

# KBA

KEY BIODIVERSITY AREAS

# KBA PROGRAMME ANNUAL REPORT 2024



KBA PARTNERS:



# FOREWORD

This report highlights some of the progress the KBA Partnership has made in implementing the KBA Programme and Strategic Plan in 2023. It has been an exciting year, as funding from the Bezos Earth Fund supported comprehensive assessments of KBAs in three countries in the Congo Basin (Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, and Republic of Congo) and four countries in the Andes (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru). By the end of the year, KBA assessments for 651 sites were uploaded to the World Database of KBAs (WDKBA) from these two regions, for further review and confirmation (which has now been completed). These two highly biodiverse regions are important for global conservation, and identifying the globally significant sites is helping guide how each country can reach the target of covering 30% of land and seas by protected and conserved areas by 2030 .

The United Arab Emirates was also one of the first countries to make a comprehensive assessment of its KBAs which was completed and published in the World Database of KBAs in 2023. UAE scientists together with IUCN identified nine global and four regional KBAs for this country, which qualify as important for populations of 37 species of birds, mammals and reptiles.

The South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) also worked on finalising proposals for 263 KBAs which qualify as important for populations of more than 3000 species. SANBI has also identified several sites that qualify as KBAs under the ecosystem criteria (A2 and B4) and are therefore among the first KBAs to be identified for ecosystems. SANBI has also made the first classification of sites using Criterion E, to identify KBAs of global significance because of their quantified irreplaceability. They found that many of these sites also qualified under other KBA criteria, illustrating the complementary nature of the criteria.

In 2023, various private sector disclosure frameworks started to be developed following the signing of the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF). Under Target 15 of the KMGBF, companies are asked to disclose their impacts on biodiversity. Some countries, as well as the European Union, have created legislation requiring that companies do this. KBAs are referenced in all of the major disclosure frameworks as sites of particular biodiversity importance.

The use of the Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool (IBAT) by the private sector continues to expand rapidly, meaning that more and more business decisions are taking into account the proximity of KBAs to business operations and supply chains.



**Naomi Kingston & Paul Matiku,  
Co-Chairs KBA Committee**

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# KBA PROGRAMME

The Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) Programme is an ambitious attempt to identify, map, monitor and conserve critical sites for global biodiversity across the planet. Led by 13 international conservation organisations that form the [KBA Partnership](#), this programme aims to support each nation of the world to identify KBAs within their country and to support identification of KBAs on the High Seas. This is providing a blueprint of sites for conservation that contain globally important populations of species or globally significant areas of ecosystems, and sites of outstanding ecological integrity or irreplaceability. Knowing, with precision, the location of those places that contribute significantly to the global persistence of biodiversity is critical for a wide range of end users across society, from national decision makers to private companies, as well by international conventions. Use of these data is enabling, conservation actions to be directed to halt and reverse biodiversity declines and to address existing and emerging threats.

The [Global Standard for the Identification of Key Biodiversity Areas \(KBA Standard\)](#) published by IUCN in 2016 establishes a consultative, science-based process for the identification of globally important sites for biodiversity worldwide. Sites qualify as global KBAs if they meet one or more of 11 criteria in five categories: threatened biodiversity; geographically restricted biodiversity; ecological integrity; biological processes; and, irreplaceability. The KBA criteria have quantitative thresholds and can be applied to species and ecosystems in terrestrial, inland water and marine environments.

The vision of the KBA Programme is ‘a comprehensive network of sites that contribute significantly to the global persistence of biodiversity that is appropriately identified, correctly documented, effectively managed, sufficiently resourced and adequately safeguarded’. A seven-year strategic plan was developed in 2018 which guides the KBA Programme and provides indicators to measure progress. This report summarises some of the key achievements made towards the implementation of the KBA Programme and strategy in 2023.



A photograph of a narrow stream flowing through a dense, lush tropical forest. The water is clear and flows over large, moss-covered rocks. The surrounding vegetation is thick with various shades of green, including large trees and dense undergrowth. The scene is captured from a low angle, looking down the length of the stream.

**312 SITES WERE IDENTIFIED AS  
NEW (152) OR RE-ASSESSED  
DURING THE YEAR**

# KBAS AND THE GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

Following the ratification of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) in December 2022, countries have started re-aligning their National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs) to the KMGBF. The KBA Policy Working Group developed a document that showed where KBAs were relevant in the KMGBF and suggested actions that could be incorporated in NBSAPs to conserve KBAs. This was circulated to all CBD focal points, while country profiles summarising KBA data in a national context were sent to 85 of the countries where there has been engagement in using KBAs. In several countries, KBA Partners have been asked to help with this alignment of their NBSAPs and they have also been encouraging the insertion of actions relevant for KBAs. Feedback from many countries suggests that they will incorporate KBA conservation into their NBSAPs.



A webinar was also held with staff at the World Bank to raise awareness of the objectives of the KBA Programme and show how KBAs are relevant to the KMGBF. There was great interest in using KBAs from the participants, many of whom were not very aware of what KBAs are. This is a common finding, where people from outside the conservation world are still unaware of KBAs and why they are important for biodiversity planning and conservation.

Both Target 1 and 3 of the KMGBF refer to **‘areas of importance for biodiversity’** but this term has not been defined by the CBD. Several authors came together with the Head of the KBA Secretariat to develop a policy-relevant [paper](#) which was published in One Earth in January 2024<sup>1</sup> that defined this phrase, suggesting that the overarching criteria used to identify KBAs together with areas important for connectivity be used as the definition. An ‘Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group’ established by the CBD to develop guidance on monitoring the KMGBF adopted the definition proposed in this paper into their [guidance for Parties](#) to the convention.

A series of policy-relevant briefs were also developed in 2023 to show the relevance of KBAs for [governments](#), and the [private sector](#) and for the donor community, and these are now being circulated to relevant audiences.



1 Plumtre, A.J., et al. (2024) Targeting site conservation to increase the effectiveness of new global biodiversity targets, *One Earth*, 7, 11-17. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.oneear.2023.12.007>

# COUNTRIES MAKING COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENTS OF KBAS

Twenty-seven countries had established KBA National Coordination Groups (KBA NCGs) by the end of 2023. While no country has perfect knowledge of the distribution and numbers of all its species and ecosystems, and while new KBAs will be identified over time when new data are collected and/or published, we refer to ‘comprehensive assessments’ of KBAs in a country where a KBA NCG has assessed multiple taxonomic groups and applied multiple KBA criteria. It is envisioned that the KBA identification and monitoring will continue over time in countries in the same way that the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species is updated at regular intervals as well as incorporating assessments of additional species when data become available and are compiled.

To date, 11 countries of the 27 with KBA NCGs have made fairly comprehensive assessments of their KBAs. They have compiled data for mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, sharks and rays, plants and some insect and marine invertebrate groups, and have applied the KBA criteria to those species where the global distribution of the species is known. These countries include: Bolivia, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ecuador, Gabon, Mozambique, Peru, Republic of Congo, South Africa, Uganda and United Arab Emirates. While many of the assessments were initiated prior to 2023, these have only been published in the WDKBA in 2023, or will be published in 2024. In 2024 we will undertake an analysis of how a comprehensive assessment changes plans for achieving the ‘30 x 30’ target (of conserving 30% of land and seas by 2030). In 2024, we will also assess progress by countries in developing biodiversity-inclusive spatial plans using KBA data.



The United Arab Emirates proposed and published nine sites that met the criteria in the global standard for KBAs, and they are still evaluating five additional sites that are likely to become regional KBAs. The South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) worked on finalising proposals for 263 KBAs which qualify as important for populations of more than 3000 species, many of which are plants given the country has a [floral kingdom](#). They have also identified several sites that trigger the ecosystem criteria for KBAs (A2 and B4) some of the first KBAs to be identified for ecosystem and also the first classification of sites using Criterion E, the irreplaceability criterion.

With support from the Bezos Earth Foundation, four countries in the Andes and three in the Congo Basin made comprehensive assessments of their KBAs. This involved 607 biodiversity experts assessing nearly 6,000 species across 651 sites. More details are given on page 8. Uganda also finalised re-assessments of 43 existing sites that had not been previously assessed against the KBA global Standard. They proposed various updates and revisions, adding nine new sites, mostly for plant species. Together with seven freshwater sites assessed against the global criteria in 2019, this brings the total number of global KBAs to 58 in this country.

# BEZOS EARTH FUND FINANCING 7 COUNTRY KBA ASSESSMENTS



**600**  
Taxonomic experts  
Re-assessed all the KBAs identified in the 7 countries

**651**  
Sites  
Uploaded to the WDKBA until the end of 2023

Les zones clés de la Biodiversité,  
atouts pour l'extension des Aires protégées  
et autres initiatives de conservation communautaires en  
République Démocratique du Congo

In 2022 The Bezos Earth Fund generously supported the KBA Partnership with a grant of \$5 million USD through BirdLife International. This funded comprehensive assessments of KBAs in four Andean nations (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru) and three Congo-basin countries (Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, and Republic of Congo) as well as supporting the development of the World Database of Key Biodiversity Areas (WDKBA).

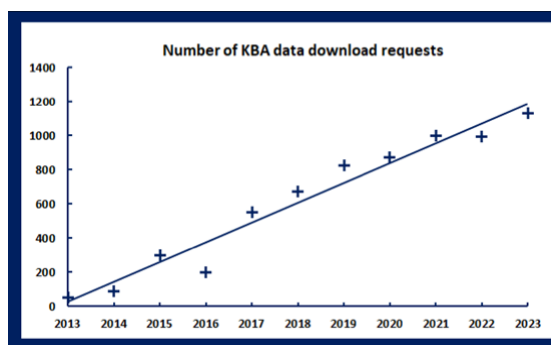
During 2023, more than 600 taxonomic experts re-assessed all the KBAs that had been identified for these countries, mostly with previous versions of criteria, and identified new sites that qualified as KBAs for one or more species or ecosystems. In this process, they applied some KBA criteria for the first time, including criterion C on ecological integrity (Republic of Congo and Gabon) and the application of unique genetic diversity as an assessment parameter (Colombia). Some sites in the Andes have more than 50 KBA trigger species, indicating how biodiverse-rich these sites are. The KBA NCGs in these countries tested the new KBA proposal functionality in the World Database of KBAs, and as a result several refinements and improvements to the database were made. The functionality to support online review and validation processes was also tested and revised in response. The final results of the assessment will be known by July 2024 but by the end of 2023, data on 651 sites had been uploaded to the WDKBA.

These results are already being used to inform the revision of National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and to guide 30 x 30 plans for expansion of protected and conserved areas in some of the countries.



# WORLD DATABASE OF KBAS

The World Database of KBAs continued to be modified and improved. During 2023, large numbers of KBAs in the Andes, Congo Basin and South Africa were assessed or reassessed, providing the first opportunity to thoroughly test the functionality within the WDKBA since it was launched in 2022. Several bugs were identified in the process which have now been resolved, and the process has been streamlined to make it simpler for KBA proposers to make proposals and for the RFPs and KBA Secretariat to undertake their reviews.

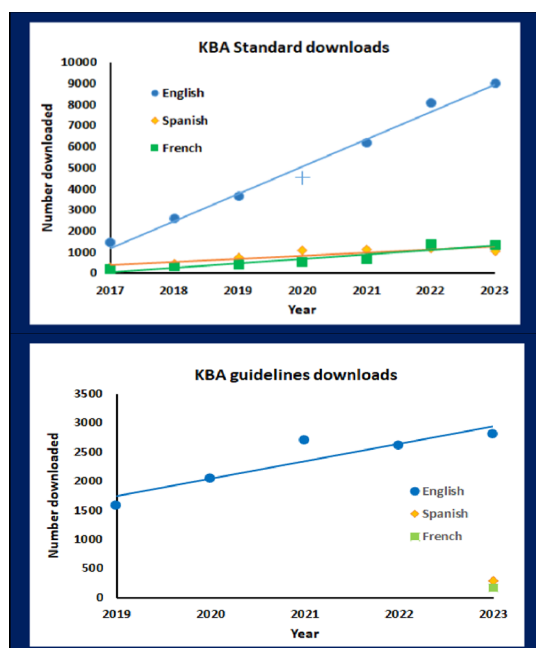


A number of other significant improvements were made to the database in order to support KBA assessments under the project, including:

Translation of the WDKBA into Spanish and French, and functionality enabling users to easily select their preferred language, thereby improving its ease of use in many parts of the world.

The development of spatial functionality, allowing for the first time the provision of spatial data (KBA boundaries) alongside tabular information, and integrated management of spatial and tabular data.

Establishment of a mechanism for concealing data on a small number of sensitive species of conservation concern from most users within the WDKBA (for example, to minimize the risk of information leaking on the locations holding the most significant populations of particular plant species that are heavily targeted by collectors).



Significant improvements to a number of sections within the WDKBA, including the addition of a search bar to improve searchability, and improvements to the comments section to help proposers and reviewers navigate the review process better.

Integration of the latest taxonomic data as they became available in the IUCN Red List (in September 2023).

Addressing some of the improvements requested by users as increasing numbers of assessments were undertaken through the WDKBA, to help support and streamline processes.

Use of KBA data continued to increase at a steady rate with 1,130 downloads of the spatial dataset in 2023. Downloads of the [KBA Standard](#) and KBA Guidelines in English, French and Spanish also increased steadily.

**World Database of KBAs**  
now accessible in **English,**  
**French and Spanish**



# TRAINING COURSES IN APPLICATION OF THE KBA CRITERIA

## 212 people

Trained in how to identify KBAs in 2023



Awareness-raising meetings were held in several countries to demonstrate the value of KBAs and how they are being used by governments. These aimed to generate the interest that can then lead to the establishment of KBA NCGs and subsequently undertaking KBA assessments. A workshop was held by WWF in Pakistan to raise awareness of KBAs which led to an agreement to seek funding to establish a KBA NCG there. Similar meetings were held in Spain, Fiji, Pulau, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, Zanzibar and Pemba, Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria, and Chile.

A total of 212 people were trained in applying the KBA Criteria in 2023 in online and in-person courses held in Colombia, Chile, Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, Algeria, South Africa, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Namibia, Madagascar, Pakistan, and Spain. This brings the number of people trained in the application of the KBA criteria to 1,302 since 2019. Most of these were led by the KBA Training Officer who revised and updated all the powerpoint training materials based on lessons learned from prior training events in 2022.

A Training of Trainers course was also developed in 2023 which will be used to develop a cadre of trainers who can run KBA training courses in their regions of the world. This course focuses on how to plan and deliver KBA criteria training courses and also gives more details about some of the criteria and how to address some of the common misconceptions made when applying them.

Several webinars were also held in 2023 to raise awareness of KBAs and how they are being used, including with the Regional Field Officers of the World Bank, IUCN Species Survival Commission, and CBD Focal points from around the World.

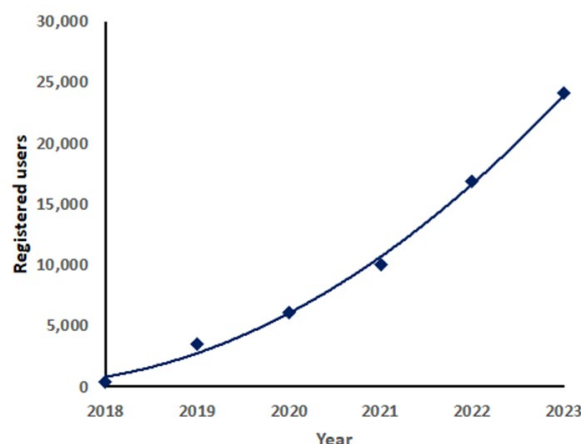
The KBA Guidelines and the online training course were translated into Portuguese with support from WCS Mozambique.

**212 people** were  
**trained** in how to  
identify KBAs **in 2023**



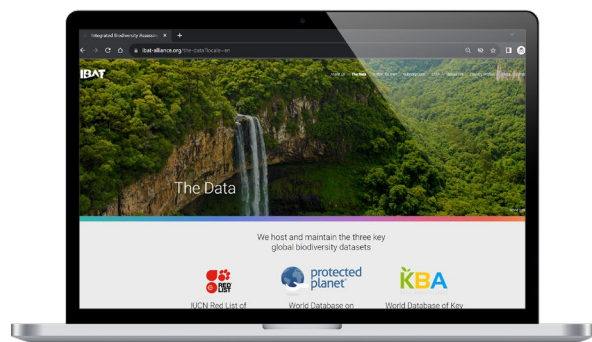
## KBA USE BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR

KBAs are made available to the private sector through the Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool (IBAT). This tool provides bespoke reporting options that can inform a company about its potential impacts on threatened species, protected areas and KBAs. The use of IBAT continued to grow significantly in 2023 with 24,097 registered users by the end of the year. IBAT has several subscription options for companies, and the funding generated from these subscriptions is used to further develop IBAT as a tool but also supports the management



of the underlying databases that the tool relies upon. \$300,000 was provided by IBAT to support the KBA database in 2023, equating to about one-third of the operating costs of the KBA Secretariat.

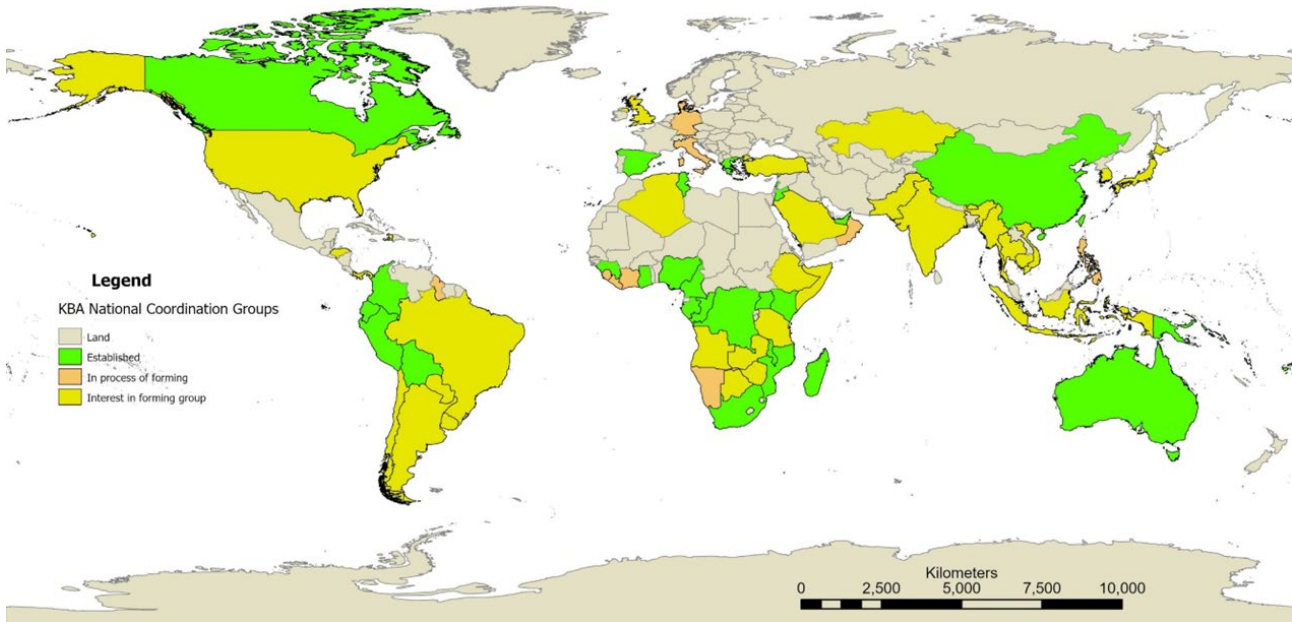
## KBAS INFORMING PRIVATE SECTOR DISCLOSURE FRAMEWORKS



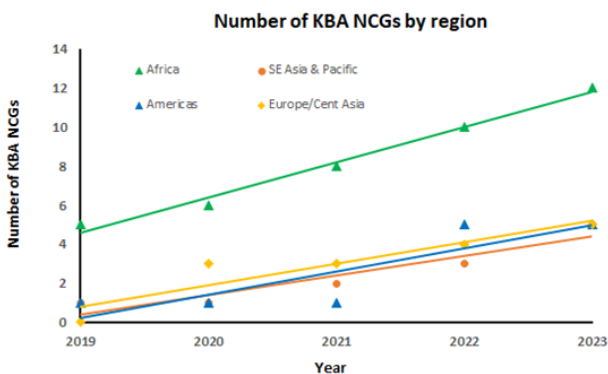
Following the ratification of the KMGBF in December 2022, several frameworks to support companies to measure and report their impacts on biodiversity were launched or further developed in 2023. These included the Task Force on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD), Science Based Targets Network (SBTN) and the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). The KBA Partnership successfully worked with each of the frameworks as they were developed to ensure that KBAs were referenced

appropriately within them as sites of particular importance for biodiversity. TNFD references KBAs in the Locate component of its L.E.A.P. approach (Locate, Evaluate, Assess and Prepare). SBTN guidance states that companies should avoid negative impacts on KBAs, and GRI states that KBAs are areas scientifically recognised for their importance for biodiversity and companies should report on how they avoid impacts on KBAs. A tool to support companies to report under the TNFD framework using data in IBAT was developed in 2023 and launched in early 2024.

# GROWTH IN USE OF KBAS BY COUNTRIES



KBA National Coordination Groups (KBA NCGs) are being established in a growing number of countries to identify, re-assess, monitor and conserve their KBAs. These KBA NCGs typically include representatives of government institutions, national and international conservation NGOs and Universities, museums and herbaria. Representatives of IPLCs and the private sector are also members of KBA NCGs where appropriate and feasible. The KBA NCG coordinates the KBA process at a national level, coordinating assessments of sites, and over time their monitoring and re-assessment. They also play a role in promoting KBAs nationally and supporting the development of national policies and legislation for KBA conservation and safeguard. By the end of 2023, NCGs had been established in 27 countries, with resources being sought in 30 additional countries to establish NCGs. The growth of KBA NCGs has been greatest in Africa while the rest of the world has shown a slower but consistent trend in establishing KBA NCGs.

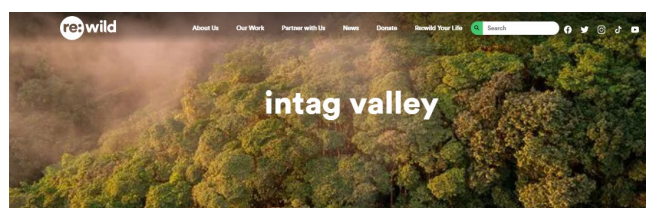


In 2023, Greece passed a law that they would use KBAs to guide their identification of new protected and conserved areas to meet the 30% area in Target 3 of the KMGBF by 2030. Mozambique also passed a law that encourages companies that have negative impacts on biodiversity to offset those impacts by funding the conservation of KBAs in the country. This is in addition to Mozambique’s recognition of KBAs as an integral component of their National Territorial Plan. Uganda listed KBAs as ‘no-go’ areas for development in their National Biodiversity and Offsets Guidelines.

**27 Countries** had  
established **KBA**  
**National Coordination**  
**Groups** by end 2023



# CONSERVING THREATENED KBAS



**Join the resistance in Intag Valley**

Intag Valley is tucked between mountain crests in the Tropical Andes biodiversity hotspot of northwestern Ecuador. For close to 30 years, the communities here have been fighting off the threat of open-pit copper mining, a highly destructive practice.

**Thank you for showing your support!**

Thank you to the thousands who signed our open letter standing in solidarity with the communities of Ecuador's Intag Valley who are protecting their home, livelihoods and the wildlife in the Intag-Toisan Key Biodiversity Area. Together, we recognize, respect and calibrate the rights of nature!

The Intag Valley provides clean water, clean air and livelihoods for local communities, and it is home to dozens of Critically Endangered species, some of which are not found anywhere else in the world. Besides harboring extraordinary biodiversity, the 12,000-acre (5,000 hectare) mining site is the source of 43 rivers and streams and includes the Intag-Toisan Key Biodiversity Area (KBA). KBAs are critical to the persistence of life on Earth and the overall health of the planet.



## In wake of Canadian oil company pausing operations, local leaders and international community again urge an immediate moratorium on drilling in Okavango River Basin

The basin provides water for hundreds of thousands of people and includes two UNESCO World Heritage sites and a Ramsar wetland of international importance

For immediate release, June 30, 2023



Okavango River on the border of Namibia and Angola. (Photo by re:wild)

Canada-based oil and gas company ReconAfrica, which has been exploring for oil in Namibia's Kavango regions since 2021, has paused all operations in the country. National Geographic broke the news June 28.

"This shows the power of the collective," said Reinhold Mangundu, a Namibian activist who penned an [op-ed](#) with Prince Harry, the Duke of Sussex about ReconAfrica's exploration for oil in 2021. "The fears expressed by local communities and passionate conservationists were not unfounded, for they recognized the peril that loomed over the wildlife, waterways, and the very lives and dreams of those who call this land home. In this moment, we dare to envision a future where sustainable and responsible practices prevail, where the harmonious coexistence of humanity and nature takes precedence. May this be a wake-up call for the

The KBA 'Red Flag Group' continued to defend threatened KBAs in 2023. This working group collaborates to intervene where a local partner organization or community is fighting a major threat to a KBA and where international support would help amplify local voices. Some successes in 2023 are summarised here.

Re:wild partnered with local Indigenous activists in Ecuador and Amazon Frontlines to create a communications campaign to increase international support for a referendum regarding mineral extraction and exploration in part of Yasuní National Park and the Choco region. This was one of several similar campaigns against such exploration. In the end, nearly 60% of Ecuadorians voted 'No' to further mining in these two regions, a first for any country in the world.

Re:wild continued to lead a communications campaign related to a large-scale mining project in the Intag-Toisan KBA, that was opposed by NGOs and the indigenous communities living in the area of the mine. The case was taken to the Imbabura Court for adjudication and Re:wild continued to generate and share communications content aimed at maintaining pressure to ensure the conservation of the KBA. Without any advance notice, in March 2023 the Imbabura Provincial Court ruled in favour of the local communities and revoked the license for the mining project.

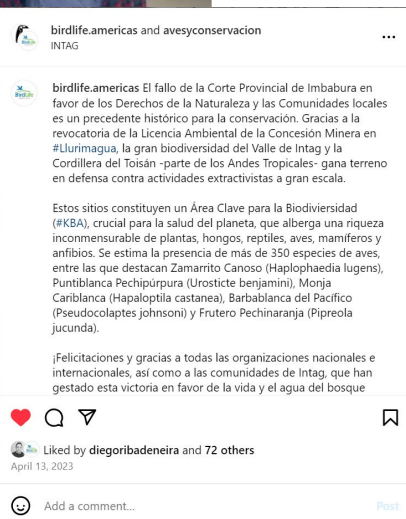
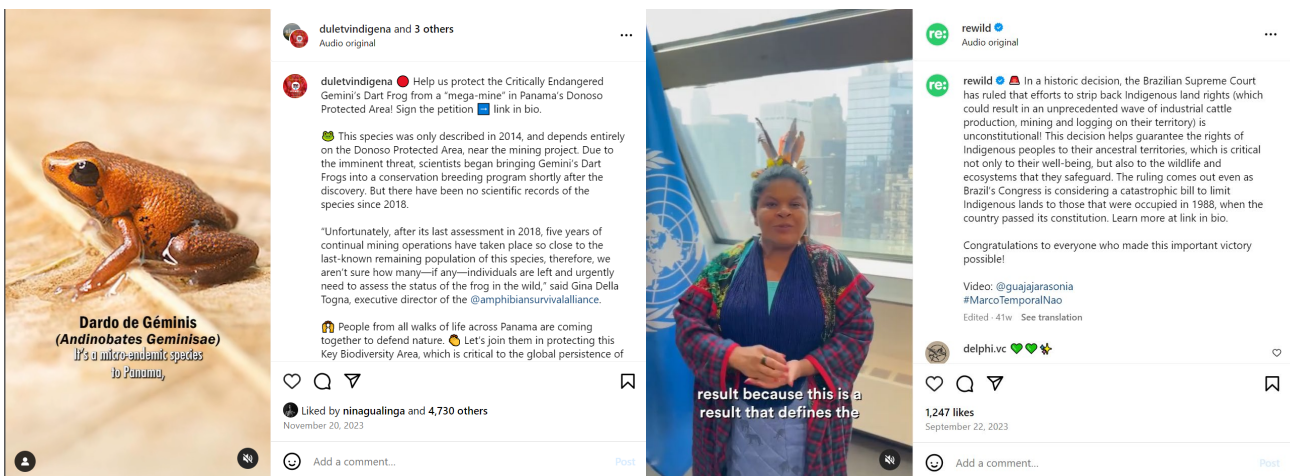
During 2023, we continued a communications campaign against oil and gas exploration in the Okavango River Basin. Re:wild regularly shared updates on social media from media outlets in Namibia and Botswana regarding the oil project and its effects on local communities, and other KBA Red Flag group members conducted on site efforts, including monitoring of ground water contamination. In March 2023, Rolling Stone magazine published an investigative piece about ReconAfrica, the company undertaking the oil exploration, and its operations in Namibia. In June 2023 ReconAfrica paused operations in Namibia but it is feared they may resume in 2024, so we remain vigilant.



In the wake of country-wide protests erupting in Panama after the contract for a large mine in the Donoso Protected Area, which is inside Golfo de los Mosquitos Forests KBA, was renewed quickly and illegally, the Atelopos Survival Initiative contacted the Re:wild communications team and asked for support building a campaign about the amphibians and other threatened species affected by the mine. Re:wild then quickly mobilized and began working with local TV Indigena to create a suite of social media content that explained the issue, asked followers to sign a petition, advocated for protecting the biodiversity in the Donoso Protected Area, amplified the voices of local communities and organizations, and asked the Supreme Court to protect Donoso. On November 28, 2023, Panama's Supreme Court ruled that the new contract for the mine was unconstitutional.

Efforts were led by American Bird Conservancy in response to the Canudos Wind Complex in the Caatinga ecoregion of Bahia, Brazil. The Red Flag group supported local communities to develop and submit a human rights complaint to the United Nations. Re:wild shared several social media posts expressing solidarity with local communities and emphasizing that the wind project was inside a KBA. We are still monitoring this project.

Reflecting on the main drivers of positive outcomes of KBA Red Flag cases, it is clear that the vast majority of cases where a positive outcome was achieved, was where funding was available to support local court cases. Given this, the Working Group agreed to establish a KBA Red Flag Fund, managed by Re:Wild on behalf of the KBA Red Flag Group, that would be able to rapidly disperse funding to the cases most in need. A document outlining how the Fund would operate is available, as is a pitch document that is ready to use for fundraising.



## KBA PROGRAMME PRIORITIES FOR 2024

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The KBA Programme Strategic plan (2018-2024) comes to an end in 2024 and a new strategic plan is in the process of being developed. The first phase of the KBA programme focused a lot on putting the relevant structures in place to facilitate KBA identification, including developing guidelines on the application of the KBA criteria and on proposing KBAs, developing and launching the World Database of KBAs, developing training materials and training people in how to apply the KBA criteria, and developing tools to help facilitate KBA criteria application and proposing KBAs. There were also efforts on raising awareness among government staff around the world on what KBAs are and why they are useful. This awareness raising will need to continue, but the focus in the second phase will be more on aiming to establish additional KBA NCGs and supporting them to undertake comprehensive assessments of KBAs in each country, and promote these in informing expansion of protected area and OECM networks.

With a growing number of countries interested in identifying and re-assessing existing KBAs, in 2024 we will be supporting this work wherever the opportunity arises. We will also be working to help KBA NCGs raise funding for KBA assessments and providing training courses to support that work. While the growth in KBA NCGs has been greatest in Africa, we will be working to encourage countries in other regions, particularly South and Central America, South-East Asia, West Africa, Europe and the Pacific.

The comprehensive assessments of KBAs in the Andes, Congo Basin and South Africa will be completed in 2024 and the sites published in the World Database of KBAs. We will aim to make a more detailed analysis of the 10 countries that will have completed such assessments at this point to distill lessons learned and summarise impacts of these data on national spatial planning and expansion of networks of protected areas and OECMs.

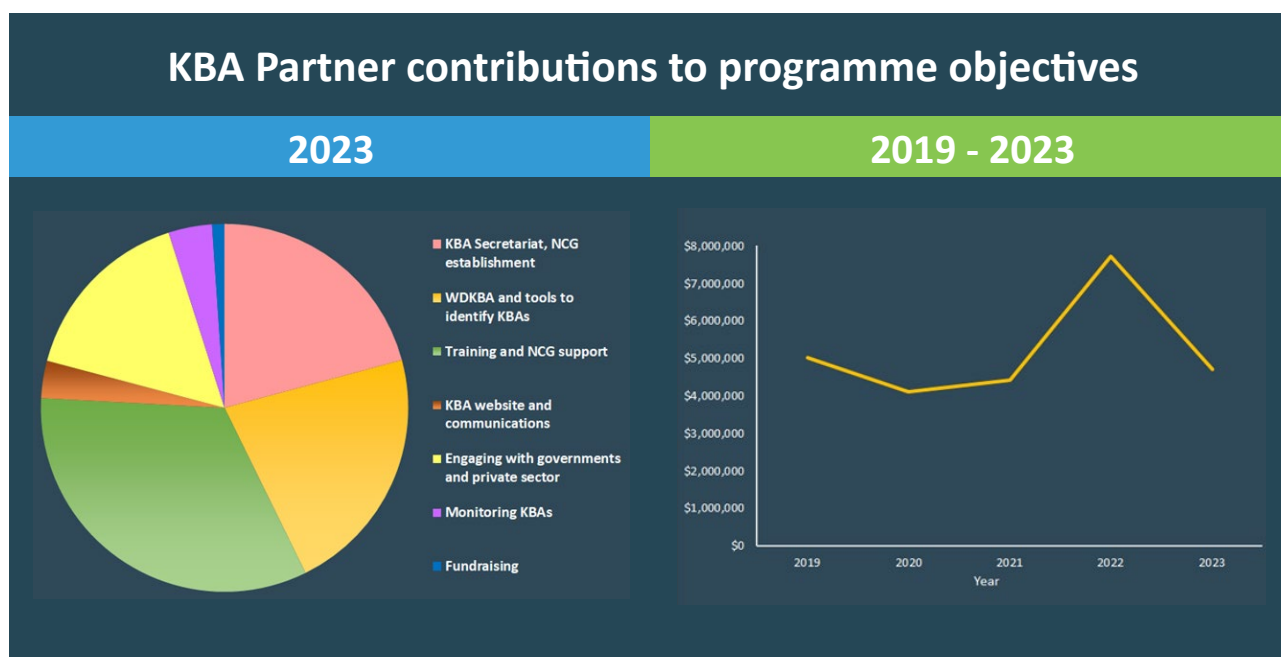


# KBA PROGRAMME FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2023

In 2023, the KBA Partners invested USD \$ **4.71 million** in both direct financing and in-kind contributions for the KBA Programme. The pie chart below shows the relative investment in each of the main objectives in the KBA Strategic Plan: 1. Support to the functioning of the KBA Secretariat including review and validation of KBAs and support to the establishment of KBA National Coordination Groups (KBA NCGs); 2. Support to the database and tools such as revision of the KBA guidelines and development of training materials; 3. Training and supporting KBA NCGs to identify KBAs; 4. Communicating about KBAs to various stakeholders; 5. Engaging governments and private sector to raise awareness about the importance of KBAs; 6. Monitoring and acting to protect threatened KBAs; and 7. Fundraising for the KBA programme. KBA Partner support to the conservation and management of KBAs around the world is not included here, but would increase the total significantly.

The KBA Partners developed a basic operating budget including the costs needed to maintain the KBA programme, which averages c.\$1 million per year. This includes the core costs of the KBA Secretariat, review and validation of KBAs, supporting the establishment of new KBA NCGs, provision of training in applying KBA criteria and supporting KBA proposal development, further development of the WDKBA, and supporting establishment of a KBA monitoring system. We are working on making this support sustainable through the contributions of the private sector to IBAT which currently funds about one-third of these costs. The budget does not include the costs of KBA identification processes within countries, which average about \$0.3-0.5 million USD per country, but vary according to the size of the country and its cost of living.

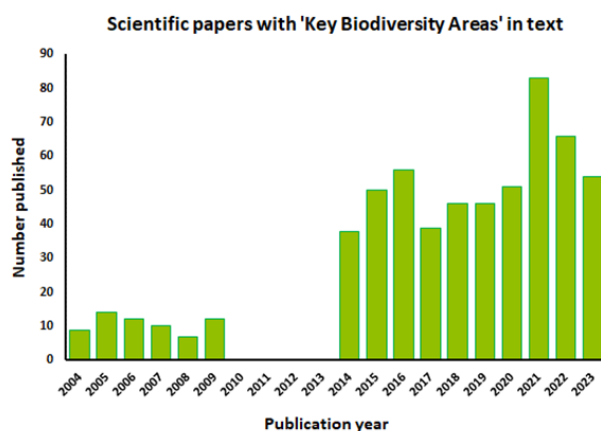
We welcome additional organisations which are interested in joining the KBA Partnership and contributing to identifying, mapping, monitoring and conserving these sites of global importance for biodiversity. Please contact the Head of the KBA Secretariat for more information if interested in becoming a partner ([aplumtre@keybiodiversityareas.org](mailto:aplumtre@keybiodiversityareas.org)).



## SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

Research relevant to the KBA Programme is published by many of the KBA Partner scientists in both the peer-reviewed literature as well as in reports. The list of publications here provides examples of some of those published in 2023.

Crowe, O., Beresford, A., Buchanan, G. M., Grantham, H., Simkins, A. T., Watson, J. E. M. and Butchart, S. H. M. (2023) A global assessment of patterns in forest integrity in Key Biodiversity Areas. [Biol. Conserv. 286: 110293](#).



Jonas, H.D., MacKinnon, K., Marnewick, D., Wood, P., 2023. Site-level tool for identifying other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) : first edition. [IUCN](#).

Lim, D.Y.H., Starnes, T., Plumptre, A.J., 2023. Global priorities for biodiversity conservation in the United Kingdom. [Biological Conservation 277, 109798](#).

Nikolov S.C., Bores, J., Staneva, A., Van den Bossche, W., Altag, M. & Ngari, A. (2023). Assessment of Conservation Priorities Along the Eastern African- Eurasian Flyway. Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds & BirdLife International. 97 p.

Plumptre, A. J., Butchart, S. H. M., von Staden, L., Smith, R. J., Matimele, H., Starnes, T., Brooks, T. M., Baisero, D., Costa, H. and Duarte, E. (2023) Key Biodiversity Areas are proving useful for spatial planning if the criteria are applied correctly. [Perspectives Ecol. Conserv. 21: 263-264](#).

Simkins, A. T., Donald, P. F., Beresford, A. E., Butchart, S. H. M., Garnett, S. T. and Buchanan, G. M. (2023) Rates of tree cover loss in Key Biodiversity Areas within Indigenous Peoples' Lands. [Cons Biol. 38, e14195](#).

Simkins, A. T., Beresford, A., Buchanan, G., Crowe, O., Elliot, W., Izquierdo, P., Patterson, D. and Butchart, S. H. M. (2023) A global assessment of the prevalence of current and potential future infrastructure in Key Biodiversity Areas. [Biol. Conserv. 281: 109953](#).

Spiliopoulou, K., Brooks, T.M., Dimitrakopoulos, P.G., Oikonomou, A., Karavatsou, F., Stoumboudi, M.Th., Triantis, K.A., 2023. Protected areas and the ranges of threatened species: Towards the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030. [Biological Conservation 284, 110166](#).

Watson, J.E.M., Venegas-Li, R., Grantham, H., Dudley, N., Stolton, S., Rao, M., Woodley, S., Hockings, M., Burkart, K., Simmonds, J.S., Sonter, L.J., Sreekar, R., Possingham, H.P., Ward, M., 2023. Priorities for protected area expansion so nations can meet their Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework commitments. [Integrative Conservation 2, 140–155](#).

The KBA Guidelines v1.2 [French](#) and [Spanish](#) versions were also added to the IUCN Library System in 2023. The rate of scientific publications that include text about KBAs has declined since 2021 when there was a large increase with the build up to COP15, but remains stable when compared with previous years.

## KBA SECRETARIAT AND KBA COMMUNITY

**Andrew Plumptre** is Head of the KBA Secretariat, has worked in Africa for more than 30 years and helped Uganda make an assessment of its KBAs. He believes that KBAs will be key in guiding the next 10 years to identify where to conserve 30% of land, freshwater and seas.



**Adrián Azpiroz** is the Chair of the KBA Community as well as Community representative for the Americas. Based in Uruguay at the Instituto de Investigaciones Biológicas Clemente Estable he has worked on the biogeography and conservation of birds in the region.



**Daniel Marnewick** represents the KBA community in Africa. He works for IUCN on the Green list of sites and OECMs.



**Konstantina Spiliopoulou** is the community representative for Europe and Central Asia. She is based in Greece and leads the GaP project to scope KBAs across Europe.



**Professor Yongyut Trisurat**, professor at Kasetsart University in Bangkok is the KBA Community Representative for Asia. He has been involved in many projects to improve spatial knowledge and planning for biodiversity in Thailand.



**Daniele Baisero**, Data Analyst for the KBA Secretariat, has extensive experience with spatial biodiversity analyses at a global scale. He is currently developing innovative tools to assist in identifying KBAs for all biodiversity across the world. He believes in visionary approaches.



**Samridhi Rijal** is the KBA Training Officer and responsible for supporting countries to run training courses on the application of the KBA criteria. Originally from Nepal she has worked in Canada and is now based in the UK.



**Tim Davenport**, was Regional Focal Point for East and Central Africa and has been working in Africa for more than 27 years. He is currently the Director for Africa Programs for Re:wild and is changing to focus on implementing KBA projects.



**Simmy Bezeng**, Regional focal point for Western and southern Africa is from Cameroon but works for BirdLife South Africa. He has been engaging governments across Africa in undertaking national red list assessments and KBA identification.



**Jeannot Kivono**, Regional Focal Point for Francophone Africa, is based in Goma, Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo where he has been engaged in many biodiversity surveys with Wildlife Conservation Society.



**Cecilia Tobar Suárez** is the Regional focal point for South and Central America and Caribbean region. Based in Ecuador, she has been working closely with the country coordinators working to identify KBAs in the Andes.



**Marcelo Tognelli**, is Regional Focal Point for North America. He is the International Conservation Project Officer for American Bird Conservancy, and works to conserve wild birds and their habitats in the region, supporting ABC’s KBA work.



**Catherine Numa**, is Regional Focal Point for the Mediterranean, North Africa, and Middle East, and working for IUCN’s office in Spain she has been working to help establish the KBA NCG in Spain.



**Mike Crosby**, Regional Focal Point for South East Asia has been working with the BirdLife International Partnership on the identification, documentation and conservation of Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (or IBAs) since the late 1990s.



**Mark O’Brien**, Regional Focal Point for Australasia and Pacific islands, enjoys working with experts across a range of taxa and believe that KBAs provide great opportunities for focussing conservation efforts and controlling developments here in the Pacific.



## Technical Working Group

**Penny Langhammer**, Co-Chair of the Technical Working Group and Executive Vice President of Science and Strategy at GWC, has been one of the key drivers in establishing the KBA criteria and Global Standard.



**Olivia Crowe**, Co-Chair of the Technical Working Group and Global Science Coordinator (IBAs & KBAs) for BirdLife International, co-leads the technical working group to provide guidance on the technical methods for applying the KBA criteria.



## KBA Consultative Forum

**Amandine Favier** from WWF was co-chair of the Consultative Forum together with **Martin Sneath**, head of IUCN’s Enterprise and Investment Team in 2023.



## Standards and Appeals Committee

**Diego Juffe Bignoli** and **John Lamoreux** are the co-chairs of the KBA Standards and Appeals committee. Diego is an independent consultant and John works for the US National Fish and Wildlife Foundation



## KBA Committee Members in 2023:

**Chair KBA Committee:** Naomi Kingston and Paul Matiku

**Chairs Technical Working Group:** Penny Langhammer & Olivia Crowe

**Chair Standards and Appeals Committee:** Diego Juffe Bignoli & John Lamoreux

**American Bird Conservancy:** Mike Parr & Amy Upgren

**Amphibian Survival Alliance:** Gina Della Togna & Penny Langhammer

**BirdLife International:** Stu Butchart, Olivia Crowe & Zoltan Waliczky

**Conservation International:** Neil Cox

**Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund:** Olivier Langrand & Jack Tordoff

**Global Environment Facility:** Mark Zimsky

**IUCN:** Tom Brooks & Thom Starnes

**NatureServe:** Anne Bowser

**Rainforest Trust:** James Lewis and Erin McCreless

**Re:wild:** Wes Sechrest, Penny Langhammer & Matt Foster

**Royal Society for the Protection of Birds:** Jo Gilbert

**Wildlife Conservation Society:** Justina Ray

**World Wide Fund for Nature:** Wendy Elliot

**WCPA** (Stephen Woodley & Madhu Rao) and **SSC** (Jon Paul Rodriguez) both have observer status on the KBA Committee and support the Chair of the SAC.

KBA PARTNERS:



[www.keybiodiversityareas.org](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org)



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