

## This tech start-up wants to 'hack' efforts to save endangered species, ecosystems

After an unorthodox career in science that has included setting up a national park in an active war zone in Afghanistan, [Alex] Dehgan is betting his retirement on hacking the field of conservation. He wants to harness the power of technological innovation to transform the practice of preserving ecosystems and species.

Borrowing a page from Silicon Valley, he has launched a non-profit technology start-up called Conservation X Labs in Washington DC. Just four years old, the initiative is bringing new people into the field of conservation — including entrepreneurs, engineers, computer scientists and anthropologists. It aims to support research and development into technology that might aid conservation.

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So far, it has launched six competitions for tools to, among other things, limit the spread of infectious diseases, the trade in products made from endangered species and the decline of coral reefs. The first commercial product to be spun out of the start-up — a portable DNA scanner — is slated for release by the end of the year.

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As co-founder and chief executive, Dehgan has big hopes for the organization and the prospect of combatting a precipitous loss in biodiversity around the world.

**Read full, original post:** [Hacking conservation: how a tech start-up aims to save biodiversity](#)