Call for Expressions of Interest:
Hosting the BIOPAMA Eastern and Southern Africa Observatory for Protected Areas and Biodiversity

1. Background

BIOPAMA is a programme aimed at improving the long-term conservation of biodiversity in 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). The Protected Areas component of BIOPAMA is implemented jointly by IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) and EC-JRC (European Commission Joint Research Centre) and is an initiative of the ACP Secretariat funded by the European Union.

BIOPAMA will establish a regional *Observatory for Protected Areas and Biodiversity* in Eastern and Southern Africa, hosted within an existing organization. The Observatory will enable 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 information and data for decision-making. A strong emphasis will be placed on ensuring the uptake and use of the information by decision-makers, and therefore an Observatory host with strong national and regional links at the policy and decision-making level is preferred.

The objective of this Call for Expressions of Interest (EoI) is to identify organizations in the region that have an interest in hosting the BIOPAMA Observatory and that share the vision of BIOPAMA for Eastern and Southern Africa.

2. Description of the Opportunity to host the Observatory

A phased approach is planned for the Observatory, with Phase 1 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 hired and employed by IUCN, will be based at the Host Organization and responsible for the day-to-day management of the Observatory. In Phase 2, the Host Organization will assume more responsibilities, i.e. gradually take over the responsibilities of the IUCN Technical Officer and possibly additional functions or activities defined jointly in Phase 1. IUCN and JRC will transition to supporting roles with respect to management of the Observatory.

IUCN and JRC envision that the Observatory will be housed in one physical location, with suitable office space where initially the IUCN Technical Officer will be based. 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 political connections and involvement in regional policy processes, while another organization may be in a better position to provide technical support to the Regional Reference Information System (RRIS), in which case a virtual link could be established between two organizations. Ideally, the Host Organization will have strengths in both conservation/natural resources policies and geospatial technologies, but if not, the preference is for the host to have strong political connections; agreements can then be established with technical organizations to satisfy the Observatory data and information needs.

The Observatory host should be in a position to:

a) Provide suitable working facilities for the Observatory staff (IUCN 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 initial agreement with the selected Observatory host will cover Phase 1, for a period of two years. During this period, the hosting arrangement will be evaluated jointly by the host, IUCN and JRC and recommendations developed on the hosting arrangement for Phase 2. It is envisaged that a second term of funding will be secured, based on the successful set-up of the Observatory in Phase 1.

For Phase 1, there is start-up budget that will cover the essential operation and administration costs. 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 for Phase 2 and beyond. The Host Organization will benefit from high regional 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. Responding to this Call for Expressions of Interest (EoI)

An EoI may be submitted by an organization or a consortium of organizations with a regional mandate, i.e. those organizations located and operating in Eastern or Southern Africa (e.g. inter-governmental body, NGO, university centre, policy think-tank, research institute, or consortium[1]). For-profit consulting firms are not eligible to apply for this opportunity.

Organizations when preparing an EoI should use the template provided (see BIOPAMA website for Template download) and consult the Observatory Terms of Reference (see Appendix). The submission should provide the information required in section 4 below and should be 5-10 pages, maximum, using single-spaced, 11-point font. Organizations are encouraged to include as appendices their latest annual report and strategic plan. If readily available, a matrix summarizing expertise of technical staff, summary of training/capacity building activities, catalog of services the organization provides, and institutional data policy can be included. This supplemental information is excluded from the 5-10 page limit.

Interested organizations are encouraged to contact Christine Mentzel with any questions or requests for clarification prior to the closing date for responses.

All responses should be delivered electronically by 2 September 2013 as an email attachment sent to Christine Mentzel (Christine.MENTZEL@iucn.org), IUCN Senior Programme Officer, Conservation Areas and Species Diversity, IUCN South Africa Office. Each submission will receive an electronic notification of receipt.

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[1] If a consortium responds to the EoI, a lead partner must be identified and the lead partner must be physically located in Eastern or Southern Africa.

4. Information sought for identification of potential hosting organizations (please use template provided on the [BIOPAMA website](#) for your submission)

4.1 Alignment of hosting organization with BIOPAMA Observatory mission
In response to the Call, interested hosting organizations are requested to elaborate on each of the questions below. This information will enable IUCN and JRC to assess the alignment of potential hosting organizations with the BIOPAMA Observatory mission. For each question, guidance is provided as to suggested length of response. If an organization finds it important to elaborate beyond this length, that is acceptable, provided the total response is within the 10 page limit.

a) What is the organization's motivation to host the Observatory?
Interested hosting organizations are asked to explain how the Observatory aligns with the organization's ongoing involvement in protected areas management and biodiversity conservation. Organizations should provide a compelling argument as to why they are best suited to host the Observatory.
Suggested length: 1/2 page

b) What are key problems that the organization recommends that the Observatory, through its Regional Reference Information System, tackle in Phase 1 and why?
Interested hosting organizations are asked to identify the key specific decision-making or policy concerns/questions in Eastern and/or Southern Africa that tools or applications developed by the Observatory could support. An explanation should be provided as to why this problem or issue merits prioritization. Organizations should describe the particular use case for the problem: the user, the management or policy concern/question of the user, the key requirements for a decision support tool, and the way in which the provision of better data, information, and capacity development provided by the Observatory could influence how the problem is addressed.
Suggested length: 1/2 page

c) What are the organization's regional and national policy-related interactions and affiliations?
Interested hosting organizations are asked to briefly describe their role in regional policy and governance structures, as well as the type and frequency of technical and policy support the organization provides to national stakeholders and agencies involved in protected areas management. Organizations should provide contact information of institutions with whom the organization frequently interacts who may be contacted (1-2 points of contact – name, institution, email address, telephone – at the regional, national, and protected areas level). If organizations have key partners (or focal points) at the national level, through which the Observatory could conduct capacity building and policy support activities, these should be briefly described through specific examples. A specific case may be highlighted which best demonstrates an organization's ability to gather and disseminate information and/or serve as a catalyst within the organization's community of practice.
Suggested length: 1/2 page – 1 page

d) How do the organization's core strengths and competencies align with the Observatory ToR?
Interested hosting organizations are asked to describe their core strengths and competencies with respect to the four functional areas of the Observatory. Particular emphasis should be placed on providing examples that best demonstrate the organization's effectiveness in policy support (ii):

i. 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.

ii. 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).

iii. Capacity building: Strengthen and institutionalize technical capacity of government decision makers and protected area managers to use spatial analysis in their protected area and land use planning and policies.

iv. Networking & communications: Strengthen a network of partners to both collaborate in RRIS development and enhance the uptake and use of information and tools for decision-making.

Suggested length: 1 page

e) What in-kind contribution(s) can the organization contribute to the Observatory?
Interested hosting organizations will discuss how they would coordinate and/or integrate the work of the Observatory with the organization's existing initiatives, fora, and information platforms, as appropriate. Organizations are encouraged to discuss linkages that can be established with existing projects/programmes where feasible, practical, and within the modest financial support provided to the Observatory. Also, organizations shall indicate sources of financial support that can be leveraged, including in-kind contributions that the hosting organization would be able to grant at no cost to the Observatory (e.g., technical and administrative staff time, office/training facilities, IT support, website hosing, etc.).
Suggested length: 1/2 page

4.2 Physical / logistical details of the hosting organization
In response to the Call, interested hosting organizations are requested to elaborate on each of the items below. This information will provide the basis for comparison of the physical/logistical conditions for the Observatory.
Suggested length: 1 page

f) Hosting organization description: specify organization's size and main revenue/funding sources.

g) Scientific environment: describe the scientific environment in the hosting organization, and the relationships and linkages with other national/regional scientific/technical/policy organizations that could offer opportunities of interaction with the Observatory staff and provide potential synergies to the operation of the Observatory.

h) Office space: briefly describe the office space (including IT infrastructure) that could be made available to the Observatory.

i) Meeting rooms: indicate availability and size of meeting rooms and facilities (beamers, videoconference, microphones, etc.).

Appendix:

Observatory for Protected Areas and Biodiversity

Terms of Reference

A. Overview

The establishment of an *Observatory for Protected Areas and Biodiversity* is a central component of the BIOPAMA project, which has the objective of improving the long-term conservation of biodiversity in 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 will be hosted by a regionally focused institution in the Eastern and Southern Africa region.

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 a legitimate land/resource use, 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, 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. 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 BIOPAMA observatory network that includes Central and West Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific.

B. Background on Eastern and Southern Africa Observatory

Comprehensive and reliable information, as well as the capacity to interpret and use this information, are key elements that support sound decision-making. In particular, with rapid development and growing populations and economies changing landscapes of Africa, appropriate and relevant information is fundamental to ensuring that decisions on land 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 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.

Based on an assessment and prioritization process, the work of the Eastern and Southern Africa Observatory will focus initially on a theme around land use conflicts and strategic integrated land use planning. By facilitating engagement of the biodiversity sector with other sectors, BIOPAMA seeks to assist decision-makers in addressing this critical threat to Protected Areas and biodiversity in this region and ensure that Protected Areas and biodiversity are appropriately considered in development planning.

C. 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 each 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, in Phase 1, a Host Organization will provide suitable office space where an IUCN Technical Officer will be based. The day-to-day management of operations will be the responsibility of the Technical Officer, with administrative support provided by the host institution, and financial support by IUCN BIOPAMA. The Technical Officer will be line managed by the BIOPAMA Coordinator for the Eastern and Southern Africa region and may have a technical reporting line to the host institution (to be determined with the host institution). If the Observatory Host Organization is able and willing to contribute more support during Phase 1, beyond office space, this is something that can be explored and negotiated. For instance, the Host Organization could provide direct technical support and implementation of activities (e.g. workshop facilitation and training; data collection and analysis; testing and evaluation of tools, etc.).

During Phase 2, the Host Organization will gradually take over the responsibilities of the IUCN Technical Officer and possibly additional functions or activities defined jointly in Phase 1. IUCN and JRC will transition to supporting roles with respect to management. It is envisaged that a second term of funding will be secured, based on the successful set-up of the Observatory in Phase 1.

In both Phase 1 and Phase 2, 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 and the host institution will therefore form a steering committee to ensure effective oversight of the Observatory.

BIOPAMA Phase 1
- Year 1 (early-mid 2014-2015) – 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)
- Year 2 (2015-2016) – 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.

BIOPAMA Phase 2 and beyond

<u>From mid-2016 – Expanding Service Function:</u> Transition of management and operation of Observatory to Host Organization, with IUCN and JRC moving to more technical support roles.