

# #SOSAfricanHeritage

September to  
December 2020

## Special Support Programme for UNESCO Sites in Africa in Times of COVID-19



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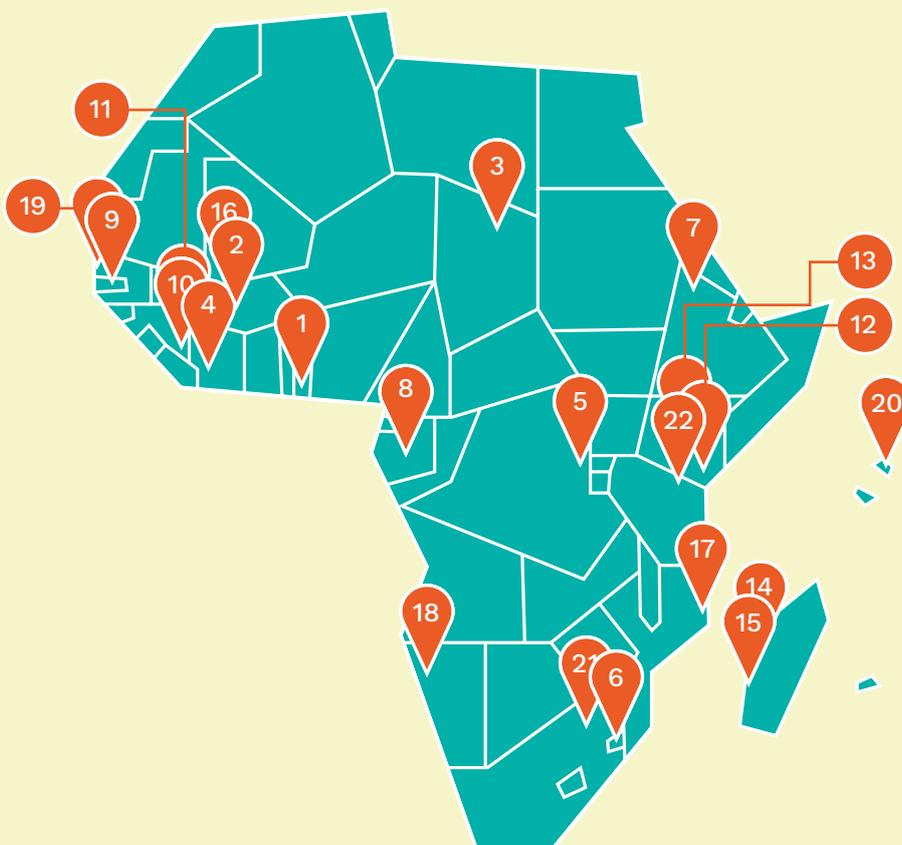
#SOSAfricanHeritage



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

German Commission  
for UNESCO

# #SOSAfricanHeritage



German Commission for UNESCO's special support programme for African UNESCO sites

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Through #SOSAfricanHeritage, the German Commission for UNESCO supports UNESCO designated sites in Africa. This special support programme is a contribution to an International Relief Fund initiated in Summer 2020 by the German Federal Foreign Office and the Goethe-Institut in order to provide rapid support to cultural and educational organisations abroad during the COVID-19 pandemic. The following articles introduce the 22 projects funded by the German Commission for UNESCO.

Many UNESCO designated sites in African countries suffer from severe impairments caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Numerous sites had to close for visitors and in turn are facing major losses of income. Due to massive financial losses, some sites no longer had the means to pay their staff in charge of protecting and managing the World Heritage sites and Biosphere Reserves. Consequently, in the absence of patrols, poaching and looting have increased significantly since the beginning of the pandemic.

In order to help UNESCO designated sites to overcome existing impairments due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the German Commission for UNESCO set up a special support programme: #SOSAfricanHeritage. The aim of #SOSAfricanHeritage is to contribute to preserving independent and sustainable organisational structures at African World Heritage sites and Biosphere Reserves as well as to secure spaces dedicated to education for global citizenship, sustainability, and cultural diversity.

## Funded Projects

On September 1, 2020, an international jury of experts selected 22 projects from 19 African countries for funding. Until December 2020 each project will receive up to 25,000 euros from the German Commission for UNESCO. The selected projects include innovative digitisation and educational measures, methods to preserve the sites' endangered infrastructures, as well as approaches to create alternative touristic access to UNESCO World Heritage sites or UNESCO Biosphere Reserves. Projects furthermore promote new and sustainable income streams, thus helping to cushion the economic downturn caused by the pandemic. Many of the selected projects are dedicated to protecting World Heritage sites and Biosphere Reserves from poaching and looting.

Find out more about the individual projects in the project-profiles.

## The International Relief Fund

The Foreign Office provides the basic funding of three million euros. Additional funding is made available by the Goethe-Institute, the S. Fischer Foundation, and the Robert Bosch Foundation. The overall coordination is directed by the Goethe-Institute.

Numerous other cultural organizations and private foundations, including the DAAD's Berlin artist program, the Mercator Foundation, and the Siemens Foundation, provide additional support funds or participate with their own programmes. With its special support programme #SOSAfricanHeritage – covering more than 500,000 euros – the German Commission for UNESCO is part of the Relief Fund consortium.

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 Call

 [unesco.de](https://unesco.de)

 Website of the  
Goethe-Institut's  
Funds



Federal Foreign Office

# Benin UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Mono: Digitisation for Nature Conservation

With digital monitoring systems and capacity training, the fund of the #SOSAfricanHeritage programme enables patrols to better monitor and prevent poaching and fight the overexploitation of natural resources.



## Infobox



© Eco Benin

- Year of designation: 2017
- Country: Benin and Togo
- Type of site: UNESCO Biosphere Reserve
-  Web presentation of the site by UNESCO

## The Biosphere Reserve briefly presented

Located in the south-west of Benin and Togo, this site covers an area of 346,285 ha. Stretching across the alluvial plain and the delta and river-bank areas of the Mono River, it boasts a mosaic of landscapes and ecosystems consisting mainly of mangroves, savanna, lagoons, floodplains and forests, including sacred forests. The biosphere reserve is home to nearly 2 million people. Main activities include small-scale agriculture, pasture, forestry, and fishing.

At the Bouche du Roy site in Benin, the focus is, among other things, on the conservation of mangrove forests, lagoon systems, the sea and the oviposition sites of four species of sea turtles and manatees, which are threatened according to the World Conservation Union (IUCN). The biosphere reserve is particularly threatened by the overexploitation of mangrove forests, fishing resources and poaching of sea turtles and manatees, as well as by the pollution of the waters with plastic waste.

In order to reduce these pressures while ensuring sustainable management of ecosystems, surveillance patrols and awareness-raising measures have been introduced in recent years.

## Impairments due to the Pandemic

With the pandemic-related restrictions, all these actions have been halted. While in 2019 only 19 areas with degraded mangrove swamps were identified by ecological monitoring, this number has increased to 59 degraded areas in May 2020 – without patrols. In addition, the abrupt stop in tourism revenues has intensified overfishing and destruction of flora and fauna.

## Remedy through Digital Monitoring, Virtual Tourism, and Online Training

Through the project supported by the German Commission for UNESCO, the NGO Eco-Benin relieves pressure on the nature reserve through targeted digitisation measures. The introduction of the digital patrol monitoring system SMART should enable monitoring even in pandemic times. For this purpose, the necessary technology will not only be purchased but the patrols will also be trained accordingly. In addition, virtual tourism in the biosphere reserve will be made possible via a website. Visitors can visit the site via a paid video or make a targeted donation for conservation measures. Eco-Benin is organising an online training course for the local population – especially young people – to impart knowledge about the marine ecosystem and raise awareness for the need for protection measures.

 [Website of Eco-Bénin](#)

# Burkina Faso UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Mare aux Hippopotames: Fight against Poaching and COVID-19

As part of the #SOSAfricanHeritage support programme, the Burkinabe MAB National Committee will improve the management of the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Mare aux Hippopotames. The project focuses on the fight against poaching, the revival of tourism and new environmental education opportunities for the local population.



## Infobox



CC BY 2.0, ninicocotte, Flickr

- Year of designation: 1986
- Country: Burkina Faso
- Type of site: UNESCO Biosphere Reserve
-  Web presentation of the site by UNESCO

## The Biosphere Reserve briefly presented

The Biosphere Reserve Mare aux Hippopotames is located about 60 km north of Bobo-Dioulasso in the province of Houet in southwest Burkina Faso. It is known for its freshwater lake („mare“) with its ponds and marshes in the floodplain of the Volta Noire river and for its gallery forests. The site is home to a great biodiversity, especially near the lake after which the reserve is named: the flora comprises 191 species with 136 genera and 52 families. Wild mammals include hippos, elephants, crocodiles, large antelopes, and numerous types of monkey and warthogs. The birdlife is represented by 160 species of waterfowl. The lake itself is home to 34 species of fish. The Mare aux Hippopotames Biosphere Reserve is surrounded by 10 villages with a population of around 40,000.

## Impairments due to the Pandemic

With the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic and the growing insecurity in the protected area, monitoring and anti-poaching activities in the Biosphere Reserve have declined considerably – among other things due to the slump in tourism and the associated loss of financial income. However, poaching is one of the reasons for the decline or even the disappearance of certain animal species, such as the sable antelope, which is one of the site’s symbols alongside the hippopotamus and the elephant. Poaching has increased dramatically since the outbreak of the pandemic and, in addition to the current health and economic challenges, poses an existential threat to the UNESCO designated site

## Remedy through improved Infrastructure and Education

Through the project, which is funded by the German Commission for UNESCO, the Burkinabe Man and the Biosphere National Committee improves the management of the Biosphere Reserve. The project focuses on combating poaching by strengthening and training the protection patrols, revitalising tourism by improving the relevant infrastructure (e.g. signposting, break areas) and environmental education offers for the local population. In addition, women in particular will be trained to collect and process non-timber products for their own use.

 [Website of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique et Technologique](#)

# Chad UNESCO World Heritage Lakes of Ounianga: Reforesting Oases and Gaining Land

The Site Management of the Lakes of Ounianga World Heritage site uses the funds of the special programme #SOSAfricanHeritage to reforest oases and to better protect the local population from Covid-19.



## Infobox



©David Stanley

- Year of inscription: 2012
- Country: Chad
- Type of site: UNESCO World Heritage (natural heritage)
-  Web presentation of the site by UNESCO

## The World Heritage site briefly presented

The site comprises eighteen interconnected lakes in the Sahara, covering an area of 62,808 ha. It is an exceptional natural landscape of great beauty with striking colours and shapes. The salt, hypersalt and freshwater lakes are fed by groundwater and are located in two groups 40 km apart: Ounianga Kebir comprises four lakes, whose highly saline waters are home only to algae and some micro-organisms. The second group, Ounianga Serir, comprises fourteen lakes separated by sand dunes. Floating reed covers almost half of the surface of these lakes and reduces evaporation. With their high-quality fresh water, some of these lakes are home to aquatic fauna, especially fish. Because of their geographical location, the natural heritage site is threatened by shifting sand dunes, which threaten not only the lakes but also the palm gardens in the oases that provide the local population with food and commercial products.

## Impairments due to the Pandemic

Thanks to the income from tourism, the World Heritage site has been able to take regular measures against the silting up of the oases and reclaim agricultural land. Now, with the pandemic and the borders closed, this source of funding has dried up and there is no government subsidy. As a result, the protection measures that are regularly implemented by the population and site management to maintain the integrity of the site have been halted.

## Remedy through Effective Management

The aim of the funded project is to strengthen the operational capacities of the local population and site management so that they can continue their site protection and income generating activities despite the negative impacts of Covid-19. Regular meetings and tours to and around the lakes will be organised. Fences will be installed and the oases will be reforested with plants adapted to the dry environment to further combat lake silting. Part of the project is also to inform the local population about COVID-19 and to provide them with appropriate protective equipment.

# Côte d'Ivoire UNESCO World Heritage Taï National Park: Zoonoses in Times of Pandemics

Through the #SOSAfricanHeritage funded project at the UNESCO World Heritage site Taï National Park, the Ivorian Office of Parks and Reserves will provide information on the links between zoonoses, pandemics, and biological diversity.



## Infobox



©AfricaForce

- Year of inscription as World Heritage: 1982
- Year of designation as Biosphere Reserve: 1977
- Country: Côte d'Ivoire
- Type of Site: UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and UNESCO World Heritage (natural heritage)
-  Web presentation of the site by UNESCO (WHC)
-  Web presentation of the site by UNESCO (MAB)

## The World Heritage site briefly presented

The Taï National Park is one of the last large remnants of the primary tropical forest in West Africa. Its rich natural flora and endangered mammal species such as the pygmy hippopotamus and 11 species of monkeys are of great scientific interest. The World Heritage site, which is also a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, is located on the border with Liberia in the south-west of Côte d'Ivoire. The southern third is the wettest and most diverse area, especially rich in legumes.

Research carried out in the park has identified certain viruses and diseases such as tuberculosis, anthrax or streptococci in the animal populations of the site. In primates, these viruses and bacteria are a threat to animal populations and a risk factor for the development of zoonoses (infectious diseases that can be naturally transmitted between humans and other vertebrates). In addition, gold-washing, deforestation, and poaching weaken the balance maintained by the parks management.

## Impairments due to the Pandemic

A diagnosis of the origin of COVID-19 suggests that it is a biodiversity crisis: An ecological balance keeps the reservoir of millions of pathogens in wild animals at bay. However, the decline in diversity in the plant and animal world has meant that 70% of newly occurring infections are of zoonotic origin. The Taï Park is a natural barrier to this, but it is not sufficiently recognised by the local population, who continue to apply destructive practices. In addition, the current pandemic has led to a reduction in management activities in the park.

## Remedy through Knowledge Transfer

The aim of this funded project is to address the risks associated to the erosion of biodiversity. The project focuses on activities that inform the population about zoonoses and hygiene measures and increase their knowledge about the latter. The local population will be sensitised to the links between environmental degradation and human health and eventually change their practices in the medium and long term. Expected results include a new database, information material tailored to the target group and improved nature conservation measures by trained national park staff.

 [Website of the Office Ivoirien des Parcs et Réserves](#)

 [Website of the Taï National Park](#)

# Democratic Republic of Congo

## UNESCO World Heritage

### Kahuzi-Biega National Park: Digital Access to Biological Diversity

In order to increase the visibility of the highly endangered Kahuzi-Biega National Park, KIVU TERRA NOVA is developing the app „MyPNKB“ with the help of funding from the German Commission for UNESCO. It is intended to present the park with its extraordinary biological richness and to enhance its touristic accessibility in times of a pandemic.



#### Infobox



© Mike Davison

- Year of inscription: 1980
- Country: Democratic Republic of Congo
- Type of Site: UNESCO World Heritage (natural heritage)
-  Web presentation of the site by UNESCO

## The World Heritage site briefly presented

The Kahuzi-Biega National Park is a vast area of primary tropical forest dominated by two extinct volcanoes, Kahuzi and Biega, featuring a diverse and rich fauna. It stretches across the Albertinian Rift and the Congo Basin and is one of the ecologically richest regions in Africa. The world's most important population of eastern lowland gorillas – a subspecies endemic to the Democratic Republic of Congo – uses this diversity as a habitat. Dense lowland rainforests and Afro-montane forests cover more than 600,000 ha, with bamboo forests and some small areas of subalpine prairies and heather on the mountains Kahuzi and Biega.

The park has been on UNESCO's List of World Heritage in Danger since 1997 due to poaching, deforestation and the presence of armed militias.

## Impairments due to Pandemic

The pandemic has further worsened the condition of the site through poaching, charcoal production, mineral exploitation and anthropogenic pressures. The suspension of certain routine activities (tourism and ranger tours) and the reduction of patrol frequencies have further increased the vulnerability of this World Heritage site. The death of one gorilla due to lack of ambulatory care following a collision with another in July 2020 and the increase in human-animal conflicts following repeated attacks by gorillas on the fields of the local population, which are increasingly threatened by poverty and hunger, were recorded.

## Remedy through App „MyPNKB“

In order to increase the visibility of the severely threatened national park, the app „MyPNKB“ is to be developed with the funding of the German Commission for UNESCO. The app is intended to present the park with its extraordinary biological wealth and make it accessible to tourists even in times of pandemic. As the social situation of the local communities has deteriorated considerably, COVID-19 information campaigns and the provision of hygiene products to combat this pandemic form another integral part of the project. In addition, the NGO KIVU TERRA NOVA is organising workshops at schools and other educational institutions to improve eco-tourism and sustainable development in the National Park. The aim is to turn pupils into World Heritage ambassadors.

# Eswatini UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Lubombo: A new Space for Dialogue and Nature Conservation

With funding from the German Commission for UNESCO, Eswatini's National Commission for UNESCO is creating an extension to the administrative office of the Lubombo Biosphere Reserve. The new building will serve to sensitise the local population to hygiene measures and nature conservation activities and to ensure that community members continue to use natural resources sustainably.



## Infobox



© UNESCO

- Year of designation: 2019
- Country: Eswatini
- Type of Site: UNESCO Biosphere Reserve
-  Web presentation of the site by UNESCO

## The Biosphere Reserve briefly presented

Lubombo is the first Biosphere Reserve in the Kingdom of Eswatini. The country is a landlocked state bordered by South Africa to the north, west and south and Mozambique to the east. The Lubombo region is the largest of the four administrative regions of Eswatini, roughly covering 35% of the country's territory. The region has the second smallest population in the country. It has a high level of biodiversity, including a number of important populations of globally threatened species such as the black rhino. Economic activities in the region are mainly focused on the cultivation and processing of sugar cane, with all the country's sugar factories located in the lowveld part of Lubombo, which is the main contributor to the country's GDP.

## Impairments due to the Pandemic

The pandemic has exacerbated the already high unemployment rate in Lubombo. The rural communities in the Lubombo region are therefore in despair as hunger and crime are on the rise. The impact on the adjacent nature reserves is an increase of marijuana cultivation, indiscriminate deforestation of sensitive riverine vegetation, and poaching of endangered species such as the protected red duiker.

## Remedy through Dialogue, Fencing, and Information

The aim of the project funded by the German Commission for UNESCO is to create a space both for the protection of the Biosphere Reserve and for the participation of the local community. This will be achieved through an extension to the reserve's administrative office. In order to raise the locals awareness for the need of hygiene measures and nature conservation, information events are also to be held in these rooms. This will ensure that community members continue to use natural resources in a sustainable way while being protected from the new virus.

Fences are to be erected to better protect the Biosphere Reserve from poaching and increasing marijuana cultivation, and to clearly demarcate grazing areas. This will also create jobs for the local population.

# Ethiopia UNESCO World Heritage Simien National Park: Jobs against Covid-19

As part of a „cash-for-work“ programme, the infrastructure of the UNESCO World Heritage site Simien National Park is to be improved. In cooperation with the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority, the African Wildlife Foundation will implement urgently needed maintenance measures on tourist trekking routes and roads.



## Infobox



©UNESCO, Guy Debonnet

- Year of inscription: 1978
- Country: Ethiopia
- Type of Site: UNESCO World Heritage (natural heritage)
-  Web presentation of the site by UNESCO

## The World Heritage site briefly presented

The Simien National Park in northern Ethiopia is a spectacular landscape where massive erosion over millions of years has created rugged mountain peaks, deep valleys, and sharp cliffs that plunge some 1,500m into the deep. The park is of importance for biodiversity conservation as it is home to globally threatened species, including the iconic Walia ibex, a wild mountain goat found nowhere else in the world, the gelada baboon, and the Ethiopian wolf.

## Impairments due to the Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought tourism in the Simien National Park to a standstill, leaving communities living in the buffer zone of the National Park without important income and trade. Under these circumstances, they have become more dependent on livestock farming and are turning to grazing herds in the park. At the same time, the quality of the once busy tourist trekking routes and internal roads has deteriorated due to the absence of tourists and has been damaged by heavy rainfall. As a result, some areas of the park have become inaccessible. Simultaneously, ranger patrols are opening access to local communities, allowing them and their cattle illegal entrance to the park. The resulting overgrazing in the park will eventually lead to land degradation and damage to wildlife habitat. As this is the most damaging land use in and around the park, the conservation gains achieved over the years will be wiped out.

## Remedy through new Trekking Routes and Jobs

As part of a „cash-for-work“ programme, the project supported by the German Commission for UNESCO aims at improving the infrastructure of the National Park through urgent maintenance of tourist trekking routes and roads. The African Wildlife Foundation in cooperation with Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority will create employment opportunities in the villages and enable people to earn an income that will help them cope with the pressures of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The tourism infrastructure, which is crucial to create income opportunities for both the park and the communities, will be maintained. Ultimately, this will also reduce the pressure on the park's wildlife and natural resources.

 [Website of the African Wildlife Foundation](#)

# Gabon UNESCO World Heritage Ecosystem and Cultural Landscape of Lopé-Okanda: Resilience through Intangible Cultural Heritage

With the help of information campaigns and an inventory of the intangible cultural heritage on site, the Site Management aims at strengthening the resilience of the National Park with funds from the German Commission for UNESCO.



## Infobox



©UNESCO, Christopher Morris Wilks

- Year of inscription: 2007
- Country: Gabon
- Type of Site: UNESCO World Heritage (mixed)
-  Web presentation of the site by UNESCO

## The World Heritage site briefly presented

The Lopé-Okanda World Heritage site is an unusual interface between dense and well-preserved tropical rainforest and savannah environments. It not only hosts a wide variety of habitats and species, including endangered large mammals, but also illustrates the ecological and biological adaptation processes of species and habitats to post-glacial climate change. Some 1,800 rock carvings bear witness to various peoples who left behind extensive and comparatively well-preserved settlement remains around mountain peaks, caves, and shelters. Neolithic and Iron Age sites reflect an important migration route of the Bantu and other peoples from West Africa along the Ogooué valley to the north of the dense, evergreen Congo forests and to the central east and southern Africa, which has shaped the development of the whole of sub-Saharan Africa.

## Impairments due to the Pandemic

The appearance of the first case of COVID-19 in Gabon in March 2020 prompted the national authorities to take numerous protective measures. These measures have had numerous effects on the Lopé National Park and on the population living in and around the park. These include the closure of hotels and restaurants, a ban on visits, the reduction of local products on the markets and the suspension of all cultural activities.

The spread of the virus in the villages has also led to a significant reduction in agricultural activities, which lead to lower resilience for the coming year. The people of Lopé are receiving too few reliable information about the pandemic and about the measures taken by the government. As a result, much misinformation is being passed on, including about potential links between the virus and traditional knowledge and the healing promises of the latter.

## Remedy through Information, New Sources of Income, and Traditional Knowledge

The aim of the project, which is funded by the German Commission for UNESCO, is to strengthen the resilience of the World Heritage site and thus facilitate the management of the pandemic. The Site Management organises information campaigns for the local population about the impact and consequences of the pandemic. A compilation of an inventory of local intangible cultural heritage that can be helpful in combating COVID-19 will be produced. In addition, activities to provide income for the population will be promoted. Together, these activities should help to strengthen the resilience of the World Heritage site.

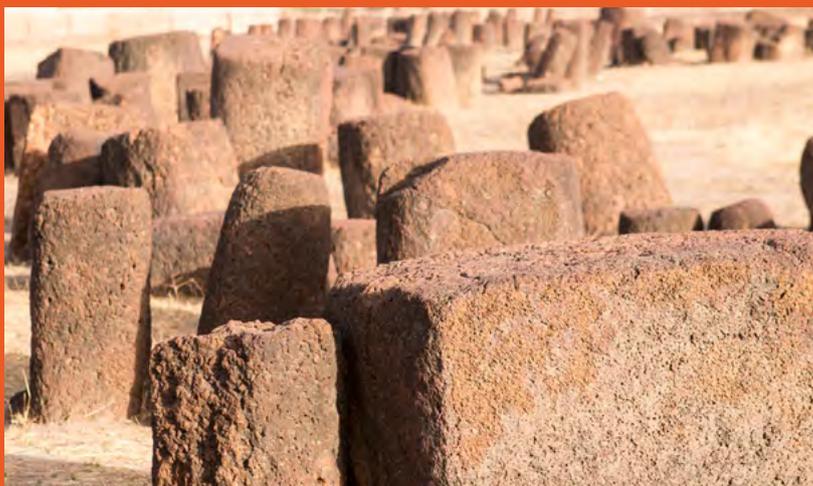
 [Website of the World Heritage Site](#)

# Gambia UNESCO World Heritage Senegambian Stone Circles: Promotion of Women and Young People

Promoting women and young people is at the heart of this #SOSAfricanHeritage project implemented by the Arts and Culture Centre in Gambia. Handicraft and history education aims at improving their entrepreneurial skills.



## Infobox



© Carsten ten Brink

- Year of inscription: 2006
- Country: Gambia
- Type of Site: UNESCO World Heritage (cultural heritage)
-  Web presentation of the site by UNESCO

## The World Heritage site briefly presented

The site consists of four large groups of stone circles representing an extraordinary concentration of over 1,000 monuments along a section of the Gambia River. The four groups, Sine Ngayène, Wanar, Wassu, and Kerbatch comprise 93 stone circles and numerous tumuli and burial mounds, some of which have been excavated. Materials from the 3rd century BC and 16th century AD have been found here. Together, the stone circles of laterite columns and the associated tumuli form an extensive sacred landscape that has been formed over more than 1,500 years. It reflects a prosperous, highly organised, and durable society.

## Impairments due to the Pandemic

The communities living at this World Heritage site in the Niimi district are already at risk of poverty, which in the past has forced many young people to leave their homes. Tourism is one of the main sources of income for young people and women in this community. The outbreak of Covid-19, the state protection measures, and the resulting decline in revenue since March 2020 mean that these communities are now even more severely affected. This has also led to a 95 percent drop in income and created a great deal of pressure on young people and women to move to the cities or leave the country.

## Remedy through History Education and Crafts

This project aims to provide 50 young people living in the communities of Juffureh with the skills necessary to make a living, but also to improve their historical knowledge about the World Heritage site through well-trained guides. The training of the tourist guides will focus on counter-acting historical revisionism, myths, and misinterpretations of history. 25 women will be trained in handicraft techniques so that they can make cotton prints for sale when tourists return to the site. As part of this training, the women will also be trained in online marketing to ensure a permanent clientele.

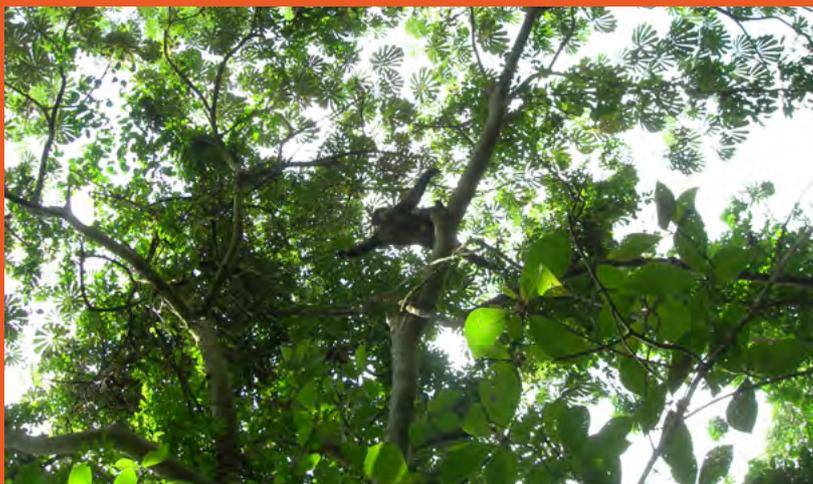
 [Website of the National Centre for Arts & Culture](#)

# Guinea UNESCO World Heritage Mount Nimba: Mapping for Animal Welfare

In the Guinean UNESCO World Heritage site Mont Nimba, the Reserve Office uses the #SOSAfricanHeritage funds for anti-poaching patrols, geo-referencing, and mapping of ape habitats.



## Infobox



©UNESCO, Guy Debonnet

- Year of inscription as World Natural Heritage: 1982
- Year of designation as Biosphere Reserve: 1980
- Country: Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire
- Type of Site: UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and UNESCO World Heritage (natural heritage)
-  Web presentation of the site by UNESCO (WHC)
-  Web presentation of the site by UNESCO (MAB)

## The World Heritage site briefly presented

As a veritable „water tower“ with some fifty springs between Côte d’Ivoire and Guinea, the „Mont Nimba“ nature reserve is dominated by a mountain range with its peak Mount Nimba reaching 1,752 m above sea levels. The slopes, which are covered with dense forest and grassy mountain pastures on the lower levels feature a particularly rich endemic flora and fauna. The area covers a total surface of 17,540 ha, thereof 12,540 ha in Guinea and 5,000 ha in Côte d’Ivoire.

This World Heritage site, which is also listed as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, is home to endemic and diverse species of the most remarkable animal and plant populations, not only in West Africa but throughout the African continent; in particular, endangered species such as the micro-potamogal of Mount Nimba, the viviparous toad of Mount Nimba, and chimpanzees that use stones as tools.

## Impairments due to the Pandemic

Since the emergence of the novel coronavirus, no cases have been reported at Mont Nimba in the prefecture of Lola and in the forest region (as of August 2020). The management of the Biosphere Reserve has so far been maintained. Surveillance patrols and assistance to the local communities through international support will continue. However, the massif has been under threat for decades due to increased pressure from demographic growth. Although the natural forests covering the slopes of the Nimba massif have not suffered much damage, the fauna has been severely affected by poaching. The World Heritage site has therefore been placed on the UNESCO list of World Heritage in Danger since 1992.

## Remedy through Data and Awareness Raising

The project supported by German Commission for UNESCO aims at strengthening the general conservation measures of the nature reserve: These include monthly search and anti-poaching patrols and the identification, geo-referencing, and mapping of areas frequented by great apes to facilitate their surveillance. In addition, this data will be processed into maps. The Reserve Office will organise information campaigns in the neighbouring villages, which are particularly vulnerable to forest fire.

# Guinea UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Ziama Massif: Nature Conservation through Participation

At the Ziama Massif Biosphere Reserve in Guinea, the National Man and the Biosphere Committee is investing #SOSAfricanHeritage funds in nature conservation, the fight against poaching, and hygiene measures.



## Infobox



©Jurgen

- Year of designation: 1980
- Country: Guinea
- Type of site: UNESCO Biosphere Reserve
-  Web presentation of the site by UNESCO

## The Biosphere Reserve briefly presented

The Ziama Massif Biosphere Reserve is located at the border with Liberia in south-eastern Guinea and about 100 km from the town of N'Zérékoré. The forest is dense, evergreen, or semi-evergreen. The Ziama forest is a refuge for several rare, endangered, and threatened species. Among the 124 mammal species are elephants, monkeys, buffaloes, pygmy hippopotami, chimpanzees, hoofed animals, and carnivores. There are also various species of bats, rodents, birds, and reptiles.

The forest is one of the most important habitats for endemic species of the large Upper Guinean forest block between Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Côte d'Ivoire.

## Impairments due to the Pandemic

Since March 2020, the Government of Guinea has taken measures to combat the pandemic, including border closures, physical distancing, and downsizing civil service. According to a June 2020 WWF analysis, tropical deforestation increased by 150% in March as COVID-19 spread globally. In Guinea, too, particularly in the Ziama Biosphere Reserve, Covid-19 protection measures and staff cuts in the services have led to a reduction in guard patrols. The result is more illegal logging and poaching. The loss of purchasing power due to the slowdown in economic activity caused by COVID-19 has led a large part of the local population to resort to the use of forest products (medicinal plants, wild fruits) and poaching of protected species to secure their income.

## Remedy by Working with Stakeholders on the Ground

The aim of this project is to improve the conservation of the Ziama Biosphere Reserve by strengthening the capacity of the local population to combat poaching and deforestation. In order to be effective, this fight is not only being led by the guard patrols, but the project aims to make it participative and inclusive. To this end, the Man and the Biosphere committee identifies first of all the most relevant socio-professional actors in the region, such as hunters, farmers, cattle breeders, women's groups through surveys of locally elected officials. With these groups, the reasons for poaching and forest fires will be identified and adequate protection measures will be developed. Information material, including current legal texts on environmental protection and protection against COVID-19 are produced and distributed in the three most important local languages.

# Kenya UNESCO World Heritage Sacred Mijikenda Kaya Forests: Multi-Generation Dialogue for Sustainability

With this #SOSAfricanHeritage project, the National Museum of Kenya plans to involve different age groups in the sustainable management of the Sacred Mijikenda Kaya forests.



## Infobox



© IIED

- Year of inscription: 2008
- Country: Kenya
- Type of site: UNESCO World Heritage (cultural heritage)
-  Web presentation of the site by UNESCO

## The World Heritage site briefly presented

The Mijikenda Kaya forests consist of 10 separate forest areas along a 200 km long coastal stretch, which contains the remains of numerous fortified villages, so-called kayas, of the Mijikenda people. These kayas, which were built from the 16th century onwards and were abandoned by their inhabitants in the 1940s, are now considered to be the homes of ancestors. They are venerated as holy places and as such are maintained by councils of elders. The site is inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List as a unique testimony to a cultural tradition functioning as a direct link to a living tradition.

## Impairments due to the Pandemic

The informal governance structures of the forests of Saint Mijikenda Kaya and unstructured management approaches are currently threatened by poaching and internal conflicts. The forests provide various forms of livelihood for neighbouring communities. However, small local businesses are not profitable enough to alleviate the pressure and to ensure alimention. Moreover, the local communities contribute to the depletion of resources as they use firewood as their main source of energy and for building their homes. In addition, since the first COVID-19 case in March 2020, forests have increasingly been subject to urban-rural migration caused by job losses.

It is therefore necessary to strengthen the industries and promote sustainable agriculture. Data collection on the state of forest resources and the impact of the pandemic is currently needed to protect the forests against the growing population.

## Remedy through Digital Encounters and Sustainable Business

With this project, the National Museum of Kenya aims to facilitate interactive encounters between the elders and the different age groups („Rika“) via local radio, television stations, and social media platforms contributing to sustainable forest management. This will lead to a more formal and functional management structure and will increase the resilience of the forests. In order to further reduce pressure on forest resources and products, existing local small businesses will be strengthened and expanded to become more profitable and also to meet the needs of neighbouring forest communities for food, firewood, and building materials.

 [Website of the National Museum of Kenya](#)

# Kenya UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Mount Kenya: Sustainable Forest Management

The Meru Forest uses #SOSAfricanHeritage funds to improve the biosphere of the Upper Imenti Forest and to ensure a more sustainable livelihood of community members.



## Infobox



©Water, Land and Ecosystems

- Year of designation as Biosphere Reserve: 1978
- Year of inscription as World Heritage: 1997
- Country: Kenya
- Type of Site: UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and UNESCO World Heritage (natural heritage)
-  Web presentation of the site by UNESCO (MAB)
-  Web presentation of the site by UNESCO (WHC)

## The Biosphere Reserve briefly presented

Mount Kenya, located on the equator about 180 km north of Nairobi, is a lonely mountain of volcanic origin. A belt of humid Afromontane forest merges into a zone of tree-like heather at about 3,200 metres and further up to moorland and grassland. Mount Kenya is an important water reservoir for its foothills and the surrounding areas. Increasing conflicts over water resources influence the complex ecological and socio-economic dynamics of the highland-lowland system of Mount Kenya and the adjacent upper Euaso Ng'iro northern basin. Mount Kenya National Park was established in 1949 and declared a Biosphere Reserve in 1978. In 1997, Mount Kenya National Park and the adjacent forest reserves were included in the UNESCO World Heritage List.

## Impairments due to the Pandemic

The COVID-19 crisis, in conjunction with the Kenyan economic crisis, has increased deforestation rates in the Upper Imenti Forest, thus hampering international efforts to achieve emission targets. Smallholders are becoming increasingly dependent on forests and forest products for their own use, including medicinal plants and wildlife, leading to an over-harvesting of natural resources. With the outbreak of COVID-19, the search for wild plants and other plant-based medicines in forests will increase. The pandemic and the migration of population from urban to rural areas due to lack of employment is increasing the pressure on forest resources. Legal livelihoods are being lost, while illegal charcoal production, encroachments, and other unplanned activities are increasing. Local fears of the virus spreading to villagers and wildlife are also growing.

## Remedy through Digital Monitoring, Virtual Tourism, and Online Training

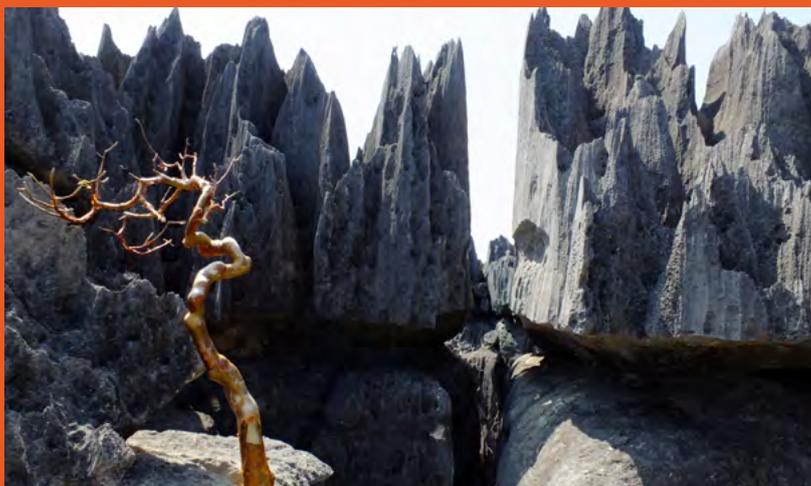
Improving the management of the forest biosphere of the Upper Imenti Forest and ensuring the sustainable livelihood of community members is the main objective of the project led by Meru Forest. It aims at contributing to strengthening and maintaining the independence and sustainable organisational structure of the Biosphere Reserve through active stakeholder participation, sustainable management of the ecosystem, and through exchange programmes and cultural diversity.

# Madagascar UNESCO World Heritage Tsingy de Bemaraha: Better Protection through Local Committees

Through training and educational measures, joint fire-fighting campaigns and regular meetings, the Tsingy de Bemaraha UNESCO World Heritage site aims to increase the participation of local stakeholders, communities, and authorities in site management, thus strengthening the organisation of the site.



## Infobox



© Tee la Rosa

- Year of inscription: 1990
- Country: Madagascar
- Type of Site: UNESCO World Heritage (natural heritage)
-  Web presentation of the site by UNESCO

## The World Heritage site briefly presented

The Tsingy de Bemaraha nature reserve is located in the west of Madagascar and covers 152,000 ha. The World Heritage site offers a great variety of geomorphological structures. It is a veritable cathedral of limestone and forms one of the most spectacular natural landscapes on the island and in the world. The western part of the plateau is formed by a very dissected relief, largely covered by a dense, dry deciduous forest. In its eastern part, the forest is interspersed with savannahs. Due to its richness in animal and plant species, Tsingy de Bemaraha is considered to be a centre of endemism.

## Impairments due to the Pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic is having a wide range of economic and social impacts in Madagascar, including the protection of the UNESCO World Heritage site. The social impact as a whole cannot yet be predicted. Food shortages and poverty will continue to increase in rural areas.

At the same time, a massive increase in fires has been recorded in recent months. By mid-May, the number of fires detected by satellite exceeded the total number of cases documented in 2019. The resulting damage on site is massive: 969 hectares of savannah have burned down, and cases of illegal logging are increasing.

The National Park is also one of the most visited places in Madagascar by international tourists. The closure of the park for tourism has a negative impact on the financial resources for the sites management.

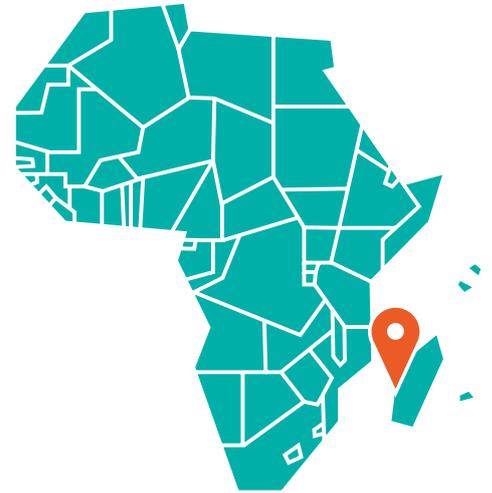
## Remedy through Education and Technical Equipment

The project, funded by the German Commission for UNESCO, aims to strengthen the organisation of the site and to increase the participation of local stakeholders, communities and local authorities in site management. This is to be achieved, for example, through training and educational measures, joint fire-fighting campaigns and regular meetings. In addition to strengthening the organisation, the project also aims to improve the infrastructure of the World Heritage site. The acquisition of GPS devices, water bags or mobile phones will enable more targeted monitoring and protection measures to be implemented in the future.

 [Website of Madagascar National Parks](#)

# Madagascar UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Belo sur Mer: Young Volunteers Against Forest Fires

With the support of young volunteers, Madagascar National Parks will take action against forest fires at UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Belo sur Mer – Kirindy Mité with funds from the special support programme #SOSAfricanHeritage.



## Infobox



© Nomis Simon

- Year of designation: 2016
- Country: Madagascar
- Type of Site: UNESCO Biosphere Reserve
-  Web presentation of the site by UNESCO

## The Biosphere Reserve briefly presented

Located on the west coast of Madagascar, the Belo-sur-Mer – Kirindy-Mite Biosphere Reserve comprises a watershed and a mosaic of rich but fragile ecosystems. The ecosystems include dry forests, thickets, thorn forests, savannahs, mangroves, coral reefs and salty swampy depressions known as „tannes“. The reef is a valuable feeding ground not only for the resident whales, dolphins, manatees and sea turtles. The people are also dependent on these natural resources for their livelihood and income. After all, the islands and two sacred salt lakes, together with their unique marine biodiversity, are a valuable asset for tourism.

## Impairments due to Pandemic

The Kirindy Mité National Park is the core area of the Belo-sur-Mer – Kirindy-Mite Biosphere Reserve. In 2020, fires in the park started very early in the year and increased further in April due to the declared Covid-19 emergency. The health crisis exacerbated the economic situation of the local population and prompted them to attack the park's natural resources, including through forest fires. From January to July 2020, 216 fire points were recorded by satellite in the park, compared to only 66 in the same period in 2019, which has already resulted in the loss of some 60 hectares of forest.

## Relief through Young Volunteers

The Biosphere Reserve's project concept combines nature conservation with sustainable development. The aim of the Madagascar National Parks project funded by the German Commission for UNESCO is therefore to develop and implement a resilience system for the core area of the biosphere reserve – by actively involving the communities in nature conservation activities, the fight against forest fires and reforestation work. To this end, young unemployed people from the region and students from the more urban areas will be recruited as volunteers, trained as protection brigades. A better awareness of nature conservation in the long term is one of the expected results.

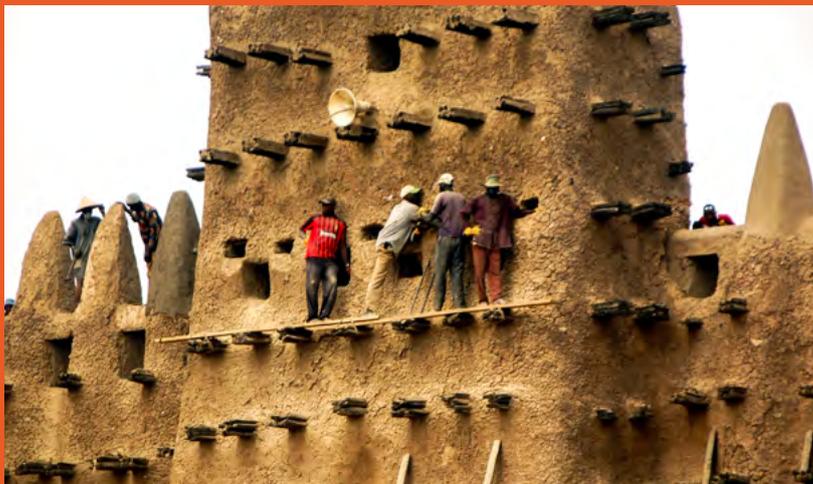
 [Website of Madagascar National Parks](#)

# Mali UNESCO World Heritage Djenné: Renovation Work on Clay Mosque

Urgent repair measures at the Great Mosque of Djenné can now finally be carried out by the Mission culturelle de Djenné through the special support programme #SOSAfricanHeritage.



## Infobox



© Ralf Steinberger

- Year of inscription: 1988
- Country: Mali
- Type of Site: UNESCO World Heritage (cultural heritage)
-  Web presentation of the site by UNESCO

## The World Heritage site briefly presented

Djenné is one of the most famous cities in the inland delta of the Niger and is the centre of medieval adobe architecture in the Upper Niger region. It is located 570 km northeast of Bamako and is one of the oldest cities in sub-Saharan Africa. The site is an ensemble that for many years symbolised the typical African city. It is also particularly representative of Islamic architecture in the region.

The World Heritage site is characterised by the remarkable use of clay. The Great Mosque of great monumental and religious value is an outstanding example of this. Due to a lack of resources for the maintenance of the buildings as well as ongoing predatory excavations, the sites of Djenné have been enlisted on the UNESCO list of World Heritage in Danger since 2016.

## Impairments due to the Pandemic

The Great Mosque of Djenné has a variety of defects: The facades are partly eroded and cracked. The roofs have been weakened by rain. The plaster of the fence walls has been washed away. Minarets and corner ornaments are crumbling. The building materials of the staircase on the north side are weakened by age.

All these shortcomings pose a serious threat to the UNESCO World Heritage site. The renovation work planned by the Malian Ministry of Culture was abruptly halted this year due to the pandemic.

## Remedy through Alternative Financing

With funds by the German Commission for UNESCO, the Mission culturelle de Djenné will be able to carry out renovation work this year. The focus is on the maintenance and permanent conservation of the decorative elements. In addition, cracks are to be corrected and cavities caused by rain are to be filled in order to maintain the mosque's condition acceptable for future generations.

# Mozambique UNESCO World Heritage Mozambique Island: Management and Monitoring with the help of Social Media

For ensuring a decent World Heritage management even in times of „physical distancing“, the Mozambique Island Conservation Office trains the local population in the use of digital platforms and social media thanks to the #SOSAfricanHeritage programme.



## Infobox



© UNESCO, Lazare Eloundou Assomo

- Year of inscription: 1991
- Country: Mozambique
- Type of Site: UNESCO World Heritage (cultural heritage)
-  Web presentation of the site by UNESCO

## The World Heritage site briefly presented

The island of Mozambique is a limestone coral reef located 4 km from the mainland coast of the Republic of Mozambique. Together with two uninhabited islands of Goa and Sena, it forms an archipelago. It houses the fortified city of Mozambique, a former Portuguese trading post on the way to India. The city owes its remarkable architectural unity to the consistent use of the same building techniques, building materials (stone or makuti), and decorative principles since the 16th century.

## Impairments due to the Pandemic

The daily monitoring of the conservation status together with the local population is currently impaired because field work is not possible. Similarly, World Heritage education cannot take place either due to the current restrictions. It is also difficult to bring communities together to discuss the problems of World Heritage management. All of this not only makes it more difficult to protect Mozambique Island, but it increasingly prevents the active involvement of the local population.

## Remedy through new Communication Network

With the help of #SOSAfricanHeritage funds, the Mozambique Island Conservation Office plans to provide in-depth training to various World Heritage stakeholders and members of the local community on the correct use of digital platforms and social networks. This should enable them not only to participate actively in the monitoring and management of Mozambique Island, but also to be involved in the decision-making process of the competent authorities. The aim is to establish a local communication network for the conservation of the World Heritage site between the islanders and other World Heritage stakeholders in Mozambique.

 [Website of the Conselho Muicpal da Cidade da Ilha de Mocambique](#)

# Namibia UNESCO World Heritage sites Twyfelfontein /Ui-//Ais and Namib Sand Sea: Digitising World Heritage

In order to make the two Namibian World Heritage sites accessible even during the pandemic, Namibia's National Heritage Council digitally visualises them with funds from the special programme #SOSAfricanHeritage of the German Commission for UNESCO and makes them broadly accesible.



## Infobox



© Serena Tang

- Year of inscription: 2007
- Country: Namibia
- Type of Site: UNESCO World Heritage (cultural heritage)
-  Web presentation of the site by UNESCO
- Year of inscription: 2013
- Country: Namibia
- Type of Site: UNESCO World Heritage (natural heritage)
-  Web presentation of the site by UNESCO

## The World Heritage sites briefly presented

The World Heritage site Twyfelfontein or /Ui-//Ais is home to one of the largest concentrations of rock engravings in Africa. The cultural site houses neolithic drawings of animals and human and animal footprints. Over a period of at least 2000 years, it documents in a unique and comprehensive way various ritual practices of the hunter-gatherer communities of southern Africa. Like no other site, it also illustrates the links between the ritual and economic practices of hunter-gatherers.

The natural site Namib Sand Desert is the only coastal desert in the world. With an area of over three million hectares and a buffer zone of 899,500 ha, the area consists of two dune systems: An old, semi-consolidated one, which is overlaid by a younger, active one. Fog is the main source of water in the area, creating a unique environment in which endemic invertebrates, reptiles, and mammals adapt to an ever-changing variety of microhabitats and ecological niches.

## Impairments due to the Pandemic

Since the beginning of the pandemic and the subsequent border closures worldwide, the negative effects in Namibia have been felt above all in the tourism industry. While few local tourists visit the two World Heritage sites, the majority of visitors come from abroad. The decreasing number of visitors due to the closure of the borders is currently reflected in lower revenues. The revenues would normally have been invested in the conservation and management of the sites.

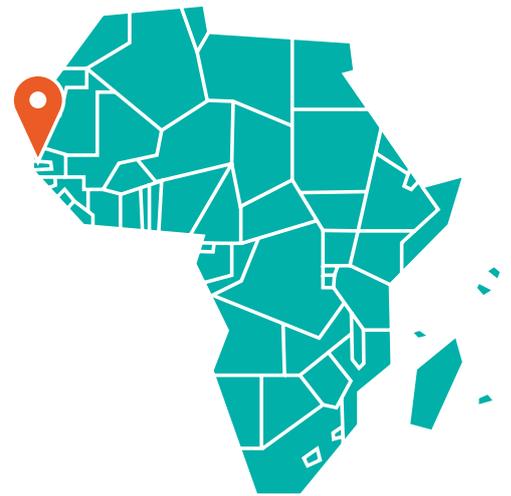
## Remedy through Virtual Access

In order to maintain access to the exceptional cultural and natural heritage sites, the National Heritage Council Namibia is using the project funds of the German Commission for UNESCO to diversify the digital communication of the two World Heritage sites. Together with the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC), audiovisual material about the World Heritage sites Twyfelfontein /Ui-//Ais and Namib Sand Sea is produced and presented on various platforms. The material will also be used during the celebrations of the African World Heritage Day, which is celebrated annually on 5 May.

 [Website of the National Heritage Council of Namibia](#)

# Senegal UNESCO World Heritage Saloum Delta: Creating Alternative Sources of Income

With funds from the special programme #SOSAfricanHeritage, the national park management in the Saloum Delta World Heritage site will strengthen nature conservation, intensify the fight against poaching, and create alternative sources of income.



## Infobox



©Ho Visto, Nina Volare

- Year of inscription: 2013
- Country: Senegal
- Type of Site: UNESCO World Heritage (cultural heritage)
-  Web presentation of the site by UNESCO

## The World Heritage site briefly presented

The cultural landscape of the Saloum Delta UNESCO World Heritage site includes brackish water channels, mangrove and dry forest, and Atlantic marine biology. The 5,000 km<sup>2</sup> area formed by the arms of three rivers yields fish and shellfish for the population in its vicinity. Today, the site is still characterised by 218 manmade shell mounds that have been created over the centuries, some of which are several hundred metres long. Burial sites provide information about the cultures from different periods of the Delta's occupation and bear witness to the history of human settlement along the coast of West Africa. In 1981, the Saloum Delta has been designated as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

## Impairments due to the Pandemic

Senegal has mobilised resources to combat Covid-19, which have had a negative impacts on the finances of nature conservation and tourism. The Saloum Delta National Park is also affected by this budget cut. Due to the park being closed to tourists, the local population's sources of income are limited. At the same time, the cost of maintaining activities in the park while keeping physical distance is increasing. As a consequence, volunteers from the communities have stopped supporting the rangers in their activities such as monitoring, awareness raising, environmental education, and scientific research. At the same time, poaching is on the rise due to the lack of monitoring.

## Remedy through New Technology and Health Protection

In order to maintain the protection of the cultural landscape as well as the economic basis of the local population in equal measure, the funds of the German Commission for UNESCO will be invested in monitoring as well as guard patrols and their technical equipment. Furthermore, the local population will be supported through workshops to use alternative sources of income, e.g. poultry farming. The local health station will be equipped with hygiene products to better protect the people from the corona virus.

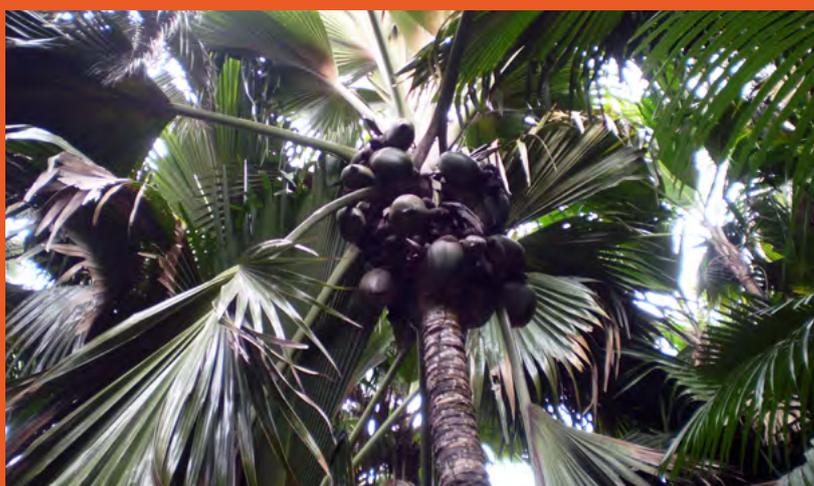
 [Website of the Parc National du Delta du Saloum](#)

# Seychelles UNESCO World Heritage Vallée de Mai: Resilience through Knowledge and Technology

At the Vallée de Mai World Heritage site in the Seychelles, the Seychelles Islands Foundation is investing #SOSAfricanHeritage project funds in technical equipment and training of its staff to maintain a minimum level of conservation measures and to protect the valuable Coco de Mer palm.



## Infobox



©UNESCO, Leila Maziz

- Year of inscription: 1983
- Country: Seychelles
- Type of Site: UNESCO World Heritage (natural heritage)
-  Web presentation of the site by UNESCO

## The World Heritage site briefly presented

Situated on the granite island of Praslin, the Vallée de Mai is a 19,5 ha area that has remained largely unchanged since prehistoric times. The landscape is dominated by the world's largest population of the endemic Coco de Mer, a palm tree of global importance. It is considered the carrier of the largest seed in the plant kingdom. The forest is also home to five other endemic palm trees as well as many animal species that only occur in a specific, spatially delimited environment.

## Impairments due to the Pandemic

Before the outbreak of the pandemic, the Vallée de Mai was considered the most visited natural wonder of the Seychelles. The World Heritage site is currently experiencing a 97% decline in visitors. At the same time, poaching is increasing on its most valuable natural resource, the seeds of the Coco de Mer palm. While the direct loss of income is estimated at 2,05 million dollars, the ecological loss caused by poaching the seeds is not quantifiable. The Seychelles Islands Foundation, which has the task of preserving the World Heritage Site, does not receive a budget from the government, but finances itself. Its research and monitoring activities depend entirely on tourism revenues. At present, the activities have had to be cut back accordingly. This situation, combined with the increasing poaching of IUCN Red Listed Coco de Mer, poses an acute threat to the World Heritage site.

## Remedy through Technology and Knowledge

The aim of the project is to strengthen the resilience of the Vallée de Mai and the surrounding municipalities during the COVID-19 crisis. Staff will be better equipped to prevent poaching and other crimes. To be able to work effectively, staff and other relevant stakeholders will be trained to make full use of the new technologies available. In addition, activities at local and national level as well as increased communication activities will raise awareness of the importance of this World Heritage site.

 [Website of the Seychelles Islands Foundation](#)

# South Africa UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Magaliesberg: Against Poaching, Forest Fires and Plant Theft

The management of the Magaliesberg Biosphere Reserve is using the #SOSAfricanHeritage funds for strengthening its guard patrols against poaching, robbery, and forest fires and for collecting data for improved protection and law enforcement.



## Infobox



©John Karwoski

- Year of designation: 2015
- Country: South Africa
- Type of Site: UNESCO Biosphere Reserve
-  Web presentation of the site by UNESCO

## The Biosphere Reserve briefly presented

The Magaliesberg Biosphere Reserve is located in South Africa between the cities of Pretoria and Johannesburg. It forms the interface between two large African biomes, i.e. animal and plant communities in a larger geographical area, and the remains of a third biome. These are the central grassland plateau, the sub-Saharan savannah, and the Afro-montane forest. A variety of flower species grow here. It is also home to numerous animal and bird species, which account for 46,6% of all bird species in the South African sub-region. The area faces high unemployment and poverty. The main economic activities are agriculture, mining, urban development, and tourism.

## Impairments due to the Pandemic

The pandemic and subsequent national closures have led to numerous company closures and job losses. Poachers have taken advantage of the situation by trading bushmeat along the Magaliesberg Biosphere Reserve. This not only leads to an increase in poaching of wildlife, but also to illegal plant extraction and tree felling for the firewood trade. Poachers often ignite several forest fires at once, which quickly develop into wildfires and cause lasting destruction to the vegetation in the Biosphere Reserve.

## Remedy through Data Collection and Patrols

The aim of the project is to protect the Biosphere Reserve from an increase in poaching of wildlife, from the removal of endangered plant species, from the felling of trees for firewood, and from environmental degradation caused by forest fires. This will be achieved through patrols, the removal of animal traps, and the collection of appropriate data, such as the geo-referencing of hot spots for animal traps, illegal logging or forest fire scars. The data will be shared with the relevant nature conservation and law enforcement authorities so that they can take appropriate action if necessary.

-  [Website of the Magaliesberg Biosphere Reserve](#)
-  [Video „Magaliesberg Biosphere Reserve implements Sustainable Development Goals“](#)

# Tanzania UNESCO World Heritage Kilimanjaro: Tree Nurseries for Biodiversity

The Kilimanjaro National Park uses the funds of the #SOSAfricanHeritage programme to remove invasive species from the lower mountain forest of the park to protect biodiversity.



## Infobox



©Antonin Rémond

- Year of inscription: 1987
- Country: Tanzania
- Type of Site: UNESCO World Heritage (natural heritage)
-  Web presentation of the site by UNESCO

## The World Heritage site briefly presented

With 5,895 m, the Kilimanjaro is the highest peak in Africa. The mountain has five main vegetation zones: lower slopes, mountain forest, heath and moorland, alpine desert and peaks. The whole mountain, including the montane forest belt, is very rich in species, especially mammals, many of which are threatened with extinction. Because of these features, but above all because of its height, physical shape and snow cap, Kilimanjaro is considered an outstanding example of a natural phenomenon of superlatives. The Kilimanjaro National Park covers an area of approximately 75,575 ha and protects the largest free-standing volcanic mass in the world.

## Impairments due to the Pandemic

The current pandemic poses a serious threat to the conservation of nature reserves in Tanzania. According to tourism statistics, the number of tourist visits has decreased by 98,5% since the outbreak of the pandemic. Income from tourism is the only source of funding for nature conservation in all national parks in the country. The impact on daily park operations is correspondingly drastic. In order to minimise the effects, a large part of the park operation has been scaled down. Plans to rid the lower mountain forest of invasive species are also affected. The spread of exotic tree species is massive, affecting biodiversity and the forest ecosystem.

## Remedy through Data Collection and Patrols

The main objective of the project, which is funded by the German Commission for UNESCO, is to free the mountain forest from invasive species. By restoring the degraded areas the ecosystem of the lower mountain forest is to be improved. In order to speed up the recovery of the native forest, the National Park Authority will control invasive species more closely, establish two nurseries for native tree species and plant native trees. Seedlings and seeds will be collected from the wild plants in the affected areas. The results are to be incorporated into a vegetation report from which other nature reserves can also learn.

 [Website of the Tanzania National Parks](#)

# Publication Data

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