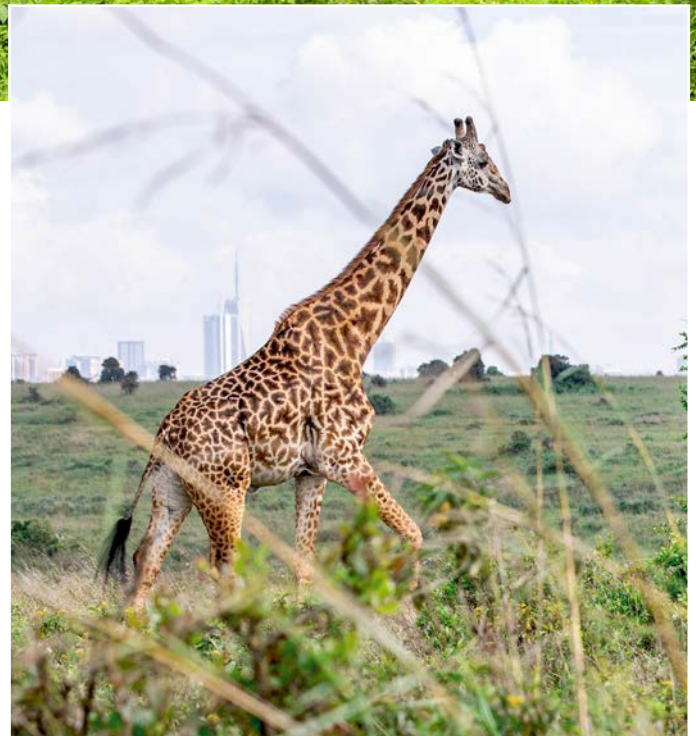


SUSTAINABLE FINANCING FOR AFRICA'S PROTECTED AND CONSERVATION AREAS

Africa's **6 million square kilometers** of protected and conserved areas (P&CAs) provide clean air and water, erosion and flood control, climate regulation, and a host of other services critical to human well-being. They are reservoirs of biodiversity, wellsprings of spiritual and cultural value, and a source of livelihoods that can provide economic resilience during times of crisis, especially for local communities.

While it is hard to put a price on this array of benefits, we do know that these vital lands are severely underfunded. That is, the level of investment in Africa's protected and conserved areas does not come close to matching the importance of these lands. **On average, Africa's P&CAs areas are managed on \$50 per square kilometer, as opposed to the estimated \$1,000 per square kilometer required to sustain biodiversity.** And many parks and other protected areas rely on project-based funding that ebbs and flows, adding to the uncertainty.



We must ensure Africa's protected and conserved areas, as the backbone of the continent's natural infrastructure, are well managed and deliver results for Africa's development agenda.

A recent AWF survey found that not only did 70% of protected areas have severe budget shortfalls, an astonishing 9% had no budget at all (700 protected-area directors surveyed). In 2020 and 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic worsened the plight of Africa's protected areas. Those P&CAs supported by trust funds fared better through the crisis and were able to access emerging funding with more ease.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Today, **there is an unprecedented opportunity for Africa's conservation leaders to emerge as global changemakers** in addressing the climate crisis and urgencies related to biodiversity loss. Africa's population will be the world's largest by 2050. If Africa's development path mimics the path seen on other continents, then our growth will outstrip all the best efforts to reduce emissions elsewhere. Unchecked biodiversity loss will only exacerbate the mounting challenges related to climate change. Investing in nature, specifically Africa's more than 8,600 protected and conserved areas, will provide biodiversity conservation and climate solutions.



Successfully tackling global climate change requires African leadership.

THE SOLUTION

A Pan-African Conservation Trust (APACT) was conceived by the African Protected Area Directors (APADs) forum in collaboration with the co-organizers of the landmark Africa Protected Areas Congress (APAC) held in Kigali in July 2022—AWF and the International Union for Conservation of Nature. It would invest in nature by placing \$200 billion in a trust fund to ensure sufficient, sustained financing for all of Africa's protected and conserved areas in perpetuity.

APACT's goal is to mobilize significant levels of finance in support of all of Africa's P&CAs, transforming them into **growth and prosperity engines** for Africa's increasing human population. Revenue from improved protected-area management would not only benefit P&CA employees and communities living near protected areas, it also would **significantly impact the GDPs** of countries and improve other aspects of economies.



A critical design consideration for APACT is to ensure that it is complementary to, not in competition with, other efforts relating to conservation finance in Africa. This pertains to both programmatic strategy and funding sources. The intent is to help address persistent gaps, expand the volume of funding supporting Africa's P&CAs, and ensure that the entire system of P&CAs has sustained access to financing.

APACT takes sustainable financing to scale across the continent. At a time when the world is negotiating ambitious

Rwanda, a leader in green growth and sustainable development, is the first country to make a financial commitment to APACT.

targets under the biodiversity and climate conventions, APACT is positioned as an Africa-led, African-owned mechanism for delivering global commitments of increased funding to the ground, where the investment can have the most significant and lasting impact.



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