

PART 5:

Opportunities for African protected areas

What lessons can be drawn from current trends inspiring protected areas management and governance?

The following chapters outline that:

- There is a need for a focused effort to ensure that protected areas are effectively managed and equitably governed in ways that generate positive outcomes for biodiversity;
- The role of protected areas is not only about preserving ecosystems and species, but also about supporting their active restoration and recovery;
- The protected area concept is evolving from being isolated islands of intact nature, to fully integrate components of sustainable land and seascapes. In this sense, the Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs) are of interest;
- Africa-based scientific institutions, and particularly the contribution of regional scientific institutions as knowledge hubs and coordinators across the continent, will play a central role for evidence-based protected area policies.

 Ghost crab along the shore of the Loango National Park, Gabon.
Source: Grégoire Dubois, with permission, all rights reserved.

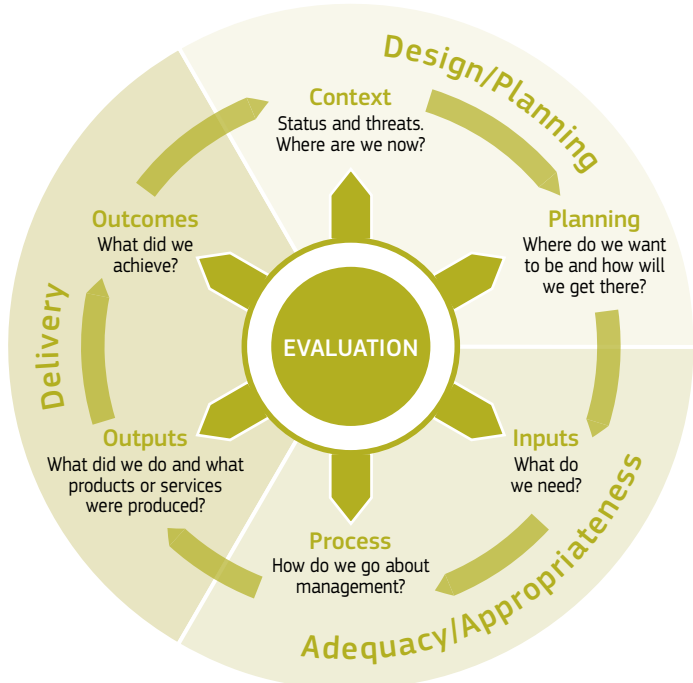
5.1 Improving protected area effectiveness

5.1.1 Protected areas with management effectiveness assessments

Protected Area Management Effectiveness refers to how well protected areas are managed, particularly how resources and strategies are used to deliver positive conservation outcomes. Assessing management effectiveness is crucial for tracking how well protected areas deliver on their conservation goals. Management effectiveness assessments support transparency, motivate for policies that prioritise protected areas, and encourage the monitoring and evaluation need for the long-term sustainability of our natural heritage. According to the Global Database of Protected Area Management Effectiveness, 1056 of Africa's more than 8000 protected areas have been assessed for management effectiveness.

Protected areas that exist on maps, but that fail to deliver positive outcomes for nature are unfortunately common enough to have their own term: paper parks. Paper parks are the consequence of protected areas that lack clear management plans, adequate resources, or effective implementation processes. Efforts to prioritise protected areas management effectiveness (PAME) are a response to the concept of paper parks.

PAME is crucial for ensuring the conservation and sustainable management of natural areas. The concept encompasses multiple facets of protected area management, including biodiversity conservation, policies and practices, stakeholder engagement, resource management, enforcement, socioeconomic impacts, and monitoring and evaluation systems¹. The effectiveness of a protected area depends on how well it achieves its conservation objectives through its day-to-day operational activities. Socioeconomic benefits, like tourism revenue and employment opportunities, are also ingredients of effective management, as is the adequacy of meeting local community needs.



⚡ The Framework for assessing management effectiveness of protected areas.

The protected area management cycle is comprised of six elements. Assessments begin by understanding the context of the protected area, including its ecological value, its threats and opportunities, key stakeholders, as well as the broader management and political environment. This context informs the planning process, which establishes the vision, goals, objectives and strategies to conserve valuable natural features and reduce threats. Inputs need to be allocated in the form of staff, money and equipment to work towards the planning objectives. The process of implementation depends on how inputs are used during management activities. These lead to management outputs (i.e. goods, services, and products), which should be outlined in management plans with a clear logic on how these contribute to positive conservation outcomes. The whole process is cyclical because improved outcomes change the original context and, therefore, future management objectives.

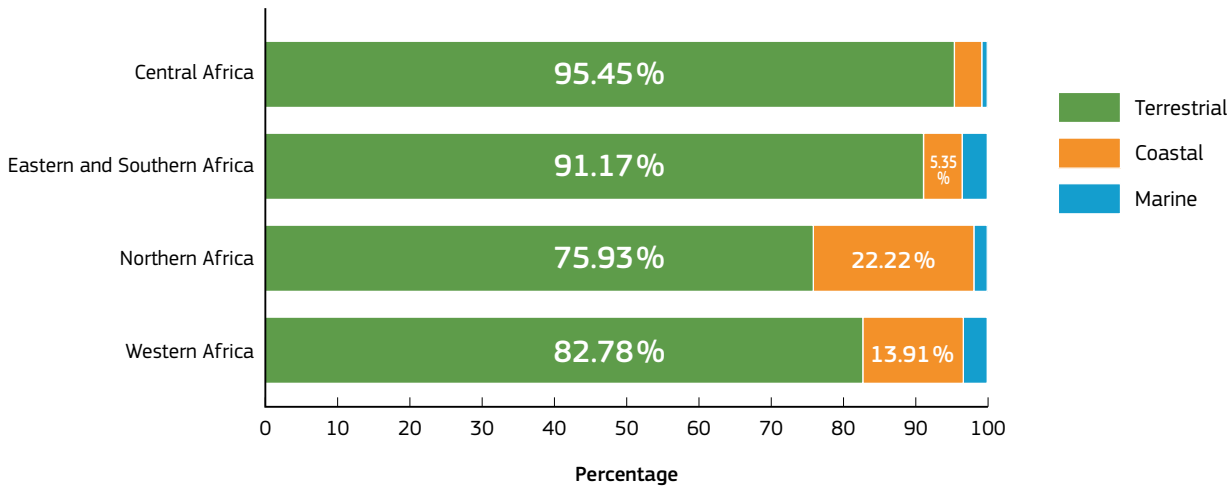
Source: Hockings, M., et al. (2006). *Evaluating Effectiveness: A framework for assessing management effectiveness of protected areas*. 2nd edition. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland, and Cambridge, UK

⚡ The uptake of different methods for assessing management effectiveness across African regions.

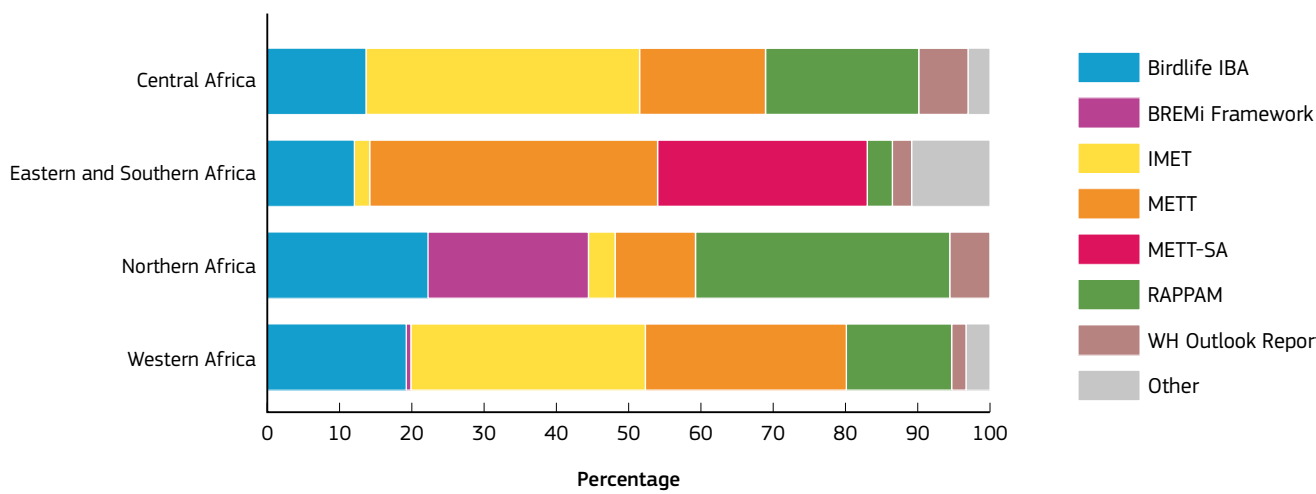
Eighteen different methods have been used to assess management effectiveness in Africa, with apparent regional preferences. For example, IMET (the Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool) is more prevalent in Central and Western Africa, whereas METT (the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool) is more commonly used in Eastern and Southern Africa.

Source: UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2024), Protected Planet: The Global Database on Protected Areas Management Effectiveness (GD-PAME). Online, 05/2024. UNEP-WCMC and IUCN, Cambridge, UK. Available at: www.protectedplanet.net

PAME can be measured and monitored to track trends on how well a protected area – or network of protected areas – is being managed. The importance of monitoring management effectiveness is reflected in its inclusion as a component indicator for Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Despite the policy prominence, a minority of African protected areas have assessed the management effectiveness. According to the Global Database on Protected Area Management Effectiveness² (GD-PAME), only 1056 specific of more than 8000 African protected areas have assessed their management effectiveness. This figure is almost certainly an underestimate, because protected area authorities are not obliged to contribute their assessments to the database. Even so, the high number of unassessed sites demonstrates a glaring information gap. The feature map shows how most African countries have yet to assess the management effectiveness across their whole protected area network.



There is no shortage of methods for assessing management effectiveness in protected areas. GD-PAME records 95 different assessment methods globally³, and 18 different methods have been used across Africa⁴. Some methods are more common in parts of the continent than in others. For example, IMET (the Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool) is more prevalent in Central and Western Africa, whereas METT (the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool) is more commonly used in Eastern and Southern Africa. Different assessment methods have their own strengths and weaknesses, and there is likely policy inertia in the choice of method (i.e. authorities tend to prefer using the same method they have used previously).



The Global Database on Protected Area Management Effectiveness

The Global Database on Protected Area Management Effectiveness² (GD-PAME) is a collaborative initiative led by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC). Although it is the most complete global database of management effectiveness assessments for protected areas, it is still far from complete. There is, therefore, a tangible opportunity to grow the database by encouraging protected area authorities to contribute their assessments to the database. Moreover, GD-PAME provides a searchable list of protected areas that have been assessed for management effectiveness, but it does not present the outcomes of those assessments (which remain the intellectual property of the protected area authorities). This means that the database cannot be used to distinguish well-managed protected areas from those that are poorly managed. Nevertheless, by providing a centralised platform, GD-PAME remains a critical tool in monitoring global progress towards conservation targets set by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

⚡ The share of African protected areas with management effectiveness assessments across terrestrial, marine, and coastal realms.

To date, the bulk of protected areas with management effectiveness assessments have been on land. The majority of African assessments have been in Eastern and Southern Africa (748 of 1 056 assessments), followed by West Africa (151 of 1 056 assessments). The remaining 157 assessments are shared between Central and Northern Africa.

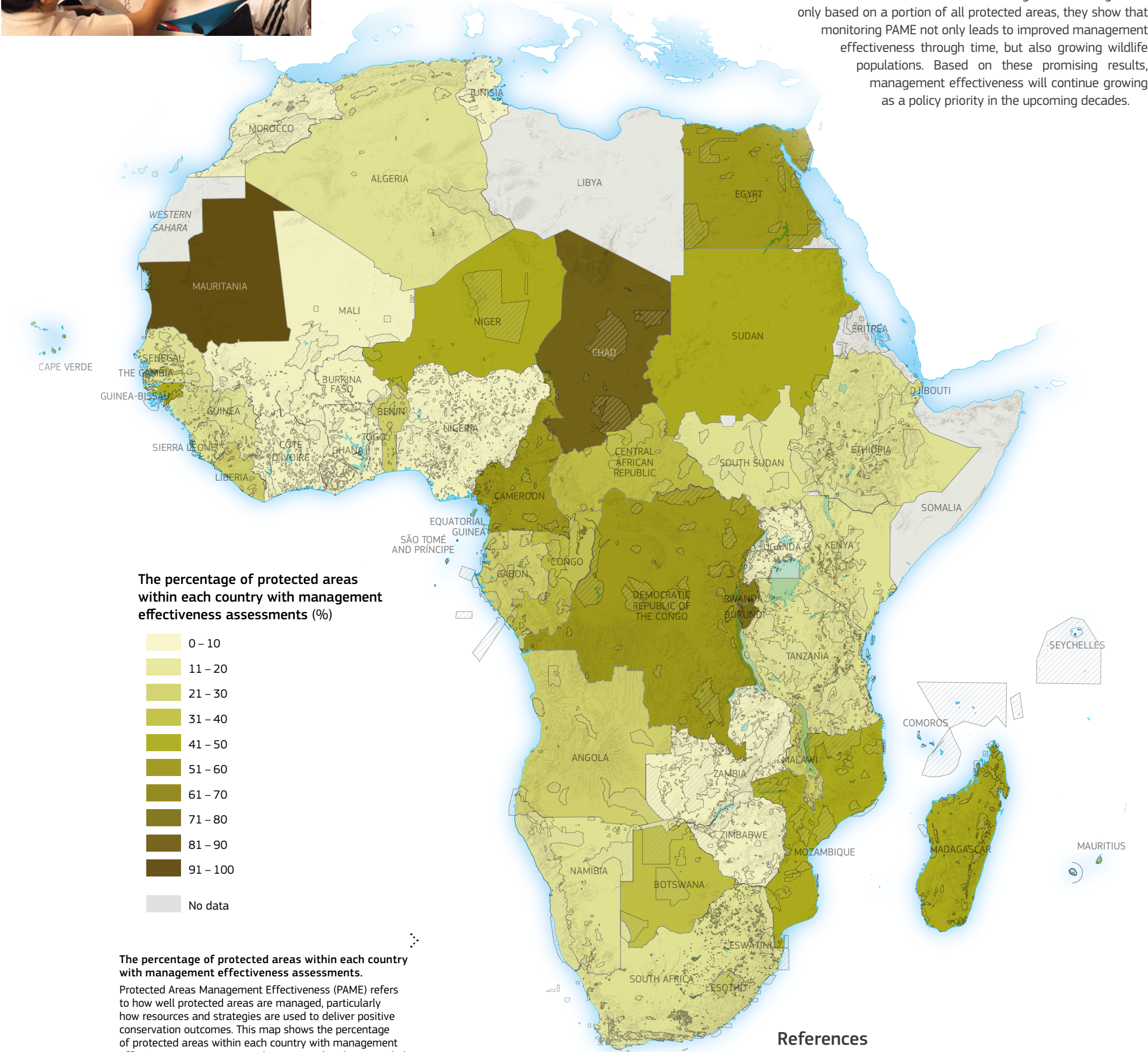
Source: UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2024), Protected Planet: The Global Database on Protected Areas Management Effectiveness (GD-PAME). Online, 05/2024. UNEP-WCMC and IUCN, Cambridge, UK. Available at: www.protectedplanet.net



Stakeholder mapping as part of a management effectiveness assessment.

Although methods for assessing management effectiveness may differ, most rely on inputs from a wider group of people with a stake in the management of the protected area. This image shows interactive stakeholder mapping during a management effectiveness assessment for Kisite Mpunguti Marine Park and Reserve, Kenya.

Source: BIOPAMA project, with permission, all rights reserved.



The percentage of protected areas within each country with management effectiveness assessments.

Protected Areas Management Effectiveness (PAME) refers to how well protected areas are managed, particularly how resources and strategies are used to deliver positive conservation outcomes. This map shows the percentage of protected areas within each country with management effectiveness assessments, when reported and as recorded in the Global Database on Protected Area Management Effectiveness. (As many countries have not submitted data, due to varying reporting practices and the absence of a reporting obligation, this map provides a preliminary measure of management effectiveness across regions).

Source: UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2024), Protected Planet: The Global Database on Protected Areas Management Effectiveness (GD-PAME). Online, 05/2024. UNEP-WCMC and IUCN, Cambridge, UK. Available at: www.protectedplanet.net

There are tangible benefits from assessing PAME. A global assessment reported that 69.5% of protected areas with multiple assessments had their measured effectiveness increases with time⁴. This suggests that the practice of measuring management effectiveness is associated with measureable improvements, possibly due to increased attention, investment, and more focused adaptive planning. Promisingly, larger protected areas and protected areas under greater threat showed the largest improvements⁴. A subsequent global study went one step further and demonstrated how higher management effectiveness – especially improved capacity and resources – was associated with increased vertebrate abundance⁵. Even though these findings were only based on a portion of all protected areas, they show that monitoring PAME not only leads to improved management effectiveness through time, but also growing wildlife populations. Based on these promising results, management effectiveness will continue growing as a policy priority in the upcoming decades.

References

- [1] Hockings, M., et al. (2006). *Evaluating Effectiveness: A framework for assessing management effectiveness of protected areas*. 2nd edition. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland, and Cambridge, UK.
- [2] UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2024), Protected Planet: The Global Database on Protected Areas Management Effectiveness (GD-PAME). Online, 05/2024. UNEP-WCMC and IUCN, Cambridge, UK. Available at: www.protectedplanet.net.
- [3] Coad, L. et al. (2015) Measuring impact of protected area management interventions: current and future use of the Global Database of Protected Area Management Effectiveness. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B, Biological Sciences*, 370, art. 20140281.
- [4] Geldmann, J., et al. (2015) Changes in protected area management effectiveness over time: A global analysis. *Biological Conservation*, 191, 692-699.
- [5] Geldmann, J., et al. (2018) A global analysis of management capacity and ecological outcomes in terrestrial protected areas. *Conservation Letters*, 11, e12434.

5.1.2 The Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool (IMET)

The Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool (IMET) supports effective and adaptive management of protected and conserved areas. It enables the setting of baselines, prioritising conservation actions and allocating funding. A network of more than 100 African trained coaches supports its use over the continent. IMET is well equipped for 21st century conservation because it can be applied to community-led conservation initiatives and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs), and aligns closely with IUCN Green List criteria.

Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework emphasises that protected areas should be managed effectively. To improve management effectiveness and monitor progress toward Target 3, Parties rely on tools and metrics of protected area management effectiveness.

One of the objectives of the BIOPAMA programme was to support improved protected and conserved areas management effectiveness and governance. The main contribution in this regard was developing the Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool (IMET)¹.

IMET's functionality can be applied to terrestrial and marine protected and conserved areas serving different purposes:

- Assessing the management effectiveness in protected areas.
- Planning and managing operations, including anti-poaching actions.
- Assessing areas beyond formal protected areas, in the context of other-effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) and related community-led conservation.
- Scaling-up analyses, which automates the process of tracking management effectiveness across multiple assessments over time within a single protected area or across a protected area network.

These purposes benefit local protected area managers, protected area authorities, national services, and donors (including EU Headquarters, Delegations, and Member States), who are able to monitor management effectiveness or to track the impact of interventions. IMET is available in English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese, which broadens the user-base.

The alignment between different management effectiveness methodologies and IUCN Green List criteria.

IMET aligns closely with the criteria for IUCN Green List assessments, a global standard for high functioning protected areas. Although other methods align more closely to the Green List's governance criteria, IMET is fully aligned with criteria on design and planning, and conservation outcomes; with near full alignment with management effectiveness criteria. (METT: *Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool*; RAPPAM: *Rapid Assessment and Prioritisation of Protected Area Management*; SAGE: *Site-level assessment of governance and equity*; IMET: *Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool*; EoH: *Enhancing our Heritage*; COA: *IUCN World Heritage Conservation Outlook Assessments*; MEAT: *Marine Protected Area Management Effectiveness Assessment Tool*).

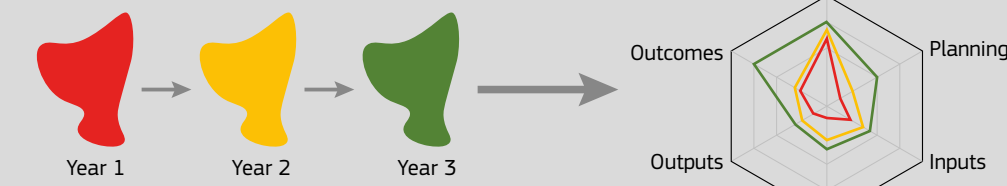
Source: UNEP-WCMC & IUCN (2022) *Crosswalk analysis of protected area effectiveness assessment methods and the IUCN Green List standard*. Summary Report. United Nations Environment Programme. Cambridge, United Kingdom.

Green List Component	Criterion	METT	RAPPAM	SAGE	IMET	EoH	COA	MEAT
1. Good governance	1.1	full		exceeds				
	1.2	low						
	1.3							
	2.1							
2. Sound design and planning	2.1							
	2.2							
	2.3							
	2.4							
3. Effective management	3.1							
	3.2							
	3.3							
	3.4							
	3.5		none					
	3.6	medium						
	3.7							
4. Successful conservation outcomes	4.1							
	4.2							
	4.3							

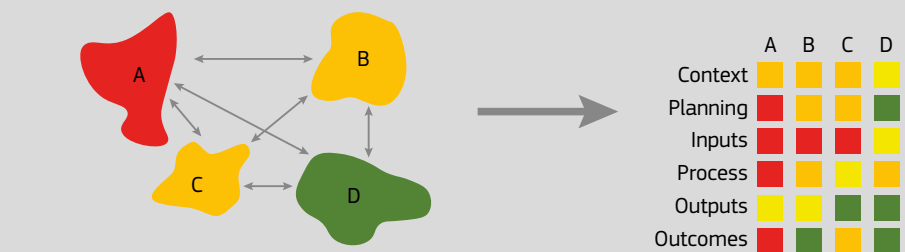
IMET scaling-up tool

One thing that sets IMET apart from other assessment approaches is that it simplifies comparisons between multiple assessments. Progress can be tracked based on subsequent assessments over the same protected area, or assessments from different protected areas within a network. This supports national services in identifying strengths and weaknesses, intervention priorities to reinforce a network's effectiveness and priority areas for future national or international investment. Scaling-up analyses go beyond simply comparing the total IMET scores, offering instead disaggregated comparisons that allow protected area authorities to compare assessments and diagnose the underlying reasons for different effectiveness scores. Comparisons are aided by visual comparisons in the form of radar plots and colour-coded results matrices, which allow non-specialists to quickly compare the results across multiple protected areas.

Comparisons of the same protected area in time:



Comparisons of protected area network across space



Conceptual overview of the IMET Scaling-up module.

IMET enables comparisons of assessments through time and across space, for all parts of the management cycle. The module's visual summaries make it easy for non-specialists to interpret multiple assessments, as either radar plots or colour-coded matrices.

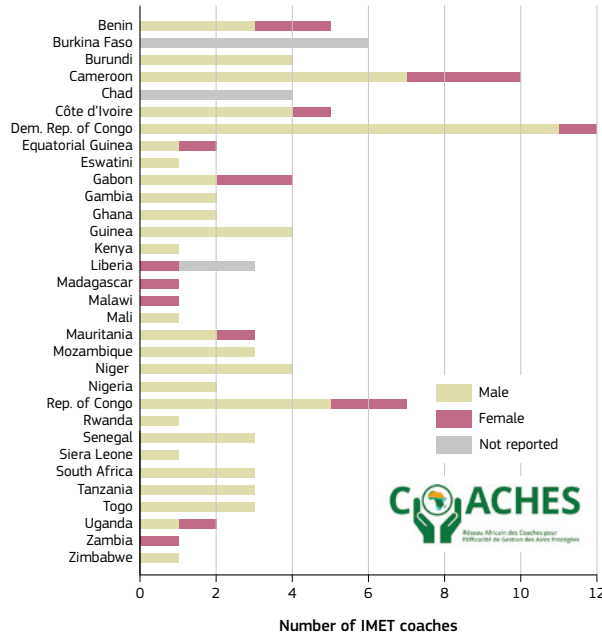
Source: Own design.

Large parts of the continent are shifting away from a model of fortress conservation to one that is community-led and integrated into productive human landscapes. IMET is equipped for this shift because it is not limited to protected areas with clearly defined boundaries. IMET for conserved areas can be described as a simplified version of the standard IMET for protected areas, with a stronger focus on identifying key stakeholders, and their interests and impacts on specific ecosystem services. Thus, management effectiveness is delineated based on the social makeup of the communities living in OECMs, community forests, locally managed marine areas, and indigenous and community conserved areas. A series of webinars in French and English introduced IMET for conserved areas to support users as they adapt to the needs of community-led conservation.

IMET for conserved areas.

IMET for conserved areas is the newest module for the Integrated Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool, tailored specifically to communal areas and OECMs. The module can be described as a simplified version of the standard IMET for protected areas, with a stronger focus on identifying key stakeholders, and their interests and impacts on specific ecosystem services. The tool is available through the most recent IMET release (v2.1.3), and was communicated through a series of webinars in French and English.

Source: BIOPAMA programme.



The African network for coaches for protected area management effectiveness (Réseau Africain des Coaches pour l'Efficacité de Gestion des Aires Protégées: RACEGAP).

More than 100 highly committed African nationals across 32 countries have been trained as coaches for assessing protected area management effectiveness. Roughly one out of every five coaches are female and 70% are from Francophone countries. These African coaches are organised in a formal network registered in Côte d'Ivoire as the non-profit organisation RACEGAP: *Réseau Africain des Coaches pour l'Efficacité de Gestion des Aires Protégées*.

Source: Based on data supplied by: Réseau Africain des Coaches pour l'Efficacité de Gestion des Aires Protégées.

Although management effectiveness methods have existed for several years, these are being shaken up by the IUCN Green List³. The Green List provides an independently verifiable global standard for well-functioning protected areas. Before this, protected areas authorities had to use their discretion when interpreting the outcomes from their management effectiveness assessments. A report by UNEP-WCMC and IUCN analysed how well existing assessment methods align with Green List criteria⁴, and IMET was shown to align well. IMET is fully aligned with the Green List components on sound design and planning, and successful conservation outcomes. It also aligns fully with five of the seven management effectiveness criteria. This independent analysis demonstrates how IMET users can evaluate their performance against the IUCN Green List Standard with minimum extra effort.

Building capacity for using IMET.

The BIOPAMA programme hosted several training events, workshops, and webinars to raise awareness and build capacity on the use of IMET. This image shows participants at a training event held in Kigali, Rwanda, during February 2020.

Source: BIOPAMA Programme, with permission, all rights reserved.



VISION

Improving the management effectiveness of protected areas, leading to enhanced biodiversity, sustainable development, and the long-term sustainability of ecosystems

BENEFICIARIES

- Protected areas
- National services
- Regional Observatories
- EU (HQs, Delegations, Member States)
- Other Donors

MODULES

- Protected areas
- Anti-poaching
- OECMs
- Scaling up

Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool (IMET)

OPPORTUNITIES

- Supporting protected area authorities achieve their conservation targets through effective management and equitable governance
- Supporting donors to identify and prioritise most effective investment opportunities
- Supporting countries, the international community and the Convention of Biological Diversity in reporting obligations, reducing the gap between field level and international for a.

IUCN Green List

Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

IMET has the functionality and the user-base to contribute significantly to improving the management effectiveness of African protected areas. It is an indicator for all interventions under NaturAfrica, the EU's programme for supporting protected areas, biodiversity conservation, and green livelihoods on the continent. Ultimately, the tool contributes to the long-term sustainability of Africa's species and ecosystems and meeting the goals of the Global Biodiversity Framework.



Protected areas with at least one assessment using the Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool (IMET).

To date, there have been more than 400 IMET assessments across 260 African protected areas. Of these, only 118 are recorded in the Global Database on Protected Areas Management Effectiveness (GD-PAME). This shortfall is because protected area authorities are not obliged to share their assessments with GD-PAME. Nevertheless, the data available through GD-PAME demonstrate IMET's wide reach, especially throughout Western and Central Africa.

Source: UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2024), Protected Planet: The Global Database on Protected Areas Management Effectiveness (GD-PAME). Online, 05/2024. UNEP-WCMC and IUCN. Cambridge, UK. Available at: www.protectedplanet.net

References

- [1] Białowolski, P. et al., (2023) Use of the IMET tool in the evaluation of protected area management effectiveness in Central Africa. *Journal of Environmental Management*, 326, art.116680.
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- [3] IUCN and World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) (2017). IUCN Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas: Standard, Version 1.1. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland.
- [4] UNEP-WCMC & IUCN (2022) *Crosswalk analysis of protected area effectiveness assessment methods and the IUCN Green List standard*. Summary Report. United Nations Environment Programme. Cambridge, United Kingdom.



5.1.3 Protected Area Governance and Equity (PAGE) assessments

To be equitable, conservation has to achieve both environmental sustainability and social justice by recognising the interdependence between ecosystems and human communities. This is reflected in governance, which refers to the structures, processes and traditions that determine how power and responsibilities are exercised, how decisions are taken, and how citizens or other stakeholders have their say. By assessing governance and equity, protected area authorities can promote fairness, inclusivity, and respect for rights. Ultimately, this leads to more effective and enduring conservation outcomes that benefit both people and nature.

Equity, justice, and fairness have come to the fore during conservation discussions. Conservation actions can have significant social, economic, and cultural implications for different stakeholders, including local communities, indigenous peoples, and marginalised groups. Therefore, to be equitable, conservation has to be fair, just, and inclusive in the way it manages and governs natural resources in protected areas.

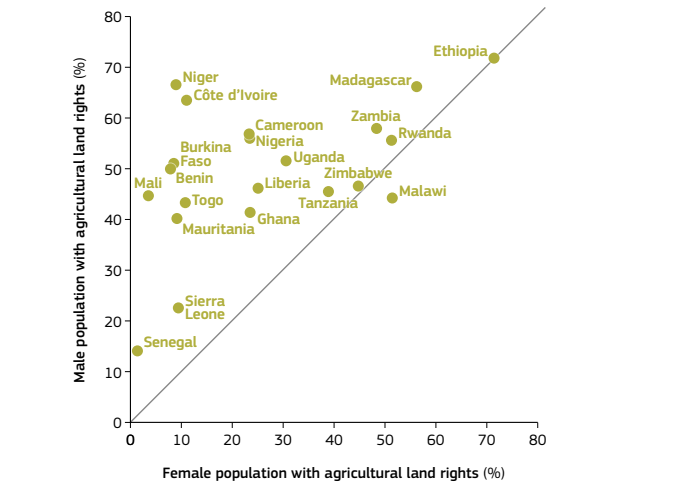
The equitable governance of protected areas must involve stakeholders in all facets of governance: (i) upholding rights, (ii) ensuring transparency and accountability, (iii) free prior and informed consent, (iv) dispute resolutions, (v) ensuring cultural diversity and beliefs, and (vi) sharing the costs, benefits, rights, and responsibility equitably.

The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework has adopted a stronger stance on human rights. Targets 1, 3, 9, 21, and 22 specifically call on parties to acknowledge culture diversity, knowledge, and rights of indigenous people and local communities⁵.

Principles	
Equity: Recognition	1. Respect for community members' human rights and resource access rights.
	2. Respect for all relevant actors and their knowledge, values, and institutions
Equity: Procedure	3. Effective participation by all relevant actors in decision making.
	4. Transparency, information sharing, and accountability for actions and inactions
	5. Access to justice, including effective dispute resolution processes.
Equity: Distribution	6. Fair and effective law enforcement.
	7. Effective mitigation of negative impacts on community members.
Other	8. Equitable sharing of benefits among relevant actors.
	9. Achievement of conservation and other objectives.
	10. Effective coordination and collaboration between actors, sectors, and levels

10 Principles of equitable governance for area-based conservation. Equitable governance principles draw on guidance as endorsed by parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the IUCN's good governance principles.

Source: Pinto, R. and Dawson, N. (2023). Equitable governance underpins effective conservation. IIED Briefing. International Institute for Environment and Development. London, United Kingdom. Available at <https://www.iied.org/21596iied>

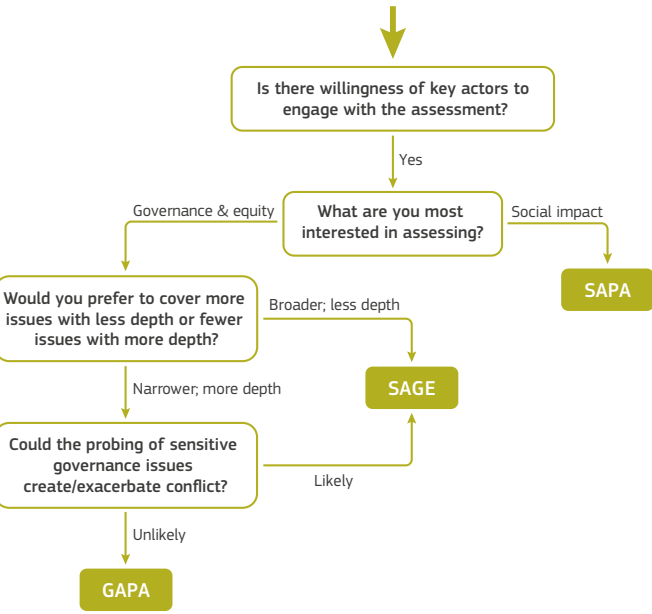


Proportion of people with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, disaggregated by sex (%). SDG Indicator 5.a.1 evaluates the presence and effectiveness of legal frameworks and policies designed to promote gender equality and empower women and girls, contributing to the broader goal of achieving gender equality as outlined in SDG 5. Disparities in land rights between males and female are indicative of gender inequality, which is the case for most parts of Africa. Source: Data from multiple sources compiled by the UN – processed by Our World in Data. (2023) Male population with agricultural land rights. SDG Indicators Database, United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2023).

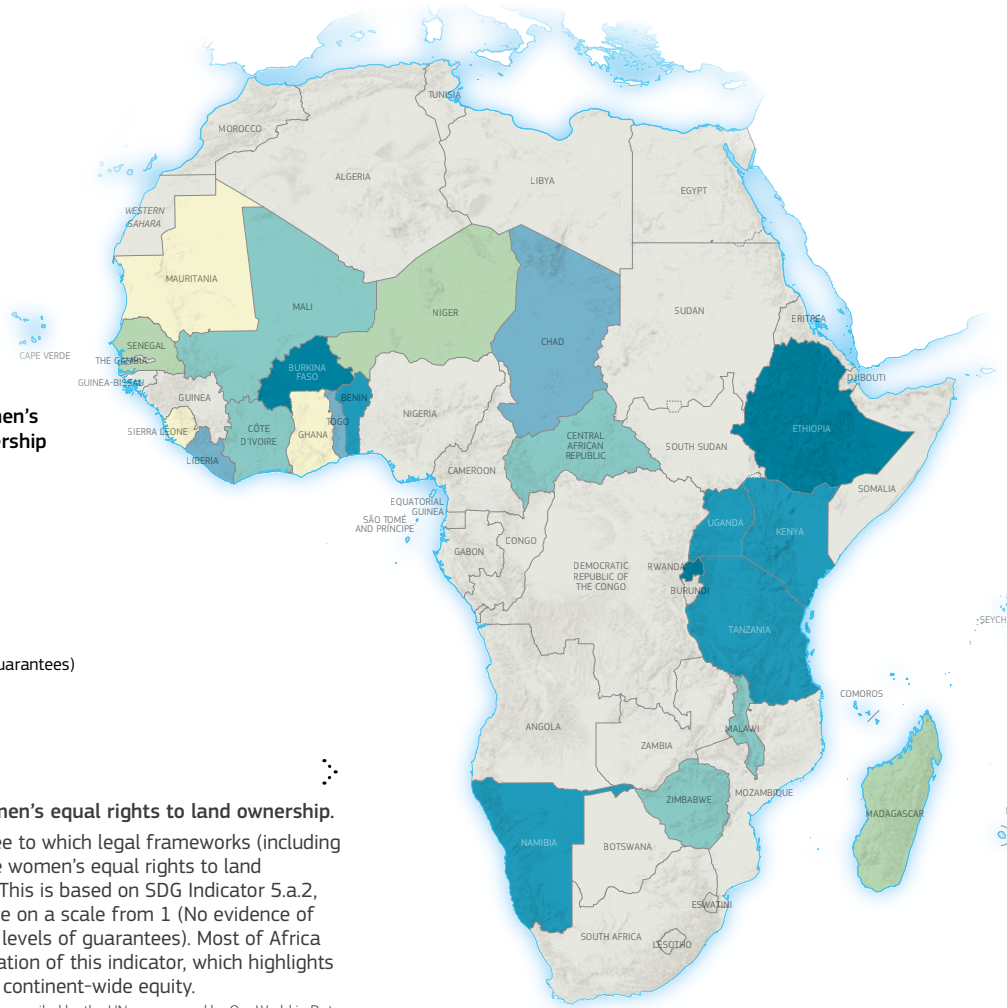
Governance in the Global Biodiversity Framework

Target 22 aims to "ensure the full, equitable, inclusive, effective and gender-responsive representation and participation in decision-making, and access to justice and information related to biodiversity by indigenous peoples and local communities, respecting their cultures and their rights over lands, territories, resources, and traditional knowledge, as well as by women and girls, children and youth, and persons with disabilities and ensure the full protection of environmental human rights defenders."

The Framework has also identified several complementary indicators for Target 22, which are aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 5, which aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.



A decision tree for assessment methods for Protected Areas Governance and Equity (PAGE). Answering the questions in this decision tree will assist users in identifying the appropriate PAGE assessment tool for their specific needs. Source: Franks, P. and Pinto, R. (2020). SAPA, SAGE or GAPA? Tools for assessing the social impacts, governance, and equity of conservation. IIED Briefing. International Institute for Environment and Development. London, United Kingdom. Available at <https://www.iied.org/17664iied>



Legal guarantees of women's equal rights to land ownership. 1 (No evidence), 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 (Highest levels of guarantees), No data.

Legal guarantees of women's equal rights to land ownership. This map shows the degree to which legal frameworks (including customary law) guarantee women's equal rights to land ownership and/or control. This is based on SDG Indicator 5.a.2, which categorises evidence on a scale from 1 (No evidence of guarantees) to 6 (Highest levels of guarantees). Most of Africa lacks consolidated information of this indicator, which highlights an obstacle to monitoring continent-wide equity. Sources: Data from multiple sources compiled by the UN – processed by Our World in Data (2023) 5.a.2 – Degree to which the legal framework (including customary law) guarantees women's equal rights to land ownership and/or control (1=No evidence to 6=Highest levels of guarantees) – SG, LGL, LNDPEMOD. SDG Indicators Database, United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

The main feature map shows how relatively few protected areas have reported PAGE assessments in Africa. While this does not imply that most protected areas lack effective governance, it does highlight a possible lack of reporting assessments at the global level and a critical information gap on the state of governance and equity across the continent. A priority for the upcoming decades is, therefore, to scale up PAGE assessments across Africa. Not only will this be necessary to deliver on the ambitions of the Global Biodiversity Framework, it will also identify potential challenges, conflicts, and opportunities for collaboration. Ultimately, this will enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of conservation initiatives.



PAGE assessment. PAGE assessment locations, Protected Areas.

Governance and Equity Assessments in African protected areas. Protected Areas Governance and Equity (PAGE) refers to a framework that focuses on the governance structures, management practices, and equity considerations within protected areas. The map shows protected areas where PAGE assessments have been carried out and reported. Source: <https://africa-knowledge-platform.ec.europa.eu/page>

Community members using the site-level assessment of governance and equity to assess protected area governance in Zambia. Site-level Assessment of Governance and Equity (SAGE) is a method used to evaluate and improve the governance and equity in protected and conserved areas. It involves assessing various aspects of governance, including transparency, accountability, participation, and equity, to identify strengths and weaknesses in the system. Source: Phil Franks, on an IIED CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.



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[1] Franks, P. (2021) Global Biodiversity Framework: equitable governance is key. IIED Briefing. International Institute for Environment and Development. London, United Kingdom. Available at <https://www.iied.org/20586iied>

[2] Pinto, R. and Dawson, N. (2023). Equitable governance underpins effective conservation. IIED Briefing. International Institute for Environment and Development. London, United Kingdom. Available at <https://www.iied.org/21596iied>

5.1.4 IUCN Green List sites

There has been considerable progress in assessing protected area management effectiveness, governance and equity. However, protected area authorities have traditionally been left with responsibility to judge whether progress on these aspects was sufficient or not. The IUCN Green List changes this by outlining a global standard that recognises and promotes well-managed and effectively governed protected areas.

Previous strategies under the Convention on Biological Diversity recognised that effective management, governance, and equity are critical aspects of successful protected area systems. Even though methods for monitoring management effectiveness (PAME), and governance and equity (PAGE) have matured, it has traditionally been left to protected area authorities to judge whether the measured progress was sufficient or not. As such, Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity reported whether PAME and PAGE assessments were carried out, without necessarily reporting whether the outcomes of those assessments were positive. The IUCN Green List changes this.

The IUCN Green List provides a global standard¹ on how good governance, sound design and planning, and effective management contribute to successful conservation outcomes. Protected areas that meet these independently verifiable standards qualify as Green List sites. Green Listing signals that a site contributes significantly to biodiversity conservation and the Sustainable Development Goals according to globally consistent criteria.

The ultimate objective of Green Listing is to grow the number of highly functional protected areas that deliver successful conservation outcomes through sound governance and management. This is pursued by prioritising conservation outcomes, facilitating capacity development, and encouraging collaboration in effective conservation management. Green List sites must demonstrate equitable and effective governance, which means that decision-making processes are transparent, inclusive, and involve the participation of all relevant stakeholders, including local communities and indigenous peoples. This helps ensure that the management of the protected area is fair, accountable, and responsive to the needs and concerns of all involved parties.

The IUCN Green List Standard¹ provides globally consistent set of criteria that outline the requirements for achieving Green List status. Each criterion consists of generic indicators and metrics to evaluate protected area performance. Areas that meet these criteria are awarded Green List certification, which demonstrates their excellence in conservation and management.

The feature map shows that achieving Green List status is still relatively rare across Africa. Although 23 African countries have certified the IUCN Green List Standard, to date, just 22 protected areas from nine countries have been Green Listed according to these standards. While this partly reflects the challenge of demonstrating that a protected area is successful, it mostly reflects the relative novelty of the Green List process. Many more protected areas will likely achieve Green List status in the upcoming decade as the uptake of the standard improves.

Good Governance	Sound design and planning	Effective management	Successful conservation outcomes
- Guarantee legitimacy and voice - Achieve transparency and accountability - Enable governance vitality and capacity to respond adaptively.	- Identify and understand major site values - Design for long-term conservation of major site values - Understand threats and challenges to major site values - Understand social and economic context.	- Develop and implement a long term management strategy - Manage ecological condition - Manage within social and economic context of the area - Manage threats - Effectively and fairly enforce laws and regulations - Manage access, resource use and visitation - Measure success.	- Demonstrate conservation of major natural values - Demonstrate conservation of major associated ecosystem services - Demonstrate conservation of cultural values.

The four criteria for the Green List Standard.

The Green List Standard is comprised of 17 criteria and 50 indicators, which serve as an internationally consistent benchmark for conservation performance. By meeting these standards, protected area authorities demonstrate how they maintain performance and deliver tangible conservation results. The Green List Standard is reviewed periodically to ensure continuous improvement and alignment with international benchmarks.

Source: IUCN and World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) (2017). *IUCN Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas: Standard, Version 1.1*. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland.

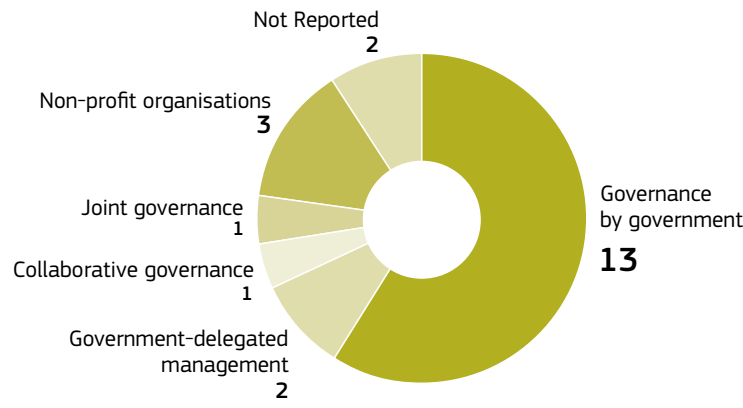
Ol Pejeta Conservancy, Kenya

Ol Pejeta Conservancy, situated in East Africa, boasts a rich diversity of flora and fauna. The protected area is famous for housing nearly 130 black rhinos, making it the largest black rhino sanctuary in the region. It is also home to the last two remaining northern white rhinos (*Ceratotherium simum ssp. cottoni*) in the world. Because both of these lone survivors are female, Ol Pejeta is attempting to cross-breed these individuals with the closely related southern white rhino (*C. s. simum*). Surrounding the conservancy are communities with over 50,000 people, benefiting from employment opportunities, trade, and security provided by the conservancy. In the two decades since its establishment, Ol Pejeta has remained committed to conserving the area, offering sanctuary to wildlife, and supporting livelihoods in surrounding communities. This was rewarded in 2014 when Ol Pejeta become one of the first ever Green Listed sites.



One of the last northern white rhinos in the world, flanked by a dedicated rhino handler. The only two remaining northern white rhino survive in Ol Pejeta Conservancy, Kenya, one of the first protected areas to receive Green List status. Source: Make It Kenya/ Stuart Price on Flickr PDM 1.0.

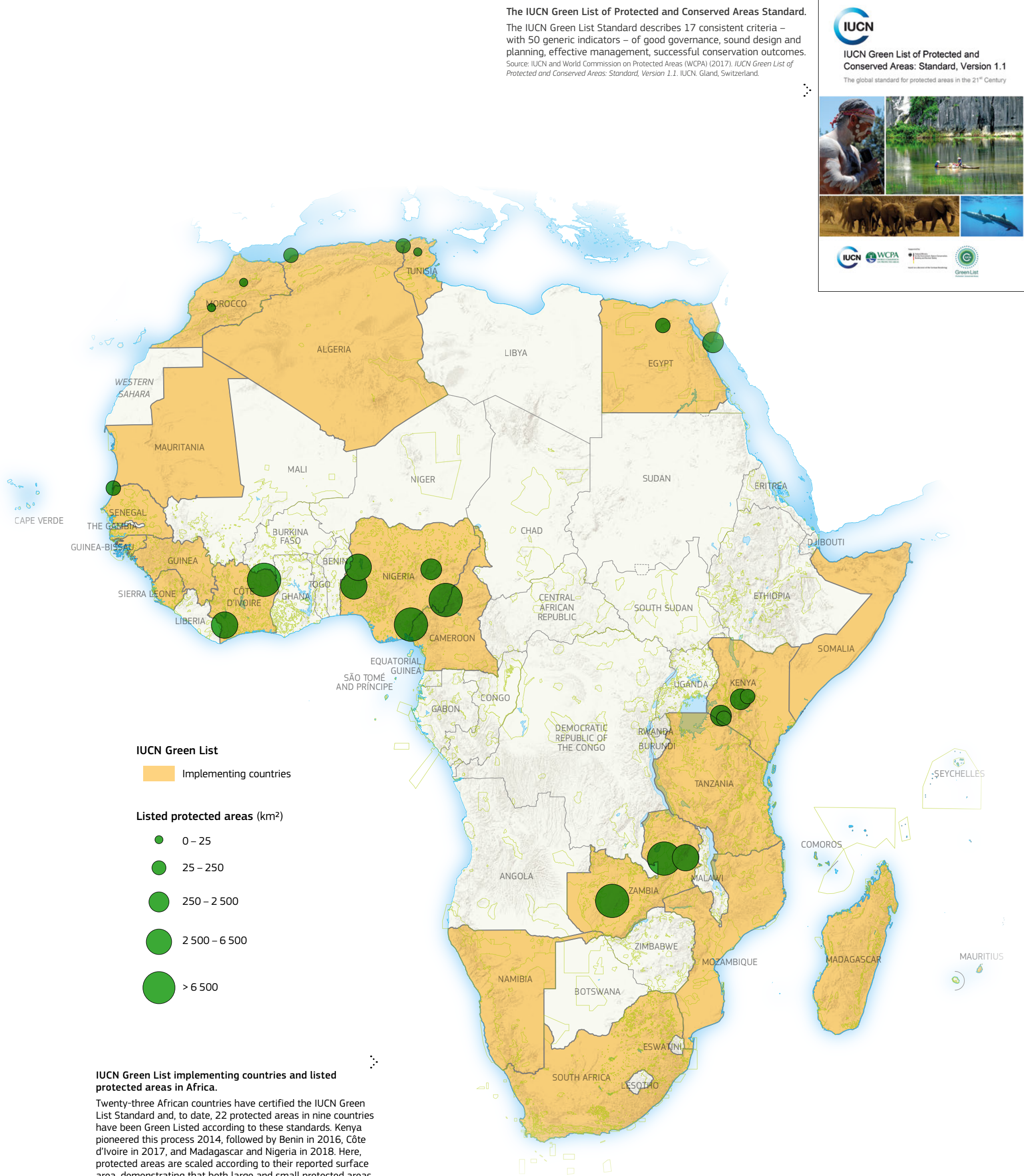
Governance type



African Green List sites based on their IUCN management category (left) and governance type (right).

The majority of the 22 Green Listed sites in Africa are national parks (IUCN Category II) governed by governments, but the existence of other combinations of management and governance demonstrate that Green Listing is feasible for all kinds of protected areas as long as they can demonstrate high standards.

Source: UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2024). Protected Planet: The IUCN Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas. Online, 05/2024. UNEP-WCMC and IUCN, Cambridge, UK. Available at: www.protectedplanet.net



IUCN Green List implementing countries and listed protected areas in Africa.

Twenty-three African countries have certified the IUCN Green List Standard and, to date, 22 protected areas in nine countries have been Green Listed according to these standards. Kenya pioneered this process 2014, followed by Benin in 2016, Côte d'Ivoire in 2017, and Madagascar and Nigeria in 2018. Here, protected areas are scaled according to their reported surface area, demonstrating that both large and small protected areas have successfully achieved Green List status.

Sources: **Green listed sites:** UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2024). Protected Planet: The IUCN Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas. Online, 05/2024. UNEP-WCMC and IUCN, Cambridge, UK. Available at: www.protectedplanet.net.

Implementing countries: IUCN (2024) IUCN Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas. Online, 05/2024. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland. Available at: <https://iucn.greenlist.org/>

Reference

[1] IUCN and World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) (2017). *IUCN Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas: Standard, Version 1.1*. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland.