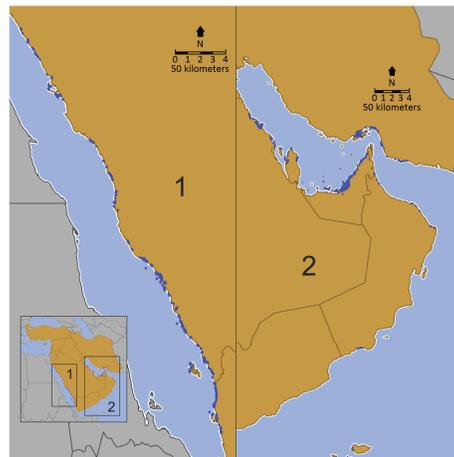


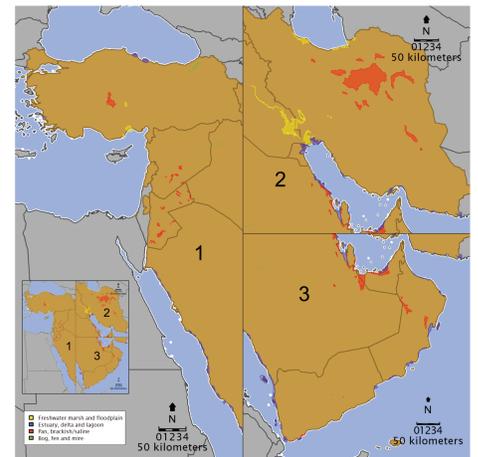
A preliminary assessment of the economic value of coastal and freshwater wetlands in West Asia

BACKGROUND

- Wetlands are natural resources that provide many benefits, such as habitat for birds, recreational services and sites for fishing.
- These benefits are not priced in markets and as a result, they are often overlooked in cost-benefit analysis.
- Predicted strong population growth, high incomes, and economic diversification strategies in the region stimulate demand for water, as well as urban and infrastructural development.
- Wetlands in West Asia are at risk from water shortages, pollution and outright conversion that result from decision-making based on information that does not acknowledge all the benefits and the full economic value of wetlands.



Mangrove distribution

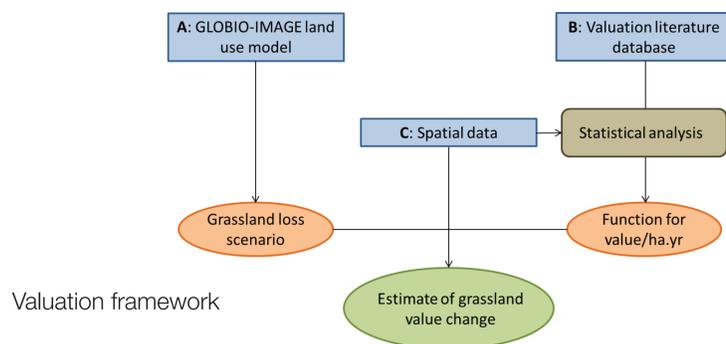


Wetland distribution

OUR OBJECTIVES

- To provide an initial contribution towards the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE) decision to conduct a study to assess the economic value of wetland benefits in the Arab world.
- To estimate the economic value of changes in the extent of freshwater and coastal wetlands in West Asia under a scenario for a possible future.
- To show that a case can be made on economic grounds for investing in research and policies that will improve wetland conservation.

METHODS

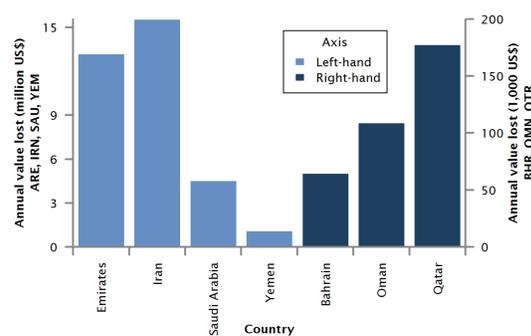


Valuation framework

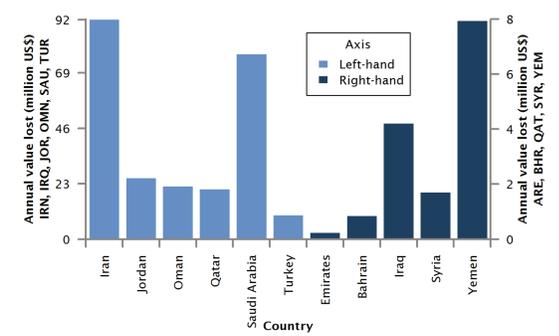
- Develop a database with estimates of the economic value of wetlands from existing literature.
- Extract information on socio-economic contexts using global datasets of spatial variables.
- Develop a meta-analytic value transfer function to be applied to wetlands in West Asia.
- Contrast wetland value under a scenario (2000-2050) of wetland loss and a policy of full wetland conservation.

RESULTS

- For the scenario period (2000–2050), the net present value of the economic value that would be lost if wetlands are not protected equals 2.3 billion USD (4% discount rate) and 7.3 billion USD (1% discount rate) for West Asia.
- The potential total economic loss can be split by ecosystem and country to uncover significant difference, which can be caused by national differences in wetland stocks and the potential for wetland losses, as well as variations in the per-hectare annual value of wetlands.
- The results exclude a small number of wetlands with extremely high estimates of economic value, in order to present a conservative estimate.



Lost annual value of mangroves in 2050



Lost annual value of wetlands in 2050

OUR CONCLUSIONS

- If the unpriced benefits of wetlands are considered, a strong case can be made to invest in further research and policies to protect wetlands in West Asia.
- To get a detailed understanding of the economic benefits of wetland conservation that can be used in policy development, local studies are needed.
- Sustainable policy development, which acknowledges the full suite of benefits from wetlands, requires engagement of and discussion with stakeholders.
- This would constitute a new approach and would necessitate building new capabilities in policy development

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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