

Internship/volunteer/work experience position WWF

Financial framework Marine Protected Areas

General context

Traditionally, MPAs (Marine Protected Areas) have been financed by public sector and philanthropic funds. In the last 25 years, private sector investments have started to play a role as well in conservation finance through the development of new mechanisms (eg. carbon finance, mitigation banking and nutrient trading). Healthy oceans are vital to sustain livelihoods worldwide and to provide a rich source of protein for the coming generations. Public sector and philanthropic funds for MPAs are likely to increase in the coming years, but will not be sufficient to safeguard the benefits that healthy oceans can provide. An up scaling of private sector investments is necessary to implement and manage MPAs worldwide to safeguard these ocean benefits.

According to a recent report of Credit Suisse, WWF and McKinsey&Company (2014), private and institutional investors are interested in conservation finance and the potential is large. The challenge for WWF and conservation partners is to match investors to MPAs (or Protected Areas (PAs) in general), to make investing in MPAs easier and more common with the goal of restoring habitats and safeguarding ecological processes.

Therefore WWF-Netherlands has created a position for a student or a volunteer to assess the current investment structures for MPAs and PAs and potential new products that could enhance future investments.

Objectives of this study

- To make an inventory of current investment structures and products that are available for habitat protection and specifically for MPAs
- To analyze whether the right tools (structures/products) are available to increase investments in MPAs (gap analysis)
- To make (preliminary) recommendations on structures and products needed for stimulating/increasing investments in MPAs

Research approach

The research approach will be as follows:

1. Desk/literature study

A desk/literature study will be done to make an inventory of existing projects and examples of innovative financial products that have been developed to increase the amount of private sector investments in conservation projects. This inventory should give insight in investment structures and financial products that are successful and that could also be used to finance MPAs.

2. Interviews

Especially the viewpoint from the private sector investors should be further analyzed. This is done through interviews with professionals from the financial sector, to gain knowledge on what would move investors towards MPA projects and which key conditions are missing at the moment that should be improved.

3. Recommendations

If necessary, recommendations for a new financial product specifically for MPAs can be proposed to WWF for further development.

Final outcome

The final outcome will be an inventory of existing, successful financial structures and products, applied to attract private sector investments to marine habitat protection projects, a gap analysis on whether the right tools are in place and (preliminary) recommendations for further development of financial structures and/or products needed to sustainably finance MPAs.

Research questions

- What forms of private sector investments with conservation/environmental goals already exist that can be applied to MPAs or marine habitat protection?
- Which framework should be in place to facilitate private sector investments in an MPA i.e. is there a need for the development of new structures and/or products?
- Who are the key players in this field?
- Who should WWF involve in the development of a new structure/product?

Timeframe

The internship will cover about 3 to 4 months, for 3 days a week. The candidate will be working at WWF Netherlands in Zeist. The starting period of the internship will be August or September 2014, depending on availability.

Student profile & qualifications

- Preferably a Master student/volunteer in finance or business studies with an interest in WWF work
- Good knowledge of the financial sector and investment structures
- Preferably familiar with the conservation sector
- Familiar with the following methodologies: developing questionnaires, conducting interviews, literature/desk study
- Skills: independent, analytical, entrepreneurial

Support from WWF

The candidate will become part of the international project 'MPA Action Agenda' managed by the Oceans and Coasts team within the WWF Netherlands office. The position will provide the candidate the possibility to connect with the worldwide WWF network and professionals from the financial sector. The MPA Action Agenda team will supervise and support whenever necessary. Details on compensation will be provided on request.

Documents & links

- Conservation finance: Moving beyond donor funding toward an investor-driven approach, 2014 (WWF, Credit Suisse, McKinsey&company)
- Sustainable Investments for Conservation: The Business Case for Biodiversity, 2007 (PWC for WWF)

- <http://conservationfinancenetwork.org/overview/markets-private-capital/conservation-investment-banking/>
- <http://www.thekinshiplus.com/2014/03/19/conservation-finance-is-gearing-up-for-wall-street/>