



REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

BIOPAMA is seeking a suitable host organisation for the West Africa Regional Observatory for Biodiversity and Protected Areas. This is an exciting opportunity for a dynamic, regionally active organisation that shares the mission of BIOPAMA and is interested in becoming part of, and helping to shape, the development of the Regional Observatory and supporting the delivery of its core functions.

BIOPAMA is a collaborative program that aims to improve the long-term conservation of biodiversity in West Africa by promoting the use of the best available science and knowledge and building capacity to strengthen policy and decision-making on biodiversity conservation and protected areas management (terrestrial and marine).

Towards this aim, the Regional Observatory is being established to enable the provision of relevant information and decision-support tools, to promote and facilitate exchange of information with a variety of end users (esp. decision-makers and protected area managers and practitioners). Over time, it is also intended to facilitate capacity development, as well as the exchange and improvement of knowledge about biodiversity conservation and protected area issues and responses.

The objective of this call for Expressions of Interest is to identify organisations in the region that have an interest in hosting the Regional Observatory and that share the vision of BIOPAMA for West Africa. IUCN and EC-JRC (European Commission Joint Research Centre) will use the submissions as a basis for selecting a host organisation and for negotiating a hosting agreement for the establishment and implementation of the Regional Observatory.

A consortium approach to the expression of interest would be encouraged where organisations believe they could maximise services and benefits through the Regional Observatory by pooling their collective capacity and resources. The hosting arrangement will be formalised through the conclusion of an Agreement between IUCN and the hosting organisation, for the duration of the second phase of BIOPAMA (June 2023) with an evaluation of progress after the first two years.

Information and guidelines on responding to the call for expressions of interest as well as the submission template are attached, and can also be found on the BIOPAMA website: <https://biopama.org/>

Expressions of Interest should be submitted by April 29, 2019 before 11:59 PM (GMT).

For more information, please contact Tanya MERCERON, BIOPAMA Coordinator for West and Central Africa, IUCN. Email: tanya.merceron@iucn.org

West Africa Observatory for Protected Areas and Biodiversity

Terms of Reference

1. Background

The Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management (BIOPAMA) program aims to improve the long-term conservation and sustainable use of natural resources in [African, Caribbean and Pacific \(ACP\) countries](#), in protected areas and surrounding communities. It is an initiative of the ACP Group of States financed by the European Union's 11th [European Development Fund \(EDF\)](#), jointly implemented by the [International Union for Conservation of Nature \(IUCN\)](#) and the [Joint Research Centre of the European Commission \(JRC\)](#). Building on the first five years of activities financed by the 10th EDF, BIOPAMA's second phase, that goes from 2017 to 2023, provides tools for data and information management, services for improving the knowledge and capacity for protected area planning and decision making, and funding opportunities for specific site-based actions. www.biopama.org

BIOPAMA will contribute to the establishment of a regional Observatory for Biodiversity and Protected Areas in West Africa, hosted institutionally by WAEMU and technically by an existing regional organization or technical consortium of associated organizations. The Observatory will facilitate the provision of relevant data and information to assist in better planning and decision-making, support exchange of knowledge and expertise and, in partnership with existing institutions, build regional capacity to support the use of data and information for policy and decision-making. A strong emphasis will be placed on supporting the uptake and use of information by policy-makers. Therefore, it is important that the Observatory's technical host has national and regional linkages and experience with approaches and mechanisms to bridge what is often viewed as a gap between science and policy.

Comprehensive and reliable information, as well as the capacity to interpret and use the available information, are key elements that can support planning and sound decision-making in the West Africa region. It is critical that decisions on land and marine use are sustainable in the long-term and do not compromise the resources upon which we ultimately depend for livelihoods and survival. Protected Areas play a crucial role in safeguarding some of these resources, and therefore, decisions affecting protected areas and their surroundings need to be informed by the most comprehensive and up-to-date information available. This is the task that BIOPAMA is aiming to tackle. Through the development of the Regional Observatory for Biodiversity and Protected Areas and Biodiversity, the goal is to provide a regional resource hub for decision-makers to support them in making sound decisions on the management of natural resources in the region. This includes relevant information, 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 recognized and upheld in development decisions.

The objective of this Request for Expression of Interest (EoI) is to identify an organization in the region with an interest in, capacity and capability for hosting the BIOPAMA Observatory and that shares the vision of WAEMU and BIOPAMA for West Africa. The host should be committed to their common objectives and prepared to work in a close and collaborative partnership with IUCN, JRC, and different types of users to establish the service-oriented role of the Observatory, create synergies for delivering BIOPAMA's objectives, and secure the niche and demand to sustain the program in the longer term.

2. Description of the Opportunity to technically host the Observatory

A phased approach is planned for the Observatory, with the first part encompassing a start-up and establishment period, during which BIOPAMA will support one full-time staff person (a Technical Officer). The Technical Officer, who will be recruited, employed and paid by IUCN, will be based at the host organization and will be responsible to support the day-to-day management of the West Africa Observatory. S/he will work closely with the IUCN BIOPAMA Program Coordinator for West and Central Africa and will collaborate with BIOPAMA's other regional Observatories.

IUCN and JRC envision that the Observatory will be housed in one physical location, with suitable office space and IT infrastructure for the Technical Officer. The Observatory may create virtual links with other institutions across the region according to the strengths or limitations of a single institution to meet all the necessary hosting requirements. For example, it is possible that one institution may have strong

national political connections and involvement in regional policy processes, while another organization may be in a better position to provide technical support to information system, in which case a virtual link could be established between two organizations. Ideally, the host organization will have strengths in both biodiversity/natural resources policy and geospatial information management and research, but if not, the preference is for the host to have strong information management and research capability; agreements can then be established with policy organizations to satisfy the Observatory policy support and advocacy needs.

The Observatory's technical host should be in a position to:

- a) provide suitable working facilities for the Observatory staff (Technical Officer);
- b) provide excellent telecommunications and information technology support;
- c) establish links and synergies between the Observatory, the hosting institution and other regional institutions and networks, regarding the development and use of data, information, and tools for protected areas management and biodiversity conservation;
- d) facilitate/support information flow to decision makers and from decision makers.

The technical host of the Observatory is expected to deliver the following services:

- a) Establish a fully functional protected areas Observatory online portal (thereafter "the portal"). A Drupal based internet website hosted by WAEMU, managed by the technical host and IUCN, that provides Observatory users with the full access to the BIOPAMA RIS services
- b) Develop mirror sites
- c) Ensure fully functional access and links to the RIS tools developed by the JRC and other developers via the portal. The RIS tools include amongst others the Geonode, the IMET database, e-conservation
- d) Ensure fully functional links to other regional observatories is related sectors such as MOLOA and the Observatories of Water basin. Ensure that other observatories access, display and use protected area data bases
- e) Provide continuous support to the Observatory implementation partners (list to be detailed in the implementation contract) to update information and web pages
- f) Conduct statistical analysis and environmental modeling to keep regional and global policy indicators updated (such as Aichi Target or indicators for the regional strategy for marine protected areas and others)
- g) Establish data sharing agreements with institutional data owners
- h) Serve as hub to update UNEP-WCMC regional databases including input to the World Database of Protected Areas (WDPA)
- i) Train users, mostly technicians in national and regional administration, in the use and maintenance of information system tools
- j) Provide data analyses on request to the project's partners to improve and monitor the implementation and the design of national and regional policies
- k) Lead the elaboration of the State of Protected Areas (SoPA) and State of Marine Protected Areas (SoMPA).

The goal is to find a host that is highly committed to BIOPAMA's objectives and prepared to work with IUCN, JRC, and different types of users to establish the service-oriented role of the Observatory, create synergies for delivering BIOPAMA's objectives, and secure the niche and demand beyond the existence of the program. The host organization will benefit from high regional visibility from WAEMU and global visibility in the context of BIOPAMA, and from close interaction with IUCN and its technical networks, as well as JRC scientists and technology development specialists through various mechanisms.

3. Overview

The establishment of an Observatory for Protected Areas and Biodiversity is a central component of the [BIOPAMA program](#), which has the objective of improving the long-term conservation of biodiversity in West Africa by promoting the use of the best available science and knowledge and building capacity to strengthen policy and decision-making on biodiversity conservation and protected areas management (terrestrial and marine). A key feature of the Observatory will be a Regional Reference

Information System (RRIS), which builds upon and complements the [Digital Observatory for Protected Areas](#) initiative. It is envisaged that the Observatory will be focused on policy support and capacity development, networking and communications, and providing science-based data and information to support management decisions and policy processes. The Observatory will primarily engage with national and regional level agencies and institutions, with additional targeted interaction with protected area managers. The Observatory is institutionally hosted by WAEMU and will be hosted by a regionally focused West African institution or consortium.

The primary anticipated outcomes of a successfully functioning Observatory are:

- 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 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 and knowledge sharing;
- heightened awareness of the value of protected areas as legitimate land/resource uses, recognized and upheld in development decisions.

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

The BIOPAMA Observatory Team will include: IUCN, JRC, WAEMU and the Observatory host. IUCN is leading the establishment and operation of the Observatory and the capacity building programme, and JRC the design, development, and technical operation of the RRIS. WAEMU is the institutional host. The Observatory host will work closely with IUCN and JRC in designing and executing a phased implementation approach for the Observatory. The Observatory host will have a strong alignment with the vision for the Observatory and will contribute knowledge and relationships to ensure wide collaboration with other, related initiatives.

The Observatory will form part of a global observatory network that includes Central and West Africa, Southern and Western Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific, supported by BIOPAMA.

4. Day-to-day operations and functionality

(i) Observatory functions/tasks

It is envisaged that the main functions of the Observatory are to:

- 1) **Data & Information:** Develop and maintain a Regional Reference Information System (RRIS) that supports data discovery, sharing, and use and responds to information needs in the region. Indicative actions include:
 - a. Facilitating regional collection, access, and sharing of data and information on biodiversity and protected areas via the Regional Reference Information System (RRIS);
 - b. Developing user-centered tools (web services and applications) that address specific management questions and policy concerns (for use in policy support);
 - c. Providing technical support and training (as part of overall capacity building programme) to stakeholders on RRIS and associated tools, and assist with analyses directly or facilitate through JRC;
 - d. Establishing relevant data collection protocols and data sharing agreements with providers and partners in the region, building on existing discussions and agreements in the region.
- 2) **Capacity building:** Strengthen and institutionalize technical capacity of government decision makers and protected area managers to use spatial information in their protected area and land use planning and policy decisions. Indicative actions include:

- a. Coordinating between/among stakeholders (national government agencies, technical institutions, NGOs, and donor community) to facilitate greater awareness of existing capacity building initiatives for Protected Areas and biodiversity professionals;
 - b. Facilitating delivery of BIOPAMA capacity building action plan in the region.
- 3) Policy support: Provide policy support to national and regional decision-makers, especially for the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) (e.g. Convention on Biological Diversity Programme of Work on Protected Areas- CBD PoWPA). Indicative actions include:
- a. Providing policy support to national governments on implementation of and reporting against MEA commitments, especially CBD PoWPA, using spatial information collated in the RRIS and tools developed through the Observatory;
 - b. Developing and implementing a strategy to improve user engagement and use of products in policy and decision-making processes.
- 4) Networking & communications: Strengthen the network of partners to both collaborate in RRIS development and enhance the uptake and use of information and tools for decision-making. Indicative actions include:
- a. Facilitating network(s) of protected area managers, practitioners, including between relevant government agencies to enhance sharing of knowledge, data and local solutions;
 - b. Communicating science-based Protected Area and biodiversity management 'best practices'.

(ii) Management and hosting arrangements

A phased management approach is planned for the Observatory. Initially, it is understood that WAEMU is the institutional host and this terms of reference aims to seek a technical host able to provide the technical requirements mentioned above as well as the capacity to reach the BIOPAMA goals and the regional goals regarding protected areas and biodiversity. The technical host is also expected to offer suitable office space where a Technical Officer will be based. The technical host of the regional observatory will be responsible for the day-to-day management of operations with the support of the Technical Officer (who will be an employee of IUCN), and financial support by IUCN BIOPAMA with a budget of approximately 800 000 Euros until 2023.

The technical host will gradually take on more responsibilities and possibly additional staff and activities, as defined jointly with IUCN and JRC. It is envisaged that over time that WAEMU will endeavour to sustain the Observatory and fully incorporate the Observatory into its governance structure.

IUCN Regional Offices 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, WAEMU and the host institution will therefore form a steering committee to ensure effective oversight of the Observatory.

Steps for the implementation of the Observatory

- 2019 – Establishment: focus on raising awareness of function of Observatory; building networks; building relevance of RRIS and prioritizing information needs; focus on providing targeted policy support to selected national governments (e.g. those making specific requests)
- 2020 – 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.
- From 2021 to 2023 and beyond BIOPAMA 2nd phase – Expanding Service Function: Institutionalize the Observatory within WAEMU; solidify management and operational procedures by host organization, with IUCN and JRC providing technical and resource mobilization support. The contract is expected to last until the end of BIOPAMA 2nd phase (end of June 2023) but at that time WAEMU and other regional stakeholders must be able to carry on the initiative. Therefore, it is important that the mechanism implemented by the technical host is regionally sustainable. At the best, the structure should be institutionally incorporated by WAEMU and its partners.

Criteria for the selection of the Host Institution

The following aspects will be taken in consideration for the evaluation of proposals. The weight of each criteria is determined in the template for submission.

Statement of interest. The regional observatory host should clearly explain its motivation for the proposed mandate.

Existing regional network. This criterion has to do first with the Geographic coverage as the regional observatory host's mandate need to cover the majority of the 17 West African countries of PACO: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Republic of Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo. Second with relevant interactions / affiliation in the region. Evidence needs to be provided that the Regional Observatory host has experience in hosting similar regional initiatives.

Capacity to bridge the science – policy gap. The regional observatory host needs to be able to illustrate that they have relevant thematic experience related to protected areas and biodiversity.

Core Strength and competencies. The regional observatory host needs to provide evidence of in-house technical capacity and competencies in data management, capacity building, policy support, networking and communications.

Financial or in-kind contribution. The regional observatory host needs to be able to prove that it can efficiently contribute to reach the goals of the BIOPAMA program, for example by mobilizing addition fund, providing staff time...

Physical / Logistical capacity. Evidence needs to be provided that the Regional Observatory host can provide physical and logistical facilities. This includes office space and IT infrastructure.

Sustainability. Evidence needs to be provided as regards the sustainability of the organization beyond the life of the BIOPAMA program (2023) and its capacity to maintain the observatory beyond 2023.

Each criterion is scored out of 5 where:

- ✓ 5 means excellent
- ✓ 4 means very good
- ✓ 3 means reasonable
- ✓ 2 means some shortcomings
- ✓ 1 means severe shortcoming
- ✓ 0 means unacceptable

A score of 0 or 1 means disqualification for the following criteria:

- ✓ Existing regional network
- ✓ Capacity to bridge the science – policy gap
- ✓ Core Strength and competencies
- ✓ Sustainability

TEMPLATE:

(Please use this template for your submission)

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

To host the Observatory for Protected Areas and Biodiversity in West Africa

1. Basic Information
A. Name of the organization. If a consortium, provide the lead applicant (which is necessarily West African) and also complete item B. <i>[The lead institution should be an inter-governmental organization, academic institution, research organization, or other not-for-profit organization].</i>
B. If applying as a consortium, provide the names and locations of all organizations.
C. Name and title of person submitting the EoI
D. Website of organization
E. Country/-ies in which organization is active
F. Postal address (include name of city)
G. Email address
H. Telephone number
I. Fax
2. Statement of Interest (Suggested length: ½ page) 5%
<p>a. What is your organization’s motivation to host the Observatory?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having reviewed the ToR for the Observatory, how do you envision the Observatory could benefit your organization? • How does the Observatory align with your organization’s ongoing involvement in protected areas management and biodiversity conservation?
3. Existing regional network (Suggested length: ½ page) 10%
<p>b. What are your organization’s regional and national interactions and affiliations?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What programmes, projects, and fora provide potential synergies to the operation of the Observatory? • How can the Observatory best build upon your organization’s existing partners and stakeholders? • What is the type and frequency of technical and policy support your organization provides to national stakeholders and agencies involved in protected areas management? • If your organization has key partners (or focal points) at the national and protected area levels, through which the Observatory could conduct policy support and capacity building activities, briefly describe through specific examples. <p>Please provide contact information of institutions with whom your organization frequently interacts who may be contacted (1-2 key points of contact – name, institution, email address, telephone – at the regional, national, and protected areas level). For shortlisted organizations, points of contact may be contacted in the second stage of the selection process.</p>
4. Bridging the science – policy gap (Suggested length: ½ page to 1 page) 20%
<p>c. In what ways does your organization bridge the science-policy gap as it relates to biodiversity conservation and protected area management?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What experience does your organization have in applied research and ensuring the uptake and use of that research by decision-makers? • What mechanisms or activities does your organization pursue to bridge the science-policy gap, and at whom are they targeted? • What is a specific case which best demonstrates your organization’s ability to bridge the science-policy gap?

5. Core strengths and competencies (per functional areas described in ToR) (Suggested length: 1 page) 30%

d. What are your organization's core strengths and competencies with respect to geospatial data & information management?

- How experienced is your organization with developing and handling spatial databases, as well as establishing services and applications for online data discovery and use?
- How can your organization demonstrate a track record and culture of sharing information, promoting data standards, and encouraging data sharing protocols?
- Can you provide a specific example of how your organization was able to 'free up' data and/or bring about a change in attitude with respect to data access?

e. What are your organization's core strengths and competencies with respect to capacity building?

- In what ways does your organization build capacity at individual, organizational, and/or infrastructure levels?
- Can you provide a specific example of how your organization strengthened and institutionalized the technical capacity of government decision makers and/or protected area managers?

f. What are your organization's core strengths and competencies with respect to policy support?

- What is your organization's role in West African regional policy & governance structures and processes?
- What is the type and frequency of policy support your organization provides to national and regional decision-makers, especially for the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) (e.g. Convention on Biological Diversity Programme of Work on Protected Areas - CBD PoWPA)?
- What is a specific case which best demonstrates your organization's success in providing policy support (e.g., a research output of your organization such as trend data, map, or a report was used as reference material by a government minister to inform on-going policy debate and decision-making)?

g. What are your organization's core strengths and competencies with respect to networking & communications?

- What types of networking and communications tools does your organization use for outreach?
- How has your network grown over time and to what do you attribute this development?
- Can you provide a specific example of how your organization was successful in catalyzing or strengthening a community around a particular policy or management issue or concern?

6. Financial or in-kind contributions (Suggested length: ½ page) 15%

h. What financial or in-kind contribution(s) can your organization offer to the Observatory?

- What sources of financial support can be leveraged, including in-kind contributions that your organization would be able to offer at no cost to the Observatory (e.g., technical and administrative staff time, office/training facilities, IT support, website hosting, etc.)?
- How feasible does your organization think it would be to mobilize complementary financing sources for maintaining the observatory?
- How would your organization coordinate and/or integrate the work of the Observatory with the organization's existing initiatives, fora, and information platforms?
- What linkages can be established with existing projects/programmes?

7. Physical / logistical details of the hosting organization (Suggested length: ½ page) 5 %

i. What office space (including IT infrastructure) could be made available to the Observatory?

- What is the status of your organization's physical infrastructure (hardware and software used to store data, interconnected storage and servers, monitoring & management of storage)?
- Does your organization have 24/7 broadband internet access/bandwidth sufficient for transferring GIS & RS data (not less than 10 Mbps)?
- Could your organization make available office space for Observatory staff (approximately 30m2)?

8. Sustainability (Suggested length: ½ page - 1 page) 15%

- j. Does your organization respond to or depend upon a higher body? Are there governance arrangements or political factors that could influence (favourably or unfavourably) the management of the Observatory?
- k. What is your organization's size (both in terms of permanent staff and revenue), and how consistent are the funding streams year to year?
- l. How long has your organization been operating in the region and how would you characterize the organization's regional track record & reputation?

SUBMITTING THE EXPRESSION OF INTEREST AND FURTHER INFORMATION

1. Documents must be received no later April 29, 2019 (11:59 p.m. GMT). Please send your EoIs electronically, by email, to tanya.merceron@iucn.org [attention: Tanya Merceron] and copy sebastien.regnaut@iucn.org and armelyacine.badolo@iucn.org
2. All EoIs must be submitted in English or French, using this form and maintaining its settings (font, margins, page size, and so on). Submissions should be in Word (except for the scanned documents). The files should be labelled as nameinstitution_EoI.doc, nameinstitution_Appendices.doc, nameinstitution_Scanneddocuments.doc. Submissions missing any section of the EoI and those that exceed the page limit will not be considered.
3. Each submission will receive an electronic notification of receipt.
4. Additional information on the BIOPAMA programme can be found by visiting <http://www.biopama.org/>.
5. For questions or further information please contact: Tanya Merceron, tanya.merceron@iucn.org from IUCN West and Central Africa Regional Office