

In July 2011 the European Commission launched the **BIOPAMA** (*BIOdiversity and Protected Areas Management*) Project, with funding from the European Development Fund, supporting biodiversity conservation in the ACP Countries (African, Caribbean, Pacific). This project is managed by IUCN (International Union for Nature Conservation) and the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission.

The objective of BIOPAMA is to improve the management of Protected Areas from local to regional levels. The development of a reference information system for Protected Areas for ACP countries will be based on the Digital Observatory for Protected Areas (DOPA), an initiative of the JRC, in partnership with the IUCN, UNEP-WCMC, GBIF, Birdlife International. DOPA is encouraging the sharing with conservation stakeholders of databases and models to support the scientific and technical issues that are typically raised when establishing the Program of work on Protected Areas, e.g. species richness and endemism, habitat representativeness, park connectivity, fire monitoring, land-cover change, management effectiveness, governance...

Aside these technical developments, BIOPAMA has a strong component focusing on capacity building efforts in the ACP countries and strengthening of existing networks with local actors.