



PRESS RELEASE

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A biodiversity knowledge hub available for 24 countries in Eastern and Southern Africa

24 November 2020. Nairobi. The Regional Resource Hub for protected areas and biodiversity is now available to support the 24 countries in Eastern and Southern Africa in improving conservation outcomes and achieving global commitments, for the benefit of nature and people. During an online event, IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, RCMRD, the Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development, and partners have officially launched the Regional Resource Hub and one of its flagship knowledge products, the most comprehensive analysis on the state of protected areas in Eastern and Southern Africa.

The Regional Resource Hub is a knowledge hub that compiles and analyses relevant data and provides information to support field interventions and policy dialogues, for fair and effective management and governance of protected and conserved areas in Eastern and Southern Africa.

The Regional Resource Hub acts as one of the regional observatories implemented by the Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management (BIOPAMA) Programme, and is hosted by the Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD) in Eastern and Southern Africa. The Hub includes an information system, co-developed with the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission, which helps decision makers to track progress on conservation targets, and to manage and assess the protected and conserved areas in the region. Other similar hubs have been established with BIOPAMA's support in Western and Central Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific.

“Effective conservation, management and governance of protected and conserved areas in Eastern and Southern Africa is crucial to our long-term economic growth and development. The establishment of this Regional Resource Hub is a great milestone as it will facilitate the provision of relevant information and data to support policies and effective decision-making on protected and conserved areas which are our invaluable natural heritage”, said **Luther Bois Anukur, Regional Director, IUCN Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office.**

One year after IUCN and RCMRD formalized the partnership for the “Regional Resource Hub”, the partner institutions presented to the stakeholders in Eastern and Southern Africa the latest developments of this knowledge hub during an online event that took place on 24 November 2020. The Regional Resource Hub was launched in the presence of Heads of Protected Area agencies, ministries responsible for protected areas and wildlife, high-level technical institutions, Regional Economic Communities and BIOPAMA donors and partners.

“RCMRD is confident that the data and information availed in the Regional Resource Hub will go a long way in delivering useful information to make informed decisions, as the various stakeholders in conservation address the challenges that threaten our biodiversity”, said **Dr. Emmanuel Nkurunziza, Director General, Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development.**



The knowledge generated by the Regional Resource Hub aims to support national governments, regional organisations, NGOs, communities and other organisations, in achieving their biodiversity conservation objectives and to report their progress on multilateral environmental agreements, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, more accurately.

The “State of Protected and Conserved Areas in Eastern and Southern Africa” report is a flagship knowledge product of the Regional Resource Hub. Launched on the same occasion, this report makes a significant contribution to assessing the current status of the protected and conserved areas in Eastern and Southern Africa and understanding their relevance to the societal needs.

“*This report demonstrates how systems of protected and conserved areas are an essential conservation strategy for the region, without which the loss of biodiversity would have been much more significant. It also highlights the many gaps in understanding and implementation, and shows us just how challenging it is to achieve effective outcomes for nature conservation*”, said **Trevor Sandwith, Director, IUCN Global Protected and Conserved Areas Programme.**

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State of Protected and Conserved Areas Report:

- Full publication: <https://doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.CH.2020.15.en>
- Information flyer: [link](#)

DESCRIPTIONS OF ORGANISATIONS:

About RCMRD

The Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD) was established in 1975 under the auspices of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the African Union (AU). It is an inter-governmental organization and currently has 20 contracting Member States in the Eastern and Southern Africa Regions. RCMRD’s mission is to promote sustainable development through generation, application and dissemination of Geo-Information and allied Information Communication Technology (ICT) services and products in member States and beyond.

About IUCN

IUCN is a membership Union composed of both government and civil society organisations. It harnesses the experience, resources and reach of its more than 1,300 Member organisations and the input of more than 10,000 experts. IUCN is the global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it.

www.iucn.org



About BIOPAMA

The Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management (BIOPAMA) programme aims to improve the long-term conservation and sustainable use of natural resources in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, in protected areas and surrounding communities. It is an initiative of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) financed by the European Union's 11th European Development Fund (EDF), jointly implemented by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (JRC). Building on the first five years of activities financed by the 10th EDF (2012-2017), BIOPAMA's second phase provides tools for data and information management, services for improving the knowledge and capacity for protected area planning and decision making, and funding opportunities for specific site-based actions. www.biopama.org

About the Joint Research Centre and the European Commission

The European Commission (EC) is the executive body of the European Union (EU), which is the world's largest donor of official development assistance. As the in-house science service of the EC, the Joint Research Centre (JRC) provides EU policies with independent, evidence-based scientific and technical support, including policies and programmes at global level and specifically those focusing on the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP). <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en>

About the European Union

The Member States of the European Union have decided to link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders. <http://europa.eu/>

About the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS)

The Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), formerly known as the ACP Group of States, is an organisation created by the original Georgetown Agreement in 1975, and subsequently revised in 2019. The OACPS' main goals centre around the sustainable development of its Members and their gradual integration into the global economy; coordination of OACPS activities in the framework of the implementation of the existing Partnership Agreement with the European Union; consolidation of unity and solidarity among Members of the OACPS; and the establishment and strengthening of peace, security and stability in free and democratic societies. <http://www.acp.int/>

