



securing freshwater ecosystems

Water is vital for human survival, yet 1.6 billion people lack access to clean drinking water and 2.6 billion people lack adequate water sanitation. We rely on fresh water not just for drinking and washing, but for fisheries, agriculture, transportation, industrial processes and electricity generation. Fresh water comes from precipitation, glacial melting and runoff, and it flows above- and under-ground delivering us invaluable services. One estimate places the global value of all freshwater services at US \$7 trillion per year.

Despite the critical importance of healthy freshwater ecosystems for human well-being and for economic growth, unsustainable development has placed a great burden on nature's ability to deliver enough fresh water to sustain all life on Earth. Working in more than 40 countries, Conservation International (CI) works to responsibly and sustainably care for natural systems so that ecosystem services—the tangible benefits that people receive from nature, such as fresh water—are available for today's needs and for generations to come.

CI's solution to maintaining global freshwater security is to focus on ensuring the reliable and sustained availability and quality of fresh water at the times and places it is needed to sustain people and other freshwater-dependent life on Earth.

The reliable supply of clean water is vital to sustainable business operations for companies around the world. With increasingly scarce and unpredictable sources of water—further exacerbated by a changing climate and ever worsening pollution and degradation of key sources—lack of available clean water is a growing risk for many companies.

our approach

Through the Center for Environmental Leadership in Business (CELB), CI works in partnership with leaders in key industries to: reduce companies' ecological footprint through innovative business practices; harness the power of supply chains to drive the widespread adoption of good practices; invest strategically in on-the-ground conservation opportunities; and create dynamic communications campaigns that inspire consumers and employees worldwide to take action in their everyday lives.

Our work with companies on water includes the following approaches:

- Creating water management strategies, policies and practices and advising on efficiency measures, water footprint accounting and sustainable water sourcing.
- Developing sustainable sourcing criteria, which include water conservation and watershed protection, to build sustainable water practices into business supply chains.
- Supporting payment for ecosystem services mechanisms that assign a value to freshwater ecosystem services, thereby compensating the communities whose actions enhance or protect those services.

- Investing in water stewardship projects in areas of strategic importance to companies, where operations depend on reliable, clean water supplies from those regions.
- Communicating the importance of water conservation to educate employees, consumers and the general public on the importance of protecting nature's benefits.

To ensure the development of successful, replicable strategies to conserve the ecosystem services provided by freshwater systems, CI and our partners are implementing demonstration projects in China, Brazil, South Africa, Colombia, Fiji, and other countries around the globe.

Freshwater Demonstration Project Locations

