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Brussels, 28 November 2017/IUCN/ACP: The European Union (EU) and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States have invested €60 million in the Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management (BIOPAMA) Programme over the next six years – making it one of the largest EU biodiversity programmes. The programme is being implemented by IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature and the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission.

“The protection and sustainable management of biodiversity in ACP countries requires a comprehensive approach that extends beyond the establishment of protected areas,” says **Patrick I. Gomes, Secretary-General of the ACP Group**. “It is against this backdrop that the ACP Group of States supports the BIOPAMA Programme, which not only contributes to the protection of terrestrial and marine biodiversity but seeks to provide relevant data and information to decision-makers at all levels, to enhance biodiversity conservation in ACP countries.”

This renewed commitment underlines the importance of the more than 9,000 marine and terrestrial protected areas in the ACP countries, which protect species and ecosystems and underpin the well-being of more than three billion people.

“Protected areas are a key element of sustainable development, benefitting local and rural communities,” says **Stefano Manservigi, Director General of the European Commission's Department for International Cooperation and Development**. “They underpin economic activities, like tourism, and they guarantee basic services, like water provision. When managed in an efficient way, they improve local governance and promote the stability of large territories. This is why the continued success of the BIOPAMA programme is so crucial.”

The [BIOPAMA Programme](#) ^[1], which commenced in 2011, delivers high-quality data on the status of protected areas, poaching, illegal logging and many other issues in African, Caribbean and Pacific countries. With this data, the programme helps prioritise where immediate interventions and investment in protected areas are most needed.

“High quality data is indispensable for effective planning and decision making in conservation,” says **IUCN Director General Inger Andersen**. “This generous contribution will provide the data needed to better manage protected areas so that they continue to provide life-supporting benefits to people around the world. IUCN looks forward to working with the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries to help conserve their unique biodiversity, sustain livelihoods and achieve sustainable development.”

A new component of the Programme, financed through the 11th European Development Fund, is the funding of projects led by local communities, NGOs and other key actors, enabling them to enhance livelihoods through the sustainable use of resources in protected areas.

“JRC is delighted to continue its partnership with IUCN and to work together on BIOPAMA, and is honoured for the opportunity to further our work in support of the priority needs of the ACP Group of States and European international cooperation and development policy,” says **Alan Belward, Head of the Knowledge for Sustainable Development and Food Security Unit at the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission**. “BIOPAMA underlines the link between people and nature – we face global threats to biodiversity but these can only be properly addressed by enabling sustainable development as part of efforts to conserve ecosystems. Information is fundamental to understanding these relationships and making smart decisions – JRC will apply all of its renowned expertise and experience in delivering high quality, robust data and knowledge products to support this.”

The BIOPAMA Programme has brought significant improvements in accessing data and information, and building capacity in managing protected areas. More than 2,000 protected areas, NGO, academic and government staff received support through BIOPAMA between 2012 and 2017, to address specific regional or community needs. Four regional resource hubs for decision making have been established. They support data collection, analysis, monitoring and reporting, and develop the capacities of staff and organisations to manage this information.

For more information, visit the [BIOPAMA website](#) [1], or read the [original article](#) [2].

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[1] <http://www.biopama.org/>

[2] <https://www.iucn.org/news/protected-areas/201711/protected-areas-across-africa-caribbean-and-pacific-boosted-%E2%82%AC60-million-investment>

[3] <http://acp.int/category/story-type/press-releases>