

NEWS FROM AFRICAN PROTECTED AREAS

NAPA 205

CONSERVING NATURE IN AFRICA



THIS MONTH IN THE NAPA

EDITORIAL



P.2 & 3 **HOW TO FINANCE CONSERVATION?**

All actors must come together with a “whole of society” approach to assure the sustainable financing of our natural heritage for people today and for future generations...

MOOC, TUTORIALS
AND ESSENTIALS



P.4 & 5 **OUR ONLINE COURSES**

Stay up to date with all the latest from our MOOCs, Tutorials, and Essentials, and join the platform at moo-conservation.org.

YOUTH
CONSERVATION



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In Youpwé, the mangrove becomes a living classroom, by our benevolent mentor, Roger Tchounzou

THIS MONTH IN
THE NAPA



P.8 TO 11 **SUSTAINABLE FUNDING OF PAS**

Discover our brand-new **tutorial** on sustainable financing of conservation in protected areas... **Join now!**



Funding protected and conserved areas

By David Meyers
Executive director - Conservation Finance Alliance

Protected and conserved areas (PCAs) are the backbone of conservation - maintaining essential ecosystems and nature's services that enable countries, economies and people to thrive and stay resilient in the face of climate change and a rapidly changing environment. These critical jewels of nature and economic value need as much support as can be provided by a full range of management and finance solutions. Finance has historically been a challenge for PCAs as even in many developed countries it is often difficult to assure adequate budgets from government sources - the primary source for PCA funding - and most sites need to be extremely creative to capture additional site-based revenues to complement the funding allocated by governments.

There has been a growing interest in funding PCAs from non-governmental sources as in many countries government budgets are constrained and funding nature is not prioritized from a political perspective. While creativity and alternative sources of funding are important, core PCA funding should be coming from governments for a few key reasons.

First, the conservation of nature and public lands is a central role of government as governments are responsible for the general wellbeing of their current and future citizens - no other entity has that primary responsibility.

This is especially the case for shared resources that require collaborative management over long periods and necessitate the balancing of multiple trade-offs among diverse stakeholders.

Secondly, governments are uniquely endowed with powerful tools and mechanisms to capture the value of healthy ecosystems and natural capital through taxes, fines, levies, and fees. These instruments allow for the value of water regulation, coastal protection, flood control, pollination, climate regulation and recreational services (among others values) to be captured and redistributed to assure the retention of these values. Many of the values of nature can be considered "public goods" and it is the domain of the public sector to assure they can continue to be enjoyed by the population.

Finally, governments are responsible for setting the terms of use including restrictions on consumption, conversion, land tenure, rights and responsibilities, and market prices (through taxes and subsidies) of natural resources and natural capital. These traits of government taken together show how national and subnational governments should be the main source of funding for nature and protected and conserved areas.

...



Join our tutorial on www.mooc-conservation.org

It remains essential for PCA management authorities to remind government representatives - especially when they change regularly - of their role and responsibility for finance and sound management of natural resources and especially of protected and conserved areas. Governments can also empower local communities to better manage sites and resources by providing clear rights and responsibilities, building management capacity, and endowing those local groups with the ability to collect and retain site based revenues.

In the end, all actors - private companies, Indigenous People, local communities, civil society, and the public sector must all come together with a "whole of society" approach to assure the health, longevity, and sustainable financing of our natural heritage for people today, for future generations, and for all the other living entities on our shared planet.

David Meyers, PhD, MBA
Executive Director
Conservation Finance Alliance

Want to learn more?

Join our tutorial on www.mooc-conservation.org

This tutorial explores the range of finance solutions available to support Protected and Conserved Areas using practice guidance. You will gain a foundation in PA finance, understand finance planning, and examine Practice Guidelines for PA finance. As you work through each module, you will also be guided through the development of a comprehensive financing strategy for a fictional park as a way to put your new knowledge into practice.



OUR ONLINE COURSES: MOOCs, TUTORIALS AND ESSENTIALS

Our 8 MOOCs, 4 Essentials and 5 Tutorials are always open and available!



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Free online training courses for amateurs and professionals in conservation and protected areas

Start learning →

To follow the ESSENTIAL MOOCs and Courses, you will need an internet connection and access to a computer, tablet or smartphone.



MOOC Conservation is the platform that hosts IUCN-Papaco's online training courses, developed in partnership with the Senghor University, in Alexandria (Egypt).

See you on:

www.mooc-conservation.org

THE MOOCs THEME-BASED TRAINING

MOOC BUNDLE FOR THE ONLINE CERTIFICATE

The following MOOCs must be completed to sit the exam and obtain the Online certificate in protected area conservation:



[PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT](#)



[ECOLOGICAL MONITORING](#)



[LAW ENFORCEMENT](#)



[SPECIES CONSERVATION](#)



[VALORISATION OF RESOURCES AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM](#)



[NEW TECHNOLOGIES](#)



[MARINE PROTECTED AREAS](#)

[Learn more about the online certificate here](#)

Next date: 16 June 2026 for English speakers

TUTORIALS TECHNICAL TRAINING



[NATURE CONSERVATION EDUCATION](#)

For teachers, educators, parents, etc., to provide them with the tools and methods they need to teach the children in their care about nature conservation...



[WORDS OF CONSERVATION](#)

An interactive glossary with 100 essential words and expressions you need to know if you want to conserve nature and understand PA management...



[MANAGEMENT PLANNING OF PROTECTED AREAS](#)

A step-by-step guide to organising the preparation, implementation and evaluation of your protected area management plan...



[HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT](#)

A simple method for understanding, anticipating and responding to conflicts between humans and wildlife...



[RESTORATING PROTECTED AREAS](#)

A practical guide explaining the different steps to follow to prepare, restore and assess a damaged protected area...



[SUSTAINABLE FINANCE FOR PROTECTED AREAS](#)

How to sustain your protected area and develop a powerful business plan...

OTHER MOOCs AVAILABLE ON MOOC-CONSERVATION.ORG



[GOVERNANCE OF PROTECTED AREAS](#)



[COMMUNITIES AND CONSERVATION](#)

MOOC CONSERVATION IS SUPPORTED BY THE FONDS FRANÇAIS POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT MONDIAL



ON MOOC-CONSERVATION, THIS MONTH: MOOC COMMUNITIES AND CONSERVATION



NEW: SUSTAINABLE FINANCE FOR PROTECTED AREAS

This tutorial explores the range of sustainable finance solutions available to support Protected and Conserved Areas (PCAs) using practice guidance from IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas. Learners will gain a foundation in PCA finance, understand finance planning, and examine four Practice Guidelines for PCA finance. Its content was developed by a team from the Conservation Finance Alliance and Conservation Strategy Fund's Numbers for Nature Training Institute, based on guidelines prepared for the IUCN WCPA. They will also explore how to develop a comprehensive financing strategy for a fictional park, putting their new knowledge into practice.



THE COURSE IS OPEN, FREE, AND CAN BE TAKEN AT YOUR OWN PACE: [CLICK HERE](#).

MOOC COMMUNITIES AND CONSERVATION

Last month we launched this MOOC on community-based conservation. Join the 1500 learners who already started their learning journey. The practical approach of this course makes its content easily applicable to the field.



THE COURSE IS OPEN, FREE, AND CAN BE TAKEN AT YOUR OWN PACE: [CLICK HERE](#).

ONLINE CERTIFICATE IN PA CONSERVATION

Since June 2025, graduates of the Online Certificate in Conservation of PAs from French-speaking Africa and Haiti can apply for a field internship to put into practice the knowledge acquired in the MOOCs.

>> [How to obtain the Online certificate? Click here.](#) <<

2026 MOOC CONSERVATION CALENDAR

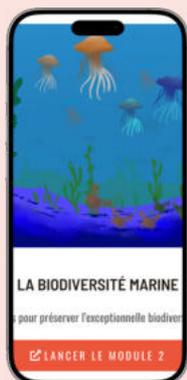
**23 mars : launch of MOOC
One Health**

**16 June: Online certificate
exam for English speakers**

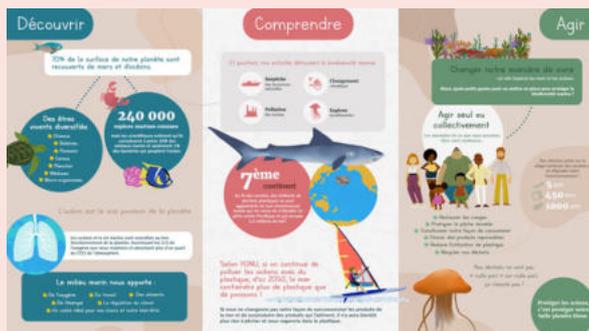
YOUTH CONSERVATION

DEDICATED RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE TO RAISE AWARENESS AND INSPIRE THEM TO TAKE ACTION!

On the [Youth Conservation environmental education platform](#), you will find dedicated resources tailored to children and young people, available in a variety of formats to suit different needs. Everything is 100% free and open access, and the content is offered in several languages, including national and regional languages. Please feel free to share widely to help educate, raise awareness, and inspire younger generations to take action!



Tailored video learning pathways



Clear, illustrated posters



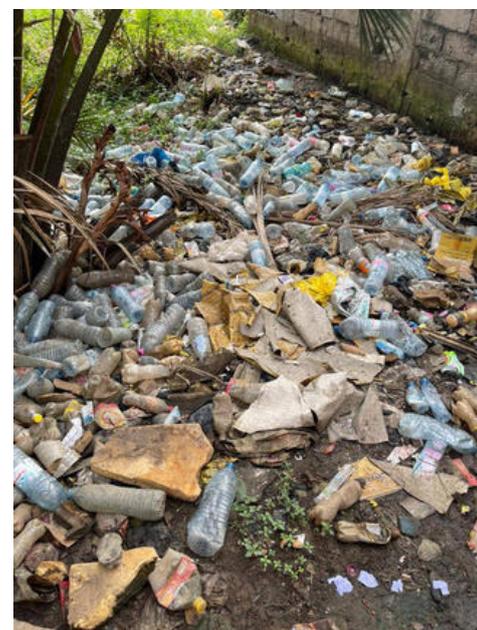
Audio content available on [Spotify](#) and [YouTube](#)

YOUTH CONSERVATION - VOICES FROM THE FIELD

IN YOUPWÉ, THE MANGROVE BECOMES A LIVING CLASSROOM, BY OUR BENEVOLENT MENTOR, ROGER TCHOUNZOU

On the occasion of World Wetlands Day 2026, under the theme “Wetlands and Traditional Knowledge: Celebrating Cultural Heritage,” the NGO *Anges Réunis pour une Conscience Solidaire*, in collaboration with the Regional Delegation of the Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development, mobilized local authorities, students, civil society organizations and media around a shared goal: strengthening wetland protection while valuing ancestral knowledge.

The highlight of the event was **a field excursion to the Youpwé mangrove** — an immersive experience in one of the most strategic ecosystems of the Congo Basin.



Wetlands: allies for Climate and Health

Rivers, mangroves, seas and oceans are major climate regulators and vital carbon sinks. They support food security, protect against flooding and erosion, and host exceptional biodiversity.

Yet these ecosystems are under growing pressure: deforestation, pollution, biodiversity loss, and the escalating impacts of climate change.

Protecting wetlands means acting simultaneously for climate stability, public health and sustainable development.

Understanding to Take Action

Five thematic workshops structured the day, following a clear educational approach:

Define - Discover - Understand - Act.

Topics included wetlands and pollution, climate change, health, and traditional knowledge — turning awareness into practical engagement.

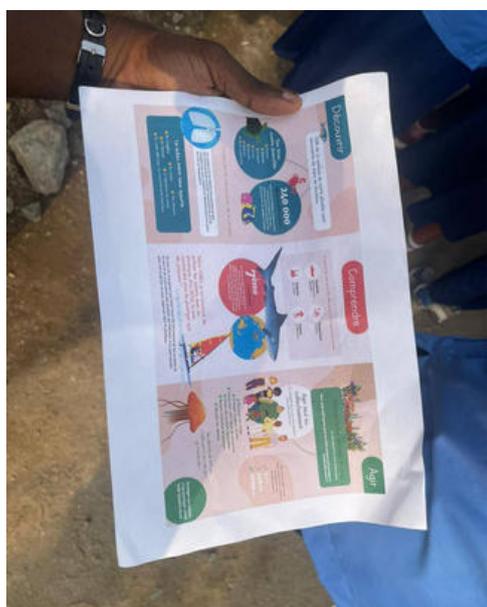
Media outreach campaigns, educational discussions, and the presentation of local initiatives further broadened participation. A report will be submitted to contribute to the Congo Basin's inputs to upcoming international conferences on oceans and wetlands.

Valuing Traditional Knowledge to Strengthen Resilience

At the heart of this year's celebration was the recognition of traditional knowledge as a key driver of sustainable resource management and climate resilience. Far from being merely cultural heritage, these practices represent strategic assets for conservation.

Beyond a one-day event, this initiative forms part of a long-term commitment aligned with the One Health approach, which recognizes the interconnectedness of human, animal and ecosystem health.

In Youpwé, the mangrove was not only visited. It became a space for learning, intergenerational dialogue and collective commitment to the future.



SUSTAINABLE FUNDING OF PROTECTED AREAS

OUR NEW TUTORIAL ON WWW.MOOC-CONSERVATION.ORG

This NAPA presents a summary of our brand-new tutorial on **sustainable finance solutions** available to **support Protected Areas (PA)**. Learners gain a foundation in PA finance, understand finance planning, and examine four Practice Guidelines for PA finance. They explore also how to develop a comprehensive financing strategy for a fictional park, putting their new knowledge into practice.



The tutorial primarily draws recommendations and material from the *“Practice Guidance for Protected and Conserved Areas Finance,”* which was published by the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) in 2025. The Guide is designed to provide its readers with a deep understanding of how the tools of finance for nature, also known as conservation finance, can support conservation goals in protected (PA) areas.

To know more: **join our tutorial for free on www.mooc-conservation.org**

Module 1 (summary): how can finance help my protected area?

Strong financial planning is essential to manage protected areas over the long term. Without adequate and well-managed funding, protected areas cannot conserve biodiversity, provide ecosystem services, or support human well-being. The **first module of the tutorial** introduces the foundations of protected area finance and explains why finance is a core management issue, not just a budgeting exercise.

A. Ecosystem Services: why protected areas have value

Protected areas conserve ecosystems that deliver ecosystem services, which directly support people, economies, and the planet.

Those ecosystem services are:

Supporting. They maintain ecological processes (e.g. soil formation, nutrient cycling)

Provisioning. They supply resources (e.g. water, food, timber)

Regulating. They regulate natural systems (e.g. climate regulation, flood control)

Cultural. They provide recreational, spiritual, and tourism benefits

Why this matters for finance?

These services have real economic value, even if they are not always priced in markets. Remember, protected areas generate major economic and social benefits, making them strong candidates for long-term investment.

B. Importance of funding and the finance gap

Protected areas are essential for biodiversity conservation but are severely underfunded. The Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) sets the goal of protecting 30% of land and water by 2030 (30x30). Achieving this requires aligning public and private finance with biodiversity goals and removing harmful subsidies.

The funding gap: about US\$68 billion per year is needed to manage existing protected areas. This is almost three times more than current funding. Meeting 30x30 targets could require up to six times current funding levels.

Why investment in PAs makes sense?

Protected areas generate strong economic returns. They support livelihoods, climate stability, water security, and tourism. Effective finance systems improve efficiency and empower PA managers. The problem is not just lack of money, but also how finance is mobilized, managed, and aligned with conservation goals.



C. Key challenges in protected area finance

Protected areas face multiple, interconnected financial challenges:

- Nature is not priced:** ecosystem values are often excluded from markets.
- Public goods problem:** benefits are shared, but costs fall on specific managers.
- Harmful policies and subsidies:** trillions of dollars still support activities damaging nature.
- Inefficient public funding systems:** funds may arrive late, be poorly targeted, or be inflexible.
- Mismatch between needs and budgets:** real management needs are not reflected in planning.
- Weak financial management capacity:** limits effective and sustainable use of funds.
- Short-term funding:** prevents long-term conservation planning and impact.

Note that **financial challenges are structural**, not just operational!

D. Creating an enabling environment for PA finance

To overcome these challenges, certain enabling conditions must be in place.

1. **Economics.** Nature must be internalized into economic systems. Tools include green taxes, environmental regulations, cap-and-trade systems, and natural capital accounting. Governments play a central role in setting market rules.

2. **Institutions.** Strong institutions are essential for enforcement and accountability. Weak governance, corruption, or poor coordination can undermine finance solutions. Capacity building and institutional reform are critical.

3. **Policy and incentives.** Conservation finance works best when clear incentives and predictable funding exist. Environmental commitments must be backed by enforcement and budgets.

4. **Information.** Economic valuation and clear business cases help justify investment. Information must be accessible and shared across institutions and stakeholders.

5. **Social and equity considerations.** Finance solutions must be socially acceptable, transparent, and equitable. Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and stakeholders must be involved throughout planning and implementation.

Finally, these enabling conditions can be grouped into: **Incentives - Systems - Capacity and empowerment.** We should note that finance solutions fail without supportive policies, institutions, information, and social legitimacy.

E. Good Practice Guidelines for conservation finance

There are four complementary approaches to protected area finance (from the WCPA Guidelines):

-**Optimize resource efficiency:** use existing resources to achieve the greatest conservation impact.

-**Discourage harmful actions:** use financial tools to reduce activities that damage nature.

-**Incentivise positive actions:** align economic incentives with conservation outcomes.

-**Increase financial capital for conservation:** mobilize new funding and manage it responsibly.



Note that many PA managers focus only on operational funding and miss broader, cost-effective solutions. Management costs are often driven by external threats. **If threats are not reduced, no amount of funding will be sufficient.**

A holistic finance strategy is more effective than simply raising more money.

F. Taxonomy of finance solutions

Finance solutions are tools and mechanisms used to implement the four good practice approaches. BIOFIN defines them as context-specific combinations of financial and economic instruments.

We find seven categories of finance solutions:

- Return-Based Investments**: e.g. loans, equity, crowdfunding, venture capital
- Economic Instruments**: e.g. environmental taxes, fees, permits, fines, offsets
- Grants and Transfers**: e.g. public aid, philanthropy, conservation trust funds
- Business and Markets**: e.g. conservation businesses, nature credits, voluntary offsets
- Public Financial Management**: e.g. budgeting, fiscal transfers, subsidy reform, earmarked revenues
- Risk Management**: e.g. insurance, blended finance, pay-for-success models
- Financial Efficiency**: e.g. management effectiveness, PPPs, biodiversity accounting

Protected area finance is not one tool, but a **portfolio** of solutions tailored to local needs and conditions.

In conclusion, **protected areas generate high economic, social, and environmental value** but current funding is far below what is needed. Financial challenges are systemic and require enabling conditions. **Effective PA finance combines efficiency, incentives, risk management, and capital mobilization.** And long-term conservation success depends on reducing threats, not just increasing budgets.

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QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Conservation is a business of perpetuity."

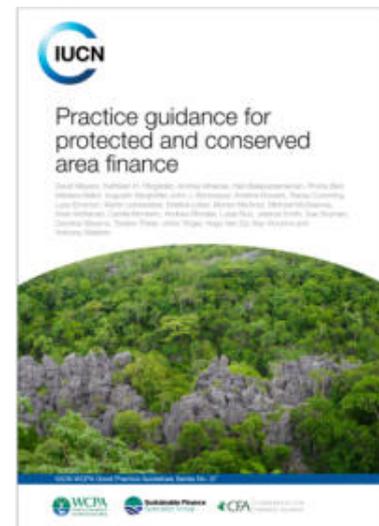
Gifford Pinchot, one of the pioneers of modern conservation in the United States, considered one of the founders of the scientific management of natural resources.

THE RESOURCE OF THE MONTH - A MUST-READ!

IUCN WORLD COMMISSION ON PROTECTED AREAS - PRACTICE GUIDANCE FOR PROTECTED AND CONSERVED AREA FINANCE (2025)

How to build truly sustainable financing for protected and conserved areas?

This recent WCPA guide provides **a clear methodological framework** to analyze financial needs, diversify revenue sources (public, private, philanthropic, and innovative mechanisms), and **develop a coherent long-term strategy**. It offers practical tools, thematic fact sheets, and concrete examples from diverse contexts.



👉 **Our new tutorial on sustainable financing for protected and conserved areas is directly inspired by this publication!**

We draw on its core principles, strategic approach, and resource diversification logic to make them accessible and actionable for our readers.

A reference resource for moving from short-term budget survival to a genuine financial strategy in support of conservation.

Available for download on the IUCN portal [HERE](#).

NEWS OF THE WORLD - PROGRESS MADE, BUT CHALLENGES REMAIN...

🐢 RETURN OF THE FLOREANA GIANT TORTOISE IN THE GALÁPAGOS

After nearly 200 years of absence, the Floreana giant tortoise has been reintroduced to the island that bears its name, following a breeding and ecological restoration program. This revival of a once-extinct species represents a collective victory for science, protected area management, and community mobilization in restoring key ecosystems.

🌳 REFORESTATION AND CONSERVATION IN COSTA RICA

In a global context of widespread forest loss, Costa Rica stands out: its Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) program has promoted forest protection and restoration for several decades, with more than half of the country's forested area now under coverage. This initiative demonstrates how economic mechanisms can effectively support long-term conservation goals.

🌲 TROPICAL FORESTS STILL UNDER PRESSURE

Despite these successes, global forest loss remains alarming, with millions of hectares destroyed each year. This serves as a reminder that conservation alone is not enough without strong public policies and sustainable financing.

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To contribute to a NAPA (article or publication on protected areas, cover photo, job offer, etc.), contact us at moocs@papaco.org.

THE OPINIONS EXPRESSED IN THIS LETTER DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THOSE OF IUCN