



Call for Expressions of Interest:

Contributing to the BIOPAMA Regional Observatory for Biodiversity and Protected Areas in West and Central Africa

Protected Areas and Biodiversity Observatory

Terms of Reference

A. Overview

The establishment of an *Observatory for Protected Areas and Biodiversity* is a central component of the BIOPAMA objective of building capacity to improve decision-making related to protected area management and conservation of biodiversity (terrestrial and marine). A key feature of the Observatory will be a Regional Reference Information System (RRIS), and it is envisaged that the Observatory will be focused on **networking and communications** between stakeholders, and **providing science-based data and information to support management decisions and policy processes**. BIOPAMA will primarily engage with national and regional level agencies and institutions, with additional targeted interaction with protected area managers. BIOPAMA will also develop a regional capacity building programme in partnership with existing institutions, as well as developing tools to assist in solving regional conservation issues.

The Observatory will be hosted by a regionally or a sub-regionally focused institution in the Western and Central Africa region that will:

- 1) Develop and maintain a Regional Reference Information System (RRIS) that supports data discovery, sharing, and use
- 2) Provide policy support through direct technical advice on MEA implementation (e.g. CBD PoWPA), and the development of user-centred tools (web services and applications) that address specific management questions and policy concerns
- 3) Strengthen and institutionalize technical capacity of government decision makers and protected area managers to integrate spatial analysis into their protected area and land use planning and policies
- 4) Strengthen the network of partners to both collaborate in RRIS development and enhance the uptake and use of data and tools

The primary anticipated outcomes of this activity are:

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- Improved availability and access to data to feed into the development of tools/applications within the RRIS
- Tailored tools meeting targeted policy/decision-makers' needs
- Strengthened awareness and capacity of target decision-makers to integrate geospatial tools and information into decision-making processes
- Enabled hosting organization acting as a facilitator in sustainable regional networks involving data collection, spatial analysis, training, and protected area management best practices

The effectiveness of the Observatory will ultimately be measured by the degree to which BIOPAMA tools, analyses, trainings, and dialogues contribute to national and regional governments making sound protected area management and biodiversity conservation decisions.

The BIOPAMA Observatory consortium will include: IUCN, JRC, and the Observatory host. IUCN is leading the establishment and operation of the Observatory, and JRC the design, development, and technical operation of the RRIS. The Observatory host will have a strong alignment with the vision for the Observatory and support IUCN and JRC in its implementation. The BIOPAMA Western and Central Africa Observatory will also align and collaborate with other, related initiatives.

The Observatory will form part of a global observatory network that includes Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific.

B. Background

With rapid development and growing populations and economies changing the landscapes in Africa, it is crucial that we provide appropriate and relevant information to ensure that decisions on land use are sustainable in the long-term and do not compromise the resources that we ultimately depend on for livelihoods and survival. Protected Areas play a crucial role in protecting some of these resources and therefore decisions affecting Protected Areas and their surroundings need the most comprehensive and up-to-date information available. This is the challenge that BIOPAMA is aiming to address through the development of the Regional Observatory for Protected Areas. The Observatory will provide a regional resource hub for decision-makers to allow them to make sound decisions on the protection of natural resources in the region.

The Resource hub will include relevant information, including data and analyses as well as the capacity to use and interpret this information to ensure that the awareness of the value of Protected Areas as a legitimate land use is recognised and upheld in development decisions.

In collating all the data and information needed to provide this service, the Observatory will rely on partners to link their information and data to the Observatory. This means the Observatory will also need to tackle the challenges in the region of issues such as data quality and access as well as uptake and use of information, for it to achieve its goal of supporting sound decision-making and ultimately contributing to improved Protected Area management and support. Some indicative activities that the Observatory

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will therefore engage in include the establishment of relevant data collection protocols and data sharing agreements with providers and partners in the region, building on existing discussions and agreements in the region.

It is envisaged that the Observatory will function in two main ways:

1. Networking and Communications hub –

- a. Coordinating between/among stakeholders (national government agencies, technical institutions, NGOs, and donor community) to facilitate greater awareness of existing capacity building initiatives;
- b. Facilitating delivery of BIOPAMA capacity building action plan in each region;
- c. Facilitating network(s) of protected area managers, practitioners, including between relevant government agencies;
- d. Communicating science-based PA Management ‘best practices’;
- e. Provide policy support to national governments on implementation of and reporting against MEA commitments, especially CBD PoWPA

2. Data and information hub

- a. Facilitate regional collection, access, and sharing of data and information on biodiversity and protected areas via the Regional Reference Information System (RRIS) (TOR being developed by JRC);
- b. Provide technical support and training (as part of overall capacity building programme) to stakeholders on RRIS tools, and assist with analyses directly or facilitate through JRC.

B. Day-to-day operations and functionality

(i) Location

It is envisaged that the Observatory will be housed in one physical location in the Western or Central African sub-region – where the Technical Officer will be based. Virtual links may also be created with other institutions across the region according to the ability or inability of a single institution to meet all the necessary hosting criteria. The location of the Observatory will be determined by strategic criteria and the compatibility of the host with the long-term vision of the Observatory.

(ii) Management and hosting arrangements

The day-to-day management of operations will be the responsibility of the Technical Officer, with administrative support provided by the host institution, and financial support by IUCN BIOPAMA. IUCN Regional Office (PACO) will be responsible for ensuring activities are aligned with agreed BIOPAMA project outputs, capacity building action plans, and also in line with IUCN and JRC institutional strategies. IUCN, JRC and the host institution will therefore form a steering committee to ensure effective management of the Observatory in the initial phase.

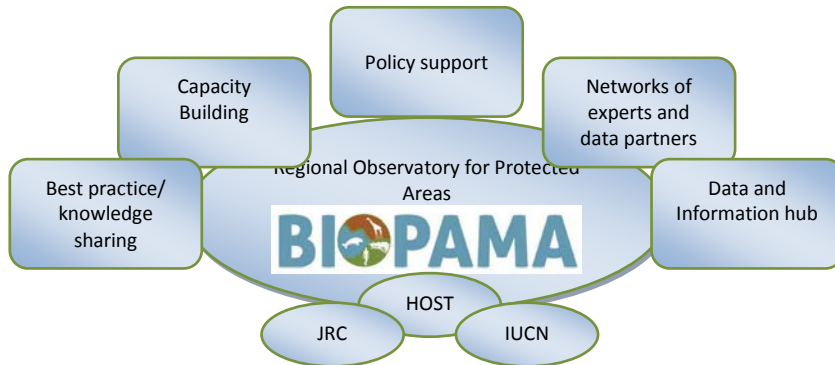
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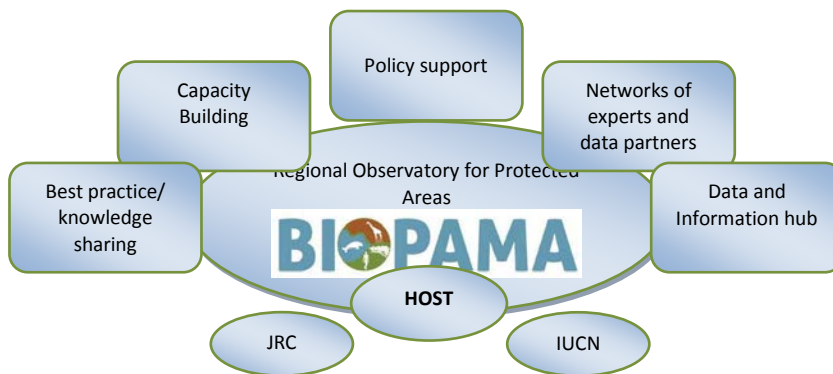


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Short term: direct involvement and support from IUCN and JRC (Phase 1)



Long term: less direct support from IUCN and JRC, transition to Host organisation running Observatory (process beginning in Phase 2)



(iii) Technical Officer

The Technical Officer will be an employee of IUCN, at least in Phase 1. The Officer will be line managed by the BIOPAMA Coordinator for the WCA region and may have a technical reporting line to the host institution (to be determined with the host institution).

The essential functions of the Technical Officer during Phase 1 are linked to the overall TOR for the Observatory and should include:

Networking and Communications

- Coordinate between stakeholders on existing PA management capacity building initiatives;
- Coordinate delivery of BIOPAMA capacity building action plan across the region;
- Assist with facilitating PA management networks, and/or assist establishment of new networks where needed;

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- Communicate relevant science-based PA Management ‘best practices’ to stakeholders/networks;

Data and Information

- Facilitate collection of data and information on biodiversity and protected areas for use in the Regional Reference Information System (RRIS);
- Facilitate technical support and training to stakeholders on use of RRIS and associated tools;
- Assist with requests from regional and national stakeholders for data analyses, or facilitate requests through JRC in Italy;
- Actively promote data sharing and data sharing agreements with national and regional governmental agencies, research institutions, NGOs;
- Provide technical support to national governments on improving data access and availability for reporting against CBD PoWPA and other international agreements on biodiversity.

Policy Support (this function will be shared with the IUCN Regional Coordinator)

- Communicate with range of audiences on protected area and biodiversity policy;
- Network and build linkages between research and policy communities;
- Monitor and evaluate the use of information products;
- Develop strategy to improve user engagement and use of products;

The Observatory will provide direct technical support and implementation of activities in some cases (e.g. workshop facilitation and training; data analyses), while other activities and services that may require more expert input or considerable more time than is available from the Technical Officer could be sub-contracted as appropriate.

(iv) Phases of operation

BIOPAMA Phase I

- Year 1 (early-mid 2014) – Establishment: focus on raising awareness of function of Information Centre/Observatory; building networks; building relevance and credibility of RRIS and prioritizing information needs; focus on providing targeted policy support to selected national governments (e.g. those making specific requests)
- Year 2 (Dec. 2015) – Building Service Function: Focus on providing targeted policy support to selected national governments; coordinate priority capacity building activities; demonstrate examples of RRIS services and its application potential and relevance to users; build capacity for data access and analysis; prioritize data and information collation based on priority needs in the region.

BIOPAMA Phase II and beyond

- From 2016 – Expanding Service Function: Continue to build networking, facilitation, and communication function; demonstrate application and relevance of the RRIS to inform PA management decision-making, with focus on priority issues; continue to build capacity of wide range of stakeholders to access, analyse, and share data and information.

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