to visually map and measure ecosystem services. Notably, the [Chengdu Institute of Mountain Hazards and the Environment](#) has spearheaded the extensive use of InVEST in Baoxing County (Sichuan Province) to quantify ecosystem services in a poverty-stricken region with high biodiversity. China has designated this region an Ecosystem Function Conservation Area and our partners have used InVEST models to estimate and map delivery of services ranging from mushroom and medicinal plant production

China Brochure



A brief overview of the work the Natural Capital Project is doing in China ([Download pdf](#))

Events

InVEST Trainings

Latin America-
October
Portugal- November

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(key parts of the local economy) to water retention (for flood security and hydropower production efficiency) and carbon sequestration (for climate security). Resulting maps are overlaid with a biodiversity map to identify areas suitable for development and those where conservation of Giant pandas and other species would yield high return-on-investment to society.

In close collaboration with the Natural Capital Project, RCEES is also using InVEST to assess a new payment for ecosystem service program that aims to preserve water quality in Beijing's surface water reservoir. Home to over 500,000 households north of Beijing, this watershed is also tasked with providing drinking water to Beijing's 20 million urban residents. This program pays farmers to transition from paddy-land rice agriculture to dry-land row-crop agriculture in order to reduce surface water nutrient runoff and promote less water-intensive agriculture. By quantifying the program's impacts on natural capital and its value, a clearer assessment of the associated costs and benefits are helping inform future management of the program.

China's attention to policy-making around ecosystem services has spurred great interest in evaluating natural capital across many sectors of society. We have engaged numerous stakeholders in China to introduce the Natural Capital Project and our tools and approaches. These included: the Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP), State Forestry Administration (SFA), Poverty Alleviation Bureau, Nature Reserve staff, the Beijing Olympic Committee, and several city, county and provincial governments. To further support work on natural capital in China, our technical manuals have been translated into Chinese, and our book, [Natural Capital: Theory and Practice of Mapping Ecosystem Services](#), is being translated into Chinese as well.

China's National Ecosystem Service Assessment

InVEST TRAINING IN CHINA

InVEST is being used in China's first-ever National Ecosystem Services Assessment, spanning a wide range of ecosystems and geographic scales. The Chinese Academy of Sciences' Research Center for Eco-Environmental Science (RCEES) is leading this effort and will use InVEST to assess changes in ecosystem services from 2000 - 2010. This massive initiative opens a new paradigm for integrating spatially interdependent ecosystem functions such as clean water and carbon storage into national development planning.



This summer, the Natural Capital Project was invited to help train over 200 government land-use managers and scientists from around the country in use and interpretation of InVEST. The InVEST training focused on technical assessment of key ecosystem services related to securing food, water, climate, and biodiversity. The ecosystem assessment training and workshop took place in Beijing, China from June 26-July 2nd and was hosted by the Chinese Ministry of Environmental Protection and the Chinese Academy of Sciences (RCEES).

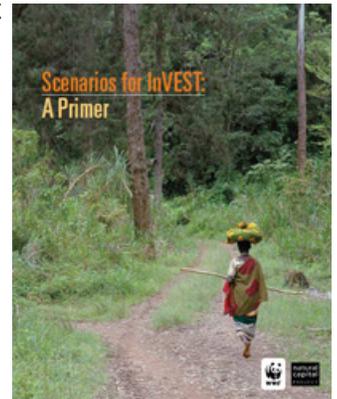
Scenarios for InVEST

GUIDANCE FOR DEVELOPING SCENARIOS TO ASSESS ECOSYSTEM SERVICE TRADEOFFS

Scenarios describe what the future could look like. Scenarios enable forward-looking, comparative assessments of how ecosystem services are likely to change under different possible futures. In our applications of InVEST with partners around the world, the Natural Capital Project has found that scenarios are critically useful. They can make ecosystem service assessments more relevant to specific decisions and involve stakeholders in a powerful learning process.

To help InVEST users, the Natural Capital Project has just published two reports on scenario development:

- The **Scenarios Primer** provides a quick introduction to scenarios and how they can be used with InVEST. It includes short case studies and highlights important considerations including characteristics of effective scenarios, methods for developing scenario storylines and maps, and experiences using scenarios to inform different decision contexts.
- The **Scenarios Guidance and Case Studies** is a detailed resource for practitioners. Drawing on case experiences, it provides guidance on scenario types and methods, engaging stakeholders, and creating scenario maps. It highlights issues and questions for reflection, along with practical tools, full case studies, and links to further resources.



Both reports are available at [Scenarios for InVEST](#).

Thank you for your continued interest in the Natural Capital Project. Be sure to stay tuned to learn the latest developments on our work around the world, and to receive the latest updates on InVEST trainings, release dates, and new product launches. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at invest@naturalcapitalproject.org.

Sincerely,
Natural Capital Project



Try it FREE today.