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M. Sanjayan, CEO of Conservation International, describes the challenge of measuring conservation efforts, especially those that encompass complex systems. One way he assesses success is by asking himself if a project will continue even after the organization leaves. "There is no pride in being in a place for a very long time if you're a nonprofit," he says. "Your job should be to put yourself out of a job in every place you work."



Transcript

- You can't ask the question if you don't have the right measure set up for it.. It's a massive challenge for every conservation organization.. It's easy in some ways to say, "I'm saving this species "or this place." The minute you get beyond that, and you talk about a whole river system or a whole landscape or seascape, it becomes really complicated.. So we have approximate metrics of activity, but then we also look at the long attempt things, which have to do with both human while being, but also the state of that ecosystem.. For me, what I use in some ways as a measure is, I wanna ask myself, can this project stand on its own feet, even after we're gone? There is no pride in being in a place for a very long time if you are a non-profit.. Because your job should be to put yourself out of a job in every place you work.. And if you approach it in that way, you're approaching it with a life cycle of a project.. It means that within 10 years, I want every project that we do to essentially, be self-sustained, self-generating, create a virtual cycle within that project.. Now you might have some level of philanthropy in there.. But philanthropy can not be the driver of that kind of persistent change..

There has to be the kick in the ass to get things going...