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The time for choosing?

The conservation world has long understood that we have entered an era of biodiversity decline, some even calling it the sixth period of massive extinction of species since the life appeared on earth. Nearly all agree in saying that this comes as a direct result of human activity (see NAPA # 72's editorial on the Anthropocene). Mankind being the source of the problem, it is therefore necessarily part of the solution, if one does exist...

The debate is not new but it is still ongoing. There is, on one side, the ideal situation, in which the Earth (and all its ecosystems) evolves naturally. Species appear, others disappear, but this evolution is beyond our realm, so we should not have to worry. In this case - purely theoretical nowadays -, we would be sufficiently happy living besides the rest of nature without further questioning ourselves. Unfortunately, the increased human footprint on the planet has changed things significantly, and man can no longer evade his responsibility in the pressure put on some species (others, it must be remembered, having greatly benefited from man's activities). Conservation, therefore, is the answer we came up with to solve the predicaments we ourselves generated. And protected areas (protected against us) are a tool participating in this answer. But despite all this, biodiversity (at large) continues to disappear. Can we simply go on with these previous models?

Should we change our strategy?

A survey conducted in 2011 (**Murray Rudd in Conservation Biology*) across almost 600 researchers involved in the study of biodiversity asked for their opinions on this issue. The study shows a wide diversity of advices, but some factors predominate: First, the question of prioritization is no longer a taboo. Given the failure - real or perceived - of conservation, the majority of scientists (almost 60%) think we need to make choices and those may include to focus our efforts on selected species / ecosystems to the detriment of others. How then, do we choose the species on which to focus our efforts? The answer is not given, but it appears that over 40% of the surveyed scientists want to mix economy and ecology, in other words, to emphasize the conservation of species displaying economic utility to humans. Yet nearly 50% of them believe that it is not possible to link the ecosystems' functions to economic values, which challenges the feasibility of the ecosystem services approach, so proactively promoted in recent years. A large majority also recognizes that more and more constraints and rules are needed for the conservation of biological diversity. In other words, it is necessary to force humanity to be more reasonable. Finally, over 80% admit that we need to rethink the conservation objectives and success standards we have set, especially in the light of climate change, otherwise we may continue facing identical failure rates. Curiously, older scientists tend to mainly defend this position, as if experience had taught them, if not what to do, at least what not to do.

I do not know what fraction of these scientists were talking about or from Africa but it is likely that the results would not be so different, had the survey been carried specifically about the continent.

Several studies have shown and continue to show that the decline in biodiversity is particularly important here and that conservation efforts are struggling to curb this alarming situation. Here more than anywhere else probably, tough choices have to be made if we are to achieve what can be. Will we finally make these choices?

This NAPA does not aim to answer this question, which deserves much more than a single letter, but it evokes a path for improvement that, at least, is widely agreed upon: improved training, for better decisions and more promising results.

**Scientists' Opinions on the Global Status and Management of Biological Diversity - Murray A. Rudd - Conservation Biology Volume 25, Issue 6, pages 1165 – 1175, December 2011-
http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/cobi.2011.25.issue-6/issuetoc*

Papaco is also on Twitter
@Papaco_IUCN



Training courses on protected areas management – assessment of ongoing initiatives and perspectives

Directions 1 to 6 of the Road Map for African PAs

Reminder: IUCN-Papaco has developed different trainings on Protected Areas management since 2008. A Master's degree has been initiated with the Senghor University (three promotions trained since then) and also an eight-week University Diploma (the 10th UD will be held in Burkina Faso in Feb/March and the 11th in Gabon in April/May) - (see NAPA n°8 and 47 on the Master, n°40 and 63 on the University Diploma, n°23 on professional training and n°58 on e-learning). All these offers have been favourably assessed recently (see below). But in any case, they target a few dozen of people each year and do not respond to the expectations of the many parks managers or PA partners in French speaking Africa, where training on this specific topic is scarce. We are therefore considering developing a larger offer that could take the form of a Mooc (see page 8). More info to come in next editions of the NAPA...

1) Assessing Papaco's capacity building initiatives for protected areas management in West and Central Africa

By Francis Staub (biodiversité Conseil – www.biodiv-conseil.fr) and Bora Masumbuko (IUCN)

In West and Central Africa natural resources are important for and contribute to economic and social development. Hence these resources, especially the ones within and around protected areas, are subject to various pressures and threats. As a result, biological diversity experiences gradual loss, which affects the ecological balance of ecosystems. Protected area stakeholders involved in protected area management need adequate training to face these changes. Therefore, building capacities in protected area management remains a priority for the development and conservation of parks and reserves in Africa. It is with this in mind that IUCN-Papaco (within the IUCN's Central and West Africa Programme / IUCN-PACO) set up a short-term and a long-term course in 2008. Between then and the date of this assessment, about 150 interns from more than 15 different countries had taken one of the two courses offered (*note that the courses are still going on now*). The present evaluation of what has been learnt and how it is applied shows very good results and highlights the relevance and the utility of these courses, and the need to continue running them. The main changes observed are an improvement in knowledge in the protected area field, changes in professional attitudes and personal development (greater self-confidence).

A. Context and introduction

In West and Central Africa natural resources are instrumental to economic and social development. Hence these resources, especially the ones within and around protected areas, are subject to various pressures, including illegal hunting, uncontrolled fires, over exploitation of timber and non-timber forest resources... As a result, biological diversity experiences gradual loss, which affects the ecological balance of ecosystems.

Protected area stakeholders involved in protected area management are not always prepared to face these threats and changes, which are not always accompanied by adequate training. The training that is provided and is a part of school or university "Water and Forestry" departments does not include specific modules on protected areas. Therefore there is a pressing need to build the capacities of

young professionals and managers responsible for promoting biodiversity conservation in protected areas. Building capacities in “protected area management” is therefore a priority for the development and conservation of parks and reserves in Africa, as it will help protected area managers better understand planning, monitoring and evaluation, consultation methodologies and the legal or technical standards.

The importance of Capacity building was also recently highlighted at the World Park Congress and was one of the main theme with the purpose to develop and implement a legacy of protected areas capacity development programmes and products that will assist countries to more effectively and equitably manage their systems of protected areas and enhance their ability to meet their commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity and Aichi Targets and to address the challenges across the suite of themes addressed by the Congress.

Within this context, the Papaco, in collaboration with different partners – initially 2iE (Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso) and subsequently with Senghor University of Alexandria (Egypt) – developed short and long-term courses aimed at providing the different stakeholders with the tools and methodologies or the specific technical and scientific skills required to improve the way they manage their parks and ensure lasting results.

The two training courses are:

- A *University Diploma* (UD) aimed at young professionals with relevant experience. It takes eight weeks of five to six day modules which combine theory with field visits.
- A *Master's Degree*, a two year course which enables young graduates to specialise in this field.



Field trip of the first promotion of the Master's degree, in 2009, Burkina Faso

After 5 editions of the UD and 2 editions of the Master, this study has been conducted in order to understand the effects of the courses on the careers of the persons trained and on the conservation. In particular, the perceptions of past students on the courses and how it affected their day-to-day work and activities were assessed and recommendations to improve the courses were formulated.

B. The courses and their objectives

The University Diploma

The objective of the *University Diploma* (UD) also called “Building Skills in Protected Area Management” is to equip protected area managers with the tools as well as the specific technical and scientific skills to improve the way they manage parks and to ensure their actions are long-lasting. This training programme is aimed at protected area managers from the public, para-public and private sectors in West Africa. It also targets NGOs or association managers working in the environmental field or in renewable natural resource management. Candidates must have professional experience and at least a 3 years university study in a relevant subject. A maximum of 20 participants are selected per edition.

The entire course is made up of modules, which combine lessons in theory with a field trip to apply the various tools acquired. Modules include:

- Module 1: Conservation policy and protected area concepts
- Module 2: Evaluation and planning in protected area management
- Module 3: Participatory approach/management and promotion of protected areas
- Module 4: Notions of practical ecology for protected area management
- Module 5: Ecological monitoring, techniques for wildlife census taking and an introduction to GIS
- Module 6: Field trip and data processing
- Module 7: Environmental law and sustainable development
- Module 8: Environmental economy

At the end of this course, it is expected that the participants:

- have acquired/reinforced the priority skills for managing protected areas
- are capable of implementing plans that are adapted to the sustainable management of environmental resources

- have strengthened their skills in ecological monitoring, human/wildlife conflict resolution, and local reconciliation and consultation
- have improved their knowledge of general tools (agreements, environmental law, management instruments, standards etc.) which will make them operational, able to propose and implement conservation policy.

The course is evaluated and enables successful students to obtain a University Diploma in “Protected Area Management” awarded by Senghor University. The teachers are experts selected based on their experience in the West Africa Region and in Protected area management. The course is entirely given in French. At the time of this study, the course had been run five times in West Africa¹ since January 2011, for a total of 99 students (*note that the 10th edition is currently under preparation and will be held in February in Ouagadougou*).



First promotion of the UD in 2011, Ouagadougou

The International Master's in Protected Area Management

This long training course offers a major in “Protected Area Management”. The first year consists in “generalist” modules which focus on the following: environmental and development issues, the economy of the environment, environmental law, international relations, general ecology, English, IT, project management, management tools, environmental evaluations etc. It ends with a 10-week internship in a professional situation. The second year focuses on the major subject, protected areas: protected area

¹A similar training course was organised for Central Africa in partnership with Senghor University and WCS in 2012 (UD 5), 2013 (UD 7) and 2014 (UD 9). This course will be run for the fourth time in April 2015 (UD 11).

conservation/management policy and strategies, forestry, decentralisation, environmental education, protected area management tools, financing, effectiveness, promotion etc. and concludes with the presentation and defence of the internship dissertation.

To enrol, students must hold at least a 4 years university study (Bachelor's degree or equivalent). Selection is based on evaluation of written applications. After the course, students who have successfully completed all the modules will receive a Master's in Protected Area Management.

At the time of this study, this course had been run twice for West and Central Africa since 2008. 49 students from these two sub regions have obtained this degree since the course began (*the third cohort began the course in September 2013, and will end in May 2015*).

Unique courses in West and Central Africa

Other training institutions offer courses on general or related subjects and in other regions such as the ERAIFT (Regional post-graduate school for the development and integrated management of forests and tropical areas) in DRC, which offers a post-graduate diploma in development and integrated management of forests and tropical areas or Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar with its Master's in Integrated Management and Sustainable Development of West African Coastlands (GIDEL), which mainly focuses on marine protected areas.

The two assessed training courses, specifically created to build capacities in “protected area management” in West and Central Africa, are therefore unique in the sub-region and respond effectively to an existing demand. Indeed, the recent regional evaluation of demand and supply in terms of courses for protected area professionals in West and Central Africa (*Hausser, 2013*), conducted by the Biopama project, highlights that currently only the University Diploma and the Master's are actually operational.

However with the growing pressures that affect protected areas and the need to improve their management to face these threats, more countries and institutions are thinking about developing training courses, which specifically target protected area management.

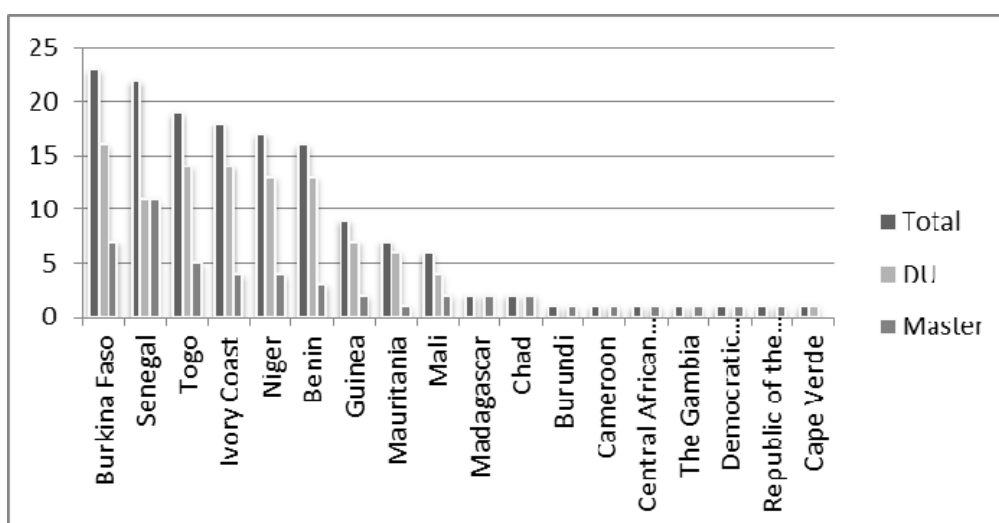
C. Methodology

In order to gather the information for this study a questionnaire was developed and sent to 148 students (UD and Masters). The information sought concerned student profiles, training, professional experience, comments on the course itself, application of skills learned. Following the questionnaire, telephone interviews were held in order to explore their responses further. Three countries were visited (Niger, Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast) in order to have a better idea of how the skills acquired were applied on the field and also to discuss with the Directors of the Agency for protected areas in each country. For the other countries that were not visited, directors were contacted over the telephone.

In total 102 questionnaires were filled in: 73 for the UD (73.7% of responses) and 29 (59.2% of responses) for the Master's. For the Master's, four countries did not return their questionnaires: Central African Republic, The Gambia, Guinea and Democratic Republic of Congo. Because the questionnaires were not filled out in a uniform manner, and the students sometimes skipped certain questions, the percentages are calculated in a relative manner (in relation to the number of responses received).

D. Results and impacts of the training programmes

The **geographical distribution** shows that six countries benefitted well from these two courses: Burkina Faso (23), Senegal (22), Togo (19), Ivory Coast (18), Niger (17) and Benin (16).



Distribution of Students by Country

In terms of gender, in total, a little more than 20% of the graduates are women. While this figure seems low it is nonetheless more than significant in light of the actual situation in the field where few women are involved in protected area management.

A high majority of the students who responded (more than 80% in average for both courses) declared that **the training courses had met their expectations**, and that they were **satisfied** with them. Among the strong points of the courses, they most frequently mentioned:

- The creation of a network of protected area management specialists / sharing of experience
- The content and quality of the courses
- The quality of the teachers
- The field trip
- How easy it was to enrol – enrolment procedure

Among the weak points of the course, they most frequently mentioned:

- The module on GIS/remote sensing not detailed enough
- Generally insufficient hours (and therefore certain subjects covered too briefly)
- Not enough practical training / lack of practical experience

The professional career of graduates

➤ *The University Diploma*

Six countries benefitted well from the training courses: Burkina Faso, Togo, Ivory Coast, Niger, Benin and Senegal, followed by three others (Guinea, Mauritania and Mali), which had between four and seven people trained. Thus particular attention is paid during selection of candidates to the students' country of origin so that the sub-region is trained evenly.

In most countries that participated in the course, there is a good distribution across the different types of organisation (public sector, international organisation, NGO, foundation, private sector, and student), except in Ivory Coast where graduates are only in the public sector, and Mali (public and NGO).

The majority of the former students in all countries work in the public sector. Other work in NGOs and another minority are currently students or work in the private sector. Students are enrolled in Master's degrees on a related subject, i.e. Natural Resource and Biodiversity Management, Protected Area Management, Tropical Ecosystem Management, short course, and PhD (Climate Change and Land Use).

One of the most important results is work in connection with a protected area or around a protected area. The study revealed that more than 60% of the respondents are currently working in a protected area or the surrounding area mainly in the public sector, which is therefore the greatest beneficiary of this capacity building. This result indicates that the skills acquired are useful and that the training meets a real need. Institutions involved in the public sector are at the central level (e.g. General Directorate for Environment or whatever denomination depending on the country, an Agency for protected area management, or a project which is hosted by the government), or on a protected area site. Some graduates also hold positions with international agreements (CITES, RAMSAR, World Heritage).

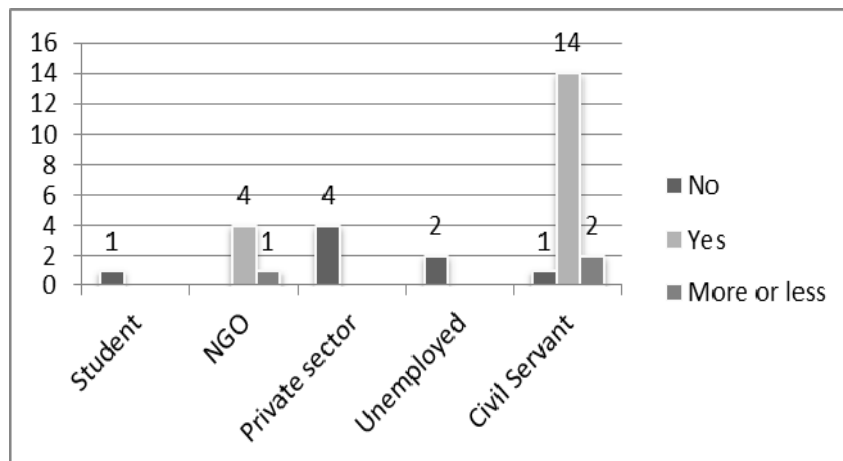
➤ **The Master's degree**

In total 17 countries participated in the Masters programme since its beginning in 2008, with 10 countries from West Africa, 6 from central Africa and Madagascar, with a total of 49 students. Senegal is the country that has most benefitted from the Master's course (more than 20% of the total trained). Burkina Faso, Togo, Ivory Coast and Niger were also well represented.



Second promotion of the Master's degree, in 2012

The majority (60%) of the former students work in the public sector, and 20% in NGOs. And more than 60% of the respondents are currently working in connection with a protected area or around a protected area. Most graduates are now working in the public sector, which represents almost half the students employed within a protected area. Therefore the course enables graduates to obtain protected area management positions, clearly fulfilling its objectives.



Type of organisation in connection with a protected area or around one

Furthermore, the positions held by graduates are important positions, sometimes at a decision level. For example in Niger the current director of fauna and hunting is a former Master's student. In sub-directorates, graduates also hold positions. Graduates can also be found in charge of protected areas: Warden at the Sena-Oura National Park (Chad), Deputy Warden at the Dimonika Biosphere Reserve (Congo), Head of ecological monitoring at W National Park Benin (Benin), Ecological monitoring manager in the Giraffe zone (Niger).

Course impacts and implementation of skills acquired

The courses have had numerous effects at various levels: at the student level, the institutional level but also at national and regional level. The graduates have been able to develop and improve their knowledge. The impact can also be felt on their professional attitudes and personal development (self-confidence). The institutions thus benefit from these effects as they now have staffs who are more convinced, at all levels of the importance of protected areas.

➤ ***The protected area concept***

In general, the courses lead to a better understanding of the “protected area” concept, including the IUCN protected area management categories that some have tried to apply at the national level. The students have a new vision of protected area management issues, and they even admit that they no longer speak the same language as their colleagues who have not done the course. Furthermore, the courses bring and/or reinforce knowledge for more effective management. They enable the tools required and in particular the importance of management plans and ecological monitoring to be better understood. As a result, graduates now work in a much more professional manner using concepts that they now understand better and more rigorous work methods. Many respondents feel themselves more confident to talk about the subject, especially during meetings, and are therefore even able to influence decision makers. As an example regarding decision making influence, in Niger, the Directorate for Wildlife, Hunting and Protected Areas has quadrupled its budget for protected areas following “lobbying” by course graduates.

➤ ***Protected area management planning and participation of communities***

Many elements are well understood in terms of participatory protected area management planning, including the need for an up-to-date management plan, the formulation of priority objectives, the involvement of all stakeholder and if necessary those from the surrounding area, etc. In the field, many respondents have participated directly or indirectly to varying degrees in developing or updating management plans. Some examples are: participation in management plan development (now awaiting adoption by the National Assembly) for Arly national park in Burkina Faso, participation in development of management plans for two newly created Marine protected areas: Sangomar and Gandoulin Senegal, substantial contribution to the writing of the Fazao- Malfakassa park management plan in Togo.

The respondents are now convinced that a protected area can only be managed effectively if the local communities are involved and informed. They now have a better understanding of how to involve local communities in the different site management activities. They improved awareness among local communities so that they better understand the need to properly manage the

resource that is necessary to their well-being.



➤ ***Management effectiveness and ecological monitoring***

The students declared that they have a better understanding of the tools for evaluating protected area management effectiveness, especially Rapid Assessment and Prioritization of Protected Areas Management (RAPPAM), Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT), and Enhancing our Heritage (EoH), and they started using them annually for their protected area. They also acquired the skills necessary to develop and implement ecological monitoring systems. Many of them have set up monitoring systems and developed new indicators. In Benin, for instance, the skills acquired were used to improve the ecological monitoring system at the Pendjari National Park. In Burkina Faso they carried out wild animal and bird census at the Classified forest and partial wildlife reserve of the Comoé-Léraba, and in Senegal, they set up an antelope monitoring protocol at the Gueumbeul special wildlife reserve.

E. Conclusion

Capacity building in “protected area management” is one of the priorities for developing and conserving parks and reserves in Africa. Planning tools, monitoring and evaluation tools, consultation methods etc. are generally poorly grasped by most managers and other protected area stakeholders.

The courses are unique in the sub-region and offer an exhaustive range of skills. They offer two different and complementary options: the UD aimed at working professionals, and during a short period of time, and the other mainly targets students (the Master’s). They address the main subjects that are important in protected area management. They respond to the needs (especially the UD

Programme) expressed by practitioners by covering, even briefly, the main subjects related to protected area management.

Students are in general highly satisfied about the course. Many graduates are found in key positions in all institutions responsible for protected areas, and they will now be able to work towards more effective management. This should progressively, as more people are trained, lead to positive changes in protected area management.

The many examples of how the skills learned during the course have been put into practice in the field, of changes in students' mentalities regarding protected areas and the positive testimonies they offer, are all reasons for continuing these courses.

At this stage the UD seems to better respond to needs on the ground. Indeed, the main effects and most significant impacts were noted for those who had taken the UD course. This result seems logical as more people have taken it and most of them were already working in connection with a protected area. They were therefore able to put their new skills into practice immediately. It would appear that priority should be given to continuing the UD course.



Acknowledgements

Funding for this courses was provided by the World Bank-GEF, the MAVA Foundation, the Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial (the French Global Environment Facility - FFEM), the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the Agence Française de Développement (French Agency for Development - AFD).

2) A “MOOC” on management of Protected Areas for francophone countries in Africa – Challenges, opportunities and the way forward...



Study realized by M. Francis STAUB (biodiversité Conseil – www.biodiv-conseil.fr) and financed by the French Agency for Development – Afd

MOOCs (*Massive Open Online Courses*) are highly interactive online course aimed at unlimited participation and open access to all on the World Wide Web. In addition to traditional course

materials such as videos, readings, MOOCs provide interactive user forums that help build a community of actors. MOOCs are a recent development in distance education, which began to emerge in 2012. MOOCs have the potential to enhance online education in developing countries by facilitating collaboration between people, places and technology. Taking this into consideration, a MOOC on management of Protected Areas in West and Central Africa would be very relevant.

Some challenges but some great perspectives for Africa

There are still a number of challenges in implementing MOOCs in the developing world. MOOCs rely on digital technologies and e-learning spaces to achieve their goals. Many regions of the developing world lack not only adequate telecommunications infrastructure, but also access to computers, technical expertise, online learning skills and English language proficiency (indeed, it can be estimated that currently only 100 MOOCs are in French, while there are more than 2000 MOOCs in total worldwide).

Despite these challenges, MOOCs can be successful in the African context, as long as their content is adapted (for the case of francophone Africa, the first thing would be to use French!) and make use of available and appropriate technologies.

Africa's Internet penetration of 15.6% is growing steadily, thanks to investments in broadband and the proliferation of smartphones. The McKinsey Global Institute projects that by 2025, Internet penetration will rise to 50% (600 million users) and smartphones will increase six-fold.



Mooc are a way to connect offer and needs for learning

According to a recent Fast Company article, the need - and demand - for MOOCs is strong: Africa is the “youngest” continent with 200 million people between the ages of 15-24, with an expectation to double in size by 2045. Yet sub-Saharan Africa’s higher education enrolment is the lowest in the world (about 5%). Thus, combining MOOCs with mobile phones could be a very powerful way to educate large numbers of people in the Africa.

As an example of this opportunity, Coursera, the prominent American MOOC platform provider, has recently partnered with the World Bank and the Tanzanian government to provide MOOCs to African students in an ICT education initiative.

Protected Areas in Africa are under pressure

Africa is home to some of the most precious ecosystems and species of the planet. The continent has many “protected areas” that play a critical role in contributing to biodiversity conservation, but also in securing ecosystem goods and services, and enabling climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies. Unfortunately, most of the protected areas face a situation of disequilibrium, which is characterized by external pressures exerted on the protected area. The main threats to protected areas can be summarized as follows: habitat loss and degradation due to conversion to pastureland and agriculture and overexploitation of natural resources, including logging, collection of non-timber forest products (NTFPs), overfishing, and overgrazing by livestock. To face these threats and to fully provide these services, protected areas must be managed effectively.

The resources available to the management structures are frequently insufficient, lacking human, financial and material resources. Protected area managers often lack the skills needed for the role in today’s context. Today more than ever, park managers and those responsible for resource planning need effective trainings and tools to deal with the pressures and threats that African protected areas are facing. Strengthening the capacities of the staff of management bodies and local stakeholders, and raising awareness of nature protection are essential for an efficient management.

Capacity development has been identified in many regions and in global assessments on biodiversity conservation as one of the key priorities that needs

to be urgently addressed to promote best practices and management performance in protected areas.

In Africa, several capacity building initiatives have been created, for instance the 8 week University Diploma on protected area management (done with the Senghor University) for young professionals. The course is aimed at protected area managers (and their scientific, NGO or private sector partners). Unfortunately, these initiatives are not yet widely available, and often receiving a very high and increasing number of applications. In addition to the high demand, the increasing costs of education in Africa, is a barrier to large access.



UD 7 in Gabon, in 2012

A gap to fill

Despite this continuing need for capacity building, there are still very few – short – training opportunities on protected area management for Africa. Moreover, there are currently very few MOOCs targeting Africa and / or natural resources management. Taken into consideration, the need for capacity building, the growing importance of protected area, and the few resources available (without mentioning the cost and difficulties of organizing training in Africa), a MOOC on « management of protected Area » appears to be potentially a wise solution. In addition to the improvement of the skills of learners with regard to Protected Areas management, such a MOOC will facilitate the creation of a community of involved actors for the protection of nature in West and Central Africa.

Brief reminder on what a MOOC is...

The common format is a course of 7 weeks. A standard 2 hours lecture becomes in the online format a set of 5 to 10 videos of 10-12 minutes each. Students initially see the teacher introduce

the topic, but soon thereafter the focus shifts on what the teacher writes. Instead of blackboards tablet computers are used, on which the professor writes on an empty or pre-filled screen, while speaking.

The second major component of MOOCs is assignments. Students have to upload assignments every week, which in some of the most popular MOOCs can be very challenging. Assignments are evaluated and graded automatically when possible. As an alternative, the evaluation is crowd-sourced to the students themselves, asking them to grade their peers.

The third component of MOOCs is a forum, which adds a social dimension.

The fourth component is a certificate given by university (or training institute) to students who succeed at all assignments.



UD 8 in 2014, Ouagadougou

Concept and approach for developing a MOOC on management of the Protected Areas in West (and Central) Africa

The development of a MOOC can be very time consuming. It usually requires the development of new materials and methods, or at least adapting content and methods that will be applicable to the different learner and learning contexts. It is estimated that the development of content of a MOOC takes two to three times greater than creating a traditional course.

However, a wealth of useful and practical resources is already available through the UD and IUCN's partners such as the MAVA (ex Fondation Internationale du Banc d'Arguin). Thus, the content of the course could be adapted from these resources but also other partners such as the Master GIDEL « Gestion Intégrée et Développement Durable du Littoral Ouest africain » from the University Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar,

Senegal. If needed, additional contents coming from foreign universities could be used.

- Course objective

The course would aim to understand the opportunities and challenges implied by the management of protected areas. The course should help “learners” to gain a better understanding of the importance of protected area, their vital role if well managed and the different aspects of PA management. The course would target technicians and practitioners, as well as all conservation partners (NGOs, civil society or the private sector) who want to better understand the meaning of their everyday actions. It could also enable a wider audience to become familiar with natural resources management. Thus, it can be expected that this course could have also an impact on the critical mass of the population and made it aware of the role, and importance of protected areas.

- Certificate

Upon successful completion of the course, students will receive a “Certificate of Completion,” “Statement of Accomplishment” or some other equivalent, in a digital format. While it is always nice to have something to show, these certificates of completion are not yet very recognized and have a limited value. However, this trend could change within the next couple of years. Moreover, to address the risk of cheating and/or identity fraud, MOOC platforms are increasingly prepared (for a small fee: \$30 to \$100 per course) to verify students' identity and provide proctored exams. This allows the student to obtain a **verified certificate of completion**. Some providers are also starting to offer proctored exams in testing centres. The possibility of getting credit with African Universities should also be explored.

Next steps

In order to move forward in the development of a MOOC on “management of Protected Area”, it will be imperative to secure some initial funding to allow the recruitment of a team in charge of the content development. The time to develop a MOOC depends on the complexity and the desired level of details. The average time ranges **from 3 to 6 months**. IUCN-Papaco will engage in this initiative in 2015.

More on www.papaco.org

AFRICAN WORLD HERITAGE FUND AND SCHOOL FOR HERITAGE IN AFRICA 6 MONTH INTERNSHIP

VENUE 1: Midrand, South Africa (AWHF) from 01 April – 30 September 2015

VENUE 2: Porto-Novo, Benin (EPA) from 01 March – 31 August 2015

Funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African World Heritage Fund

OBJECTIVES

□ Provide an opportunity for young African professionals to gain regional experience international heritage organizations.

Build capacity and enhance skills in heritage conservation and management for both heritage professionals and heritage institutions.

□ Establish an African/international support network for management of cultural/natural heritage in order to build the institutional capacity needed to implement the Convention.

Applicants include students (graduate), professionals or members of natural/cultural heritage and academic institutions (not necessarily within the heritage sector). Applicants must be 30 years of age or below. The project is open to participants from all African countries. Applicants are required to be competent in either English or French. The costs for the internship will be covered by the organizers

The complete application package should be sent **at the latest on the 6th February 2015 via electronic emails to:** AWHF - Pamela Mac Quilkan (PamelaM4@awhf.net) with copy to EPA (epa@epa-prema.net).



Job offer – ZSL

Pendjari National Park (Benin) -
Technical Advisor

(West and North Africa Conservation Programme)

ZSL's West and North Africa Programme is looking for a Technical Advisor to support Pendjari and W national parks in Benin. The successful candidate will be responsible for the delivery of this new initiative to strengthen capacity for conservation of the W-Arli-Pendjari complex.

Main Duties:

The main focus in the initial phase is to support effective law enforcement monitoring and protection in Pendjari and W national parks through the implementation of the SMART approach

(www.smartconservationsoftware.org). The Technical Advisor will also work alongside colleagues at ZSL and partner organisations to develop the project further and secure additional funds for its delivery.

Person Specification:

• Successful applicants will have an excellent standard of written and spoken French,

- Ability to communicate effectively in English,
- A Master's degree in a relevant subject or equivalent level of work experience in a relevant field.
- Experience in protected area management, wildlife protection and/or patrol based monitoring (ideally SMART or similar approaches) is essential
- Proven experience in capacity development.
- Solid personal and collaborative skills and proven experience of working with multiple collaborators and stakeholders.
- Experience of project management and development is highly desirable,
- Good understanding of biodiversity conservation issues in the region essential.

The candidate should have proven budget management and report writing ability, and excellent communication skills. Ideally the candidate should also have experience of living and working in developing countries, preferably in West Africa. The post will be primarily based in and around Pendjari and W national parks, with regular travel to ZSL's office in Cotonou and the wider region as appropriate. This is a 1 year renewable contract, dependant on funding. The position is to start as soon as possible.

To Apply:

Applicants should send their CV, Equality of Opportunity Monitoring Form and a Covering Letter detailing relevant experience and skills and stating why they want the position, by email to hr@zsl.org.

Closing date for applications: 8th February 2015.

Start date: ASAP



CAPACITY BUILDING

The Earth Skills Network: Training and Mentoring to Support Management Effectiveness

African World Heritage Sites and Protected Areas are invited to apply to an innovative skill sharing programme that will develop the capacity of sites to meet organisational challenges.

Earthwatch has launched the Earth Skill Network and applications for funded training in 2015 close on 27th February. Read on for more information, or visit the Earthwatch **website** to download your application pack

What is the Earth Skill Network?

The Earth Skills Network (ESN) is a unique collaboration between Earthwatch, UNESCO, IUCN and the business community. ESN connects leaders from the business and conservation world through mentoring and skill-sharing opportunities, focusing on strengthening protected area management.

ESN arises from an understanding that, although protected area managers have a wealth of ecological knowledge and practical skills, there are a wider suite of business skills, which do not typically form a large part of staff training.

Companies have a wealth of experienced staff and spend a lot of resources on training for effective business management, so the Earth Skills Network brings together experienced business mentors, recruited from the corporate world, with managers from protected areas, World Heritage Sites and management authorities, in a mentor-mentee relationship to transfer key business skills.

This training helps to ensure that sites have a strong organisational foundation and a strategic approach to management. It also increases understanding within the business community of the important role that sites play in safeguarding vital ecosystem services, upon which communities and businesses depend.

ESN builds on five years of training UNESCO World Heritage Sites through the 'Business Skills for World Heritage' programme. Here's what Kishore Rao, Director of the World Heritage Centre had to say about this initiative, *"In a world where an MBA is considered a pre-requisite to managing any private sector company, it seems odd that management training is not readily available to those looking after some of the planet's most precious wilderness areas. I am delighted that this unique collaboration is building the expertise of the custodians of our natural heritage."*

Why is the ESN relevant to me and my organisation?

Most protected area site managers are trained biologists with several years of field experience, giving them solid grounding to respond to the wide range of challenges they face, from managing

forest fires to counteracting poaching. However, effectively managing protected areas requires additional skill sets, which that are not always part of traditional staff training. Management challenges go beyond ecosystem health and include those related to running a site's organisational systems and processes. If a protected area lacks organisational effectiveness then it will be compromised in its ability to deliver on management objectives.

By training staff in essential business management skills the ESN can help to ensure effective operations at your site. Applying these skills will help your organisation to make better use of available resources, identify and prepare responses to potential risks, develop the foundations for sustainable financing of activities, and much more.

By joining the Earth Skills Network your organisation can:

- Access a fully-funded, in-depth training programme in business planning and effective management.
- Receive mentoring from an expert with significant business experience in an international organisation, helping your site to take a strategic approach to tackling specific issues.
- Support the professional development of staff, helping them to develop the leadership competencies required to put the skills they have developed into practise.
- Network, connect with and support staff from other African protected areas.
- Have an opportunity for constructive dialogue with members of the business community, potentially with companies that are operating in your region.



Business mentors and Site managers meet in South Africa for a 10 day training programme

How is the programme structured?

The ESN training is focused around a 10 day intensive residential training, which takes place in South Africa and is co-delivered by a team of learning and business professionals. During the residential training, three staff representing a protected area, or group of protected areas, work with a business mentor to review the specific business challenges they face, and to develop a plan for applying the skills developed during the training. Representatives may be from site management, management authority or government level. After the residential training, protected area representatives continue to work with a business mentor to achieve their objectives for at least 12 months. Support, guidance and encouragement from the mentor and Earthwatch, combined with senior management support on the ground ensure effective outcomes.

What is the impact of the training?

Earthwatch have been running skills sharing programmes for six years, and have trained over 90 staff. These individuals return to their site with new skills and motivation, and the support of a business mentor to help them put what they have learnt into practise. On the ground ESN is helping in numerous ways. For example, at one site the mentor and mentees have identified \$25,000 a year in cost savings, have organised a community engagement forum and are working on a number of initiatives to enhance revenue generation through ecotourism.

Here's what one protected area manager had to say about his experiences, *"Every success story starts with a dream. Do you dream of a better future for your protected area? Joining this course was the best decision in my professional life. The*

content and experience was rich and more importantly the networking has been amazing."



Business mentor from Shell working with the Director of Marojejy National Park, Madagascar

How can I find out more?

The application period for ESN is open until **February 27th** and Earthwatch are pleased to be able to offer fully funded training bursaries to 6 sites in Africa. Training will take place in October 2015. For more information and to apply visit the **Earthwatch website** : <http://eu.earthwatch.org/corporate-partnerships/partnering-with-earthwatch/earth-skills-network-introduction>. Or contact Stacey Baggaley (sbaggaley@earthwatch.org.uk).

BIOPAMA East and Southern Africa is seeking a **consultant to develop draft guidelines for mineral and hydrocarbon exploitation (EI) development in the SADC region.**

The consultant will assist IUCN and SADC in developing the content for the regional guideline, based on the outline and inputs suggested by the workshop participants (held in September 2014). The consultancy shall be conducted within a 6 week period beginning middle March and must be **completed by 30 April 2015.**

For further information, download the ToR on www.papaco.org

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Program Officer - Small Grants for Conservation (PPI) – Support to local NGOs West Africa

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