

**UN Climate Action Summit, being convened by UN Secretary-General on 23 September
2019**

Nature Based Solutions

Proposition from African Parks

**‘Achieving multiple global objectives in a synergistic and pragmatic manner through scaling up
public-private partnerships for managing protected areas’**

Context and rationale.

Well managed protected areas represent the front line in the global effort to protect biodiversity, including wildlife, and the economic benefits that can be unlocked. They provide a place at which multiple global objectives synergise in a pragmatic manner, including on biodiversity, climate change and sustainable development.

Well managed protected areas help to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in multiple ways, such as ending poverty by creating decent local jobs, especially for youth in rural communities remote from capital, supporting good health, well-being and quality education for local people, and creating peace and stability, as well as making clean water, mitigating climate change and protecting life on land and below water.

Multiple protected areas have been created in Africa and the technical know-how and support exists on the continent to well-manage these areas. There is a unique opportunity, based on proven approaches, to achieve a transformative impact by better supporting and investing in protected areas through the public private partnership model, which blends public and private financing and promotes south-south and north-south cooperation.

Well managed parks create the necessary pre-conditions for generating public and private investment for wildlife-based tourism, local business enterprises, carbon sequestration, security, education and healthcare.

African Parks is a South African based not for profit entity dedicated to supporting African States manage their parks for the benefit of local people, national economies, and wildlife. African Parks adopts a business approach to conservation, which combines world class conservation practice with business expertise and a commitment to financial, social and ecological sustainability.

This approach is replicable across all continents.

An overview of the contribution.

How the contribution leverages living natural systems as a solution to avert climate change?

Ensuring nature-based climate solutions are about conserving and restoring wild places and planting indigenous species, so that we achieve biodiversity and climate objectives is critical to delivering on both biodiversity and climate-related international commitments in a synergistic manner.

Using the public-private partnership model, we have shown how public and private finance can be mobilised and blended to manage protected areas in a way that delivers for biodiversity and climate, while also delivering on the SDGs. By focusing on protected areas, achieving the SDGs, as well as meeting international commitments under multiple global conventions, including on climate change,

biodiversity, desertification, migratory species, trade in endangered species, international wetlands of importance and world heritage sites, synergise on-the-ground in a pragmatic and measurable manner. This is what we see in Garamba, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) for example, see [here](#).

How might the contribution support both climate, mitigation and adaptation as well as other important co-benefits and social, economic and environmental outcomes in coming years. They may include:

Reduction in carbon emission and carbon capture (GTonnes): while reduction in carbon emissions and carbon capture is well-recognised, more work needs to be done on the methodology for measuring the carbon benefits of well—managed protected areas.

Increasing climate resilience: well managed protected areas increase resilience in multiple ways, including by protecting water catchment areas, coastal mangroves, and forests and rehabilitating degraded landscapes. Multiple examples exist within the African Parks portfolio, including Majeti in Malawi, Akagera in Rwanda and Garamba in DRC.

Social impact (job increase; poverty reduction; Just transition, etc.): African Parks has demonstrated the social impact of well managed protected areas through its approach to park management, which has five foundations: law enforcement; biodiversity conservation; community development; tourism and enterprise; and management and infrastructure.

Across its portfolio of parks in 2018, African Parks:

- generated 4,804 jobs (2,199 permanent, 2,605 temporary), including 1,000 rangers who confiscated 59,322 illegal wildlife products, removed 16,863 snares, and made 797 arrests;
- helped 82,706 people receive healthcare, and 79,884 children get access to education, including by supporting 278 schools; and it
- attracted 77,884 tourists to the parks generating USD4.7M in tourism revenue for the parks.

Net economic impact (total in US\$; how was it achieved?): across its portfolio of parks in 2018, USD11.4M was paid in salaries, USD4.7M was generated in revenue by the parks through tourism, and USD3.6M was paid in taxes.

African Parks has invested over US\$173 million in conservation over the last five years. In this same period, its annual group budget has grown by 148%. In 2018 African Parks surpassed US\$50M annual group spend, with gross park revenue for the year reaching US\$4.8 million. Public institutions and individual donors were the biggest segments of its funding sources at 32% and 25% respectively.

Impact on realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (in particular SDGs 1,2,6,12,13,14,15,16): We can today show how the well managed protected areas in our portfolio of parks help to achieve the SDGs, such as ending poverty by creating decent local jobs, especially for youth in rural communities remote from capital, supporting good health, well-being and quality education for local people, and creating peace and stability, as well as making clean water, mitigating climate change and protecting life on land and below water.

Minimising species extinction and ecological losses and fostering an increase of biodiversity.

Functioning wild ecosystems provide countless benefits for millions of people including clean air and water, and food security, but they must be protected. The actions of our Rangers working with local communities deliver security and create safe places so ecosystems can function and provide for the benefit of people and wildlife. Once poaching and other illegal threats are prevented, wildlife

numbers can rise, and key species can be reintroduced. All of the parks managed by African Parks show trends in wildlife populations rising, whereas globally they are falling.

For example: Zakouma National Park has risen from the ashes. It is a park that serves as a living example of how a once lawless landscape, ransacked of nearly all its resources, has been transformed for the benefit of people and wildlife. Between 2002 to 2010, Zakouma lost 95% of its elephants – almost 4,000 were poached for the illegal sale of their ivory, and poachers left a wake of destruction and instability for the local communities living around the park. In 2010, upon invitation by the Chadian government, African Parks signed a long-term management agreement for Zakouma. Today, Zakouma serves as a nucleus of safety, where only 24 elephants have been lost to poaching since 2010; the park is the largest employer in the region; more than 6,600 children have received an education; and the park is being heralded as one of the most extraordinary wildlife experiences on the continent with Camp Nomade being booked as far as two years in advance. In 2018 we recorded 559 elephants with 127 calves under five years old.

Which countries and organisations are involved in the contribution?

African Parks currently manages 15 national parks and protected areas covering 10.5 million hectares in nine countries across Anglophone, Francophone, and Lusophone Africa, namely in: Benin, Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Mozambique, the Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Zambia.

African Parks is currently in negotiations with existing partner countries in relation to assuming management of a further three parks, as well as with two possible new partner countries, namely Angola and Zimbabwe.

How have stakeholders (for example local communities, youth and indigenous peoples, where applicable) been consulted in developing the contribution?

African Parks model is to create a legal entity and local board for each park under relevant national laws. The local boards are comprised of representatives of African Parks, wildlife authorities, and local community representatives. Core to the foundation model of African Parks is community development, tourism and enterprise that is locally based. Through this model African Parks develops a local constituency that supports each park.

We now have proof of concept of how well managed protected areas are linked to national and local development, peace and stability, as we see in parks being managed for and on behalf of governments in Africa, such as Akagera in Rwanda, Garamba, DRC (managed by African Parks), Virunga in DRC (managed by the Virunga Foundation), Gorongosa in Mozambique (managed by the Carr Foundation), Majeti in Malawi, and Zakouma in Chad (managed by Africa Parks), as well as community conservancies such as the Northern Rangelands Trust in coastal and northern Kenya (managed by the Northern Rangelands Trust).

Where can the contribution be put into action?

The African Parks public private partnership model is already deployed across 15 national parks and protected areas covering 10.5 million hectares in nine countries across Anglophone, Francophone, and Lusophone Africa, with more in the pipeline. The model can be further deployed in Africa and across any continent, and a similar model has been used by others as is reflected above.

African Parks has been contacted by governments in Central and South America, and Europe enquiring about the model and its possible application in those regions. Two Australian State Governments have deployed a similar model for managing two protected areas in those States.

How the contribution will be delivered? How will different stakeholders be engaged in its implementation? What are the potential transformational impacts?

The contribution can be delivered through each of the core partners to the African Parks model: the State that owns the land and has mandated and contracted African Parks to manage it for and on its behalf; African Parks staff, including local field-based staff; community partners, including those involved in local enterprises; private sector partners, especially those from the tourism sector; and funding partners from the public and private sectors, including private funders.

There is a unique opportunity, based on proven approaches, to achieve a transformative impact by better supporting and investing in protected areas through the public private partnership model, which blends public and private financing and promotes south-south and north-south cooperation.

Is this initiative contributing to other Climate Action Summit workstreams (industry transition; energy transition; climate finance and carbon pricing; infrastructure, cities and local action; resilience and adaptation; youth and citizen mobilization; social and political drivers; mitigation strategy)?

It is only being submitted to this stream. It can also contribute towards other workstreams, as appropriate, such as mitigation.

How does this contribution build upon examples of experience to date? How does the contribution link with different ongoing initiatives?

This contribution is linked to further scaling up the proven public-private partnership model for protected area management. It builds upon the experience gained by African Parks since 2003, when it assumed management of its first park in Malawi. See [Annual Report 2018](#) for details. It can also draw upon the experience gained by others using a similar approach as is reflected above.

What are the mechanisms for funding (with specific emphasis on potential for partnerships)?

African Parks model is based upon a unique and highly successful public-private partnership. Financing comes from the partner State, public institutions, philanthropic foundations, private individuals and through revenue generated by each park, especially through tourism. See [Annual Report 2018](#) for details.

African Parks successful public-private partnership conservation model ensures State sovereignty while bringing in the world's best park management. African Parks uses a fully delegated, long term management model, which means it assumes total management responsibility for all that happens in the park – operations, investments into the park, and the optimization of park revenue. The long-term nature allows it to build trust and have a profound and lasting ecological, social and development impact, which has enabled it to attract public and private financing.

Well managed parks create the necessary pre-conditions for generating public and private investment for wildlife-based tourism, local business enterprises, carbon sequestration, security, education and healthcare.

What are the means of stewardship, metrics for monitoring?

Core to African Parks approach is the gathering and analysing data and delivering real and measurable results on-the-ground. The long-term nature of its partnerships allows it to build trust and have a profound, lasting and measurable ecological, social and development impact.

By making a long-term commitment and investment in these wild places, multiple issues can be addressed in a coordinated manner and in a way that enables on-the-ground performance to be monitored over time, be it in relation to invasive species, habitat loss, infrastructure, pollution or poaching for illegal trade, as well as local jobs, education, health care and security for people and wildlife. This is what African Parks has done since 2003 in parks managed by it, as is reflected in the [Annual Report 2018](#).

What is the communication strategy?

African Parks has an experienced communications team, which over the past 12-24 months, has significantly scaled up its communications effort. Communications will draw upon existing social media channels, including its Instagram account with 111,000 followers. For more on its communications, see its website [here](#).

African Parks will work with its partners in the Last Wild Places, Legacy Landscapes and the Wyss Campaign for Nature in communicating this effort, including National Geographic and the Frankfurt Zoological Society.

What are the details of proponents (indicating the degree of commitment among the countries and organizations that are named).

African Parks is a South African based not for profit entity dedicated to supporting African States manage their parks for the benefit of local people, national economies, and wildlife. African Parks Headquarters is in Johannesburg, South Africa, with a small team of under 40 people. It has a small presence in the Netherlands, Switzerland and the USA, with less than 10 people in total, with the overwhelming number of the 4,808 people employed through African Parks being locally recruited staff to support each park.

African Parks is fully committed to maximizing the climate mitigation potential of its parks and to seeing how this can be monetised for the benefit of each park and its local communities, so that the park can be sustained over the long-term. Under the African Parks model, revenue generated by each park remains with that park.

African Parks enters into long term agreements with its partner governments, of 20+ years. All nine countries African Parks operates in, and the two possible future partner countries, are Party to the UNFCCC and the CBD, as well as multiple other global conventions. As UN Member States they have all signed on to Agenda 2030 and the SDGs.

By virtue of the contractual arrangements that are in place, each partner country and funding entity is fully committed to the success of the public private partnership model being used by African Parks.

John E Scanlon AO

Special Envoy

African Parks

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