

BIOPAMA II Impact Report

From Knowledge to Action
for a Protected Planet



20¹⁷₂₅

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Message from the IUCN Director General



The journey of the Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management (BIOPAMA) Programme is, at its heart, a story of partnership and progress — a story of how local action, informed by data and supported by collaboration, can create tangible change for both people and nature.

It is with great pride that IUCN presents the BIOPAMA II Global Impact Report (2017–2025), a reflection of nearly a decade of collaboration, innovation, and commitment to conserving the natural wealth of Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific.

Since its inception, the BIOPAMA Programme has stood as one of the most significant investments in protected and conserved areas across these regions. Funded by the European Union and implemented by IUCN in close partnership with the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission, BIOPAMA has translated knowledge into action — building stronger institutions, empowering local communities, and strengthening the governance and management of protected and conserved areas.

Through BIOPAMA, we have witnessed what partnership makes possible: over **160 locally led grants**, more than **250 protected areas strengthened**, and thousands of practitioners trained and supported. The programme's Regional Observatories and Regional Reference Information Systems have transformed how data informs decision-making, while the Action Component has catalysed real change on the ground — from improving biodiversity monitoring in Senegal to supporting women-led livelihood initiatives in the Pacific.

The impact of the programme goes beyond numbers. It is seen in the rangers trained to better protect wildlife, in the communities empowered through sustainable livelihoods, and in the regional observatories that continue to guide evidence-based decisions. It is felt in the strengthened governance of protected areas, in the networks of practitioners who share solutions, and in the growing global recognition that conservation must be just, inclusive, and locally driven.

IUCN is proud to have coordinated BIOPAMA's implementation — working alongside regional partners, governments, NGOs, and communities. Together, we have demonstrated that when science, policy, and local knowledge converge, we can achieve lasting conservation outcomes.

As we look ahead, the achievements of BIOPAMA offer a strong foundation — reminding us that effective conservation is a continuous process — one that evolves through learning, collaboration, and shared commitment. They remind us that effective conservation is not only about protecting nature, but also about empowering people — ensuring that communities who depend on biodiversity are part of the solutions for a sustainable future.

On behalf of IUCN, I extend my deepest appreciation to the European Union and to the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States, our regional partners, grantees, and the countless individuals who made BIOPAMA's success possible. Your work has strengthened protected and conserved areas, advanced equitable governance, and built a more resilient planet.

Dr Grethel Aguilar
IUCN Director General



The BIOPAMA Programme

01





79 COUNTRIES

Involved



€43.9M

Invested by the EU



8.5 YEARS

Project was implemented



251 PROTECTED AREAS

Involved through the Action Component Projects/grants



160 GRANTS

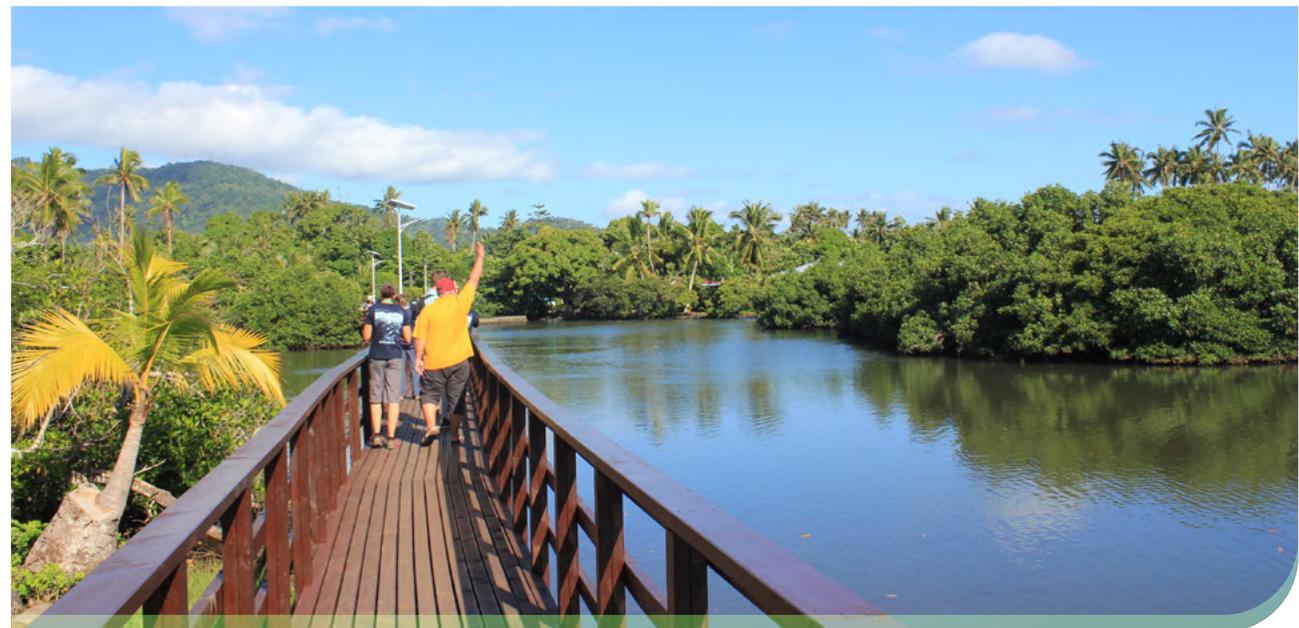
Locally administered

The BIOPAMA II programme was an initiative of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States, funded by the European Union through the European Development Fund. It was a follow-up to the BIOPAMA I programme, which ran from 2011 – 2016. Protected and conserved areas (PCAs) and the landscapes within which they are located have a central role to play in preserving the biodiversity and ecosystem services that most rural communities depend on for sustainable livelihoods.

The BIOPAMA partnership combined the protected areas and the biodiversity conservation expertise of IUCN with the scientific know-how

of the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (JRC). Within IUCN as a Union, BIOPAMA brought together the Secretariat and four regional offices in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific, the expertise of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), which includes the capacity development group, and many IUCN members.

Through the BIOPAMA programme, the efforts of protected area actors at local, regional, and national levels, were supported through the provision of tools, services, capacity development, and via finance mechanisms and actions on the ground, at site level.



Programme Approach

▣ Donor Partnerships

The BIOPAMA Programme was an initiative of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States financed by the European Union's 11th European Development Fund.

▣ Focused Priority Investment

Informed by local contexts and needs in each of the ACP regions, funding was directed towards strengthening protected area and natural resource management effectiveness and governance, and monitoring biodiversity and protected areas through capacity building initiatives, influencing decision-making and policy, and supporting locally driven activities and projects through a granting mechanism.

▣ Local Management

UCN regional offices in each of the regions led project implementation on the ground to help shepherd the investment and build local conservation leadership, capacity, and influence.

▣ Grant Mechanism

All actors, including non-governmental organisations, indigenous peoples and local communities, universities/academia, government agencies, and others, had the opportunity to apply for grants that were awarded on a competitive basis for projects that contribute to at least one of the three categories:

- Enhance the management and governance of priority protected areas by addressing existing limitations.
- Enforce the legal framework required to achieve effective biodiversity conservation.
- Support local communities' initiatives aiming to enhance the livelihoods of local people whilst effectively contributing to protected areas management.

▣ Enduring Conservation

Projects funded under BIOPAMA add to a portfolio of local, regional and global conservation initiatives of biodiversity, addressing critical priorities that are both human and nature centred. These projects will have and continue to have lasting impacts even after the funding has completed.

▣ Achieving Global Goals

The results achieved by the BIOPAMA regional offices, Regional Observatories, the Regional Reference Information System (RRIS), and grantees, supported country efforts to meet global targets related to the U.N Convention on Biological Diversity and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



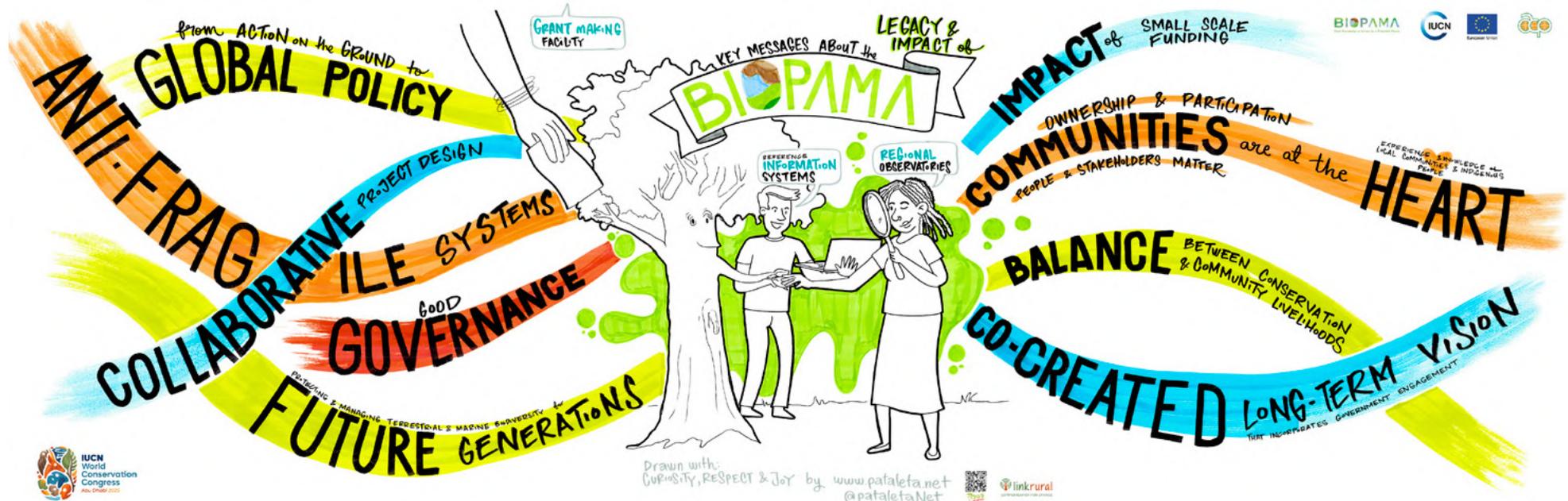
Vision

BIOPAMA II (2017 – 2025) aimed to support the long-term conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and natural resources in protected areas and nearby communities across Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific. It achieved this through two areas of focus:

1. Strengthening the institutional and technical capacity of all actors at site, regional, and national levels by improving access to and use of

biodiversity and protected area data. This approach helped to inform better policy decisions and management actions at all levels.

2. Directing resources via a grant mechanism to local actors to support biodiversity conservation efforts that were working towards improving the management, governance, and monitoring of biodiversity and natural resources in ACP countries.





Impact

The BIOPAMA II Programme focused on addressing ACP countries' priorities for improved management and governance of biodiversity and natural resources through the provision of a variety of tools, services, and funding to conservation actors.

Over the nine years, the programme had significant influence and impact in these six main areas:



EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF PROTECTED AND CONSERVED AREAS (PCAs)



CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS POLICY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORKS



ENHANCEMENT OF BENEFITS, LIVELIHOODS, AND ENGAGEMENT



CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT



INFORMED DECISION-MAKING



ADVANCING GOVERNANCE, EQUITY, AND HUMAN RIGHTS BASED APPROACHES IN AREA-BASED CONSERVATION

About this Report

This report documents the impact of the BIOPAMA II Programme at local, regional and global scales from its inception in February 2017 until its closure in November 2025.

Measuring impact is essential for understanding the effectiveness of the BIOPAMA programme and ensuring that conservation efforts lead to meaningful, long-term change. Measuring impact also helps to assess progress, identify challenges, and refine strategies to maximize positive outcomes both for current and future projects. The findings from this project can support informed decision-making, demonstrate accountability to civil society and donors, and help to secure future support for continued conservation efforts. The impact management process allows us to grow our impact continuously and to ensure efforts are placed in the places of highest need and in areas that will have lasting effects.





“ Protected areas are a key element of sustainable development, benefitting local and rural communities. They underpin economic activities, like tourism, and they guarantee basic services, like water provision. When managed in an efficient way, they improve local governance and promote the stability of large territories. This is why the continued success of the BIOPAMA programme is so crucial.”

Stefano Manservigi *Former Director General of the European Commission's Department for International Cooperation and Development*



Introduction

History of BIOPAMA I and II

02

African, Caribbean and Pacific countries host a huge share of the world's biodiversity. The Central African region represents the second largest tropical forest basin in the world, the Caribbean is home to an important part of the world's mangroves, with a large number of endemic species, and the Pacific is well-known for its coral reef ecosystems which play a key role in climate change mitigation and adaptation.



Aside from biodiversity, ecosystem and landscape conservation, protected and conserved areas (PCAs) play a much wider role through the environmental and ecosystem services they provide. Well managed protected and conserved areas can provide a host of solutions to current challenges, such as being a(n)

- ▣ **Cost-effective option for implementing climate change response strategies**
- ▣ **Effective management strategy to secure (capture and store) carbon, and**
- ▣ **Contributor to the improvement of ecosystems and livelihoods (e.g., protection of drinking water resources, protection of soil erosion and flood mitigation etc).**

ACP governments have employed a great effort in establishing PCAs, however, despite these protections, the loss of biodiversity has not slowed down. One of the key problems is that the existing human and institutional capacity in ACP countries is limited and suffers from uncoordinated approaches to effectively deal with the issues of conservation and sustainable use of natural resources and adequate conservation of biodiversity.

BIOPAMA I (2011-2016) focused on addressing these issues through capacity building by

assisting ACP countries in developing a framework for improving technical and institutional approaches through capacity building and regional coordination to manage biodiversity conservation, particularly in PCAs. The first phase of BIOPAMA prioritised:

1. The development and effective functioning of Regional Observatories (ROs) and Regional Reference Information Systems (RRIS) for Protected Areas and Biodiversity in each region to develop and implement capacity building programmes, coordinate support to national and regional organizations, facilitate networking, and provide indicators for decision-making of regional and national institutions in charge of resources management.
2. Support in increasing the understanding and recognition of policy and decision-makers on the role protected areas can play in sustainable development and in maintaining vital ecosystem services by providing the best available data on biodiversity and protected areas.
3. Enhancing the collaboration among international and regional actors.

Overarching Statistics/Impacts of the BIOPAMA I Programme



120+

Capacity Development Training Workshops



2000+

people involved in the BIOPAMA I Programme



**1 ACP WIDE
5 REGIONAL &
SUB-REGIONAL**

Regional Information Systems Built and in Place



5

Functional Regional Observatories for protected area biodiversity

BIOPAMA II (2017 – 2025) took the successes of BIOPAMA I and developed a second phase of the programme. BIOPAMA II aimed to contribute to improving the long term conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and natural resources in ACP regions in protected areas and surrounding communities. To do this, BIOPAMA II ensured that:

1. The Regional Reference Information Systems (RRIS) for biodiversity and protected areas management were maintained and enhanced at all levels.
2. The Regional Observatories (ROs) were used by stakeholders to improve planning and decision-making for biodiversity conservation and sustainable natural resource management and governance.
3. Planning and implementation of biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services and sustainable natural resource management activities were strengthened through targeted actions in priority conservation landscapes.

“*The Bahamas National Trust proudly celebrates the successful support extended to us by BIOPAMA, marking a significant milestone in advancing protected area management. This achievement not only strengthens The Bahamas’ protected area system but also demonstrates the power of regional cooperation, technical assistance, and capacity building to safeguard biodiversity and ecosystem services for generations to come.*”

Lakeshia Anderson, *Executive Director of the Bahamas National Trust*

Overarching Statistics/Impacts of the BIOPAMA II Programme



€18M

Invested by the EU towards grants



160 GRANTEES

30 are IUCN members



240+

Capacity Development Training Workshops



29,000+

People involved in the BIOPAMA II Programme



NATIONAL PROTECTED AREA NETWORKS

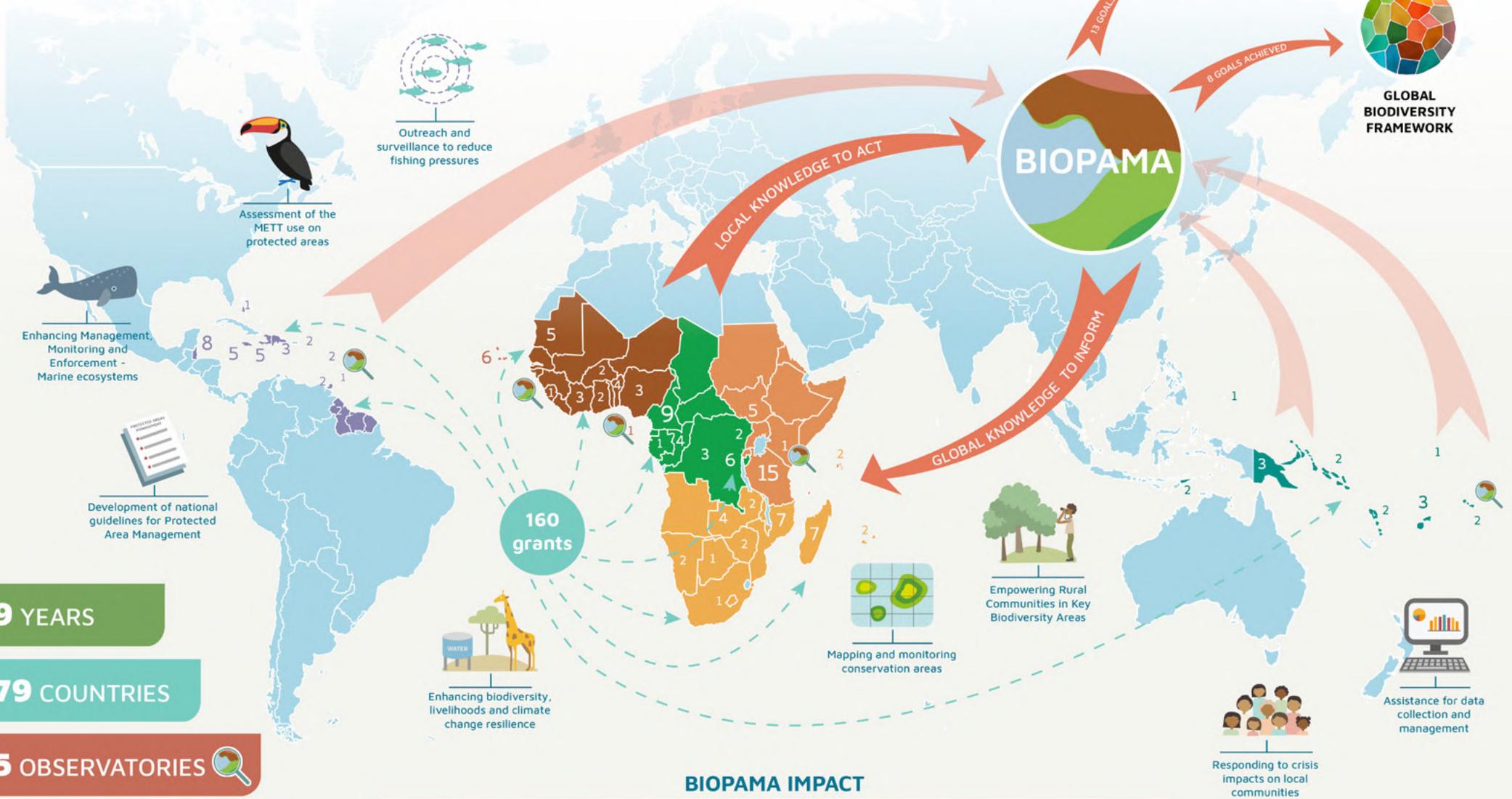
that had an associated BIOPAMA grant

- 10% Caribbean
- 14% Pacific
- 2% Western Africa
- 13.5% Central Africa
- 2% Eastern Africa
- 3% Southern Africa

BIOPAMA

From Knowledge to Action for a Protected Planet

The BIOPAMA programme (2017 – 2025) supported the efforts of protected area actors at local, regional, and national levels, through the provision of tools, services, capacity development, and via finance mechanisms and actions on the ground, at site level.



9 YEARS

79 COUNTRIES

5 OBSERVATORIES

251 PROTECTED AREAS

€43,9M INVESTED BY EU

BIOPAMA IMPACT

- Effective management of protected and conserved areas
- Capacity development
- Enhancement of benefits, livelihoods and engagement
- Contributions towards policy and legal frameworks
- Informed decision-making
- Advancing environmental and social management systems and safeguards for human rights in conservation

Donors



Partners





Contribution to Global Goals

03



Contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

In 2015, all 193 United Nations member states agreed upon 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), setting forth a transformative agenda to address the world's most urgent social, environmental, and economic challenges by 2030. These 17 goals (and their associated targets) outline concrete ambitions to create a sustainable, resilient, and inclusive future, and require collaborative efforts, bold actions, and innovative solutions

from governments, the private sector, civil society, and individuals. The BIOPAMA Programme, through the Regional Observatories, the Regional Reference Information Systems, and Grant Mechanism directly contributed to 13 of the 17 SDGs by conserving biodiversity, supporting livelihoods and economic stability, and improving ecosystem health.

THE GOAL		BIOPAMA CONTRIBUTION
 <p>1 No Poverty To end poverty in all its forms everywhere by 2030.</p>	<p>BIOPAMA supported local communities to develop alternative sustainable practices, businesses, and incomes, reducing their dependence on harmful resources and practices (total number of grants supporting alternative livelihood activities: 27)</p>	
 <p>2 Zero Hunger To end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.</p>	<p>BIOPAMA assisted local communities in transitioning to supporting sustainable food production (total number of grants working with or addressing sustainable food practices: 33)</p>	
 <p>3 Good Health and Well-Being To ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.</p>	<p>BIOPAMA assisted local communities in transitioning to supporting sustainable food production (total number of grants working with or addressing sustainable food practices: 33)</p>	
 <p>5 Gender Equality To achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.</p>	<p>BIOPAMA incorporated gender responsive systems throughout the entirety of its programme. Some locally led projects focused on addressing the gender gap and supporting women's empowerment (number of grants incorporated a gendered approach to their projects: 28)</p>	
 <p>8 Decent Work and Economic Growth To promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all.</p>	<p>BIOPAMA provided employment in the ACP regions through funding of the ROs and the development of a financial sustainability plan. Through its grant mechanism, it also supported the creation of jobs in all ACP regions (number of jobs created: 1,174)</p>	
 <p>9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure To build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation</p>	<p>BIOPAMA projects aimed to provide the means necessary for communities to adopt and construct more sustainable and ecofriendly practices and infrastructure (number of projects that focused on improving infrastructure such as monitoring and patrol equipment: 33)</p>	

THE GOAL		BIOPAMA CONTRIBUTION
 <p>10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES</p>	<p>Reduced Inequalities To achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.</p>	<p>BIOPAMA implemented ESMS in all projects receiving a grant, ensuring that all existing or potential inequalities in the landscape were addressed adequately by ensuring meaningful participation and consideration of marginalised and vulnerable groups (number of projects implementing ESMS standards: 160)</p>
 <p>12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION</p>	<p>Responsible Consumption and Production To achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.</p>	<p>BIOPAMA focused on providing adequate financial support to projects to help local communities reduce their dependence on forest and water resources (number of projects focused on improving PCA monitoring and management: 53)</p>
 <p>13 CLIMATE ACTION</p>	<p>Climate Action Taking urgent action to tackle climate change and its impacts.</p>	<p>All locally led BIOPAMA projects focused on enhancing the management effectiveness, governance, and/or monitoring of protected and conserved areas in ACP regions, thereby strengthening the resilience of ecosystems and communities to a changing climate (number of projects that focused on climate-specific activities: 21).</p>
 <p>14 LIFE BELOW WATER</p>	<p>Life Below Water To conserve and sustainably use the world's ocean, seas and marine resources.</p>	<p>BIOPAMA supports the preservation of marine and freshwater ecosystems and landscapes, as well as the continued capacity development, training, dialogues, and knowledge sharing on protecting and restoring these fragile ecosystems. (Percentage of projects that had a focus on marine or freshwater: 38%)</p>
 <p>15 LIFE ON LAND</p>	<p>Life on Land To sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss.</p>	<p>BIOPAMA supports the preservation of terrestrial ecosystems and landscapes, as well as the continued capacity development, training, dialogues, and knowledge on protecting and restoring these critical ecosystems. (Percentage of projects that had a terrestrial focus: 62%)</p>
 <p>16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS</p>	<p>Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.</p>	<p>BIOPAMA promotes and advances inclusive, equitable, participatory, and representative decision-making across the entirety of the programme, and it advocates for effective and accountable countries across all ACP regions (number of institutions accessing data provided through the RRIS: >2,000)</p>
 <p>17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS</p>	<p>Partnerships for the Goals To revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development</p>	<p>BIOPAMA focused on strengthening partnerships, promoting collaboration, and enhancing knowledge sharing across public, private, and civil society sectors (Percentage of protected areas in each region that have been assessed using PAME or PAGE tools: 22% West Africa, 38% Central Africa, 17% Eastern and Southern Africa, 27% Caribbean, 13% Pacific)</p>



Contributions to the CBD Targets Global Biodiversity Framework

The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF) was adopted in December 2022 during the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). This landmark framework aims to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and outlines an ambitious roadmap to realise the global vision of a world living in harmony with nature by 2050. The KM-GBF has four long-term goals for 2050 and 23 action-oriented targets to be reached by 2030.

- ▣ BIOPAMA has contributed to GBF targets 1 through 8 by reducing threats to biodiversity through support of 160 locally led grants, engaging in national and international dialogues, and increasing the capacity of ACP countries to monitor and report on biodiversity and protected area data through the use of the ROs and RRIS.
- ▣ BIOPAMA contributed to GBF targets 9 through 13 by meeting people's needs through sustainable use and benefit-sharing by supporting alternative livelihoods, developing financial sustainability plans, and collaboration and knowledge sharing of best practices protected area management, monitoring, and effectiveness across all ACP regions.
- ▣ BIOPAMA contributed to the GBF targets 14 to 23 by implementing and mainstreaming key tools and solutions for improved protected area management, monitoring, and effectiveness by directly training or supporting the training of over 4,000 people on tools such as METT, IMET, the Green List, SAGE, SAPA, GAPA, and RAPPAM.



Improved Management Effectiveness and Governance

- >400 Assessments on Management Effectiveness (PAME) and governance quality (PAGE)

Contributed to Target 3



Strengthened Knowledge and Data Systems

- Five regional observatories established in Africa, Caribbean and the Pacific
- Established the Regional Reference Information Systems (RRIS)
- Supported the Digital Observatory for Protected Areas (DOPA), holding more than 15,000 sets of data on protected areas

Contributed to Targets 1, 2, 21



On-the-ground Conservation Impact

- Financed 160 projects

Contributed to Targets 2, 3, 10



Monitoring for Policy Implementation

- Improved NBSAPs
- Supported countries in meeting CBD obligations
- Developed evidence-based conservation policies

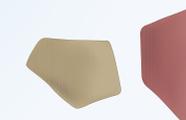
Contributed to Targets 14, 19, 20



Enhanced Capacity Building and Regional Cooperation

- Trained >4000 professionals in conservation management across 79 countries

Contributed to Targets 20, 21



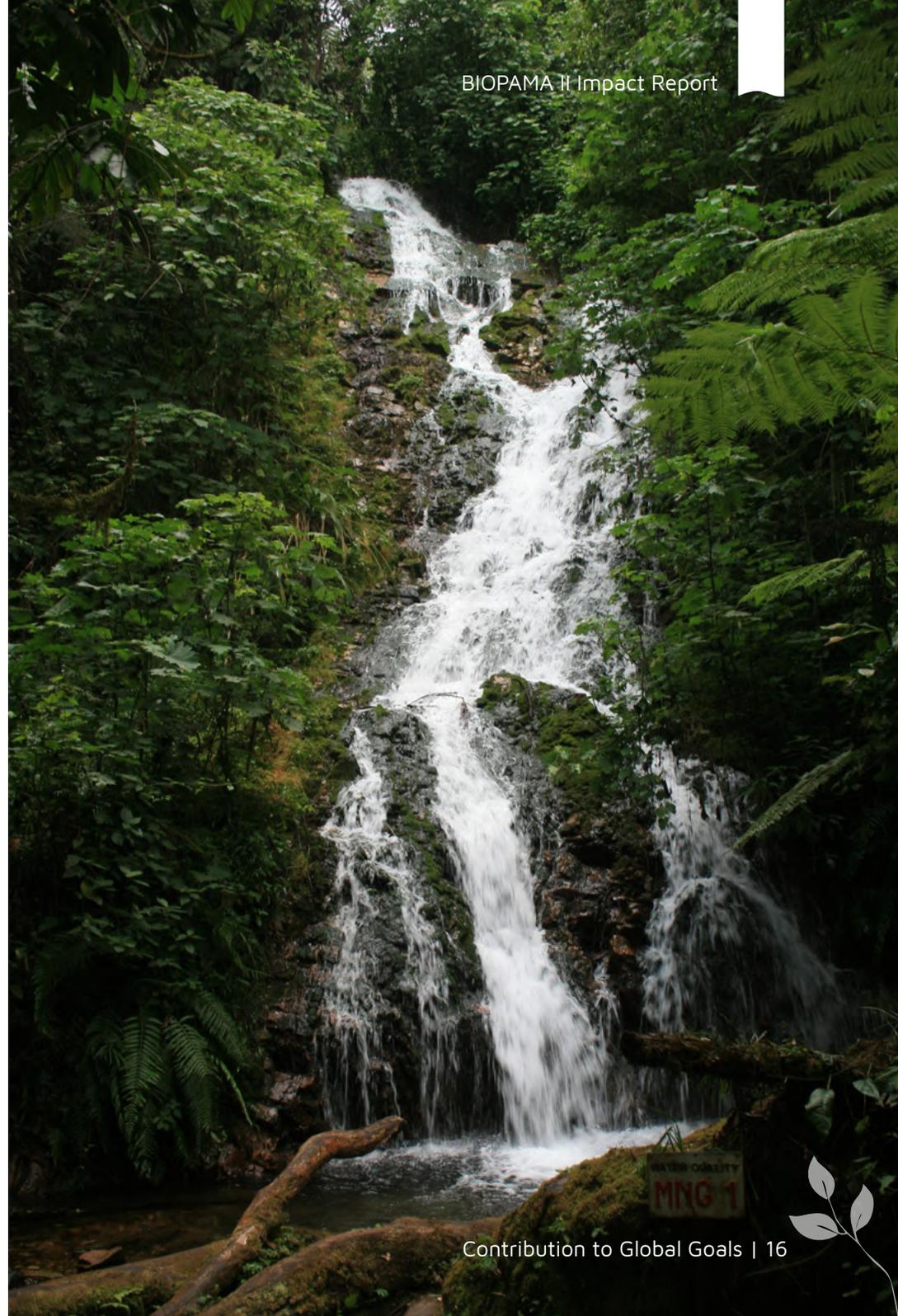
More than contributing directly to achieving these targets, the BIOPAMA programme has influenced policy-making that led to the adoption of the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework.

The programme has established five regional observatories — hosted by regional institutions working with the International Union for Conservation of Nature and the European Commission Joint Research Centre — that aggregate data, monitor protected and conserved areas (PCAs), track governance and management effectiveness, and support decision-making.

Through these observatories and associated reference information systems, BIOPAMA enables Parties to link “from knowledge to action” by translating data into policy guidance, making information freely available, and thereby supporting reporting and accountability under the Global Biodiversity Framework and other biodiversity-related goals.

In addition to information systems and observatories, BIOPAMA backs on-the-ground action and governance by offering a grant-making facility (its “Action Component”), which supports site-level projects, rapid-response grants (including for pandemic-related challenges), and training for thousands of professionals, NGOs, local communities and private-sector actors in protected area management and conservation governance.

These interventions directly support the CBD’s objectives by strengthening capacity for effective management of biodiversity, supporting the implementation of national biodiversity strategies and protected area programmes, and helping countries report progress toward relevant targets (such as conservation of ecosystems and sustainable use of biodiversity).





Regional Observatories and the Regional Reference Information Systems

04



BIOPAMA II aimed to strengthen the institutional and technical capacity of all actors at site, regional, and national levels by improving access to and use of biodiversity and protected area data. To achieve this, BIOPAMA established five **regional centres for biodiversity and protected areas management or “regional observatories”** that serve 79 countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific regions:

- ▣ Caribbean Protected Areas Gateway (CPAG), hosted by the University of the West Indies, under BIOPAMA, and by the Organisation of the Eastern Caribbean States as of 2025.
- ▣ Regional Observatory for Biodiversity and Protected Areas in West Africa (OBAPAO), hosted by the CSE Consortium under the WAEMU institutional lead,
- ▣ Central Africa Forest Observatory (OFAC) hosted by the Commission of Central Africa Forests (COMIFAC),
- ▣ Regional Resource Hub (RRH) hosted by the Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD), and
- ▣ Pacific Islands Protected Area Portal hosted by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).

The mission of these ROs included:

- ▣ Information and knowledge management via data collection, analysis, monitoring and reporting (hosted through the Regional Reference Information System (RRIS));
- ▣ Capacity development for staff and organizations to manage this information and provide policy guidance for better decision making on biodiversity conservation; and
- ▣ networking and communication.

These Regional Observatories helped to achieve:

- ▣ Improved decision-making at local and national levels by collating and managing high quality and verified biodiversity datasets and information.
- ▣ An open-data practice as a global resource by making these data and information available freely and by promoting and encouraging their use (via the RRIS).
- ▣ Effective tracking of progress against global, regional and national biodiversity goals such as the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, progress towards the Aichi Targets and the Sustainable Development Goals, and the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework.



66 out of 79

Countries who have updated their PA spatial data through the RRIS



4,000+

People trained on tools & resources provided through the RO



150

Institutions accessing data through the RO and RRIS



89

Countries using/ accessing data from the ROs

Strengthening Decision-Making Through Data: The Global Reference Information System

The Global Reference Information System (RIS), developed by the European Commission’s Joint Research Centre (EC-JRC) through the BIOPAMA Programme, empowers policy- and decision-makers across the African, Caribbean and Pacific regions with accessible, actionable information.

At its core, RIS transforms authoritative datasets into policy-ready insights through a suite of interoperable, map-based tools.

- ▣ The **Conservation Tracking Tool** connects policies, targets and indicators to geospatial evidence, displaying them as maps, graphs and metrics aligned with global standards.
- ▣ The **Dashboard** provides rapid summaries of protection-level statistics for policy briefings.
- ▣ The **PAME** and **PAGE** modules centralize data and tools for management-effectiveness and governance assessments, creating clear pathways to the **Global Database on Protected Area Management Effectiveness (GD-PAME)**.

- ▣ **The Geospatial Catalogue (GeoNode)** offers curated datasets—spanning species, land cover, human pressure and conservation status—each with transparent provenance and metadata for defensible decisions.
- ▣ **StoryMaps** turn complex analyses into compelling visual narratives, helping broader audiences engage with conservation evidence.

The system’s regional observatories serve as the connective tissue—curating regional priorities and ensuring that shared evidence is accessible through REST and geospatial APIs. This allows integration into national systems for NBSAPs, 30x30 planning, OECMs, and CBD/SDG reporting.

By the end of **2023**, the RIS had grown well beyond its initial specialist audience, reaching **over 23,000 users, 27,000 sessions and 50,000 pageviews**. The evidence base expanded in parallel: the RIS GeoNode surpassed **300 published layers**, representing an increasingly comprehensive foundation for biodiversity and conservation planning.

Since the first phases of BIOPAMA, EC-JRC has designed, built and maintained the RIS, ensuring dependable access to data, tools and APIs supporting biodiversity and forest management across the ACP regions.



> 300

Datasets on protected areas and biodiversity conservation available



> 300

People trained on data collection, analysis and the use of the CPAG



12

Countries with updated data in the WDPA

To sustain and expand this legacy, the RIS toolset and services have been transferred to the Africa Knowledge Platform (AKP) under the “Biodiversity and Forests” component of the African Regional Centres of Excellence (ArcX-RCoEs). This transition ensures that all core features—catalogues, dashboards, analytics and programmatic services—remain open and available to decision-makers, practitioners and researchers alike.

As data and tools continue migrating, users retain uninterrupted access to the information they rely on. In short: the platform remains open, the evidence base keeps growing, and the communities using RIS every day can continue tracking progress and setting new conservation targets without interruption.

Strengthening Data for Smarter Conservation Decisions

Both the RO and RRIS will have impacts to conservation and biodiversity beyond the BIOPAMA Programme. For example, in 2019, the Caribbean Protected Areas Gateway hosted 26 representatives from Government agencies and NGOs across 14 countries in a workshop to work together on enhancing how protected area data is validated, monitored, and used for decision-making. Through this workshop, participants were empowered to strengthen their national datasets and to contribute to the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA). As a result of this workshop, they formed the CREW (Credible, Reliable, Energetic, and Willing) network – a team of people dedicated to supporting the ongoing enhancement and use of data. This team is still in operation today, and continues to contribute to the advancement of the use of data.

“*The support from the BIOPAMA programme has enabled Ivory Coast to take decisive steps in the development and sustainable management of its protected areas. The inclusion of Comoé and Taï National Parks on the IUCN Green List, with the BIOPAMA support, is a testament to the excellence of our conservation and governance practices. For the Banco National Park, BIOPAMA has contributed to the development of ecotourism, offering urban populations a unique space for discovery and awareness-raising in the heart of Abidjan.*”

Conservator General Adama Tondossama, Director General of the Ivorian Office of Parks and Reserves (OIPR)



Grant Mechanism

05

The BIOPAMA Programme also provided crucial funding opportunities aimed at enhancing the management and governance of protected and conserved areas in ACP regions. These grants supported a wide range of initiatives, from improving biodiversity conservation to promoting the sustainable use of natural resources.



The programme offered various types of grants, including Small Technical Grants (STGs) and Small Technical Grants for Assessments (STGAs) that addressed specific, clearly identified needs, Medium Grants (MGs) for more comprehensive projects that tackled broader conservation priorities, and Rapid Response Grants (RRGs) that supported protected areas and communities in the face of emergencies, particularly at the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

One of the key features of BIOPAMA grants was their focus on local and regional impact. By enabling protected area agencies, NGOs, local communities, and other key stakeholders to implement targeted actions, these grants helped address urgent conservation challenges on the ground. Overall, BIOPAMA grants played a vital role in supporting effective conservation efforts and fostering sustainable development across the regions they served.

Small Technical Grants

With a funding amount of €100,000 and a one-year duration, these grants aimed to strengthen the technical capacities of targeted protected and conserved areas by acquiring equipment, establishing infrastructure, and providing training for key stakeholders.



32
STG grants

Pacific (6)
Caribbean (9)
Western and Central Africa (9)
Eastern and Southern Africa (8)



27
Countries with STG grants

Pacific (6)
Caribbean (6)
Western and Central Africa (9)
Eastern and Southern Africa (6)



€2,6M
Committed in STG grants

Pacific (€512K)
Caribbean (€693K)
Western and Central Africa (€852K)
Eastern and Southern Africa (€558K)



32
Projects focused on
primary objectives

Governance: 2
Management Effectiveness: 27
Livelihoods: 3



49
Protected Areas Addressed



**PRIORITY AREA
TARGETED**

- Marine protected and conserved areas: 8
- Marine Managed Areas: 5
- Terrestrial Protected and Conserved Areas: 16
- ICCA: 3
- Privately Protected Areas: 4
- Conservancy: 2
- Key Landscape for Conservation: 3
- KBAs: 6
- Transboundary Areas: 2
- Network of Protected Areas: 0

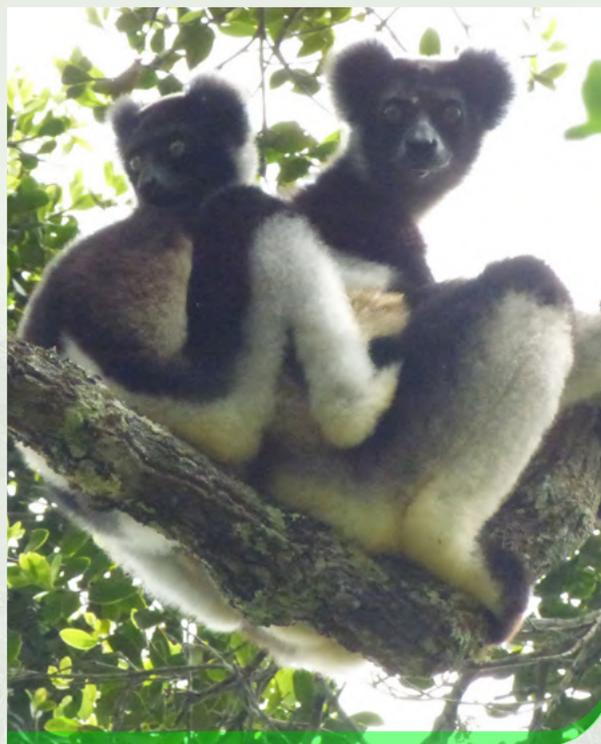
STG Case Study 1

Mangabe Reserve: A Home for People and Biodiversity

Implemented between December 2020 and November 2021, this €69,701.94 Small Technical Grant strengthened both biodiversity conservation and community well-being in Madagascar's Mangabe Reserve. Guided by priorities identified through the Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool (IMET) in 2020, the project focused on updating the reserve's management plan, improving infrastructure and facilities, and enhancing staff capacity. As a result, the reserve established a five-year management plan agreed upon by all stakeholders, reduced transportation costs, improved communication with surrounding communities through local information centres, and revitalized ecotourism activities in the area.

The project also invested in local entrepreneurship and sustainable livelihoods. Teams from Madagasikara Voakajy received training from the Centre d'Excellence en Entrepreneuriat (CEENTRE) on business development, marketing, and financial management, leading to the creation of a new ecotourism business plan for Mangabe. These combined efforts not only strengthened the reserve's governance and management effectiveness but also created long-term opportunities for local communities. By

linking economic resilience with conservation, the initiative laid a strong foundation for achieving Target 3 of the Global Biodiversity Framework through inclusive, community-driven stewardship of natural resources.



Project Budget

€69,701.94 Small Technical Grant

Location

Eastern Africa - Madagascar

Duration

01.12.2020 - 30.11.2021

Type of Priority Area Targeted

Terrestrial Protected Area

Primary Objective

Governance - Management Effectiveness
- Livelihoods

Target Groups

Local communities - Youth - Women

Main Activity Focus

Management Plan - Capacity building - Sustainable development



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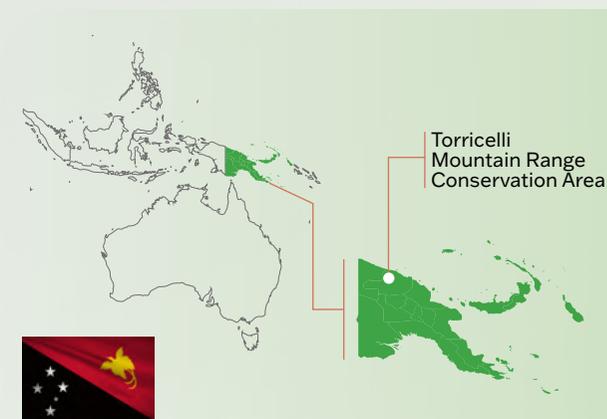
STG Case Study 2

Mapping and Monitoring the Toricelli Mountain Range Conservation Area (TMRCA)

Implemented between December 2020 and December 2021, this €99,711 Small Technical Grant—led by the Tenkile Conservation Alliance (TCA) in Papua New Guinea—strengthened conservation management through innovative technology and community participation. The project used Geographic Information System (GIS) tools and mobile applications such as Lukim Gather, SMART, and Cybertracker to map the proposed Toricelli Mountain Range Conservation Area (TMRCA) and monitor its biodiversity. These tools helped clarify land boundaries, guide sustainable land-use planning, and improve local enforcement against illegal logging and hunting activities.

The project invested heavily in local capacity building, training over 130 participants—including 16 project officers, 16 research officers, and 100 rangers—in conservation data collection and mapping technologies. Three staff members also completed advanced GIS training at the University of Papua New Guinea, producing printed maps for community and government use. With strong participation from women and indigenous groups, the initiative deepened local ownership of conservation decisions and enhanced forest

governance. By combining modern technology with inclusive engagement, the project created a replicable model for community-led conservation across the Pacific.



Project Budget

€99,711 Small Technical Grant

Location

Pacific - Papua New Guinea

Duration

01.12.2020 – 30.12.2021

Type of Priority Area Targeted

Terrestrial Protected Area, Key Biodiversity Area

Primary Objective

Management Effectiveness

Target Groups

Local communities - Indigenous people

Main Activity Focus

Monitoring/Patrol equipment

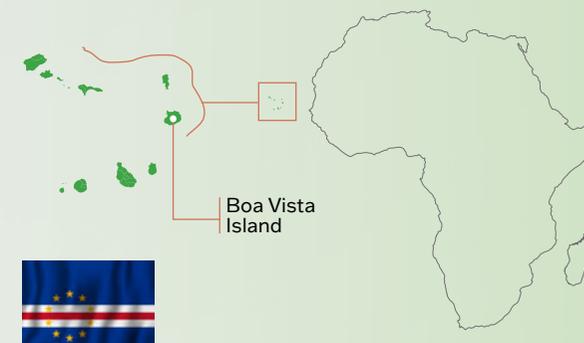
STG Case Study 3

Protecting Endangered Loggerhead Sea Turtles with Technology in Cape Verde

Implemented between November 2020 and October 2021, this €81,199 Small Technical Grant—led by Fundação Tartaruga Cabo Verde in partnership with the Turtle Foundation Germany and the Cape Verdean Ministry for Agriculture and Environment—enhanced protection of endangered loggerhead sea turtles (*Caretta caretta*) on Boa Vista Island. The project focused on strengthening the Sea Turtle Surveillance Task Force (STSTF) through the introduction of cutting-edge monitoring technologies, including conservation dogs and night-vision drones. These innovations significantly boosted patrol efficiency, especially during the nocturnal nesting season when poaching threats are most acute.

To ensure operational success, the project equipped patrol teams with specialized vehicles and thermal imaging binoculars, improving mobility and visibility across the island's rugged terrain and vast nesting beaches. Targeted training sessions built local capacity in equipment handling, drone operation, and safe fieldwork practices. Together, these measures strengthened surveillance across 15 km² of critical nesting habitat within five protected areas, including Curral Velho Ramsar Site and Parque Natural

do Norte. The project not only curbed poaching but also set a precedent for integrating modern technology into community-based conservation efforts in West Africa.



Project Budget

€81,199 Small Technical Grant

Location

Western Africa - Cape Verde

Duration

01.11.2020 - 30.10.2021

Type of Priority Area Targeted

Marine protected area - Terrestrial Protected Area

Primary Objective

Management Effectiveness

Target Groups

Local communities - National or local PA agency

Main Activity Focus

Illegal activities - threatened Species - Management/Patrol equipment



InfoFiche

Small Technical Grants for Assessments

These grants, amounting to €20,000 with a duration of 5 months, aimed to support the assessment of management and/or governance of protected and conserved areas, using evaluation tools.



38
STGA grants

Pacific (2)
Caribbean (6)
Western and Central Africa (16)
Eastern and Southern Africa (14)



26
Countries with STGA grants

Pacific (2)
Caribbean (5)
Western and Central Africa (11)
Eastern and Southern Africa (9)



€702K
Committed in STGA grants

Pacific (€40K)
Caribbean (€111K)
Western and Central Africa (€267.5K)
Eastern and Southern Africa (€283K)



38
Projects focused on
primary objectives

Governance: 6
Management Effectiveness: 32
Livelihoods: 0



184
Protected Areas Addressed



7
Tools used for Assessments

- METT (13 projects)
- SAPA (3 projects)
- IMET (16 projects)
- RAPPAM (1 project)
- IUCN Green List (1 project)
- EoH (0 projects)
- SAGE (7 projects)
- GAPA (1 project)



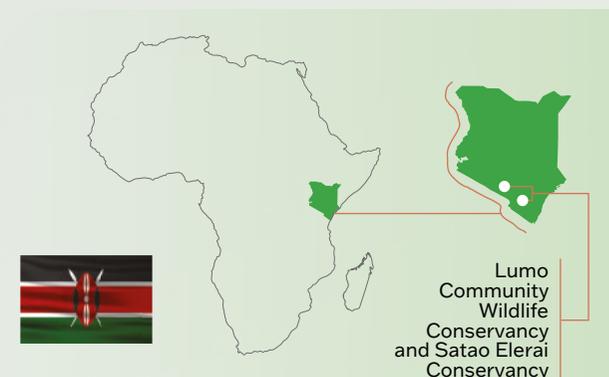
STGA Case Study 1

Assessing Governance and Equity in Kenya's Lumo and Satao Elerai Conservancies

Implemented between July and November 2021, this €19,625.55 Small Technical Grant—led by the Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association (KWCA) in partnership with the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)—focused on strengthening governance and equity in the Lumo Community Wildlife Conservancy and Satao Elerai Conservancy in Kenya. Using the Site-level Assessment of Governance and Equity (SAGE) tool, the project identified key management challenges and developed targeted action plans to enhance decision-making, transparency, and inclusivity within the conservancies.

Through a participatory process that included government representatives, NGOs, Kenya Wildlife Service staff, and community members—particularly women and youth—the project promoted inclusive dialogue and joint problem-solving. The resulting assessments highlighted areas such as resource distribution, representation, and conflict management,

enabling stakeholders to implement governance reforms and improve equity. By building stronger, more accountable local institutions, the initiative helped ensure that both conservancies can deliver lasting conservation and community development benefits across Eastern Africa.



Project Budget

€19,625.55 Small Technical Grant

Location

Eastern Africa - KENYA

Duration

01.07.2021 – 30.11.2021

Type of Priority Area Targeted

Indigenous and Community Conserved Area (ICCA) - Privately Protected Area - Key Landscape for Conservation

Primary Objective

Governance - Management Effectiveness
- Livelihoods

Target Groups

Local communities - Youth - Women

Main Activity Focus

Livelihoods/Alternative economic activities -
Capacity building - Awareness/education



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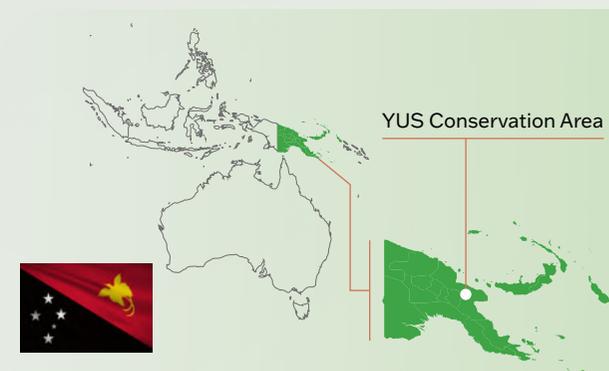
STGA Case Study 2

Evaluating the Management and Social Impact of the YUS Conservation Area, Papua New Guinea

With support from a \$19,999 Small Technical Grant, the Tree Kangaroo Conservation Program (TKCP) conducted a comprehensive assessment of the YUS Conservation Area in Papua New Guinea between June and November 2021. Using the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) and the Social Assessment for Protected and Conserved Areas (SAPA), the project provided an updated, independent evaluation of both conservation performance and community benefits. The findings informed the 2021–2025 management plan, offering clear direction for future priorities and resources to improve biodiversity outcomes and local livelihoods.

Established in 2009 as the country's first nationally recognized conservation area, YUS spans 760 km² of rainforest on the Huon Peninsula—home to the endangered Matschie's tree-kangaroo. Managed collaboratively by TKCP, local communities, and the PNG government, the area represents a leading model of

community-driven conservation. The project's insights helped refine land-use planning at the ward level, ensuring that conservation goals align with community aspirations. By integrating social and ecological data into decision-making, the YUS Conservation Area continues to strengthen its role as a cornerstone for sustainable, community-led conservation in the Pacific.



Project Budget

€99,711 Small Technical Grant

Location

Pacific - Papua New Guinea

Duration

01.06.2020 – 30.11.2021

Type of Priority Area Targeted

Marine Protected Area - Terrestrial Protected Area - Indigenous and Community Conserved Area (ICCA)

Primary Objective

Governance - Management Effectiveness - Social Impact

Target Groups

Local communities - Indigenous Peoples - Subnational Government

Main Activity Focus

Management - Landscape Approach - Protected Area Management Effectiveness (PAME)



InfoFiche

Medium Grants

These grants, ranging from €200,000 to €400,000, had an implementation period between 2 and 3 years. The objective of these grants was to respond to management priorities identified through diagnostic tools such as the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) and others.



49
MG grants

Pacific (5)
Caribbean (4)
Western and Central Africa (20)
Eastern and Southern Africa (20)



27
Countries with MG grants

Pacific (5)
Caribbean (3)
Western and Central Africa (9)
Eastern and Southern Africa (10)



€12.7M
Invested in MG grants

Pacific (€1.85M)
Caribbean (€1.54M)
Western and Central Africa (€4.45M)
Eastern and Southern Africa (€4.84M)



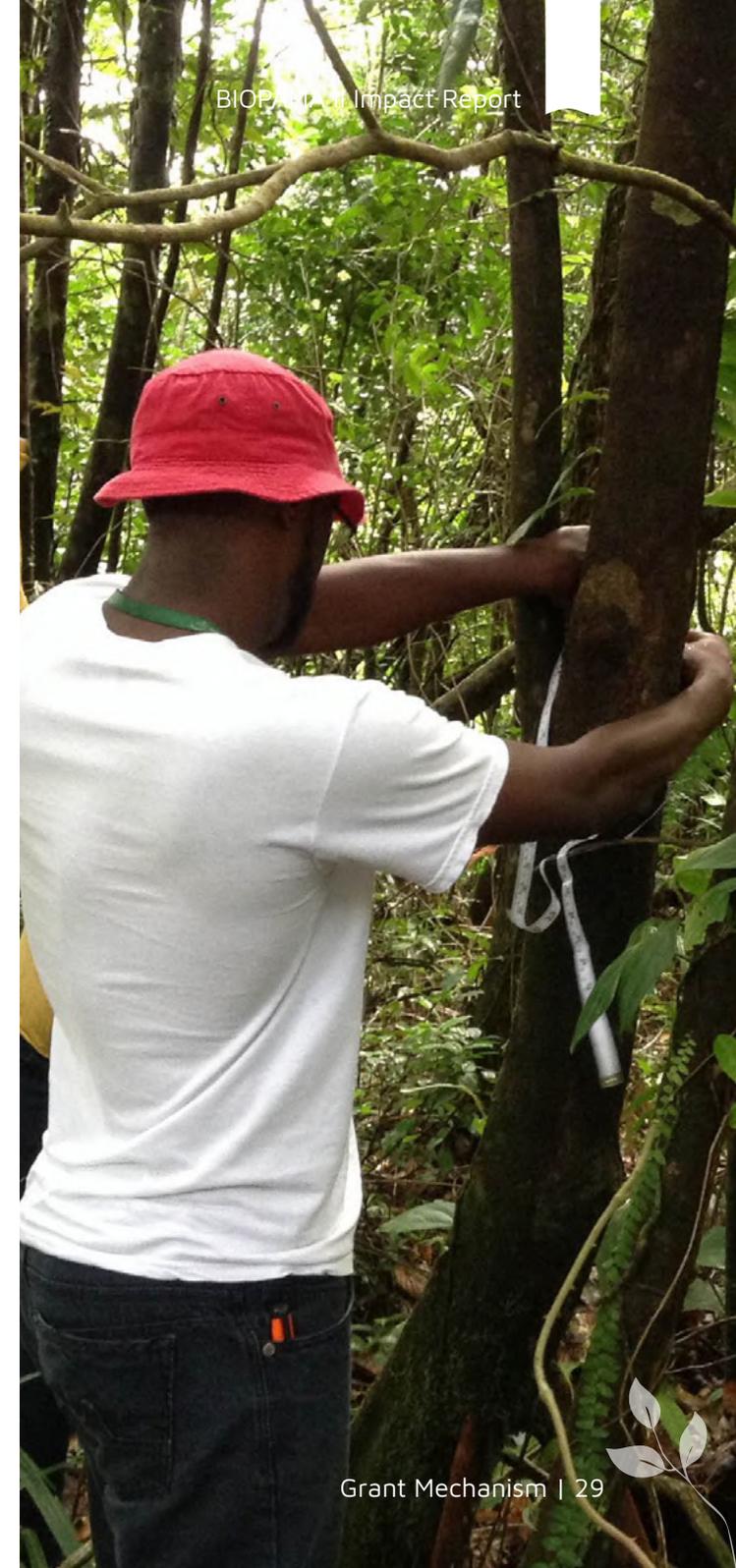
49
Projects focused on
primary objectives

Governance: 12
Management Effectiveness: 26
Livelihoods: 11



**PRIORITY
AREA
TARGETED**

- Marine protected and conserved areas (14 projects)
- Marine Managed Areas (7 projects)
- Terrestrial Protected and Conserved Areas (38 projects)
- ICCA (10 projects)
- Privately Protected Areas (2 projects)
- Conservancy (7 projects)
- Key Landscape for Conservation (11 projects)
- KBAs (12 projects)
- Transboundary Areas (9 projects)
- Network of Protected Areas (0 projects)



MG Case Study 1

Strengthening Wildlife Monitoring and Management in Niokolo-Koba National Park, Senegal

Through a €495,240.94 Medium Grant, Panthera, in partnership with Senegal’s Directorate of National Parks (DPN), implemented a four-year initiative (2020–2024) to transform biodiversity monitoring and strengthen conservation management in Niokolo-Koba National Park—a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of West Africa’s most critical ecosystems. The project developed a standardized, replicable system for surveying key wildlife species and habitats, combining modern technology with capacity building for park rangers and staff. By improving data collection, infrastructure, and patrolling capacity, the initiative empowered the DPN to make more informed and effective management decisions for the park’s long-term protection.

The results have been remarkable. Over 580 remote camera traps were deployed, generating extensive data on large and medium-sized mammals, including the critically endangered West African lion, leopards, and African wild dogs. These monitoring efforts contributed to a doubling of the park’s lion population—now estimated at 30–40 individuals—and even led to the rediscovery of the elusive giant

pangolin, unseen in Senegal for nearly 25 years. Enhanced monitoring, improved governance, and strengthened anti-poaching measures have collectively elevated Niokolo-Koba’s conservation status, culminating in its removal from the UNESCO List of World Heritage in Danger in July 2024—a milestone achievement for West African conservation.



Project Budget

Medium Grant | 495,240.94€

Location

Senegal; Western Africa

Duration

01.09.2020 – 30.11.2024

Type of Priority Area Targeted

Terrestrial Protected Area - Key Biodiversity Area - IUCN Green List

Primary Objective

Governance - Management Effectiveness - IUCN Green List

Target Groups

National Protected Areas Agency

Main Activity Focus

Threatened Species - Survey/Data - Knowledge Management



MG Case Study 2

Strengthening Management and Community Livelihoods in Timor-Leste's Mount Fatumasin Protected Area

To address critical management gaps in one of Timor-Leste's most important biodiversity areas, Conservation International, in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, and Forestry (MAPPF), implemented a project focused on improving the protection and sustainable management of the Mount Fatumasin Protected Area in Liquiça municipality. With support from a \$272,376.76 Medium Grant, the initiative—running from July 2022 to December 2024—recruited and trained five full-time protected area managers to implement the site's management plan. This marked a key step toward strengthening institutional capacity and ensuring consistent, informed oversight of the protected area, while fostering greater awareness and community involvement in conservation.

The project combined capacity building with inclusive community engagement to create long-term benefits for both nature and people. More than 20 communication and training campaigns were held, with around half of participants being women and youth, focusing on sustainable resource use, agriculture, aquaculture, and

eco-friendly enterprises. Five community groups received support to develop viable eco-tourism ventures, creating new livelihood opportunities while reducing pressure on natural resources. A comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan ensured transparent tracking of results and strengthened collaboration among partners. Together, these efforts have set a strong foundation for improved management effectiveness and more resilient, conservation-oriented communities around Mount Fatumasin.



Project Budget

\$272,376.76 Medium Grant

Location

Pacific - Timor-Leste

Duration

01.07.2022 – 30.12.2024

Type of Priority Area Targeted

Key Biodiversity Area - Terrestrial Protected Area

Primary Objective

Governance - Livelihoods

Target Groups

Local communities - Indigenous Peoples
- Women

Main Activity Focus

Management Plan - Participation - Sustainable Financing

Rapid Response Grants

Rapid Response Grants were designed to address risks and challenges posed by the COVID-19 crisis on protected and conserved area conservation. Tourism during COVID-19 was severely impacted due to global travel restrictions, lockdown measures, and health concerns resulting in many of the region's protected and conserved areas losing much needed revenue to sustain operations.



40

RRG grants

Pacific (4)
 Caribbean (12)
 Western and Central Africa (6)
 Eastern and Southern Africa (18)



24

Countries with RRG grants

Pacific (4)
 Caribbean (7)
 Western and Central Africa (5)
 Eastern and Southern Africa (8)



€1.93M

Committed in RRG grants

Pacific (€169.5K)
 Caribbean (€591.8K)
 Western and Central Africa (€288K)
 Eastern and Southern Africa (€882.1K)



40

Projects focused on primary objectives

Governance: 5
 Management Effectiveness: 22
 Livelihoods: 13



>43

Protected Areas Addressed



PRIORITY AREA TARGETED

- Marine protected and conserved areas (13 projects)
- Marine Managed Areas (2 projects)
- Terrestrial Protected and Conserved Areas (20 projects)
- ICCA (6 projects)
- Privately Protected Areas (4 projects)
- Conservancy (3 projects)
- Key Landscape for Conservation (6 projects)
- KBAs (7 projects)
- Transboundary Areas (0 projects)
- Network of Protected Areas (0 projects)

RRG Case Study 1

Restoring Forests and Livelihoods in Haiti's Forêt-des-Pins Reserve

The COVID-19 pandemic hit Haiti's mountain communities hard, driving returning residents to clear land in the Forêt-des-Pins buffer zone for survival farming — accelerating deforestation and threatening the habitat of the critically endangered Black-capped Petrel. With BIOPAMA's Rapid Response Grant, the organization Action pour la *Sauvegarde de l'Écologie en Haïti (ACSEH)*, in partnership with Environmental Protection in the Caribbean (EPIC) and Plant With Purpose, launched a community-based project to restore the forest and build resilience. Local farmers were trained in sustainable agriculture techniques, community tree nurseries were established, and environmental education programs were introduced in schools to inspire the next generation of conservation stewards.

The project not only helped reduce deforestation and regenerate degraded land but also strengthened community livelihoods through access to financial services and sustainable farming opportunities. By aligning ecological restoration with socio-economic empowerment, this initiative turned a moment of crisis into one of renewal — protecting biodiversity while helping local families thrive in harmony with the forest they depend on.



Project Budget

€45,856 Rapid Response Grant

Location

Caribbean - Haiti

Duration

30.11.2021 – 30.01.2023

Type of Priority Area Targeted

Key Biodiversity Area - Terrestrial Protected Area

Primary Objective

Livelihoods

Target Groups

Local communities - Youth - Farmers

Main Activity Focus

Participation - Livelihoods/Alternative economic activities - Ecosystem/habitat restoration - Threatened Species



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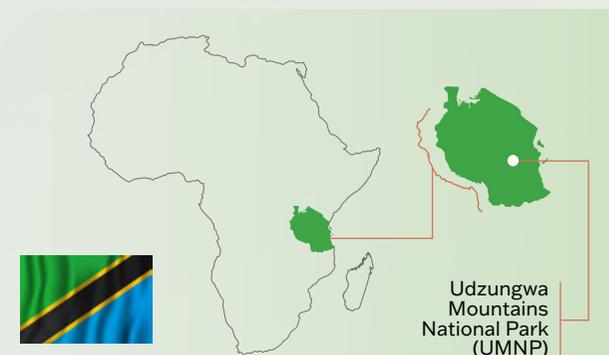
RRG Case Study 2

Community-Centred Conservation (3Cs) in Tanzania

When the COVID-19 pandemic brought tourism around Tanzania's Udzungwa Mountains National Park (UMNP) to a standstill, local communities faced mounting economic hardship. With livelihoods disrupted, pressure on natural resources increased as some turned to charcoal production and poaching for survival. Through BIOPAMA's support, the Eastern Arc Mountains Conservation Endowment Fund (EAMCEF) launched the Community-Centred Conservation (3Cs) project to turn this crisis into an opportunity for recovery. The project identified 500 vulnerable women and youth, organized them into community teams, and engaged them in vital conservation work — from maintaining park boundaries and firebreaks to repairing nature trails — while providing environmental education linking conservation to community well-being.

The results were immediate and tangible. Improved infrastructure, including upgraded trails and a new local bridge, reopened access for visitors and supported local tourism recovery. Meanwhile, participating households gained new income streams through conservation-related work, reducing pressure on park resources and curbing illegal activities. Beyond the practical

outcomes, the 3Cs project fostered a renewed sense of stewardship and pride among the communities living alongside UMNP — proving that empowering people is at the heart of effective and lasting conservation.



Project Budget

€49,904.80 Rapid Response Grant

Location

Eastern Africa - Tanzania

Duration

01.07.2021 – 30.11.2021

Type of Priority Area Targeted

Terrestrial Protected Area

Primary Objective

Livelihoods

Target Groups

Local communities - Youth - Indigenous people

Main Activity Focus

Livelihoods/alternative economic activities - Protected Area Management Effectiveness (PAME) - Awareness/education



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BIOPAMA Impact

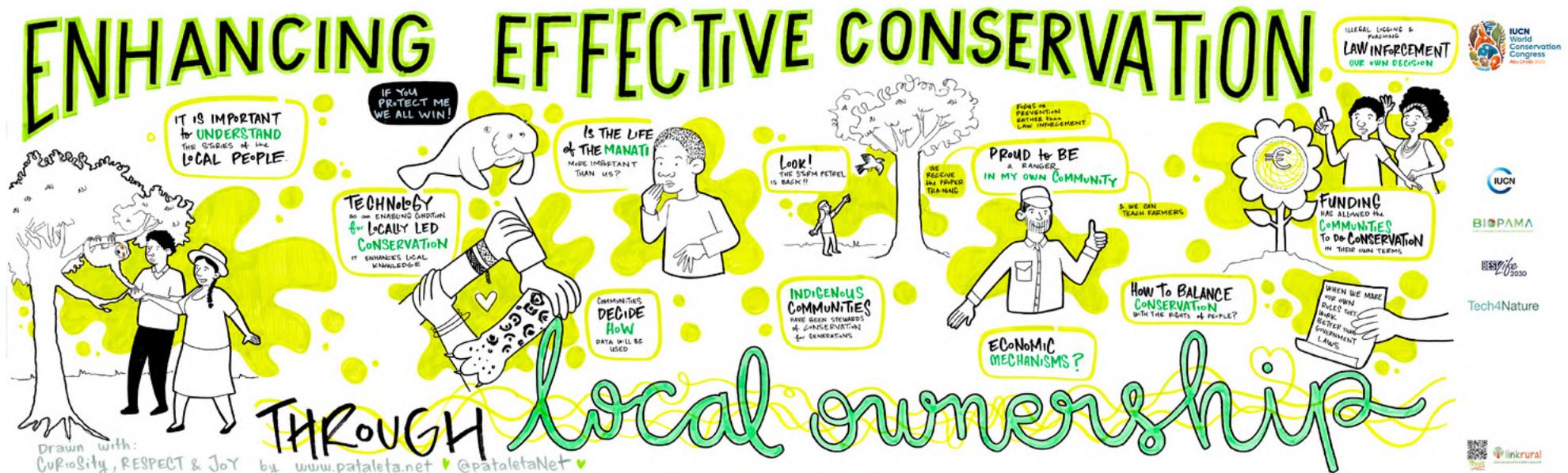
06



Impact 1 Effective Management of PCAs (including WDPA updates; Green Listing through AC grants)

BIOPAMA has contributed significantly to improving the effective management of PCAs across the ACP regions. For example, through its grant-making, over 160 projects have been funded to support the development and implementation of management plans, strengthen patrolling systems, clarify boundary demarcations, and conduct site assessments using tools like IMET. These efforts have helped site

managers address critical conservation challenges, monitor biodiversity outcomes, and work toward meeting international standards such as the IUCN Green List of PAs. BIOPAMA's investments have contributed to measurable improvements in site-level management performance and supported ecological outcomes through strengthened planning, enforcement and monitoring capacities.



Case Study 1 - Community-led Conservation in Action

Strengthening Governance in Burunge Wildlife Management Area, Tanzania

Level of impact

Local

In northern Tanzania, near the iconic Tarangire and Lake Manayara National Parks, ten villages came together to manage a shared landscape – The Burunge Wildlife Management Area (WMA). Spanning 23,000 hectares, this community-owned protected area is not only a vital migratory corridor for wildlife but also a key source of income for around 35,000 residents, who share 30% of the area's tourism revenue.

Despite its potential, the Burunge WMA faced challenges in maintaining both financial sustainability and equitable governance. Decision-making structures were uneven, transparency was limited, and coordination between communities, government, and tourism partners needed strengthening.

To address these issues, the Honeyguide Foundation launched the project "[Improving local community livelihoods and habitat through equitable governance and effective management of Burunge Wildlife Management Area](#)" (June 2023 – December 2024), supported through a medium grant of € 135,880.37. The initiative built on a Site-level Assessment of Governance and Equity (SAGE) conducted in 2021, which had highlighted the need for reforms.

The project focused on four key areas:

1. Governance and financial reforms through clear priorities, transparent oversight, and leadership capacity building.
2. Stakeholder inclusivity to foster trust and collaboration between communities, local authorities, and investors.
3. Human-wildlife conflict mitigation, using community-led deterrents, training, and real-time reporting to reduce losses.
4. Institutional capacity strengthening to ensure long-term operational efficiency and accountability.

By the end of the project, Burunge WMA showed measurable improvements in governance effectiveness, financial management, and stakeholder engagement. Decision-making became more participatory, local leaders gained confidence in managing funds and operations, and relationships among member villages strengthened.

However, the project also underscored that lasting success depends on institutionalizing reforms — embedding good governance practices, ensuring steady resource allocation, and sustaining community participation.

Burunge's experience demonstrates how investing in transparent, community-led governance can transform local conservation areas into resilient, self-sustaining models — protecting biodiversity while improving livelihoods.



Case Study 2 - A Global Benchmark for Conservation Management

The Development of the IMET Tool

Level of impact

Global

Effective conservation depends on understanding how well protected areas are managed — and improving management and effectiveness of these areas over time. Yet, until recently, many countries lacked a consistent, data-driven way to assess and compare management effectiveness.

To fill this gap, the Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool (IMET) was developed under the BIOPAMA Programme as its flagship innovation. Building on the IUCN-WCPA framework for Protected Area Management Effectiveness (PAME), IMET offers a structured, participatory, and evidence-based approach to evaluate how protected and conserved areas are performing, and to guide adaptive management decisions.

The tool's development was rooted in practice. It originated from pilot assessments in the Democratic Republic of Congo, drawing lessons from regional initiatives such as EU ECOFAC and RAPAC, and was co-designed by the European Union, IUCN, and national partners. This collaborative process ensured that IMET combined scientific rigor with real-world usability, making it adaptable across diverse ecological, institutional, and cultural contexts.

Since its introduction, IMET has been widely adopted across Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific, with particular momentum in Western and Central Africa. Through BIOPAMA, over 100 practitioners and site managers have been trained to apply IMET, leading to assessments in more than 30 countries.

These assessments have had tangible impact. In West and Central Africa, for example, IMET findings have informed management plans, supported IUCN Green List nominations, and strengthened collaboration among government

agencies, NGOs, and local communities. The approach is now being replicated beyond the ACP regions — with uptake in East and Southern Africa, Southeast Asia, and South America — demonstrating its scalability and global relevance.

By turning performance assessment into a practical, data-informed process, IMET has redefined how conservation effectiveness is measured worldwide, empowering managers and policymakers to make better, evidence-based decisions for nature and people.



Case Study 3 - From Local Coaches to a Continental Movement

How RACEGAP is Transforming Protected Area Management

Level of impact

Regional

Across Africa, protected area managers face a common challenge – ensuring that parks and reserves are effectively governed, sustainably financed, and ecologically resilient. To meet this challenge, local expertise and peer-to-peer learning are essential.

Recognising this need, the African Network of Coaches for Protected Area Management Effectiveness (RACEGAP) was established in Côte d'Ivoire in 2024 with the support of the BIOPAMA Programme. The network was created to expand the use of the Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool (IMET), strengthen professional capacity, and promote evidence-based decision-making across African protected and conserved areas.

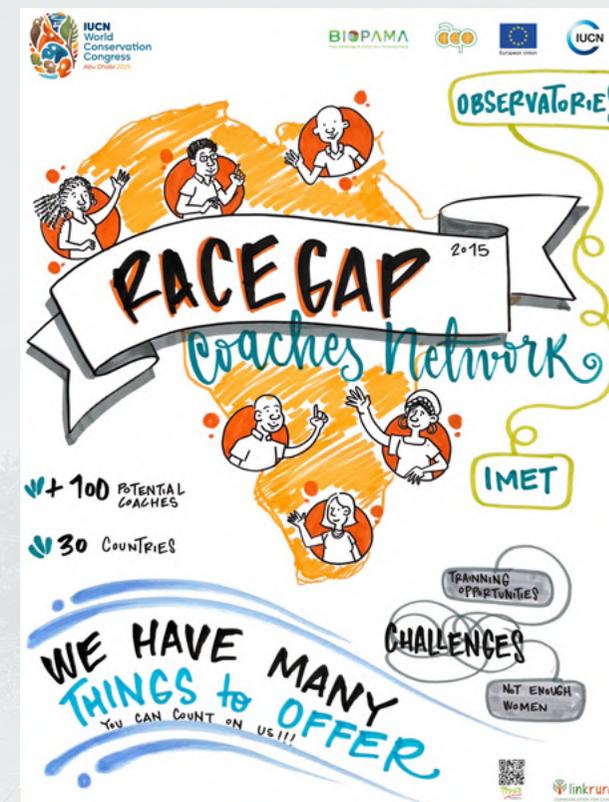
RACEGAP connects a growing community of IMET coaches and practitioners across the continent, offering members access to technical guidance, training resources, and peer support. Through a certified coaching framework and harmonized methodologies, the network ensures that IMET assessments are applied consistently, transparently, and at scale – improving the performance and accountability of protected area management.

By 2025, RACEGAP had identified 118 IMET coaches across Africa, with 54 formally registered members, demonstrating both the network's reach and its potential for further expansion.

A cornerstone of RACEGAP's approach is its Training of Trainers (ToT) model, which equips national coaches with IMET technical skills so they can train site managers and staff locally. This low-cost, scalable capacity-building model has already delivered tangible results.

In Madagascar, for example, the 2023 ToT trained over 90 protected area staff as national IMET coaches, leading to 43 new IMET assessments and the full integration of the methodology across all participating sites. The same approach has since been applied in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Lebanon, and Bolivia, collectively training hundreds of managers and technical staff.

Through its growing network, RACEGAP is creating a continental community of practice – one that empowers African conservation professionals to learn from each other, share solutions, and drive measurable improvements in how protected areas are managed.



Impact 2 Capacity Development

Capacity development has been a core component of the BIOPAMA approach, enabling PA practitioners and institutions across the ACP regions to apply improved conservation practices. The programme delivered a high volume of targeted trainings to a wide range of stakeholders, including PA staff, government agencies, and civil society organizations – on topics such as project technical and financial management, GIS, the application of key tools, such as IMET, SAGE,

SMART etc. These efforts have strengthened the ability of stakeholders to manage funding effectively, assess and improve the management and performance of their PAs, and make more informed decisions. As a result, through this programme, many grantees and partner institutions have increased their technical autonomy, integrated new tools into national systems, and applied improved practices into their ongoing conservation work.



Case Study 1

BIOPAMA Ripple Effect in the Pacific

Level of impact

Local

Across the Pacific, the BIOPAMA Programme has created a lasting ripple — strengthening conservation capacity, collaboration, and leadership far beyond its initial investments.

What began as targeted support in Papua New Guinea has grown into a region-wide movement advancing effective management of Protected and Conserved Areas (PCAs). Through small grants and ongoing technical assistance, BIOPAMA helped introduce and scale up the use of SMART monitoring tools, build skills for management effectiveness (PAME), and inspire follow-on initiatives such as the COLOURS Programme.

Inclusive capacity-building workshops in Papua New Guinea and Palau became catalysts

for knowledge exchange, training over 80 participants — half of whom were women — and directly benefiting more than 200 stakeholders from seven Pacific Island countries. These sessions promoted the adoption of IUCN Green List standards and Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs), aligning local action with Target 3 of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).

Through this cascading model of training, mentorship, and partnership, BIOPAMA empowered Pacific conservation leaders to apply global standards in local contexts, creating a self-sustaining community of practice that continues to strengthen the region’s conservation efforts.



“ With over 90% of our land under indigenous ownership, this initiative strengthens our people’s role as custodians of biodiversity. In Fiji, BIOPAMA has been truly empowering, placing communities at the heart of conservation and giving rise to solutions that are locally driven yet globally significant. By strengthening our organisational capacity to undertake assessments on effectiveness in four Key Biodiversity Areas, we have built locally driven and contextually relevant conservation action.”

Nunia Thomas, Director, NatureFiji- MareqetiViti

Case Study 2 - Scaling up Management Effectiveness

Expanding IMET Across Eastern and Southern Africa

Level of impact

Regional

For many years, the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) was the primary method used across Eastern and Southern Africa to assess how well protected and conserved areas were being managed. While useful, managers and authorities recognized the need for a more comprehensive and participatory approach — one that could also inform day-to-day planning and decision-making.

Through the BIOPAMA Programme, the Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool (IMET) was introduced to the region. IMET provided not only a more rigorous assessment framework but also a bridge between evaluation and management planning.

Initially, IMET expertise was scarce and support limited. To overcome this, BIOPAMA funded a series of IMET Coach Trainings and provided targeted Small Technical and Grant Agreements (STGAs) to help sites apply the tool. Trainees were carefully selected from among planners and technical officers already engaged in protected area management, ensuring direct integration into institutional processes.

This approach paid off. Several participants emerged as IMET champions, playing pivotal roles in embedding the tool within national and regional systems.

In Uganda, a partnership between the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) and consultant Paula Vrdoljak became a model of success. Through IMET training and facilitation, Paula supported UWA in integrating IMET into management planning — resulting in new management plans grounded in robust data and participatory consultation. Her expertise was soon sought beyond Uganda, including in South Sudan, and she now serves as a lead IMET trainer linked to the Regional Centre of Excellence (RCoE) in Eastern Africa.

In the Western Indian Ocean, another champion, Arthur Tuda, advanced the use of IMET for marine conservation. Under a BIOPAMA contract, he worked with the Kenya Wildlife Service and Tanzania Marine Parks and Reserves Unit to conduct IMET assessments across all marine protected areas (MPAs) along the Kenyan and Tanzanian coasts. These assessments informed

the development of a national strategy for MPA management, and through his training, over 30 MPA managers gained practical skills in applying IMET to planning and implementation.

Together, these efforts have transformed IMET from a new tool into a regional standard, strengthening management planning, building professional capacity, and creating a growing network of African conservation leaders who champion evidence-based decision-making for protected and conserved areas.



Case Study 3

Capacity Building Training on the WDPA

Level of impact

Global

In November 2024, UNEP-WCMC organised a four-day data workshop in Conakry, Guinea, in collaboration with the Observatory for Biodiversity and Protected Areas in West Africa (OBAPAO), the BIOPAMA Regional Observatory and CBD Technical and Scientific Cooperation Centre for West Africa. The workshop, which BIOPAMA supported, was designed to build the technical capacity of key data focal points and government staff from West African countries to collate and report data on national protected and conserved areas. UNEP-WCMC and OBAPAO presented on the best practices and principles of managing and updating geospatial data, as well as wider elements of Target 3, including other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs), territories and areas conserved by

Indigenous Peoples and local communities (ICCAs) and management effectiveness. Interactive sessions were also held on reporting data to the [Protected Planet](#) databases: the World Database on Protected and Conserved Areas (WDPCA) (formerly WDPA and WD-OECM) and the Global Database on Protected Area Management Effectiveness (GD-PAME), and the role of these databases in tracking global progress towards Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

In total, 30 participants joined the workshop from 14 West African countries. This included at least one geospatial information systems (GIS) expert from each country, which enhanced the effectiveness of interactive sessions to review

data reported to the WDPCA from across the region. As a result of the workshop, six of the 14 countries in attendance have since updated their data in the WDPCA: The Gambia, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and Togo. Combined, a total of 237-polygon records and 16-point records have been updated and verified across the region, and 14 new protected areas have been reported. In addition, the quality of data reported has been improved, with 10-point records updated to polygons demonstrating the site boundaries. Most notably, for Mauritania, this was the first update of national protected areas and Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites) in the WDPCA since 1993.

Case Study 4 - “Learn, Love, Protect”

How Caribbean Institutions are Revitalising Institutions

Level of impact

National

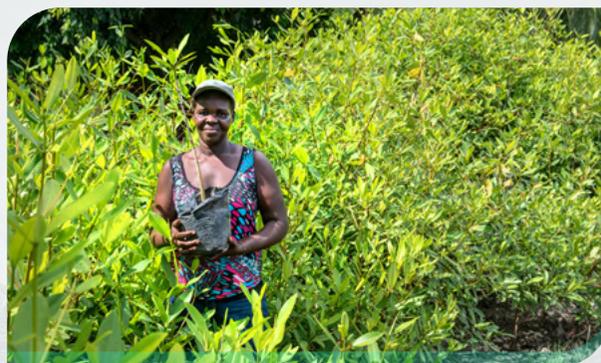
Across the Caribbean, protected area authorities are revitalising how they manage and protect their natural heritage. With support from the BIOPAMA Programme, twelve protected areas across the region have conducted Management Effectiveness Assessments, helping managers identify strengths, challenges, and opportunities to enhance governance and biodiversity protection.

These assessments do more than measure performance — they provide a roadmap for action. By revealing gaps in management systems, they help sites target funding and partnerships to address real needs.

In Saint Lucia’s Point Sable Environment Protection Area (PSEPA), the assessment results were instrumental in securing Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) support to update the site’s management plan. This process revitalised local conservation efforts, ensuring that future planning is guided by evidence and stakeholder engagement.

In Antigua and Barbuda, the National Parks Authority, which manages the Nelson’s Dockyard National Park — a UNESCO World Heritage Site — used its assessment results to successfully

apply for funding to purchase a patrol vessel. This investment transformed the Authority’s ability to monitor and protect the park’s coastal and marine ecosystems, while also supporting partner organisations in biodiversity monitoring and awareness-raising.



Through BIOPAMA’s support, Caribbean institutions are not only improving site management but also contributing to a regenerative blue economy. Enhanced marine and coastal management practices, stronger biodiversity monitoring, and data-driven decision-making are helping ensure that the region’s unique ecosystems continue to sustain communities and economies for generations to come.



Grantee testimonial video

“Thanks to the BIOPAMA grant, the National Parks Authority enhanced its capacity, strengthened partnerships, increased awareness, and delivered on our slogan: Learn, Love, Protect.”

Ruleta Camacho-Thomas National Parks Authority, Antigua and Barbuda

Case Study 5 - Connecting Data, People, and Policy

How Nairobi Became a Hub for Biodiversity Capacity Building

Level of impact

National

Access to accurate, up-to-date biodiversity data is essential for informed decision-making — from designing protected area networks to tracking progress toward global conservation goals. Recognizing this, the Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD), with support from BIOPAMA, convened two major regional workshops in Nairobi, Kenya, aimed at strengthening data management and analysis skills across Eastern and Southern Africa.

The first workshop, held 20–24 March 2023, brought together over 70 experts from 24 countries, representing government agencies, international organizations such as FAO, universities, NGOs including the African Wildlife Foundation, and private sector partners such as ESRI and Planet Labs. Participants received

practical, hands-on training on the Regional Resource Hub (RRH) — hosted by RCMRD — and the Global Reference Information System (GIS) through sessions led by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC).

By integrating national datasets with these regional tools, participants learned how to apply data-driven approaches to protected area management, monitoring, and policy development. Demonstrations from countries across the region — from Angola to Djibouti — showcased the growing power of geospatial information to inform conservation action.

The second workshop, held a year later (7–26 March 2024), built on this success, expanding participation to over 110 experts from 22

countries across Eastern and Southern Africa and the Western Indian Ocean Islands. The training advanced into data integration, monitoring frameworks, and policy translation, strengthening regional collaboration and aligning technical data systems with national and regional conservation priorities.

Together, these workshops demonstrated RCMRD's leadership in building regional capacity, creating a vibrant community of practice around biodiversity information systems. The growing participation reflects the region's increasing commitment to data-driven conservation — ensuring that robust, interoperable biodiversity data continues to guide decisions that safeguard Africa's natural heritage.

Impact 3 Enhancing Livelihoods, Benefits, and Engagement

Through its grant-making, BIOPAMA has supported conservation approaches that link biodiversity conservation with tangible benefits for local communities, using sustainable and locally adapted livelihood initiatives in and around protected areas across the ACP regions. BIOPAMA grantees worked closely with local populations to implement activities such as beekeeping, ecotourism, or sustainable agriculture - helping reduce pressure on natural resources while improving local well-

being. The programme also promoted inclusive governance, ensuring that community voices are reflected in conservation decisions. These efforts have helped foster more collaborative relationships between PCAs and local communities, as evidenced by increased community participation, reduced resource conflict, and shared conservation outcomes in several sites.



Case Study 1 - Bees and Caterpillars for Conservation A New Livelihood Path in Cameroon

Level of impact

Local

Located in the ecotone between Cameroon's dense southern forests and northern savannas, the Mbam and Djerem National Park (PNMD) harbours exceptional biodiversity — with over 60 mammal species, 360 bird species, and 65 reptiles — but faces growing threats from poaching, illegal resource use, and shifting agriculture driven by community dependence on natural resources.

To reduce pressure on the park's ecosystems, Forest and Development (FODER) implemented the Governance Support Project (PAGO) with funding from the European Union through the BIOPAMA programme. The project focused on creating sustainable income-generating opportunities for local residents through beekeeping and edible caterpillar farming, providing tangible alternatives to hunting and the sale of wild meat.

Under PAGO, 365 people (including 168 women) were trained in edible caterpillar farming, establishing 12 production units across 12 villages. In parallel, 177 people, including 28 women and 3 persons with disabilities, received training in modern beekeeping, hive construction, and sustainable honey harvesting and processing techniques.

Within the first year, these initiatives yielded measurable results — the production units became fully operational, producing a significant quantity of edible caterpillars and over 125 litres of honey. Beyond income generation, the project strengthened local stewardship of natural resources, with communities now managing the systems collaboratively with park authorities and the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife.

Through this integrated approach, PAGO demonstrated that empowering communities with viable, sustainable livelihoods can effectively reduce biodiversity threats, enhance food security, and build lasting conservation partnerships in and around protected areas.



Case Study 2 - Funding Change at the Community Level

BIOPAMA's Partnership Approach in Eastern and Southern Africa

Level of impact

Regional

To ensure that conservation funding directly meets community needs, the BIOPAMA Programme in Eastern and Southern Africa introduced an innovative partnership model for its second round of Medium Grants. This approach required proposals to be led by NGOs in partnership with Community-Based Organisations (CBOs), ensuring that funds flowed to the local level while providing CBOs with mentoring, technical guidance, and institutional strengthening.

Through this model, NGOs played a dual role — supporting project implementation and building CBO capacity to manage funds, strengthen governance, and develop future funding proposals. This helped create more sustainable and autonomous community institutions able to continue conservation and livelihood activities beyond the grant period.

In Mozambique, two such partnerships illustrate the impact of this approach.

- ▣ Santuario Bravio de Vilanculos, in collaboration with the Chingonguene fishing community, implemented a project to protect the Inhambane Estuary and mouth, providing boats and developing small-scale enterprises to support sustainable fishing.

- ▣ Centro Terra Viva partnered with Community Fishing Councils near Maputo National Park to improve ecosystem resilience and enhance community livelihoods through infrastructure for fish processing and market access.

This partnership-based grant mechanism delivered two critical outcomes:

1. Enhanced biodiversity and livelihood results at the site level through sustainable resource management and income generation.

2. Improved organisational capacity of local CBOs, leading to greater financial transparency, stronger governance, and readiness to attract future investment.

By shifting how funds are channelled and who holds responsibility, the BIOPAMA partnership model has demonstrated how locally driven conservation can be both more effective and more equitable.



Case Study 3

Amplifying Local Voices in Global Conservation Arenas

Level of impact

Global

BIOPAMA has played a pivotal role in connecting local conservation actors to global and regional policy platforms, ensuring that the voices of communities and practitioners directly shape biodiversity dialogues and decisions.

In Eastern and Southern Africa, BIOPAMA supported numerous grantees and ranger-led initiatives to share lessons at regional and global fora. Ten grantees attended the African Ranger Congress, exchanging best practices on ranger welfare, local engagement, and community-based conservation. Many participants emphasized the personal and professional value of these exchanges, noting the importance of holistic ranger well-being and the shared challenges faced across the continent.

In the Caribbean, BIOPAMA strengthened regional representation at key events, including the Latin America and Caribbean Congress on Protected Areas in Lima (2019), and the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI) meetings. These engagements enabled grantees to showcase regional achievements, connect with researchers and donors, and ensure Caribbean priorities were integrated into global conservation agendas.

The Pacific project supported over 25 individuals — including young professionals — to participate in major international gatherings such as the International Marine Parks Congress, CBD COPs, and the SIDS Conference in Antigua and Barbuda. Participants returned home as regional leaders, applying new knowledge to improve OECM implementation and marine protected area management.

In Western and Central Africa, BIOPAMA facilitated community and institutional participation in regional and global dialogues on equitable governance and rights-based conservation, ensuring the subregion's priorities were represented in Africa-wide policy forums.

BIOPAMA also sponsored 24 delegates to attend the IUCN World Conservation Congress (WCC) in Abu Dhabi in 2025. Sessions delegates attended focused on decolonizing conservation, governance, land tenure, and directing finance to community-level impact. Delegates from Tanzania and Zambia highlighted how these insights informed their national work on governance, capacity building, and participatory mapping — such as CWMAC's expansion of 3D mapping in Wildlife Management Areas.

Together, these efforts demonstrate BIOPAMA's success in linking local knowledge to global policy — empowering communities not just to implement conservation, but to shape its future.



Impact 4 Policy and Legal Frameworks

BIOPAMA has played a key role in strengthening the policy and legal environments that underpin effective biodiversity conservation across ACP regions. The programme has supported governments and regional institutions to review, align, and improve policies and legal instruments related to protected and conserved areas (PCAs), ensuring greater coherence with international commitments such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Sustainable Development Goals. Through

technical support, grant-making, and knowledge products, BIOPAMA has enabled stakeholders to identify policy gaps, enhance governance frameworks, and integrate scientific data into decision-making processes. These efforts have contributed to more robust national and regional legal frameworks that provide a stronger foundation for effective conservation action, improved governance of PCAs, and long-term sustainability of biodiversity outcomes.



Case Study 1 - Building Regional Collaboration

Establishing the Pacific Protected Areas Working Group

Level of impact

Regional

BIOPAMA played a pivotal role in strengthening regional governance for conservation through its support for the establishment of the Pacific Protected Areas Working Group (PPAWG). This platform brings together governments, NGOs, academia, and the private sector to address shared challenges and coordinate efforts for effective management of Protected and Conserved Areas (PCAs) across the Pacific.

Through a series of strategic meetings and technical support, BIOPAMA helped shape a unified regional framework for identifying priorities, developing joint action plans, and advancing commitments under Target 3 of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).

The initiative also reinforced existing regional coordination mechanisms, such as the Pacific Islands Roundtable for Nature Conservation (PIRT) and the Pacific Conservation Network (PACoN), by strengthening their thematic task forces and working groups. These efforts fostered collaboration across sectors, ensuring that conservation policies were both coordinated and grounded in practical implementation.

To maintain momentum and connectivity, BIOPAMA further supported ongoing coordination through online knowledge-sharing platforms, newsletters, and regional dialogues, helping to sustain engagement and information flow among Pacific partners.

Case Study 2 - Powering Policy Through Partnership

BIOPAMA's Support to the SADC Conservation Agenda

Level of impact

Regional

BIOPAMA has played a key role in supporting regional biodiversity policy and collaboration through its long-standing partnership with the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Managed by IUCN's Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office, this collaboration strengthens the policy and institutional foundations that underpin effective conservation across member states.

Through BIOPAMA, IUCN manages the SADC Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCA) Financing Facility, supporting the sustainable management of transboundary landscapes that contribute directly to the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). BIOPAMA also backed the development of the TFCA Portal, a community-driven platform and data repository that connects with the Regional Resource Hub (RRH), the Regional Reference Information System (RRIS), and the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA) — providing critical data infrastructure for conservation planning.

This partnership has strengthened regional reporting and knowledge sharing, enabling SADC Member States to contribute to the State of Protected and Conserved Areas (SOPACA) reports and actively engage in regional policy dialogues hosted through the RRH.

BIOPAMA further supported regional policy engagement for the implementation of GBF Targets 3 and 4, including:

- ▣ A regional OECM learning exchange workshop, jointly hosted with RCMRD and SANBI, advancing the recognition and reporting of OECMs across the SADC region.
- ▣ The development of the SADC Vulture Conservation Strategy, aligned with the global Multi-species Action Plan under the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS). The strategy positions vultures as flagship species for protected and conserved areas and transboundary conservation initiatives.

These policy engagements have resulted in a more formalised and coordinated regional framework, adopted and monitored through the SADC Secretariat, and directly supporting national policy implementation — including ongoing OECM identification and reporting processes in several member countries.

Through its partnership with SADC, BIOPAMA has demonstrated how data-driven support, policy alignment, and regional collaboration can together advance large-scale conservation goals across Southern Africa.



Case Study 3 - From Participation to Leadership

Strengthening Indigenous Voices in African Conservation

Level of impact

National

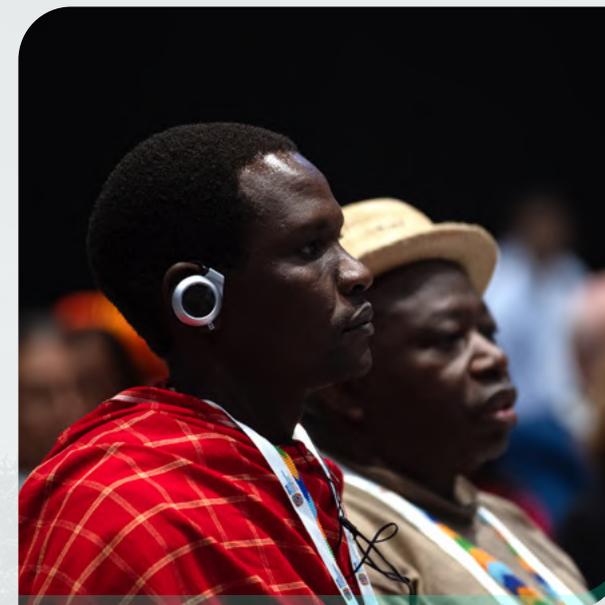
BIOPAMA played a pivotal role in supporting the creation and consolidation of the Alliance for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities for Conservation in Africa (AICA) — a Pan-African, IPLC-led platform that amplifies community voices in conservation policy and practice.

AICA brings together Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) from across Africa to advocate for visibility, equity, and meaningful participation in decision-making spaces that affect their lands, territories, and natural resources. Its mission is rooted in the recognition that lasting conservation outcomes depend on the rights, leadership, and traditional knowledge of the communities who have stewarded nature for generations.

The Alliance emerged from a series of regional engagements supported by BIOPAMA, beginning with IPLC participation in the First Africa Protected Areas Congress (APAC) held in Kigali, Rwanda, in July 2022. Follow-up gatherings in Nairobi in December 2022 and March 2023 brought together representatives from 16 African countries, leading to the formal establishment of AICA and the endorsement of its mandate through the IPLC Declaration.

BIOPAMA's support was instrumental throughout this journey — from facilitating participation in APAC and the IUCN World Conservation Congress, to enabling pre-forum sessions and regional dialogues that allowed IPLC representatives to organize, network, and define shared priorities.

Today, AICA operates as an independent, community-governed alliance, anchored in regional networks and guided by a steering committee representing all African subregions. Through continued engagement in regional and global fora, AICA has strengthened Indigenous and local representation in biodiversity governance, opened new channels for collaboration with donors and partners, and positioned IPLCs as key actors in achieving the Global Biodiversity Framework's rights-based conservation goals.



Case Study 4 - From Regional Observatories to Global Policy

BIOPAMA's Contribution to the CBD Technical and Scientific Cooperation Mechanism

Level of impact

Global

BIOPAMA's decade-long investment in regional observatories has directly shaped the global framework for biodiversity cooperation under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). In 2022, CBD Parties adopted Decision 15/8, establishing the Technical and Scientific Cooperation (TSC) Mechanism — a network of regional support centres that strengthen capacity, facilitate data sharing, and promote technology transfer for biodiversity action.

For more than ten years, BIOPAMA has put this concept into practice across the African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) regions. Through the establishment and support of five Regional Observatories, the programme built enduring systems for:

- ▣ Data and knowledge sharing – via the Regional Reference Information Systems (RRIS), which compile and provide open access to verified biodiversity and protected-area data;
- ▣ Capacity building and technical cooperation – training national agencies and stakeholders in conservation management, governance, and evidence-based decision-making;
- ▣ Regional coordination and technology transfer – linking governments, research institutions, and communities to develop shared conservation solutions.

These observatories were explicitly designed to help countries monitor progress, strengthen

policies, and report on global biodiversity targets — fully aligning with the goals of the CBD's new mechanism.

As a result, BIOPAMA's regional observatories have been recognized as official Technical and Scientific Cooperation Support Centres, offering a proven model for translating global policy into regional action. This marks a significant legacy for BIOPAMA: a bridge between regional experience and global implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Case Study 1

From Partnerships to Protection: Co-Managing Belize's Marine Treasures

Level of impact

Local

In the southern waters of Belize, a pioneering partnership is transforming how marine ecosystems are managed. Through the BIOPAMA Medium Grant (MG-C-235), the Toledo Institute for Development and Environment (TIDE) led efforts to safeguard one of the region's most ecologically significant areas — the Cayman Crown, a critical fish spawning aggregation site shared across the tri-national seascape of Belize, Guatemala, and Honduras.

The project aimed to protect multi-species spawning aggregation sites (FSAs) — vital breeding grounds for commercially and ecologically important fish species that sustain both marine biodiversity and local livelihoods. Working closely with the Belize Fisheries Department, the Ministry of Blue Economy and Civil Aviation (MBECA), and local fishing communities, TIDE advanced a process that culminated in the formal co-management agreement for the Sapodilla Cayes Marine Reserve (SCMR), signed in October 2023.

This milestone marked the first legally recognized co-management arrangement for the Cayman Crown and neighbouring sites such as Rise and Fall Bank and Nicholas Caye, ensuring more coordinated, transparent, and sustainable management of these marine areas.

Beyond governance, the project strengthened local enforcement, monitoring, and capacity-building. TIDE staff and community rangers received specialized training in spawning aggregation monitoring, data management, and collaborative patrol operations, while a network of sentinel sites was established to track changes across three key spawning locations.

By integrating science, policy, and community partnership, this initiative not only secured protection for a critical marine habitat but also set a precedent for regional cooperation in marine conservation across the Mesoamerican Reef.



Case Study 2

Strengthening the Regional Data Systems for Informed Conservation Decisions

Level of impact

Regional

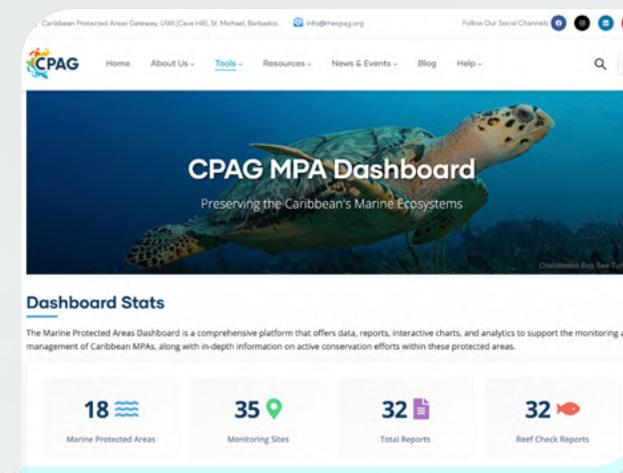
Across all four BIOPAMA regions, the Regional Observatories (ROs) have established platforms and databases that improve access to and use of information for decision-making in protected and conserved areas (PCAs). These observatories serve as regional knowledge hubs that collect, analyse, and share critical data on biodiversity, governance, and management effectiveness to support evidence-based conservation.

In the Caribbean, the Caribbean Protected Areas Gateway (CPAG) platform offers an integrated suite of tools including the Protected Area Management Effectiveness (PAME) Dashboard, the Biodiversity Dashboard, and the Socioeconomic Monitoring and Conservation Tracking Dashboards. These tools respond to regional priorities by providing real-time data for management and policy. To date, 130 individuals have enhanced their capacity in data collection and analysis through the Regional Resource Information System (RRIS), and 21 direct data requests have been processed. A collaboration between Oracabessa Marine Trust and CPAG showcased how site-level data can be visualized and accessed at national and regional scales through the RRIS platform.

In the Pacific, BIOPAMA's observatory supported the establishment of the Pacific Protected Areas Working Group (PPAWG), bringing together governments, NGOs, and academia to coordinate data-sharing and regional conservation priorities under Target 3 of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).

In Eastern and Southern Africa, the Regional Resource Hub (RRH), hosted by the Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD), continues to integrate spatial data and national datasets for policy reporting, while in Western and Central Africa, the observatory supports capacity-building and data-sharing through its regional GeoNode platform.

Together, these observatories form a connected system of regional knowledge platforms that strengthen the use of science and data in conservation decision-making across the ACP regions.



Case Study 3

Recognising Conservation Beyond Protected Areas: BIOPAMA's OECM Journey in Africa

Level of impact

Regional

As countries work to achieve Target 3 of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) — conserving at least 30% of land and sea areas by 2030 — the recognition of Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs) has become essential. OECMs acknowledge the contributions of areas outside formal protected zones that nonetheless deliver significant biodiversity outcomes, often led by local communities, private landholders, or sectoral institutions.

Through the BIOPAMA Programme, IUCN has played a catalytic role in introducing, guiding, and institutionalising OECM processes in Eastern and Southern Africa. With BIOPAMA support, national engagement frameworks have been developed in Kenya, Angola, Mozambique, and Tanzania, helping governments define criteria, identify potential OECM sites, and align these efforts with ongoing National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) revisions.

Training on the OECM Site Assessment Tool equipped practitioners and policymakers with the skills to evaluate sites systematically, ensuring national reporting reflects both biodiversity outcomes and governance quality.

To consolidate and share learning, IUCN — together with the Regional Centres of Excellence, the Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD), and the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) — convened a regional OECM learning exchange. This event strengthened collaboration across technical and policy levels, helping countries apply global standards while tailoring approaches to local contexts.

By fostering understanding, capacity, and coordination, BIOPAMA has helped countries take concrete steps toward inclusive, evidence-based recognition of OECMs, ensuring that all effective conservation efforts — both inside and outside protected areas — contribute to the 30x30 target.



Case Study 4

Updating of WDPA to inform global decision-making

Level of impact

Global

[The World Database on Protected and Conserved Areas \(WDPCA\)](#), hosted by the [Protected Planet Initiative](#), is the largest and most up-to-date global source of data on protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs). Managed by UNEP-WCMC as a joint product of UNEP and IUCN, the WDPCA provides official indicators of global progress towards Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF). The database brings together information reported by the world's governments, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, regional entities, international convention secretariats, and other data providers. In the African, Pacific and Caribbean regions, such data reporting is facilitated by the five BIOPAMA Regional Observatories: Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development

(RCMRD), Observatory for Biodiversity and Protected Areas in West Africa (OBAPAO), Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC), Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), and Caribbean Protected Areas Gateway (CPAG).

The BIOPAMA Regional Observatories played a key role in facilitating data updates from the regional level to the WDPCA. Between June 2017 and September 2025, 66 BIOPAMA countries from the Pacific, Caribbean and African regions provided updated data. This equates to 84% of countries participating in the BIOPAMA Programme. In total, over 3,200 records were updated and/or verified and nearly 1,800 new protected areas or OECMs were added over the past eight years. This included [the first OECM](#)

[reported for the Cook Islands](#) and for Oceania, and eight OECMs reported by Eswatini (the first OECMs reported in Eastern Africa). Over the course of BIOPAMA II, ten countries updated their data for the first time in over a decade, and 270-point locations were replaced with polygon spatial boundaries. These data updates help to ensure that Protected Planet showcases the continued efforts by countries to designate new protected areas, recognise OECMs, and progress towards Target 3 of the KMGBF. They also demonstrate the value of regional collaboration and enhanced capacity building efforts over the past eight years. These efforts will continue well beyond the completion of the BIOPAMA programme.



Impact 6

Advancing Governance, Equity and Human Rights Based Approaches in Area-Based Conservation

Equitable governance and human rights are fundamental to effective conservation, ensuring that protected and conserved areas respect Indigenous peoples and local communities while delivering sustainable biodiversity outcomes. In line with IUCN's Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS), BIOPAMA integrated strong safeguards throughout the programme, particularly within its action component, to ensure all conservation actions respect and advance human rights while delivering equitable outcomes. The programme systematically applied safeguard principles across grant-making, helping partners assess risks and mitigate potential adverse social and environmental impacts. Through guidance, training, tools and sharing of compliance mechanisms, grantees were supported to uphold Indigenous peoples' and local communities' rights, strengthen inclusive governance, and promote fair benefit-sharing. These capacity development efforts included regional learning events where grantees interacted with experts

on these issues, creating two-way learning spaces that demonstrated how IUCN's global guidance was successfully contextualized and implemented by local actors.

Through systematic application of IUCN's ESMS, targeted capacity development, and support for equitable governance models, BIOPAMA demonstrated that conservation effectiveness is inseparable from social equity and human rights. The programme's legacy includes strengthened local governance structures, comprehensive regional knowledge products, and a new generation of conservation practitioners equipped to implement rights-based approaches. These efforts ensured that conservation initiatives not only achieved biodiversity outcomes but also aligned with international human rights standards, reinforcing BIOPAMA's commitment to equitable and rights-based conservation practices.



Case Study 1

Where Conservation and Communities Meet: Safeguarding Community Rights in the Rugezi Marsh, Rwanda

Level of impact

Local

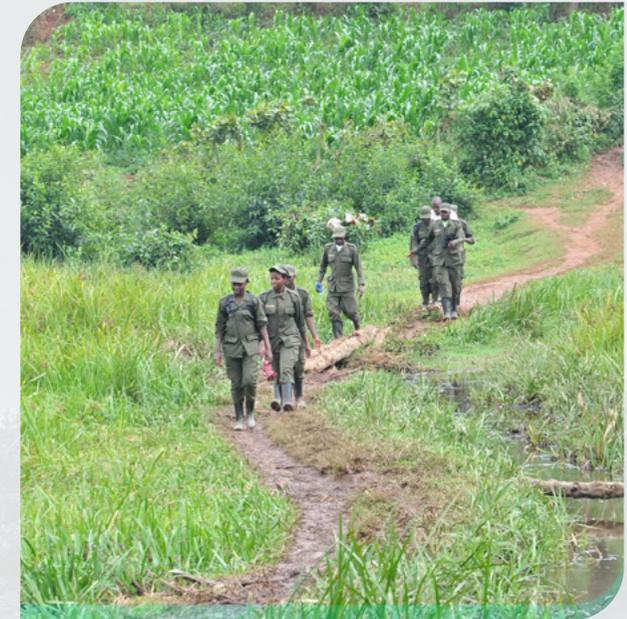
°In Rwanda's northern highlands, the Rugezi Marsh is a vital ecosystem — a Ramsar-listed wetland that provides water regulation, carbon storage, and livelihoods for surrounding communities. Yet, when early restoration efforts sought to limit human activity in the area, they unintentionally restricted local access to grazing lands, fishing grounds, and water sources that communities depended on.

Recognizing the risk of social conflict and the need for more equitable conservation, the BIOPAMA Programme applied its Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) to guide a more inclusive process. The ESMS framework ensures that conservation actions safeguard both biodiversity and community rights by identifying potential social impacts and integrating mitigation measures directly into project design.

Through this process, the voices of affected community members were actively brought into management planning. Together with

conservation partners, they developed rotational access plans that allowed for controlled, sustainable use of the wetland's resources. Complementary activities such as alternative grazing practices, improved agricultural methods, and the provision of clean drinking water, further reduced pressure on the marsh while supporting local livelihoods.

The result was a model for rights-based conservation. Restoration activities continued without excluding communities, and trust was rebuilt between local residents and conservation authorities. The Rugezi Marsh case demonstrates how BIOPAMA's ESMS can help balance ecological objectives with social equity, ensuring that conservation success is shared by both people and nature.



Establishing a team of Community Rangers to improve the management and protection of Rugezi Marsh, Rwanda. | PANORAMA

Case Study 2 - Where Communities Lead

Shared Governance in Papua New Guinea's YUS Conservation Area

Level of impact

Local

In the rugged mountains of Papua New Guinea, the the [YUS Conservation Area](#) stands as a model of how inclusive, community-led governance can protect biodiversity while strengthening local rights. Covering over 158,000 hectares of tropical forest and home to the endangered Matschie's tree kangaroo, YUS is the country's first officially gazetted conservation area — and one of the most successful examples of shared governance in the Pacific.

Supported by the BIOPAMA Programme's Targeted Action Grants, the Tree Kangaroo Conservation Program (TKCP) and the YUS Conservation Area Management Committee have built a governance model that reflects both customary leadership structures and modern democratic principles. This aligns with IUCN Governance Type B, where decision-making is shared among diverse rightsholders and stakeholders.

At the heart of this approach is the YUS Community-Based Organisation (YUS-CBO) — known locally as the voice of YUS. Through elected representatives from the four administrative zones (Yopno, Uruwa, Som, and Nambis), the CBO ensures that customary landowners remain central to conservation

decisions that affect their land and livelihoods. Chieftainships, local councils, and community members collaborate directly with conservation authorities, ensuring a participatory governance model.

This inclusive model has strengthened trust, accountability, and local ownership of conservation outcomes. It ensures that the state's formal recognition of the protected area coexists with community rights, maintaining the delicate balance between ecological stewardship and cultural heritage.

The YUS experience shows that when communities share responsibility, conservation becomes more effective, equitable, and enduring. It stands as a best-practice model for shared governance, one that links empowered communities with thriving ecosystems.

Source

[Conserving our sea of islands: 2022-037-En.pdf](#)



Case Study 3 - Power Through Knowledge

How BIOPAMA is Shaping Fair and Effective Conservation

Level of impact

Regional

Global

Across Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific, the BIOPAMA Programme has played a pivotal role in building the knowledge base and skills needed for fair, effective, and inclusive conservation. By investing in regional assessments, training, and practical tools, BIOPAMA has strengthened both the evidence and the people driving governance reforms in protected and conserved areas (PCAs).

Evidence for Action

Through targeted funding, BIOPAMA supported the production of regional knowledge products that document governance diversity, quality, and equity across three regions — West and Central Africa, Eastern and Southern Africa, and Oceania.

These publications, including [Governance, Equity and Management of Marine Protected Areas in West and Central Africa](#), [Conserving Our Sea of Islands](#), and The State of Protected and Conserved Areas in Eastern and Southern Africa (SOPACA), provide the first systematic regional analyses linking governance quality, social inclusion, and management effectiveness. Together, they offer actionable recommendations for strengthening legal and policy frameworks at both national and regional levels.

In Eastern and Southern Africa, BIOPAMA further supported a [comprehensive inventory](#) assessing management effectiveness, governance quality,

and social dimensions across protected areas. This created a baseline dataset for monitoring progress and informed future decision-making on equitable management and community rights.

Showcasing Real Solutions

To complement these analytical outputs, BIOPAMA contributed to the [PANORAMA Solutions in Focus: Governance of Protected and Conserved Areas](#) compendium — a global collection of case studies illustrating how governance reforms can recognize and strengthen local rights. These stories, drawn from real-world experiences, showcase practical strategies for improving equity, participation, and accountability in conservation.

Strengthening Capacity and Collaboration

Beyond generating knowledge, BIOPAMA has invested in capacity development and regional learning platforms that connect practitioners, policymakers, and researchers. [Workshops](#) and [training events](#) organized through regional fora provided opportunities to exchange lessons learned, apply global frameworks to local contexts, and co-develop practical tools.

This approach ensured that international standards from IUCN and partners were not simply transferred, but adapted through

collaboration — empowering local practitioners to lead change from within.

A Lasting Legacy

Together, these knowledge products and capacity development efforts have built a foundation for more evidence-based, equitable, and effective conservation governance. They ensure that decisions affecting biodiversity also respect the rights, voices, and values of the people who depend on it.



Case Study 4

Strengthening Indigenous Peoples’ and Local Communities’ Rights Through the COLOURS Programme

Level of impact

Global

Building on the foundations laid by the BIOPAMA Programme, the [COLOURS Programme](#) was launched in late 2024 to advance Target 3 of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) — ensuring that at least 30% of the planet is effectively conserved through approaches that uphold human rights and the leadership of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs).

COLOURS adopts a rights-based and community-driven approach, supporting IPLCs to map and manage their territories, strengthen governance at local and national levels, and inform national policy through comprehensive law and governance assessments.

The programme provides direct financing to IPLC organizations across five countries and four regions, empowering communities to design and lead conservation initiatives grounded in their traditional knowledge and priorities. It also amplifies Indigenous voices in international decision-making, engaging IPLC representatives in key global fora such as the IUCN, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and other biodiversity policy platforms.

By centring rights, equity, and participation, COLOURS marks a significant step forward in ensuring that global biodiversity goals are achieved with IPLCs.

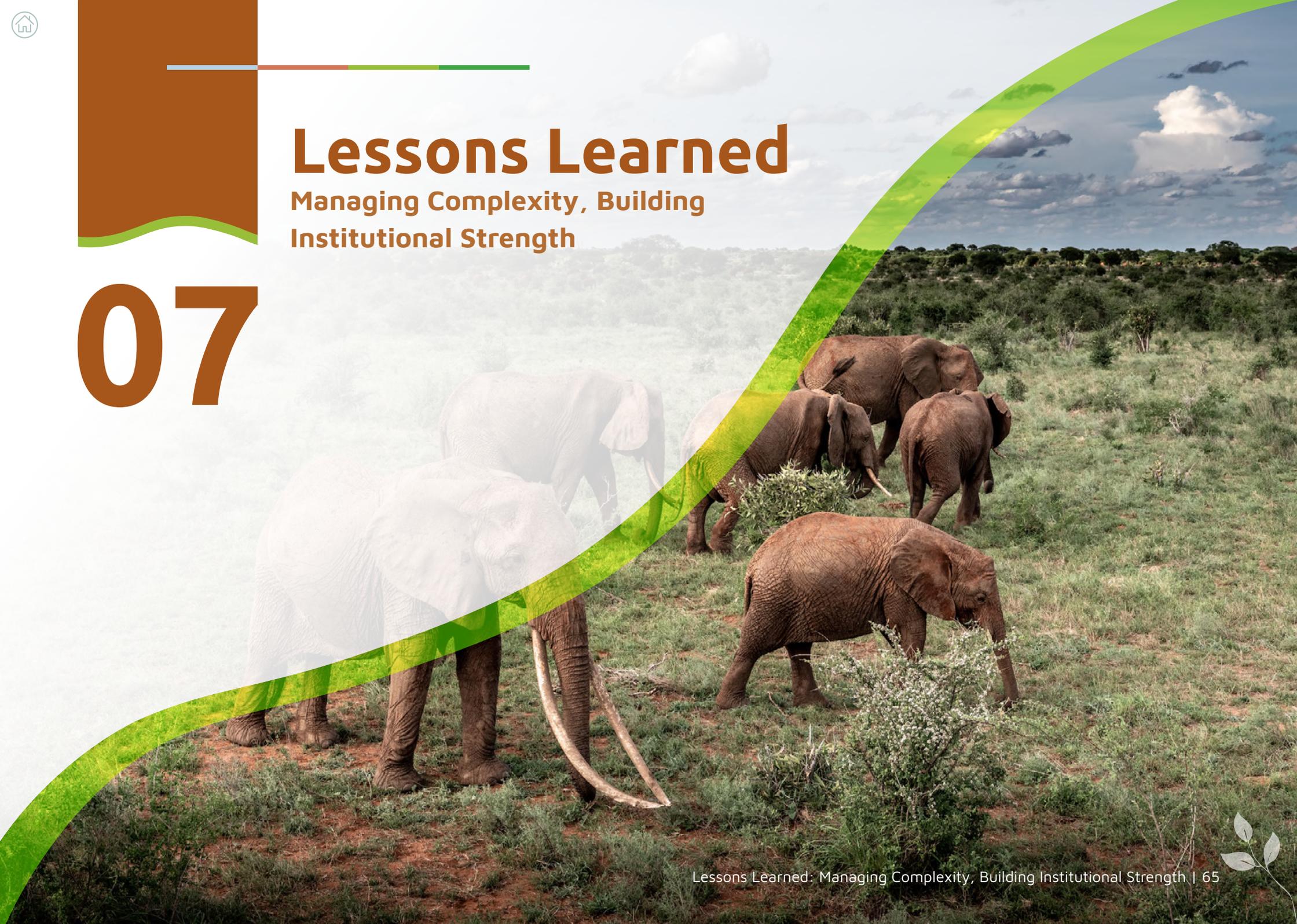




Lessons Learned

Managing Complexity, Building
Institutional Strength

07



The BIOPAMA Programme represents one of the largest — and most complex — collaborations ever undertaken between the European Union and IUCN. Its scale, geographic reach, and diversity of activities created a programme of exceptional ambition. Implemented across more than 79 countries in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific, and involving over 160 grantees and multiple institutional partners, BIOPAMA required robust coordination, rigorous financial management, and adaptive governance.

Several factors contributed to the programme's complexity:

- ▣ The **magnitude and duration** of the budget;
- ▣ Implementation through internal agreements across IUCN offices;
- ▣ A **multi-location structure** spanning three regions and time zones;
- ▣ The **number and diversity of stakeholders**, from governments to community-based organisations;
- ▣ **Strict EU funding regulations** and compliance requirements; and
- ▣ A **large, interdisciplinary team** of technical and administrative personnel working across institutions and continents.

Yet, it was precisely this complexity that became a driver of institutional strengthening within IUCN. Through BIOPAMA, IUCN demonstrated its ability to manage a high-value, rules-intensive EU programme with accountability and transparency — a performance that contributed directly to IUCN achieving EU Pillar Assessed status. This recognition enables IUCN to use its own systems and procedures when managing EU funds in the future, simplifying processes and reinforcing mutual trust between the two institutions.

BIOPAMA also advanced IUCN's internal knowledge management agenda. The "Knowledge Sharing Journey (KSJ)," conducted jointly with the BEST programme in 2023, piloted an innovative model for cross-grantee learning, reflection, and documentation. Through a combination of virtual and in-person exchanges, the KSJ supported 55 grantees in capturing lessons learned and success factors from their projects. Using the PANORAMA – Solutions for a Healthy Planet framework, 46 of these

case studies were published online, ensuring that the programme's insights remain publicly accessible beyond its lifespan. This experience provided valuable guidance for institutionalizing knowledge management approaches across IUCN's global portfolio of regranting programmes.

Despite its complexity, BIOPAMA left a lasting institutional and sectoral legacy:

1. **IUCN's Pillar Assessment** – BIOPAMA's successful implementation directly contributed to IUCN's recognition as an EU Pillar Assessed organisation, a milestone that will streamline future EU-funded engagements and enhance the organisation's strategic positioning.
2. **Strengthened Partner Capacity** – Through BIOPAMA's extensive capacity development support, grantees and partners are now better equipped to manage EU funds and comply with donor requirements. This has strengthened local institutions' ability to deliver conservation outcomes and access future international financing.
3. **Knowledge management** – BIOPAMA has played a catalytic role in embedding knowledge management practices, which led to increased visibility and uptake of good practices implemented through the programme, but also to increased uptake of knowledge management approaches at the IUCN institutional level. BIOPAMA supported practitioners and institutions to develop and publish PANORAMA solution case studies; it trained partners on how to identify, analyse, and document good practices using the PANORAMA methodology; it promoted the use of PANORAMA as a learning and scaling mechanism, helping institutions replicate tested solutions across sites and countries; and it facilitated exchanges between Regional Observatories and the PANORAMA platform, creating a feedback loop between local experience and global knowledge repositories.

In this way, BIOPAMA's operational challenges became opportunities for transformation — not only reinforcing IUCN's systems and credibility but also building a stronger, more capable network of conservation actors worldwide.

IUCN as Global and Regional Implementors of the Programme

Management of EU Funds

Key Challenges

- 1 Financial rules and compliance requirements under the EU grant contract were complex for some grantees, partners, and IUCN staff, creating challenges in budget preparation, financial reporting, and document retention.
- 2 The application of nationality and origin rules was difficult in regions with limited availability of suppliers, service providers, or consultants.
- 3 Limited experience and training among IUCN finance staff in managing subgrants affected the efficiency of financial oversight and support to grantees.

Recommendations

1. Engage with the EU to explore options for greater flexibility and simplification in sub-granting requirements, particularly for small grantees, including adjustments to documentation and reporting obligations.
2. Advocate for a more flexible approach to nationality and origin rules in contexts where local or regional procurement options are limited.
3. Prior to programme implementation, ensure that regional finance staff possess the necessary expertise—or receive targeted training—to effectively manage subgrant financial processes.

Donor Relations

Key Challenges

- 1 Communication delays across different levels of implementation occasionally created bottlenecks, leading to slower decision-making and activity delivery.

Recommendations

1. Establish clear communication protocols and timelines across all implementation levels, supported by regular coordination meetings and progress updates to ensure timely information flow.
2. Continue to build on the strong, long-term partnership between IUCN and the EU, recognizing that effective collaboration and mutual trust were key factors in the programme's success.

Operational Processes

Key Challenges

1. Inconsistencies between grantee reporting requirements and IUCN’s logframe made it difficult to consolidate and present information coherently.
2. Limited capacity among grantees affected the quality and consistency of project implementation and reporting.
3. Standardized frameworks and concepts were not always fully adaptable to the diverse regional and local contexts in which projects operated.
4. Variations in the interpretation of indicators—despite translations—sometimes led to inconsistent reporting across levels of implementation.
5. Instances of overreporting occurred when partial achievements were reported as full results, often due to limited monitoring practices or estimation of data.

Recommendations

1. Harmonize reporting frameworks by introducing standardized templates and clear guidance that align grantee reports with IUCN’s logframe and indicators.
2. Integrate structured capacity-building support into grant mechanisms, including training, mentoring, and continuous technical assistance tailored to grantee needs.
3. Ensure flexibility and contextual adaptation of frameworks and approaches to reflect local realities and support effective adaptive management.
4. Clearly specify clauses on exchange rate fluctuations and inflation adjustments in the call guidelines. Engage with the donor to explore options for more flexible financial requirements to better reflect changing economic conditions.

Grant Management

Key Challenges

1. Achieving balanced representation among beneficiaries—both geographically and by organization type—proved difficult, with limited high quality proposals above the funding threshold.
2. Complex and administratively heavy procedures, particularly for short-term or small grants, created barriers for applicants and slowed down implementation.
3. Delays in final proposal reviews and contract signing caused knock-on effects for project start dates and financial reporting.
4. Limited staff capacity, high turnover, and workload peaks affected the timeliness and consistency of grant management.
5. Outreach and communication around calls for proposals were not always sufficiently targeted or adapted to local socio-economic and biodiversity contexts.

Recommendations

1. Simplify and adapt the application and reporting processes—especially for small grants—to match local capacities and reduce administrative burden.
2. Strengthen communication and outreach strategies to ensure diverse participation and context-relevant proposals.
3. Introduce a two-stage application process (concept note + full proposal) to improve proposal quality and selection efficiency.
4. Invest in capacity building for applicants and grantees on proposal design, monitoring, evaluation, and financial management.
5. Ensure adequate staffing and well-defined handover procedures to maintain continuity and efficiency in grant management.
6. Establish regional focal points with strong local knowledge to provide technical and financial guidance and foster ongoing engagement with grantees.

Grant Project Implementation

Key Challenges

1. Inception calls did not fully address grantees' technical and financial reporting needs, with limited follow-up and low participation in some cases.
2. Insufficient continuity after inception calls—such as regular check-ins or tailored follow-up—affected support throughout the grant cycle.
3. Field visits were sometimes constrained by limited time or poor coordination, reducing their effectiveness for monitoring and learning.
4. External factors such as administrative delays, natural disasters, political interference, and COVID-19 restrictions caused project implementation setbacks.
5. Variations in technical capacity, high staff turnover, and limited engagement from some local authorities hindered timely delivery and validation of project outcomes.

Recommendations

1. Tailor inception calls to grantees' technical and financial needs, ensuring inclusive participation from all relevant staff.
2. Establish regular, structured follow-ups and individualized check-ins aligned with key grant milestones.
3. Plan and coordinate field visits well in advance to optimize time, ensure relevance, and strengthen on-site monitoring.
4. Provide targeted capacity-building, training, and mentorship to enhance partners' technical and management skills.
5. Support peer learning and knowledge exchange to encourage skills transfer and continuous improvement.
6. Consider environmental and seasonal factors in project design and scheduling to improve implementation effectiveness.

Project and Financial Management

Key Challenges

1. Frequent staff changes and internal conflicts among government and project partners hindered coordination and continuity.
2. Unclear legislative mandates created overlapping roles and responsibilities.
3. Grantees faced challenges with budgeting, financial reporting, and compliance—particularly in rural or remote contexts.
4. Strict budget and procurement rules limited flexibility and sometimes conflicted with donor or institutional policies.
5. Low-quality or incomplete financial documentation delayed reporting and reimbursements.

Recommendations

1. Strengthen and formalize partnership agreements (e.g., MOUs) to clarify roles, responsibilities, and communication lines.
2. Build capacity among partners and grantees on financial management, budgeting, and reporting requirements.
3. Develop clear guidance and training to address recurring financial audit issues early in the project cycle.
4. Support grantees in creating procurement plans that align donor requirements with local realities.
5. Encourage dialogue between IUCN and donors to streamline and simplify financial procedures while maintaining accountability.
6. Promote stability and institutional memory through longer-term partnerships and adequate staffing.

Monitoring & Evaluation, Communication & Visibility and Knowledge Management

Key Challenges

1

Limited familiarity with logical frameworks and indicators led to inconsistent project design and weak monitoring systems.

2

Some projects set overly ambitious objectives relative to available resources and timelines.

3

Reporting quality and timeliness varied significantly, with some grantees struggling to meet standards and deadlines.

4

Technical language, translation issues, and technological barriers—particularly in remote areas—affected communication and data reporting.

5

Communication and knowledge management were not systematically integrated from the start, resulting in weak visibility, inconsistent dissemination, and limited uptake of tools like PANORAMA.

Recommendations

1. Provide targeted capacity building on logical frameworks, indicator design, and reporting standards through workshops and on-demand training materials.
2. Align project M&E indicators with global frameworks such as the SDGs and GBF to better track and demonstrate impact.
3. Simplify and standardize reporting templates, ensuring they are user-friendly and adaptable across regions.
4. Strengthen communication support by assigning dedicated regional communications staff and requiring clear visibility plans from grantees.
5. Embed knowledge management and communications into project design and M&E processes, with early training on tools like PANORAMA.
6. Establish a central knowledge-sharing platform to facilitate learning, collaboration, and long-term accessibility of project outcomes.

“Kenya’s conservancies are living proof that conservation and community well-being can go hand in hand. With 65% of our wildlife found on community and private lands, conservancies form vital bridges between protected areas—ensuring ecological connectivity while empowering people as custodians of nature. The BIOPAMA programme has made a major contribution towards enhancing governance, improving resources management and significantly reducing illegal activities.”

HE Silvia Museiya, Permanent Secretary, State Department for Wildlife, Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife of the Republic of Kenya

From the Grantees of the Programme

Grant-Making Management

Key Challenges

- 1 Limited visibility of calls and lack of inclusive outreach reduced participation from smaller or remote organizations.
- 2 Application portal limitations (no notifications, technical bugs) caused confusion and data loss.
- 3 Language barriers and non-user-friendly systems constrained access for non-English speakers.
- 4 Lengthy review and approval processes delayed contracting and project start-up.
- 5 Applicants were not consistently informed of changes to call schedules or evaluation timelines.

Recommendations

1. Broaden outreach and awareness efforts, including multilingual calls and targeted support for small organizations.
2. Introduce automated status updates and strengthen system reliability through regular testing.
3. Simplify and adapt application processes to regional contexts and local realities.
4. Shorten approval timelines and ensure transparent communication on progress.
5. Consider flexible grant models—such as phased or scoping grants—to better support emerging or low-capacity organizations.

Grant Project Implementation

Key Challenges

- 1 Weak or inconsistent engagement of local and territorial governments limited policy alignment.
- 2 Operational and logistical delays, especially in island and remote contexts, slowed delivery.
- 3 Regional focal point support varied in depth and responsiveness.
- 4 Limited policy dialogue or advocacy components reduced long-term influence.
- 5 Inadequate early needs assessments led to missed opportunities for local benefit-sharing

Recommendations

1. Strengthen collaboration with local authorities and integrate policy dialogue into implementation support.
2. Plan proactively for logistical constraints and provide procurement guidance where needed.
3. Define clear roles and expectations for regional focal points and ensure their active involvement.
4. Embed capacity building and needs assessments at project inception to ensure community relevance.
5. Maintain community-centred approaches while engaging decision-makers for sustainable outcomes.

Project and Financial Management

Key Challenges

- 1 Delays in contracting, disbursement, and report validation affected timely implementation.
- 2 Strict financial and administrative criteria proved challenging for smaller or less experienced grantees.
- 3 Inflation and exchange rate fluctuations disrupted approved budgets.
- 4 Limited understanding of Simplified Cost Options (SCOs) led to inconsistent reporting.
- 5 High administrative burden strained grantee and IUCN finance teams.

Recommendations

1. Extend project durations where needed to enable realistic planning and sustainability.
2. Simplify and streamline financial procedures and negotiate more flexible donor requirements.
3. Provide targeted training on SCOs, budgeting, and reporting best practices.
4. Require finance staff participation in inception and review meetings.
5. Improve currency and inflation management, considering shared or donor-based risk coverage.

Monitoring & Evaluation, Communication & Visibility and Knowledge Management

Key Challenges

- 1 The project portal was not fully fit for purpose, making submission and document tracking difficult.
- 2 High reporting frequency created workload pressures for grantees with limited capacity.
- 3 Language barriers and unclear templates hindered data quality.
- 4 Delayed feedback slowed adaptive management and project adjustments.
- 5 Limited communications capacity among grantees reduced visibility and knowledge sharing.

Recommendations

1. Develop a more user-friendly project portal with real-time tracking and clearer instructions.
2. Shift to quarterly reporting to reduce administrative burden and improve quality.
3. Integrate mid-term reviews and feedback loops to strengthen adaptive learning.
4. Provide training and practical guidance on communications, outreach, and reporting standards.
5. Ensure all projects allocate resources for communications and knowledge-sharing activities.

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