Technical Officer for the Protected Areas Observatory, BIOPAMA Programme

Vacancy #: 2683
Unit: Protected Areas Programme
Organization: International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
Location: Cameroon Country Programme Office, Yaoundé, Cameroon
Reporting to: Regional Protected Areas Programme Coordinator
Work percentage: 100%
Function group: P1
Expected start date: 01 February 2018
Type of contract: Fixed-term (24 months with possibility of renewal)
Closing date: 22 December 2017

BACKGROUND

Launched by the European Commission in July 2011, the Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management (BIOPAMA) programme is funded through the Intra-ACP (Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific) envelop of the 10th and 11th European Development Fund (EDF). The present phase of 6 years is being implemented jointly by IUCN, and the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (JRC). The project aims to assist countries in developing a framework for improving technical and institutional approaches to conserve biodiversity, particularly in protected areas, through regional cooperation and capacity building activities. To achieve this aim, the BIOPAMA project proposes to establish in each ACP region, a series of interlinked, but regionally centered, Observatories for Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management. Each Observatory will host a node for a Regional Reference Information System (RRIS), which will work as a platform to facilitate exchange of data/information, as well as to facilitate the planning and implementation of relevant capacity building initiatives for the region among decision makers and managers of protected areas (including MPAs).

The BIOPAMA programme will leverage the Observatories, the RRIS and capacity building to assist partner countries and institutions in developing a framework for improving technical and institutional approaches to conservation through capacity development and regional cooperation, also using the possibilities and opportunities offered by the Convention on Biological Diversity, and in particular the Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA). It will support national agencies in meeting Aichi target 11 and contribute to the conservation of indigenous biodiversity and to the maintenance of the ecological services provided by protected areas, particularly for the benefit of local people who are highly dependent on the use of natural resources for their livelihoods, and also for wider social benefits. The current position only pertains to the West and Central Africa region.

A Regional Observatory will be established in the Central Africa region in collaboration with the Observatory for the Forests of Central Africa (OFAC) to enable the provision of relevant data and information to assist in better planning and decision making as well as exchanging knowledge. Furthermore, a regional capacity building programme will be developed in partnership with existing institutions, such as regional training centres, in order to train West and Central African decision makers and protected area managers, increase support for protected areas and put in place capacities that enable effective and equitable management of well governed protected areas.

IUCN is implementing BIOPAMA through its Global Protected Areas Programme (based at IUCN Headquarters in Gland, Switzerland), in close collaboration with its European Regional Programme, four of its regional offices and two commissions: the World Commission on Protected Areas and Species Survival Commission. BIOPAMA is looking for a Technical Officer with spatial analysis and GIS expertise to manage geospatial (and auxiliary) data, support the analysis processes for the Observatory in Central Africa. The current position is to work with IUCN’s Regional Office for Western and Central Africa (PACO). It will be based in Yaoundé, Cameroon. The post holder will contribute to BIOPAMA’s spatial and technical activities related to the Observatory in the West and Central African region.

JOB DESCRIPTION

The Technical Officer’s (TO) role will be to carry out the mission of observation of the Protected Areas carried out by OFAC on behalf of the COMIFAC, under the joint supervision of the Regional Coordinator of the RIOFAC support project to OFAC and the Coordinator of the IUCN Regional program for Protected Areas and Biodiversity. The TO will be IUCN full staff, seconded at OFAC in Yaoundé. She/He will work closely with the Observatory technicians, the JRC regional web developer seconded at OFAC, the IUCN, OFAC, RAPAC and JRC teams on site and abroad.

The mission includes managing the BIOPAMA regional reference information system (RRIS), producing the necessary information based on data available in the region, to ensure decision makers can take informed decisions, carrying out spatial analysis, producing maps and reports, engaging contacts and discussions with data providers to prepare data sharing agreements and to define requirements for further system development.
The position entails regular interactions with peers from regional partners, national administrations, and regional organisations on complex issues. Occasional interactions with highest external contacts on complex and policy issues. Intensive international and regional travel will be required. The position does not entail direct responsibility for additional staff, but will require direct cooperation with other technical staff working within OFAC. The position will involve responsibility for work planning and budget advice.

She/He will contribute to technical GIS and database know-how, decision-support tool development and to networking activities in the geo-spatial and conservation sector.

The specific responsibilities of the Technical Officer can be grouped into three main categories detailed below:

A. Networking and Communications
- Coordinate between stakeholders on existing PA management capacity building initiatives;
- Coordinate delivery of BIOPAMA capacity building action plan across the region;
- Assist with facilitating PA management networks, and/or assist establishment of new networks where needed;
- Communicate relevant science-based PA Management 'best practices' to stakeholders/networks;
- Establish structural collaboration modalities with relevant experts, scientists and IUCN specialists groups in view of getting regular feed-back and recommendations on specific thematic questions;
- Maintain and build relationships with existing data centres/holders in the region to identify information and datasets relevant to Protected Areas and biodiversity management (and the needs identified in the region) for integration in the Regional Reference Information System;
- Contribute to fundraising and engage with potential new funding partners.

B. Data and Information Analysis
- Assist the OFAC and JRC team in the management of the on-line data collection forms from the Observatory website: data quality, source verifications, database updates, analysis;
- Contribute to the identification and precise definition of key conservation questions/queries of different categories of stakeholders to be addressed by and through the RRIS;
- Building on the different data sets and information collected via IMET and/or via other means (included by direct provision of data sets by different data providers), produce adequate data analysis and knowledge products for different categories of Observatory users with a view to support decision-making at different level (local, national, regional);
- Coordinate or assist in the production of reports on the state of protected areas;
- In close coordination with the JRC-regional web developer and with the rest of the OFAC staff, facilitate collection of data and information on biodiversity and protected areas for use in the Regional Reference Information System (RRIS). In this objective the Observatory and more specifically the TO shall rely on ad hoc tools supporting the creation of structured and organized database, facilitating analysis, processing and decision-making;
- Facilitate connection of data and information on biodiversity and protected areas from datacentres/holders in the region with the Regional Reference Information System (RRIS);
- Actively promote data sharing and data sharing agreements with national and regional governmental agencies, research institutions, NGOs;
- Liaise closely with JRC to convey user needs from the region to the RRIS developers;
- Develop strategy (in liaison with JRC) to improve user engagement and use of products;
- Facilitate technical support and training to stakeholders based on needs identified and on the use of RRIS and associated tools as relevant;
- Assist with requests from regional and national stakeholders for data analyses, or facilitate requests through JRC in Italy;
- Provide technical support to national governments on improving data access and availability for reporting against CBD Aichi targets, PoWPA, WHC and other MEAs;
- Monitor and evaluate the use of information products produced through the Observatory.

The Observatory will provide direct technical support and implementation of activities in some cases (e.g. workshop facilitation and training; data analyses), while other activities and services that may require more expert input or considerable more time than is available from the Technical Officer could be sub-contracted as appropriate.

D. Administration and Project Management
- Prepare 6-month work plans for the Observatory in liaison with the PACO-PA programme coordinator;
- Prepare six-month and annual written reports on delivery/performance of the Observatory, against the work plan developed for each six-month period and the overall project document.
- Ensure all observatory-related expenditure (including travel, procurement and sub-contracting arrangements) complies with EC financial procedures and regulations, and follows the administrative and financial rules of PACO (in liaison with PACO-PA programme coordinator).
- Maintain close coordination with the BIOPAMA Regional Coordinator for the West and Central Africa Region. Monitor and regularly report to the BIOPAMA WCA Coordinator on progress in relation to planned goals and objectives, and agreed milestones in each country and each programme component. Identify and address issues that require attention; identify potential risks and opportunities for project implementation and propose mitigation measures and strategic actions, as needed.
- Maintain linkages with, and contribute to, other relevant programmes and projects undertaken by PACO as agreed with the BIOPAMA WCA Coordinator.
- Participate in Global IUCN bodies and others that fall within the specific scope of protected area information management
- Contribute to IUCN’s regular publications such as newsletters, website and annual report
- Provide overall input into PACO programmes, projects, activities and initiatives and offer advice on emerging initiatives, especially related to the WCA region and/or to protected areas challenges
- Adherence to the IUCN Code of Conduct.
  - Respect for people from different nationalities, cultures, ethnicities, religion, gender, sexual orientation as well as the young and elderly;
  - Responsible for exercising utmost care and judgement to ensure the assets belonging or entrusted to IUCN are not misused or wasted;
  - Avoid all instances of conflict of interest in one’s dealings;
  - Commitment to help conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure the sustainable use of natural resources;

**REQUIREMENTS**

- **D. Specific skills and experience required**
  - Minimum of a post-graduate (M.Sc.) academic studies, preferentially Higher degree of specialised academic studies in natural resource management, ecology - related discipline and extensive experience (preferably a formal qualification) in GIS and spatial analysis techniques.
  - At least 5 years’ experience with project and program responsibility.
  - Strong capacity of interaction with other persons and institutions in view of building synergies and establish structural working relationships. The candidate must guarantee full confidence and autonomy in full-filling this task as well as all the other tasks of the assignment.
  - Strong communication and presentation skills and an ability to prepare appropriate and timely reports to a wide range of audiences and cultures. A high level of competency in the French and English language is required. An adequate level of fluency in another language of the region (e.g. Portuguese) is not a requirement but would be an additional asset.
  - Fluent writing and speaking literacy in both English and French.
  - Specific knowledge and experience in the use of tools for on-line publishing of geospatial data and metadata would be an asset, as well as experience in the use of any of the component tools of the RRIS, i.e. PostGIS, GeoServer, GeoNode, Drupal.
  - Time management skills including an ability to work effectively under pressure and to meet deadlines.
- **E. General characteristics desired**
  - Good general ICT knowledge and experience, with specific focus on the management and use of geographic information systems (GIS), databases, internet user interfaces as well as spatial analysis and development of decision support tools, including experience in developing detailed user requirements in collaboration with stakeholders (i.e. translation of needs expressed by decision-makers into data and information/analysis needs to develop decision-support tools) would be a strong asset.
  - Experience in the development and implementation of capacity building programmes and training on information management, GIS and/or spatial analysis related topics would be an advantage
  - Experience in communicating and collaborating with management agencies, academic institutions and local, national and regional stakeholders to achieve agreed collective outcomes
  - Demonstrated high level skills in project planning, overseeing implementation and evaluating progress, including work planning, financial management, and monitoring and evaluation.
  - Demonstrated commitment to achieving biodiversity conservation and livelihoods goals, in collaboration with others.
  - Demonstrated ability to exercise good judgment, to think laterally and to resolve complex issues in a dynamic and changing environment.
  - Experience in biodiversity and/or protected areas management, as well as in information management, ideally involving terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems, at national and/or regional levels.

Vacancy Details - IUCN HR Management System (https://hrms.iucn.org)
• Awareness and an ability to acknowledge and respect different cultures, and to engage appropriately with people of different backgrounds.

• Demonstrated excellent interpersonal and networking skills, including the ability to work in a multi-cultural environment, and to establish effective working relationships both within and outside the organization with a diversity of stakeholders.

• An extensive existing network in the geospatial sector across the WCA region would be a great advantage.

• A team player who is able to contribute effectively to collaborative issues, and to demonstrate innovation and leadership, as appropriate.

APPLICATIONS

Applicants are requested to apply online through the HR Management System, by opening the vacancy announcement and pressing the "Apply" button at:

https://hrms.iucn.org/vacancy/2683

Applicants will be asked to create an account and submit their profile information. Applications will not be accepted after the closing date. The vacancy closes at midnight, Swiss time (GMT+1 / GMT+2 during Daylight Saving Time, DST). Please note that only selected applicants will be personally contacted for interviews.

Other job opportunities are published in the IUCN website: http://www.iucn.org/involved/jobs/

About IUCN

IUCN is a membership Union uniquely composed of both government and civil society organisations. It provides public, private and non-governmental organisations with the knowledge and tools that enable human progress, economic development and nature conservation to take place together.

Created in 1948, IUCN is now the world’s largest and most diverse environmental network, harnessing the knowledge, resources and reach of more than 1,300 Member organisations and some 10,000 experts. It is a leading provider of conservation data, assessments and analysis. Its broad membership enables IUCN to fill the role of incubator and trusted repository of best practices, tools and international standards.

IUCN provides a neutral space in which diverse stakeholders including governments, NGOs, scientists, businesses, local communities, indigenous peoples organisations and others can work together to forge and implement solutions to environmental challenges and achieve sustainable development.

Working with many partners and supporters, IUCN implements a large and diverse portfolio of conservation projects worldwide. Combining the latest science with the traditional knowledge of local communities, these projects work to reverse habitat loss, restore ecosystems and improve people’s well-being.

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