



Downstream Strategies, partners to help Barbados with ecosystem planning

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West Virginia-based Downstream Strategies, along with the Natural Capital Project, the World Wildlife Fund and The Nature Conservancy have all been hired by the Inter-American Development Bank to support coastal zone management in Barbados.

The consultancy collaboration aims at integrating climate impacts and the benefits of ecosystem services into the Barbados Coastal Zone Management Unit planning process.

Possible ecosystem services would include coastal erosion reduction provided by coral reefs, water quality improvements from forestlands and tourism opportunities provided by beaches.

The coastal region of Barbados is the country's largest economic asset, according to information from Downstream Strategies. The country's tourism industry, which accounts for more than 40 percent of employment and GDP in Barbados is dependent on the marine and coastal environment.

Downstream Strategies has offices in both Morgantown and Alderson. It offers environmental consulting services that link economic development with natural resource stewardship, according to a company news release.

The Natural Capital Project, a partnership that combines environmental science research at Stanford University and the University of Minnesota, with the global reach of science and conservation projects at The Nature Conservancy and World Wildlife Fund, was founded in 2006 and has worked on more than 20 projects worldwide, including water security in Latin America, integrated coastal planning in Belize and land-use planning in Indonesia.

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