



Africa
Keystone
Protected Area
Partnership

Safeguarding Africa's Critical Places
for the Benefit of Nature and People

Executive Summary



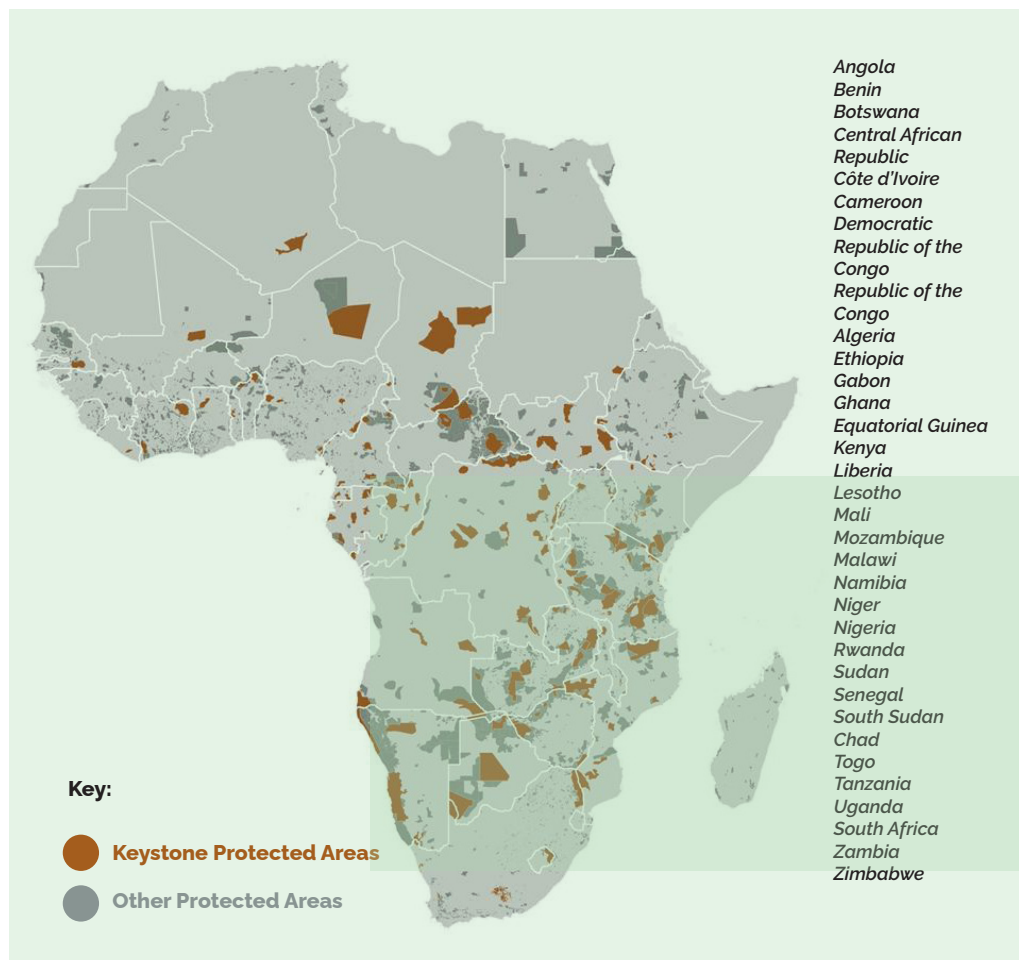
The **Africa Keystone Protected Area Partnership** is a bold new collaboration bringing together African governments, communities, NGOs, and funders to protect 162 of Africa's most irreplaceable protected areas by 2035.

The identification of Africa's 162 Keystone Protected Area involved an 18-month scientific analysis by academic experts who evaluated over 8,000 protected areas across the continent. Using a Conservation Value Index, researchers selected areas that scored 1.5 times above the average, indicating exceptional biodiversity importance, ecological health, and conservation urgency. The selection criteria included species richness, ecosystem integrity, size, connectivity, and the level of threat each area faces, ensuring that only the most critical protected areas were identified.

Like keystones in an arch, these protected areas are foundational to Africa's entire conservation landscape. Without effective management of these critical areas, achieving broader conservation goals including the Global Biodiversity Framework's 30x30 targets becomes significantly more difficult, making them essential anchors for continent-wide conservation success.

The Africa Keystone Protected Area Partnership includes collaborations with Rob Walton Foundation, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), African Parks (AP), Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS), the African Union, the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) and the International Conservation Caucus Foundation (ICCF) Group, among others.

This initiative focuses on conservation models where ecological protection and human prosperity are mutually reinforcing, directly supporting the African Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan (ABSAP) 2023-2030 and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).



Why It Matters

Africa holds over 25% of global biodiversity—and the world's future hinges on how this biodiversity is protected.

Africa's protected and conserved areas play an important role. The 162 Keystone Protected Areas store more than 5.8 billion tonnes of carbon. Additionally, they harbour 71% of African endangered species, provide water for one in five Africans, are the basis of nature based economic zones for 70+ million people, and are large enough to preserve ecological processes.

Africa's Protected Areas are critical for:

- Achieving 30x30 global biodiversity goals.
- Enhancing climate resilience.
- Sustaining food, water, and economic security.

Impact at a Glance

162



high-priority landscapes across **33 African countries**.

Home to **71%** of Africa's threatened species.

Represent **34%** of the continent's protected area land.



70

Million people live in and around PAs.



Protect **43** different types of ecosystems present in adjacent non-Keystone PAs.



The Keystone PAs provide water for 1 in 5 Africans.



Vision

The Keystone Partnership sets a new benchmark for conservation—one where African institutions, governments, communities, NGOs, and funders work together ensuring African voices shape the future of conservation.

Where we're going



Goal: Conserve 162 Keystone Protected Area to form the basis of nature's recovery across Africa.



Who's Involved



The Africa Keystone Partnership includes collaborations with the Rob Walton Foundation, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), African Parks (AP), Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS), the African Union, the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF), and the International Conservation Caucus Foundation (ICCF) Group, among others.

Broader Coalition

- African Governments, Wildlife Agencies & Ministries.
- Indigenous Peoples & Local Communities.
- NGOs, Donors, and Private Sector.

Currently engaging a wider array of stakeholders and partners



Learn More



The Africa Keystone Protected Area Partnership is a continental commitment to a shared future of ecological integrity and human prosperity.

Help us safeguard all 162 Keystone PAs by 2035.