

# A road map for African protected areas: act now!

**Africa** is a continent with a **rich, unique and irreplaceable biological diversity**. It contains many **protected areas** whose vocation is to preserve this **richness**, now and for the future.

## Are we succeeding?

**Yes**, certainly, in some places and in some countries, according to the context, actors, history, partnerships... **There are some successes and encouraging initiatives, so there is hope.**

**No**, definitely not, if we look more generally at the results of many recent analyses, and even more so if we consider the **challenges** that await, the first of which is the **significant growth in the human population** and a reduction in the area available for biodiversity and natural habitats.

## What should we do?

**Continue and strengthen conservation programmes and projects** at all scales and of all kinds, research and other studies? Certainly. This is a **very long-term task** that has produced, and will continue to produce, **useful and necessary results**. We should continue working on « **what we have to do** » to improve protected area management, because we need **more efficient tools, more effective methods, and a better understanding and evaluation of the results.**



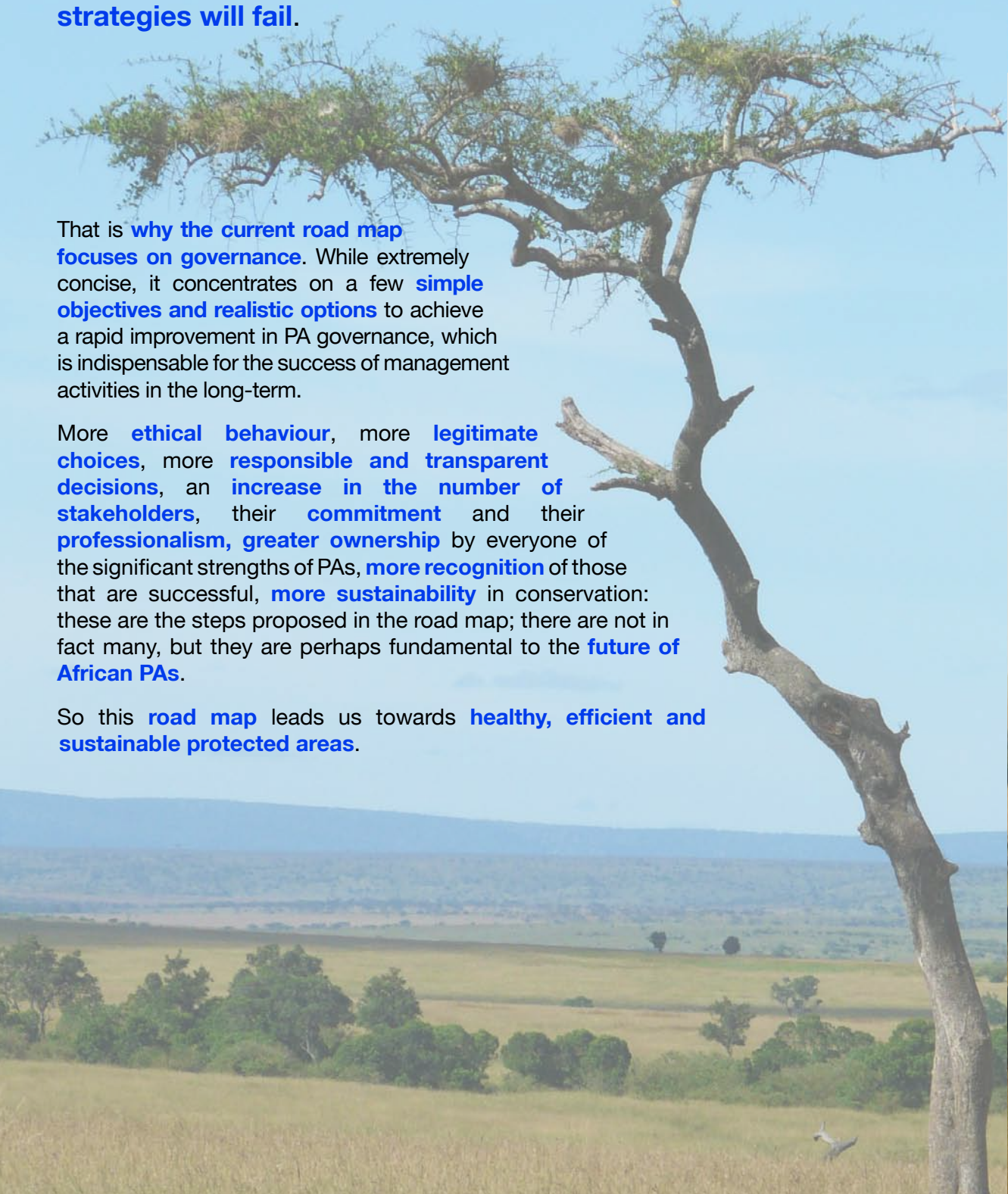
## But is this enough?

While working on the « **what to do?** » we can forget « **who should do it?** ». In other words, by focusing on **PA management**, we neglect **governance**. But we see, we know, we measure every day that **without functional and legitimate PA governance, even the best management strategies will fail.**

That is **why the current road map focuses on governance**. While extremely concise, it concentrates on a few **simple objectives and realistic options** to achieve a rapid improvement in PA governance, which is indispensable for the success of management activities in the long-term.

More **ethical behaviour**, more **legitimate choices**, more **responsible and transparent decisions**, an **increase in the number of stakeholders**, their **commitment** and their **professionalism, greater ownership** by everyone of the significant strengths of PAs, **more recognition** of those that are successful, **more sustainability** in conservation: these are the steps proposed in the road map; there are not in fact many, but they are perhaps fundamental to the **future of African PAs**.

So this **road map** leads us towards **healthy, efficient and sustainable protected areas**.



## Healthy PAs

Because without transparent and shared governance, legitimate decisions on conserving the integrity of the area are not possible

### Direction 1: **promote governance** that involves a wide circle of stakeholders

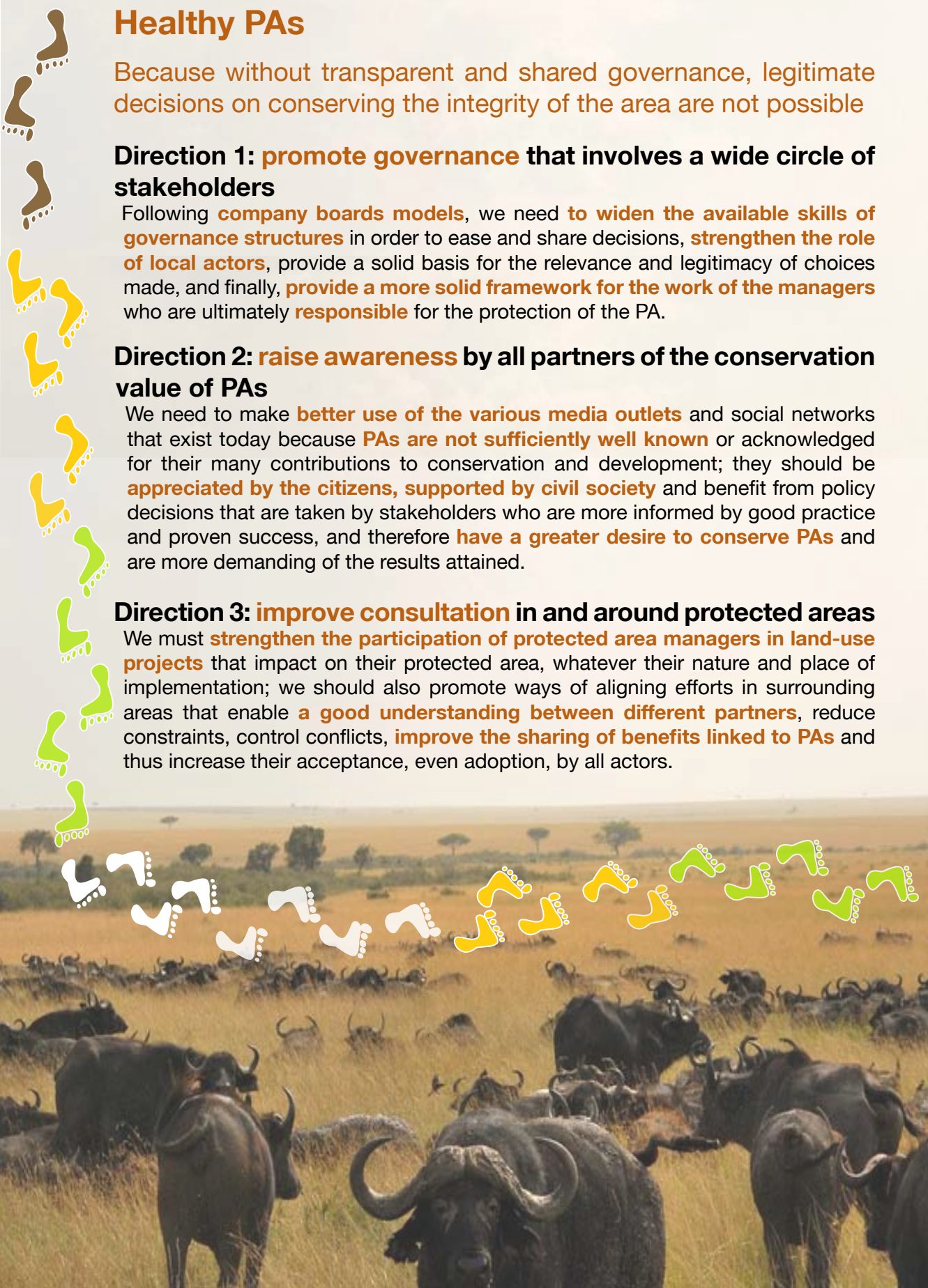
Following **company boards models**, we need to **widen the available skills of governance structures** in order to ease and share decisions, **strengthen the role of local actors**, provide a solid basis for the relevance and legitimacy of choices made, and finally, **provide a more solid framework for the work of the managers** who are ultimately **responsible** for the protection of the PA.

### Direction 2: **raise awareness** by all partners of the conservation value of PAs

We need to make **better use of the various media outlets** and social networks that exist today because **PAs are not sufficiently well known** or acknowledged for their many contributions to conservation and development; they should be **appreciated by the citizens, supported by civil society** and benefit from policy decisions that are taken by stakeholders who are more informed by good practice and proven success, and therefore **have a greater desire to conserve PAs** and are more demanding of the results attained.

### Direction 3: **improve consultation** in and around protected areas

We must **strengthen the participation of protected area managers in land-use projects** that impact on their protected area, whatever their nature and place of implementation; we should also promote ways of aligning efforts in surrounding areas that enable **a good understanding between different partners**, reduce constraints, control conflicts, **improve the sharing of benefits linked to PAs** and thus increase their acceptance, even adoption, by all actors.



# Efficient PAs

Because modern management is based on competent, responsible managers who use effective tools to achieve measurable results

## Direction 4: **promote greater sense of responsibility among managers**

Managers are major conservation actors and should follow **realistic and pragmatic objectives** (set out in the management plan) and revised on the basis of **regular evaluation** according to means available and the support obtained. We need to recognise **the level of efficiency of their decisions** and the quality of the results they produce **to valorize their role in conservation** or, if necessary, **to correct their failure**.

## Direction 5: **reinforce the competence of management structures**

For more robust governance and more effective management, the structures in charge of PAs must **identify their strengths and weaknesses** then propose ways and gather means to remedy them, as necessary, (change of status, hiring new profiles and new skills, training, especially of young rural people close to the PA, share tasks with more competent partners...) and **engage in a virtuous cycle of progress, measurable on the basis of delivered results**.

## Direction 6: **develop the managerial capacity of all stakeholders**

We need to adopt, among all partners involved, a **business-like approach**, aimed at conserving the values of the PA, while relying on a **framework** (the management plan), **methods and knowledge that are robust and easily accessible** and with quality standards for measurable results.



# Sustainable PAs

Because conservation is built on actions over the long term, to preserve biological richness forever

## Direction 7: **optimise the effectiveness of support for protected areas**

Too many actions undertaken still do not produce real results and even have negative impacts. We should support projects that: **reinforce good management plans** (existing, or if necessary, to be developed); take account of the capacities of the actors and **encourage cooperation**, whatever the scale of intervention. Transforming « big » projects into « long » projects that are adaptive, and imposing a « **good conduct** » **charter on donors** would offer **more sustainability to the changes sought**.

## Direction 8: **ensure the resources available for management and governance are made permanent**

We need to **rationalize expenditure**, multiply, diversify, and **consolidate sources of income**, establish strategic bridges between different contributions and sources of support...to allow management decisions to be made and their **impact assessed** over time, and **put in place long-lasting mechanisms of governance** that are ultimately independent of the means occasionally available.

## Direction 9: **promote protected areas that show the way (green list)**

Whatever their ecological importance and route followed, PAs which succeed in their conservation mission should be acknowledged and used as **examples to improve practice** and motivate those in charge. The **green list of the best PAs** should allow us to embark on a long-term progress in selecting **good options for PA management** and to **reward the best performance** in the long-term.



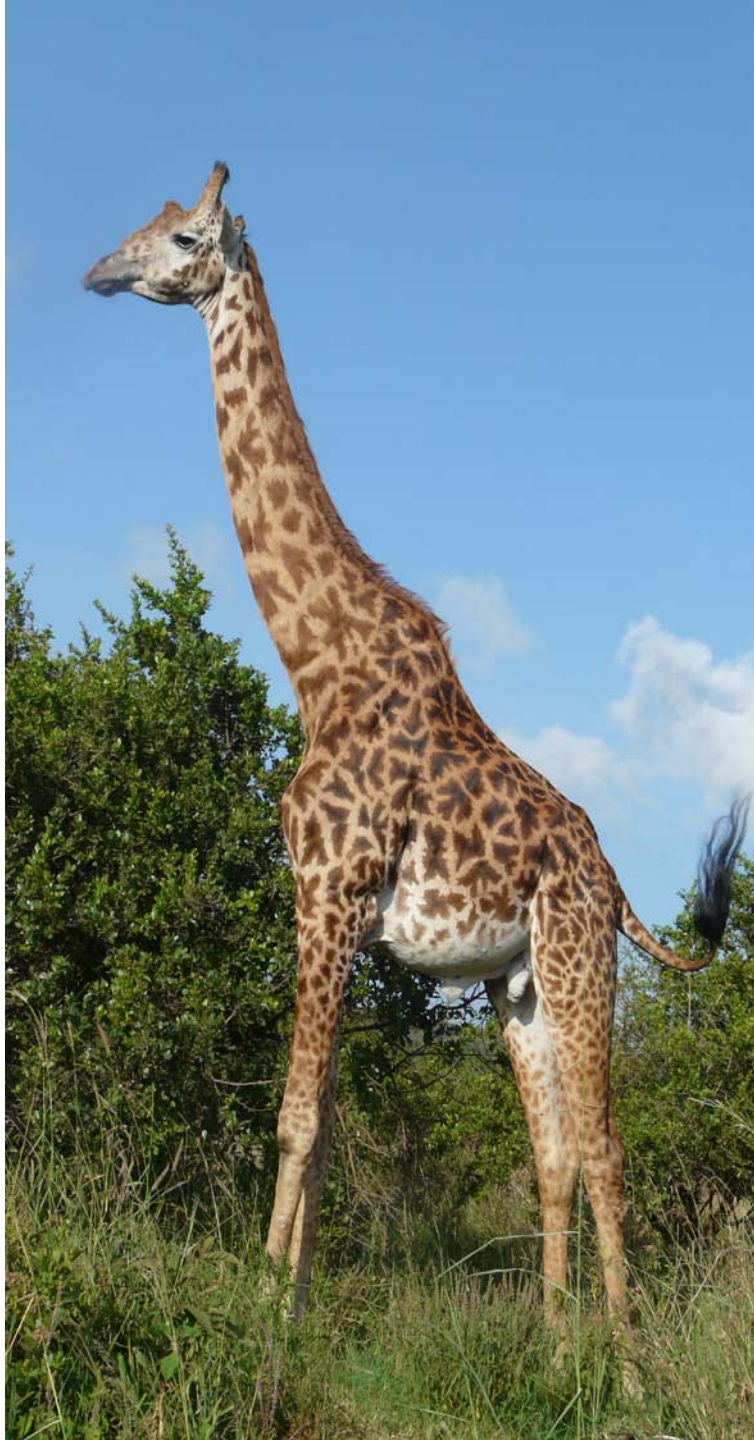
# What next?

The few steps proposed in this road map provide an **initial framework** to direct our **ambitions, choices,** and **strategies** towards stronger and more effective protected areas, **acknowledged and recognized in the green list.**

If each manager, administration, donor, and partner... carry out their actions **according to this road map,** we will gain more **relevance, coherence,** and certainly **effectiveness.**

From the World Conservation Congress, in Jeju, in September 2012 to the next one in 2016, we have **four years to achieve success.** Four years **to develop the right tools, enhance the best methods, change behaviour and amplify positive impacts...** Four years to definitively reverse the current trend and **restore to African protected areas their rightful role in the world of conservation.**

**Build on this framework, invent, innovate and communicate...** share your **experiences, ideas,** and **wishes or expectations...** on the new website of the **partnership for protected areas and conservation:** [www.papaco.org](http://www.papaco.org) which, month by month, year after year, will follow **our progress towards success.**



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