



# NaturAfrica

The Green Deal approach  
for EU support to biodiversity  
conservation in **Africa**

*International  
Partnerships*

# Executive summary

NaturAfrica is an initiative to support biodiversity conservation in Africa that takes an innovative people-centred approach. It identifies key landscapes for conservation and development where the EU will focus support for job creation, improved security and sustainable livelihoods, while preserving the ecosystems and wildlife that are vital to all.

The implementation of NaturAfrica is subject to the local context and national priorities. EU delegations will define and implement NaturAfrica programmes after wide consultation and in agreement with all stakeholders of the landscapes: national and regional government, local communities, civil society and the private sector. Working with indigenous communities and women will be at the heart of the NaturAfrica approach.

Priority will be given to development actions in key landscapes identified in [Larger than Elephants: Inputs for an EU strategic approach to wildlife conservation in Africa](#), the product of a wide consultation of stakeholders, including national institutions, civil society and the private sector. Support will be structured around 2 pillars.

1. In the short term, it will develop actions in key landscapes for conservation and development, building on the positive benefits that protected areas bring to society and the economy (see examples in the following pages), encouraging networks of protected areas and knowledge-sharing.
2. In the medium term, it will extend support beyond key landscapes to address the root causes of biodiversity loss and environmental degradation and integrate these concerns into other sectors ('mainstreaming biodiversity').

## Why do we need NaturAfrica?

Africa relies heavily on its natural resources, but its resources are being severely depleted, with worrying impacts for food security, jobs, health and climate resilience. The African Union has acknowledged the need for a sustainable use of the natural resources and identified biodiversity depletion, together with illegal exploitation and trade, as a key challenge for the continent.

The EU is committed to supporting Africa with its transition to a green economy and to cooperating on the environment ([EU-Africa Strategy](#)). As a recognised leader in promoting international responses to environment and climate challenges, the EU can also share the experience gained from Natura 2000, the largest network of biodiversity-rich protected areas in the world.

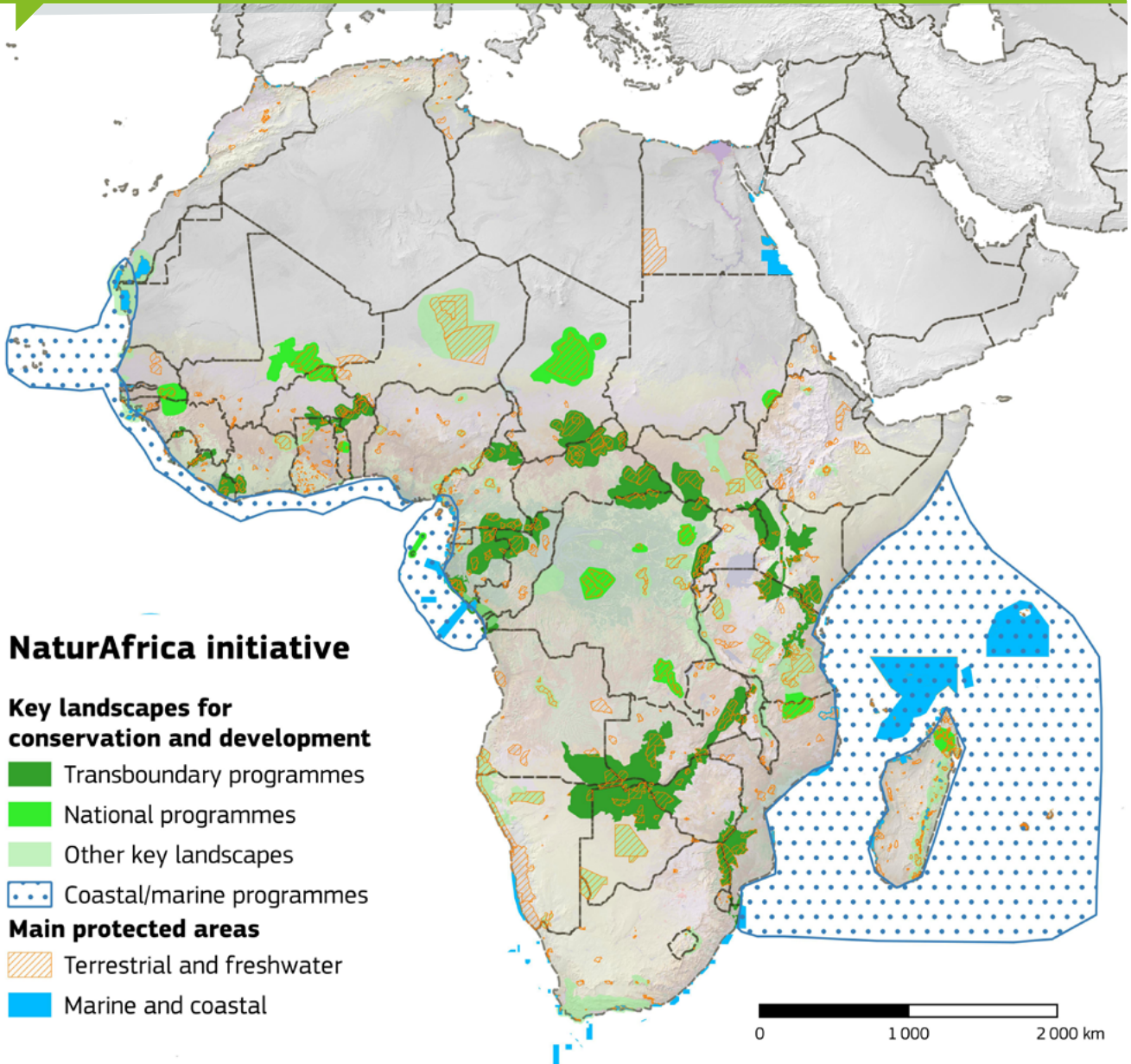
NaturAfrica is fully aligned with the [European Green Deal](#), which identifies climate change and environmental degradation as an existential threat to Europe and the world. The Green Deal emphasises the need to decouple economic growth from resource use and provides a mandate to step up the integration of environment and climate change objectives, in particular on biodiversity, forests, oceans and soil in EU-supported policies, plans and investments across all sectors of cooperation.

NaturAfrica contributes to EU global commitments on biodiversity under the Convention on Biological Diversity, including to preserve ecosystems, fight wildlife crime and increase financial flows to developing countries for global biodiversity protection. The scale of its ambition matches the EU's drive for an ambitious post-2020 agenda on global biodiversity.

“  
I want to work together on large and impactful initiatives, including NaturAfrica, which will bring visibility to Africa's natural parks – focusing on people and planet, on the EU's integrated response to tackle biodiversity loss, and to create decent and sustainable jobs.  
”

– **Jutta Urpilainen**, Commissioner for International Partnerships

## Priority areas for support (provisional)



Map based on the best information available in August 2021



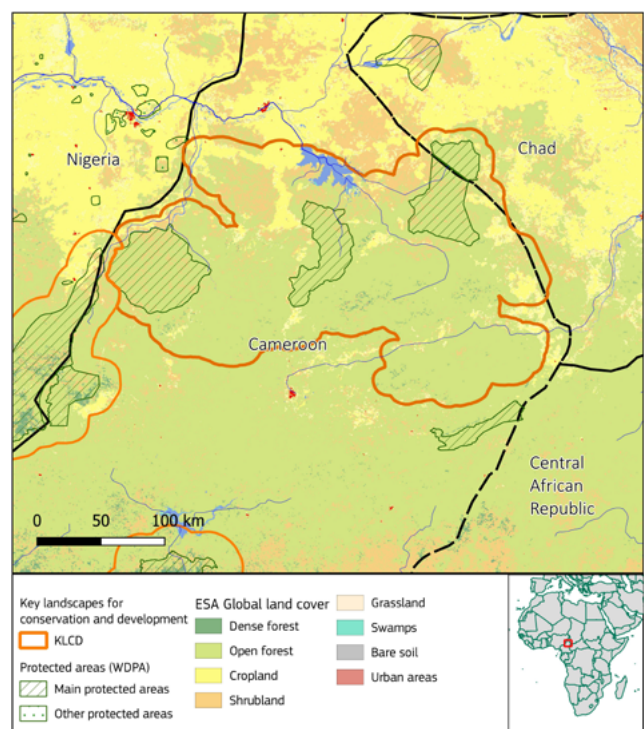
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## Example\_1 Northern Cameroon

Northern Cameroon is an extraordinary conservation landscape for at least two reasons: it's a remarkable example of Sudanese savannah, and is a mosaic of some 30 protected areas covering nearly 3.5 million hectares. Long one of the most globally famous tourist destinations in Central Africa, this natural heritage has been in decline for decades due to unsustainable exploitation by poachers, farmers and herders and lack of good governance.

As a development landscape, North Cameroon has a young and growing population, an exceptional cultural heritage and a dynamic agro-pastoral economy. However, human development indicators remain below national and regional averages, due to challenges both historic (internal political conflicts, agro-pastoral tensions, weak governance) and recent (climate change, armed conflict in the Sahel).

After decades of public aid (EUR 1 billion committed by the EU, Germany and France in 2000-2017) to boost agro-pastoral capacities and negotiate territorial agreements, the EU and its Member States are discussing the possibility of adopting (via a team Europe initiative) an integrated landscape strategy, providing support to multiple sectors (e.g. to protect parks and game reserves, incubate agro-forestry innovations, modernise cotton production, reduce agro-pastoral conflicts, support the current shift away from nomadic herding, etc.) around the cross-cutting priority: good territorial governance structured around protected areas.





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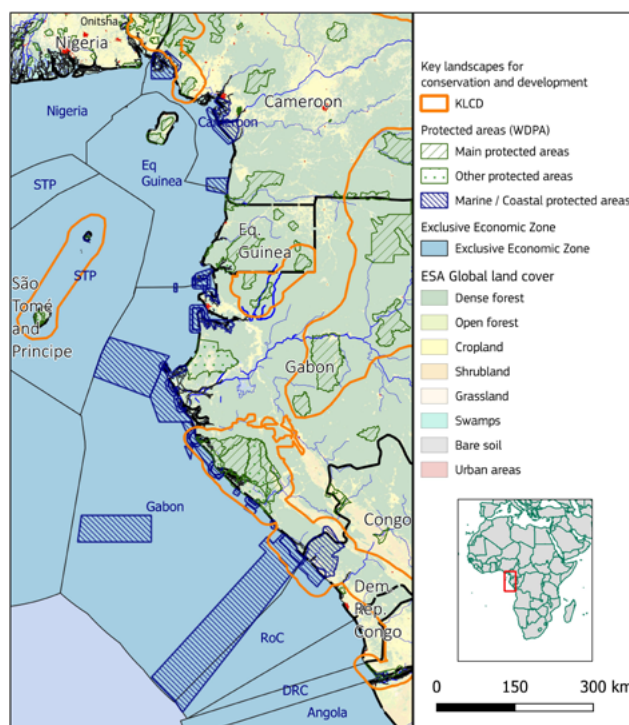
## Example\_2 Gulf of Guinea

The shores of the Gulf of Guinea, especially between Gabon and Congo, are a globally important natural landscape, known the world over through photos of humpback whales breaching, leatherback turtles laying eggs after dark, elephants roaming on the beach or hippos playing in the waves, and prompting Gabon in recent years to create several marine protected areas.

In recent decades, the landscape has also been at the heart of industrial exploitation, for hydrocarbons, fish and tropical timber, which have generated billions of dollars in private profits and public tax revenues, yet without at the same time improving human development indicators. Now, with peak oil passed, the destruction of fish stocks and degradation of forests, along with climate change, threaten to further stifle development potential of vulnerable populations.

An integrated landscape approach is applicable around the major protected areas (Mangroves, Conkouati, Mayumba, Pongara and Campo Ma'an National Parks) of this exceptional coastline. Activities envisaged that would benefit local communities include smallholder farming, sustainable fishing and forestry, ecotourism, development of market chains for non-timber forest products, bushmeat management, and minimising the environmental impact of industrial activities.

A similar approach will also be applied in the coastal landscapes of West Africa (from Mauritania to Ivory Coast), with particular emphasis on sustainable fisheries and the protection of mangroves.





© Vivian Jebet/Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT)

## Example\_3 Kenyan wildlife conservancies

Two thirds of Kenya's wildlife populations live outside formal state-managed protected areas, on land that they share with people. The Kenyan conservancies, which are a recognised land-use under Kenyan wildlife law, are a mechanism for empowering local people to lead conservation and management efforts and demonstrate how local communities and land-owners can become effective stewards of wildlife and habitats if they are given the right incentives, benefits and decision-making authority. The growth of the conservancy model in Kenya has been extraordinary, with over 160 conservancies currently covering 11 % of Kenya's land mass, representing 87 % of its protected area estate and directly impacting the lives of 930 000 households.

Conservancies deliver important conservation outcomes for Kenya. Key endangered wildlife populations such as black rhino, hirola antelope and Grevy's zebra have recovered thanks in large part to conservancies, and a multitude of wildlife-based enterprises provide powerful incentives for community-led conservation.

The community conservancies of the Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT), which are supported by the EU, among others, also generate significant revenue streams from rangeland productivity improvement, including carbon credits earned for soil carbon capture over an area of 2 million hectares of conservancy land. Arguably of even greater significance for local communities is the fact that the NRT's strong local governance structures have brought peace and security to an area of Northern Kenya that has historically suffered from insecurity and inter-ethnic conflict.



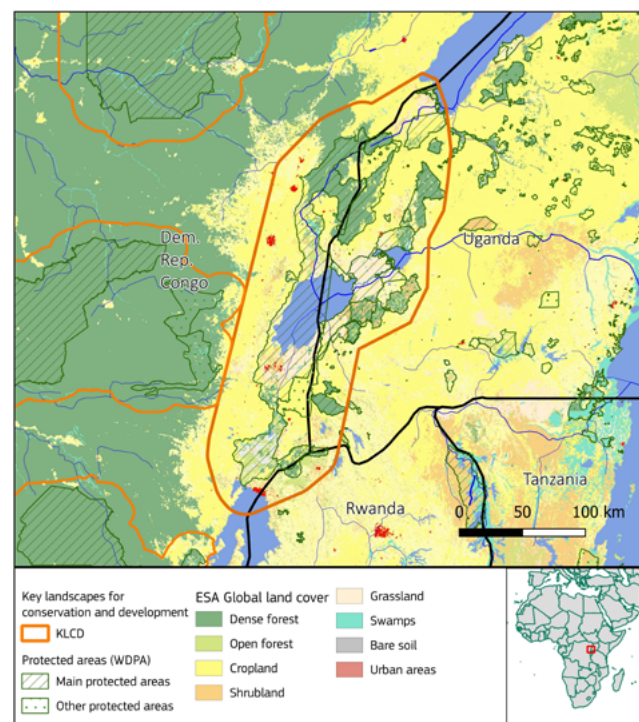


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## Example\_4 Virunga

Virunga National Park, a World Heritage Site of extraordinary natural beauty and biodiversity including the famous mountain gorillas, is located in eastern DRC. The area has also been subject to a history of armed conflict that has blighted the lives of local communities for three decades. In addition to the challenges of conserving a park in a context of chronic insecurity and violence, the park's management team focused its efforts on addressing the needs of over 5 million people who live within a day's walk of the park boundary, most of whom live in extreme poverty.

With long-term support from the EU and private donors, the Park has embarked on an ambitious programme of developing an alternative economy that enables the people to benefit from the national park while safeguarding its natural heritage. In addition to the park's world-class tourism potential, which generates over EUR 4 million annually, the park's forest ecosystems feed a network of rivers that have an estimated hydro-electric potential of 105 MW. Four hydro-electric stations are currently operational and tapping about a quarter of the park's full potential. About 600 000 people already benefit directly from this electricity which has kick-started a multitude of small and medium-sized enterprises, particularly in the agri-business processing sector. This is facilitated by an innovative credit system operating through the park's smart grid. A wide range of value chains, including fishing, cocoa, coffee, chia seeds, etc, have been boosted to create over 12,000 quality jobs over the past six years.





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## Example\_5 The KAZA landscape

The Kavango-Zambezi (KAZA) landscape is one of the South African Development Community's (SADC) 18 Trans-Frontier Conservation Areas (TFCA). The aim of TFCAs is to ensure that shared natural resources are sustainably co-managed and conserved to foster socioeconomic development and regional integration for the benefit of people living within the landscapes. Covering an area of 520 000 km<sup>2</sup> KAZA is the largest terrestrial TFCA in the world, spanning five countries: Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. This vast mixed land-use landscape includes over 250 conservation areas belonging to 11 management categories including national parks, reserves, game management areas, conservancies and tourism concessions. Roughly 29 % of the area is used for agriculture. KAZA's woodlands, wetlands and grasslands host the world's largest population of elephants – 225 000, roughly half of Africa's population – and is a crucial conservation landscape for large carnivores and many of Africa's other iconic species. The immensely important dry miombo woodlands cover a large part of the landscape, providing valuable goods and services for people including food, fibres and hydrological stability in critical watersheds, as well as a vital natural habitat on which a thriving wildlife economy is based. As a massive carbon sink, they also provide interesting opportunities to generate revenue streams for communities through carbon credits.







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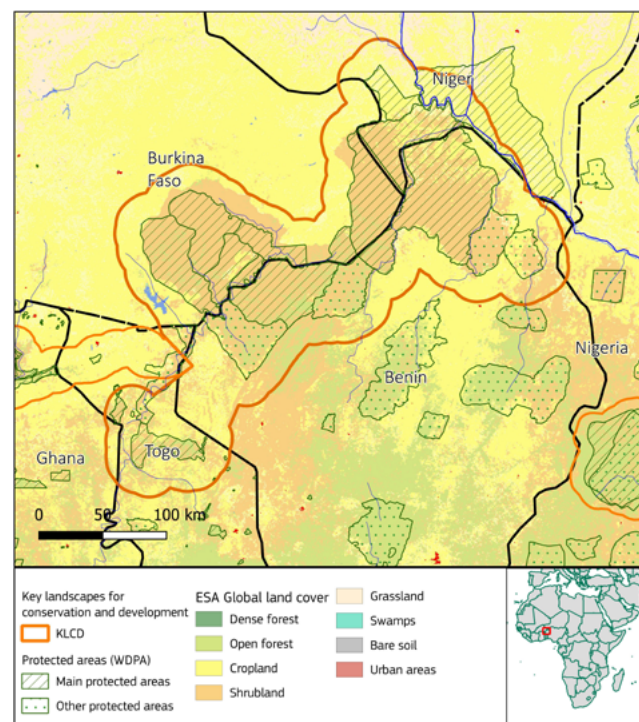
## Example\_6 The WAPOK complex

The Sahel is currently the area most threatened by terrorist groups in Africa, notably in the arc that stretches from central Mali along the northern and then eastern border of Burkina Faso as far as the tri-national park area that it shares with Niger and Benin. This area contains a 38 000 km<sup>2</sup> complex of protected areas called WAPOK: W, Arly and Pendjari national parks and their contiguous wildlife and hunting reserves, including the 2 650 km<sup>2</sup> Oti-Kéran-Mandouri protected area complex in Togo.

The relationship between rural populations and terrorists is determined by a number of major human-related crises, several of which have interconnected ecological impacts, including desertification and the depletion of wild natural resources, particularly pastures and terrestrial and aquatic wildlife.

Conserving the Sahel's natural resources and territories is therefore a priority both for the mitigation of long-term structural crises and for the fight against the cyclical insecurity of rural populations. To this end, the EU has committed EUR 60 million since 2000 to consolidate and then extend territories of good governance and management in the WAPOK, through actions to protect species and wild areas, promote tourism and cotton entrepreneurs, support small-scale farming and livestock, and develop capacities in local and regional administrations to enable more decentralised land-use governance and management.

A similar approach will also be deployed in the savannah landscape shared by Senegal, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Mali, with a particular focus on offsets for infrastructure and mining projects, and the preservation of iconic chimpanzee and large carnivore populations.



Cover photo: Mozambican wildlife veterinarian Mercia Angela on her daily walk with Boogli, a female Cape pangolin confiscated as an infant by Gorongosa National Park's law enforcement team. Boogli's mother had already been sold. Boogli was later released back into the wild. Gorongosa, Mozambique.

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**All maps:** Philippe Mayaux

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European Commission  
Directorate-General for International Partnerships  
Unit F2 – Environment, Sustainable Natural Resources  
Rue de la Loi 41, B-1049 Brussels, Belgium

Contacts: Philippe Mayaux, e-mail: [Philippe.MAYAUX@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Philippe.MAYAUX@ec.europa.eu)  
Filippo Saracco, e-mail: [Filippo.SARACCO@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Filippo.SARACCO@ec.europa.eu)  
Unit F2, e-mail: [INTPA-F2@ec.europa.eu](mailto:INTPA-F2@ec.europa.eu)

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