Global Panorama of Regenerative Innovations

33 Success Stories | 4 Illustrations

COP17 ON BIODIVERSITY · YEREVAN, ARMENIA · OCTOBER 2026



"Enfant Lumière," sculpture by Karine Berthiaume, Lac Osisko, Rouyn-Noranda, Québec, Canada

World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED)

Edited by

François Bédard · Sylvain St-Amand · Bertrand Dongmo Temgoua · Lei Cheng

CED

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An Analysis by the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations for COP17 on Biodiversity, Yerevan, Armenia, October 2026

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2026

Introduction to the report

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CED Report for COP17
Yerevan, Armenia | October 2026

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About the Photo on the Cover

This sculpture is a distinctive landmark on Lac Osisko in Rouyn-Noranda, Québec, Canada.





Photo: Nathalie Toulouse

Child of Light (Enfant Lumière)

Sculptor: Karine Berthiaume, 2023
Bronze and glass
6 metres x 6 metres

Raised above the water, the hybrid child reaches toward the light in a final surge of survival. Through its fragile posture and uncertain roots, Child of Light evokes human vulnerability and the need for a renewed bond with nature.

Child of Light embodies a quest for grounding and awareness. It invites us to imagine a more deeply rooted future, where sustainable and respectful actions are taken toward all living things.

Through this work, the artist invites us to suspend time, to reconsider our status as human beings, and to rethink our place within the natural world.

Created with the support of the **Youkali Foundation**, founded by Ginette Marcotte and Luc Paquet, this sculpture is offered as a legacy gift to the City of Rouyn-Noranda.

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Foreword

It is with great pleasure that I led the preparation of this collective publication, conceived as a contribution by the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) to the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP17), to be held in Yerevan, Armenia, in October 2026. Under the theme “Taking Action for Nature”, the Conference places strong emphasis on implementation. One of its highlights will be the first global review of collective progress in implementing the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework, adopted in Montréal in 2022 at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP15).

This publication, produced by the CED, has its origins in the initiative led by the Abitibi-Témiscamingue Regenerative Innovation Hub. In this region of Québec, Canada, whose economy relies largely on natural resources, the Hub has brought together local stakeholders around regeneration and its contribution to regional development and biodiversity. This mobilization provided the impetus for the initiative in the lead-up to COP17, with the support of the CED. Building on this momentum, the CED undertook the preparation of this collective work and called on its international network to enrich the dialogue between territories.

The first step was the creation of a Regenerative Tourism Hub, initiated by Tourisme Abitibi-Témiscamingue in partnership with MT Lab and the CED. Its launch was announced at COP16, held in Cali, Colombia, in 2024. On that occasion, the restoration and enhancement of Lake Osisko in Rouyn-Noranda, carried out by Collectif Territoire, was presented as a concrete example of regenerative tourism. COP16 also marked the beginning of international cooperation, with the signing of a partnership agreement between the CED and the City of Cali providing, among other things, for the establishment of ties between Cali and Abitibi-Témiscamingue.

Since then, the Hub has extended its mandate to all socio-economic sectors of the region and has become the Regenerative Innovation Hub. It leads a mobilization process aimed at bringing regional stakeholders together around solutions adapted to local realities. The Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue (UQAT) has joined this new phase as a strategic partner.

In preparation for COP17, this regional initiative has resulted in two complementary contributions: a case study prepared by the Hub and a one-page summary sheet produced by Collectif Territoire. In different ways, they show how a natural-resource-based region can contribute to achieving the 2030 targets of the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework. They form the starting point for the international outreach presented in this publication.

The mobilization led by the Hub has thus given rise to a broader ambition: to engage in dialogue with stakeholders from other regions of the world and explore opportunities for collaboration with them. To bring this ambition to fruition, the CED, in collaboration with the Hub and its partners in Abitibi-Témiscamingue, issued a call for contributions to its international network of some sixty experts.

The response was remarkable. Nearly half of the experts submitted a summary sheet, based on the template designed by Collectif Territoire, presenting an initiative from their territory that contributes to achieving the targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework. These sheets illustrate the diversity of approaches adopted in different contexts. They are complemented by three case studies, modelled on that of the Regenerative Innovation Hub, describing experiences in China, Colombia and Tunisia. The full list of contributors is provided in the appendix.

This publication is therefore, above all, the result of a collective effort. Born of a local impetus in Abitibi-Témiscamingue, it brings together, through the work of the CED and the participation of its international network, experiences from different

regions of the world. It highlights concrete initiatives from a wide range of contexts and seeks to foster the sharing of experience, dialogue and the forging of new connections among stakeholders committed to biodiversity.

I would like to acknowledge the leading role of the Regenerative Innovation Hub and the commitment of the stakeholders of Abitibi-Témiscamingue to the initiative that gave rise to this work. I warmly thank everyone who agreed to share their experience. Their contributions are what make this publication so rich, and they show that every territory, in its own way, can contribute to the implementation of the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to Bertrand Dongmo Temgoua and Sylvain St-Amand, co-editors of this publication, for their valuable contribution.

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Introduction

I. The Purpose of This Report

The proposition to be demonstrated: tourism can play an important role in the conservation and regeneration of biodiversity. The pressure tourism places on fragile environments is real and documented; this report examines the other side of that ledger, what tourism accomplishes when it is designed to repair the territory that hosts it. The mechanics are straightforward: when revenue returns to the territory and the community takes part in the decisions, the visit finances restoration and scientific monitoring, creates jobs tied to the health of the environment and the well-being of the residents, and passes on knowledge.

II. A Survey of CED's Experts and Partners

CED asked its experts and partners around the world to illustrate this proposition with examples drawn from their own practice and community. Thirty-three case sheets were submitted, from sixteen countries across four continents. Each sheet describes a destination, an initiative under way, and its alignment with the targets of the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF). The contexts were deliberately varied, an urban shoreline in Abitibi-Témiscamingue, a coastal oasis in Gabès, a sea area of the Minjiang estuary, a sacred forest in western Cameroon, an Andean park in Peru, a geopark in southern Tunisia, to test whether the same mechanisms hold elsewhere.

III. One Report, Two Depths of Field

Part One presents a structured synthesis of the 33 cases, each documented through a one- or two-page profile organized around four core components: (1) the expert and destination, identifying the contributor and the geographical context of the case; (2) destination characteristics, outlining the key environmental, socio-economic, territorial, and institutional features relevant to the initiative; (3) the initiative, providing a concise description of its objectives, approach, key actions, and expected or observed outcomes; and (4) alignment with the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF), identifying the specific KMGBF targets to which the initiative contributes. Collectively, these profiles provide a comparative overview of the 33 cases and facilitate the identification of recurring mechanisms, approaches, and patterns across diverse geographical and institutional contexts.

Part Two examines four cases in depth, covering governance, financing, obstacles, measured results, and the conditions for reproduction, to draw out lessons that can travel to other territories.

The two parts share one argument and one evidentiary base. Part One establishes that a pattern exists across thirty-three initiatives; Part Two tests four of them closely enough to show how the pattern actually holds up in practice, case by case.

IV. The Third Installment in the Trilogy on Ecological Civilization

The first volume of the trilogy set out the systemic thesis: without an exit from the model of continuous material growth, the world's targets will remain out of reach, a sober reading of how fast systemic change can happen, one that still holds. The second volume, the Inconvenient Ones (Damnés écolos! in French), covers the sixty-year history of the global environmental movement through the people who carried it, from Pierre Dansereau and Rachel Carson to Wangari Maathai, Paul Watson, Berta Cáceres and Greta Thunberg, a reminder of how long, and how contested, the road to this point has been.

This third volume changes the distance. At the scale of communities, with representative governance and initiatives that are sometimes modest, nature regenerates quickly, and often spectacularly. Examples: the Chinese Crested Tern, from fewer than 50 individuals in 2010 to more than 200 in 2026; 211 ha of aquaculture ponds returned to wetland and 173 ha of mangroves replanted in the Minjiang estuary; 1,000 trees planted in three years at Batoufam (Cameroon); centuries-old jessours brought back into service in the Dahar (Tunisia). Transforming the system remains necessary; the ground, meanwhile, is already moving, and is building the political consent that transformation will require.

V. What This Report Brings to Yerevan

This report is presented at COP17 in October 2026, at the moment of the Framework's first global stocktake, when none of its 23 targets is progressing at the pace expected. It carries three requests to the Parties: recognize territory-rooted forms of conservation in the indicators, bring financing down to the scale at which results are produced, and treat these experiences as a reproducible method.

Part I

33 Success Stories

Taking Action for Nature

How Thirty-three Destinations Are Delivering the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework

Contributions gathered by the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations for COP17 to the Convention on Biological Diversity, Yerevan, Armenia, 19 to 30 October 2026. Part Two of this same Analysis examines four of these cases in depth: the Regenerative Innovation Hub, Abitibi-Témiscamingue, Canada; the Téboursouk-Dougga Initiative in Tunisia; the Farallones Hub in Santiago de Cali, Colombia; and the conservation of the Chinese Crested Tern across the Minjiang Estuary and the Matsu Islands, China.

1. Four Places to Begin

In the year 2000, fewer than fifty Chinese Crested Terns were left in the world. The species had gone unseen for so long that people in China call it the mythical bird. Today there are more than two hundred. The recovery happened because two things were finally managed as one system: the rocky islets of the Matsu Islands, where the birds nest, and the mudflats of the Minjiang Estuary, where they feed. Teams in China cleared invasive cordgrass, turned fish ponds back into wetland, replanted mangrove and reed, installed solar-powered cameras that watch the colonies in real time, and persuaded sea anglers to keep their distance from a few bare rocks. A species came back from the edge because a region decided to treat its estuary and its islands as a destination worth managing.

On the other side of the world, in Gabès in southern Tunisia, sits the only coastal oasis in the Mediterranean basin, a mosaic of date palms, pomegranate groves and seagrass beds wedged between the sea and a petrochemical complex. The Oasis Vivante initiative sells stays there on an unusual condition. Visitors pay to work: replanting endemic palms, clearing the ancient seguia irrigation canals, counting migratory birds alongside researchers. The oasis gets labour and data it could never afford. The visitor gets something rarer than a view.

And in the Pacific, off the coast of Nayarit in Mexico, an island that held prisoners for more than a century closed its penal colony in 2019 and now receives visitors inside a biosphere reserve. Former residences became lodgings, so no new resort was built. Every booking passes through a single channel that enforces a hard ceiling on numbers. An environmental education centre has opened on the site, named after the writer José Revueltas.

Closer to home for this Analysis's publishers, in Rouyn-Noranda, a mining town in northwestern Québec, a lake sits in the middle of downtown that decades of heavy-metal pollution from the smelter anchoring the local economy left poisoned. Lac Osisko is not a wilderness recovery story; it is an urban one. As rehabilitation work reclaims its shoreline and reconnects the lake to the life of the town around it, it has already drawn back an audience nobody expected: 192 bird species recorded on water that residents once knew only as contaminated. A city rehabilitating its own backyard lake, one bird count at a time, turns one of the least likely places in this collection into one of its clearest reminders that regeneration does not require distance from industry, only decisions taken close to it.

Each of these reads like a local curiosity. Put side by side, they describe a method. This Analysis brings together thirty-three such cases, submitted by twenty-seven experts and teams in sixteen countries, and argues a single proposition: the targets that governments adopted in Montréal in 2022 are being met, in real hectares and real species counts, by territories that organise themselves as destinations and use tourism as the instrument.

2. What Was Collected, and How to Read It

The World Centre of Excellence for Destinations asked its experts and partners a plain question: show us a place where biodiversity is protected, restored or given value through action anchored in a destination, and tell us which of the twenty-three targets of the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework that action serves.

Thirty-three answers came back, one page each, covering thirty-two territories on four continents. They range from a boreal homeland of 450,000 square kilometres to eight hectares of forest around an archaeological dig, from a hyper-arid plateau to a contaminated urban lake in a mining town. Some describe programmes that have been running for a decade and can show results. Others describe agreements signed this year.

These pages are declarations, written by the people doing the work. They were checked for internal consistency, classified and counted, and the full accounting sits in the annexes at the end of this Analysis, where anyone who wants to verify a figure will find it. The body of the Analysis does something different with the same material: it looks for what these thirty-three places have in common, and for what they have learned that others could use.

One number is worth carrying into the reading. On average each initiative addresses seven of the twenty-three targets at once. That is the central finding, and everything below is an attempt to explain why a place, when it is managed as a destination, tends to deliver the Framework in bundles rather than one target at a time.

3. Six Things Tourism Does for Nature

The thirty-three initiatives use tourism in six distinct ways. Most use several at once. Read as a set, they amount to a working manual.

3.1 It Pays for the Work

Conservation has a permanent financing problem, and the places in this collection have each found a way to attach a price to a visit and route that money to habitat.

In Charlevoix, a Québec region between the St. Lawrence and the mountains and a UNESCO biosphere reserve since 1988, tourism businesses commit voluntarily to a levy on every night booked, along with multi-year carbon offset commitments. The money flows into the Charlevoix Biodiversity Fund and the Planetair portfolio, which finance nature-based projects inside the region rather than somewhere far away. The visitor pays a few dollars without noticing. The region accumulates a conservation budget that no annual grant could match for reliability.

Djerba runs the same logic through hotels, reinvesting tourism revenue in habitat rehabilitation and replanting with endemic species. Batoufam, in western Cameroon, shows the mechanism reaching further than expected: the reputation the sacred forest earned as a destination attracted international partners who financed a fully equipped hospital centre and new school buildings. In Algeria, AOM INVEST took the idea to the capital market and became the first small business listed on the Algiers stock exchange, channelling public and private capital into two regenerative sites, a two-thousand-year-old Roman thermal town and an underused ecotourism station.

The lesson. A destination is one of the few places where conservation can be financed by the people who enjoy it, continuously, without waiting for a donor cycle. What matters is the plumbing: a levy, a fund, a share of sales, a listing. Territories that build the plumbing early stop having to ask.

3.2 It Puts Hands and Eyes on the Ground

Restoration is slow, physical work, and monitoring is endless. Several initiatives solved both problems by handing them to visitors.

Gabès is the clearest case, since the visit itself is the restoration. Taï National Park in Côte d'Ivoire, 3,300 square kilometres of primary rainforest, has visitors plant endemic trees in the park's buffer zone and follow their growth afterwards through a QR code on each tree. Batoufam put tourists, the Batoufam people and the Baka people to work together and counted roughly a thousand trees planted in three years. In the Peruvian Andes, visitors to the Nor Yauyos-Cochas reserve rebuild ancestral terraces and clear infiltration canals that regulate the water cycle of a basin threatened by glacial retreat.

The same principle produces science. Mycosphaera, working out of Québec City, has built an open platform holding more than thirty thousand georeferenced fungal records, contributed largely by the public, and carries a portable genomic sequencer into the forest. In the Lotbinière Seigneurial Forest alone its inventories documented 322 species of fungi, eight of them possibly unknown to science, and that evidence is now supporting the designation of a new protected area. Fungi sustain ninety-five percent of land plants and appear in almost no national species-at-risk register, so a tourism operator is, for the moment, one of the few actors filling the gap.

The lesson. Visitors are an underused workforce and an underused sensor network. Both roles require the same thing: a scientist or a manager willing to design tasks that an amateur can perform without doing harm, and willing to use the results.

3.3 It Sets the Rules

Tourism becomes a threat when it grows without limits, so several of these territories wrote the limits themselves, before anyone imposed them.

The village of Sharchi sits at the gateway of the Great Himalayan National Park in Himachal Pradesh, on land under pressure from speculative buyers. With no mandate from any higher authority, its village council passed a resolution in 2021 that requires any prospective tourism business to obtain the community's explicit consent, caps guesthouses at ten rooms and reaffirms traditional wooden construction. A village of a few hundred people wrote a carrying-capacity regulation, and the buffer zone of a World Heritage site now functions as a conserved area because of it.

Eeyou Istchee, a territory spanning more than 450,000 square kilometres, adopted a different approach by pursuing certification. The Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association submitted the entire Indigenous territory, comprising nine communities, to an independent assessment based on 87 criteria recognised by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council. In June 2025, it became the first Indigenous destination management organisation in North America to achieve this certification. The assessment results are publicly available, and the certification process must be repeated every three years.

Mauritius went smaller and arguably deeper. Its Tourism Environment Charter translates the Framework into fifteen daily gestures for the people who actually touch the ecosystem, the housekeepers, the managers, the tour operators: which seafood to buy, how to maintain grounds without chemicals, how to handle plastic and water. Twenty-three global targets became fifteen things to do before lunch. Alto Minho in northern Portugal does the equivalent at landscape scale, using the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism to test every tourism flow and every land-use decision across nine municipalities against conservation priorities. In the Islas Marías, the rule is arithmetic: one commercialisation channel, a fixed ceiling, no exceptions.

The lesson. Rules that hold are written where the activity happens, in the vocabulary of the people who apply them, and they are enforceable. A ten-room cap voted by a village council does more for a Himalayan buffer zone than a national policy that no one applies.

3.4 It Protects Land That No Map Ever Counted

Target 3 asks the world to conserve thirty percent of land and sea by 2030. The instinct is to look for empty space. These contributions look somewhere else.

On Djerba, hotels are replacing exotic ornamental lawns with native trees, local palm varieties and salt-tolerant plants, reducing paved surface so water returns to the soil, and registering the results as other effective area-based conservation measures. Hotel gardens become functioning habitat. In Cameroon, the Kouoghap sacred forest of Batoufam has been protected for generations by customary law and now counts, formally, as a spatial conservation regime. In Québec, the municipality of Stoneham-et-Tewkesbury is protecting an eight-hundred-hectare forest corridor at the edge of the Québec City metropolitan area, the last large unfragmented link between a national park and a wildlife reserve, and also the watershed that supplies the city's drinking water. In Rouyn-Noranda, a lake poisoned by decades of heavy metals is being rehabilitated in the middle of town, and 192 bird species have already been recorded there.

The lesson. The thirty percent will not be found in wilderness alone. It will be assembled from hotel grounds, sacred groves, village buffer zones, city corridors and urban lakes, provided that countries open simple legal pathways for recognising conservation on private, community and municipal land.

3.5 It Moves the Decision to the People Who Live There

The phrase that recurs most often across the thirty-three pages, in different languages and on four continents, is a variation of one idea: local people move from beneficiaries to co-authors.

In Eeyou Istchee the Cree Nation runs its own destination organisation under a land regime entrenched in a 1975 treaty. At Mégantic, the Abenaki Nation of Odanak gave the oldest archaeological site in Québec its name, Mamsalhabika; it sits on the board that manages it, holds ceremonies there and is co-investing in an Abenaki space on the site. In Ambam, in the Cameroonian part of the Congo Basin, ninety traditional chieftaincies are written into the governance of the destination. In Peru, the women's committee of the Nor Yauyos-Cochas reserve holds a formal seat on the management committee and co-governs tourism revenue. In Morocco's Draa-Tafilalet oases, the asili.ma marketplace sends part of every sale to the monthly social security contributions of the women artisans who made the goods, which turns a craft income into a pension.

This is the collection's most consistent correlation. The initiatives that can show the strongest results are the ones where authority moved, and not only money.

The lesson. Consultation produces documents. Transferred authority produces stewardship, because the people who hold the decision also hold the consequences.

3.6 And It Keeps Culture and Nature in the Same Story

One family of initiatives deserves its own mention, because it solves a problem that conservation programmes often create: asking people to protect nature as though it were separate from their own history.

At Mégantic, forty years of excavation and fifty-eight thousand artefacts tell the story of twelve thousand years in which both ecosystems and human beings adapted to a warming world, from caribou tundra to maple forest. Visitors walk through a site that is simultaneously a protected mixed forest, a salmonid spawning ground and a lesson in climate change with the evidence underfoot. At Bom Jesus do Monte above Braga in Portugal, a UNESCO sanctuary plants native trees to rebuild its forest and lower fire risk, and treats the contemplative relationship between people and landscape as a conservation asset in its own right. Across the Dahar plateau in southern Tunisia, six thousand square kilometres of UNESCO geopark, where the restored structures are jessours, terraced water-harvesting earthworks built centuries ago, which hold soil moisture, stop erosion and bring back native vegetation in a place where rainfall is disappearing.

The lesson. Where heritage is the entry point, protection needs no external justification. People defend what they recognise as theirs, and a tradition that already works as an ecological technology is cheaper and more durable than an imported one.

4. What the Pattern Says About the Framework

Numbers deserve a place in this analysis where they carry an argument. Four of them do.

Seven. On average, each initiative addresses seven of the twenty-three targets. A national ministry usually works one target at a time, through one department. A territory cannot: when a village council caps hotel rooms it has simultaneously done spatial planning, protected a buffer zone, mainstreamed biodiversity into local policy and exercised community rights. This is the strongest practical case for treating destinations as delivery units of the Framework.

Four targets carry the collection. Area-based conservation, ecosystem restoration, inclusive participation and the mainstreaming of biodiversity into policy appear in roughly two thirds of the contributions or more. The combination is telling. Almost nobody in this collection is restoring a habitat without also changing who governs it and how the local plan is written. That is what makes these initiatives survive a change of mayor.

One target scores zero. Not a single contribution addresses the reform of subsidies and incentives that damage nature. This is where a local actor has no purchase at all, and it is the clearest division of labour the collection produces: territories can restore, govern, finance at small scale and include; only states can stop paying for the destruction of the same ecosystems.

One target appears once. The fair sharing of benefits from genetic resources shows up in a single case, in the Peruvian Andes, where protocols make sure that the commercial use of fifty-one native potato varieties on restaurant menus returns value to the communities that keep those varieties alive. Given how many of these destinations sell food, plants and traditional knowledge to visitors, once is a warning rather than a statistic. The mechanism exists and almost nobody is using it.

There is one more silence worth naming. Very few contributions claim the finance target, although most of them describe tourism revenue as their funding source. Money is moving into conservation in these territories and it is not being counted as biodiversity finance. The same goes for gender: women's cooperatives and women's committees appear throughout the narratives, and the gender target is formally claimed by very few. Two real categories of contributions are going unreported because local actors do not know which box they belong in.

5. What This Collection Does Not Prove

Honesty about the material improves the argument rather than weakening it.

These thirty-three pages come from a professional network that answered a call, so they describe what CED partners are doing and not the state of the world. Africa and the Americas supply most of them, Québec and Tunisia alone supply nearly half, and Oceania is absent entirely. That is the shape of a network, and it says nothing about where biodiversity action is strongest.

Each page is self-reported. Contributors decided for themselves which targets their work serves, and the number of targets identified varies from one to fourteen. A handful of pages announce more targets in the text than they list in their table.

Most importantly, only a minority can put a number on their results. A tern population, hectares of mangrove, a thousand trees, 322 fungal species, a certification obtained: these are the exceptions. Most contributions describe a mechanism and a direction of travel. That is a real finding in itself, since the initiatives able to state a measurable result are also the ones attracting partners and money. Measurement is the gap where support would pay for itself fastest.

6. What Can Be Copied Tomorrow

Eight instruments in this collection are ready to travel.

1. **Recognise conservation on unconventional land.** Hotel grounds in Djerba, a village buffer zone in the Himalayas, a sacred forest in Cameroon, an urban lake in Québec. All that is missing in most countries is a simple registration pathway.
2. **Certify a destination instead of a business.** Eeyou Istchee proves it can be done across 450,000 square kilometres and nine communities.
3. **Translate the Framework into daily gestures.** Mauritius turned twenty-three global targets into fifteen actions for frontline staff.
4. **Write consent and carrying capacity into local regulation.** Sharchi's ten-room cap and consent certificate, the single booking channel of the Islas Marías.
5. **Make the visitor a restorer and an observer.** Gabès, Taï, Batoufam, Nor Yauyos-Cochas, Mycosphaera.
6. **Build a local biodiversity fund fed by tourism.** Charlevoix's per-night levy and offset portfolio.
7. **Use a shared diagnostic baseline.** The CED's SMED methodology is already running in Brazil, Colombia, Burundi and Cameroon, which makes progress in one territory legible to another.
8. **Give the tools away.** The Praia serious game, free and in four languages, puts the player in the mayor's chair of an island capital and throws twenty-eight crises at them, every value drawn from 412 documented real cases. Mycosphaera's records are open.

And four lessons for anyone charged with delivering the Framework locally:

Start from the place, and not from the target list. Every initiative here began with something people cared about: a bird, a lake, a spring, a forest their grandparents protected. Alignment with the Framework came afterwards, and came easily.

Give real authority away early. The correlation in this collection is hard to miss.

Use tourism on purpose. Set the ceiling first, then build the revenue mechanism. In the wrong order, the same visitors become the pressure.

Measure something, and publish it. A counted population, a restored hectare, a certification. The territories that can show a number are the territories that get a partner.

7. From Montréal to Yerevan

The Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework was adopted by governments in a conference centre in Montréal in December 2022. Its twenty-three targets will be reached, or missed, in places: in an estuary in Fujian, in an oasis beside a petrochemical plant, in a forest corridor above Québec City, in the gardens of a hotel on a Tunisian island.

Taken one at a time, the initiatives gathered here are small. A thousand trees. Eight hectares. Ten rooms. Taken together, they document the step that the Framework requires and cannot itself perform: the passage from an international commitment to a decision taken by a village council, a chieftaincy, a hotel association or a municipal environment department.

Three features of that passage deserve the attention of delegates in Yerevan. The first is that the Framework has become a shared language. Contributors from sixteen countries, working in completely different ways, describe

their work through the same twenty-three targets. That alone makes local action comparable, and therefore transferable.

The second is that action for nature in these territories is inseparable from action for people. Income, jobs, food, water, cultural recognition and the standing of women in local decisions are the very mechanisms that make conservation last in these places.

The third concerns tourism itself. The sector appears in most biodiversity discussions as a pressure to be contained. In these thirty-two territories it has been re-engineered into an instrument that pays for restoration, supplies the labour, enforces the limits and explains the stakes to every visitor who arrives. That conversion depends on two conditions, which recur in every successful case: ecological limits are set in advance, and benefits are governed locally.

Reaching the 2030 targets will not depend on a handful of large programmes. It will depend on whether thousands of territories can do what these thirty-two have done, adapt it to their own ecology and institutions, connect through networks and twinnings, and scale what can be shown to work. The CED network, with its experts, its methodology and its hubs on four continents, is one of the vehicles for that multiplication.

The path from Kunming-Montréal to 2030 runs through destinations. The destinations are already walking it.

8. Key Messages for COP17

Destinations are delivery units of the Framework. Thirty-three initiatives in sixteen countries each advance an average of seven targets at once. National reporting and financing should recognise destination-level action as a channel for implementation.

Regenerative tourism works for nature when it is governed. Carrying capacity, community consent, certification and charters turn visitor flows into restoration labour, conservation finance and local livelihoods. Without those rules, the same flows do the damage.

Conservation lasts where authority has been transferred. The most advanced initiatives are those in which Indigenous Peoples, customary authorities, women's organisations and local communities hold formal decision-making power. Eeyou Istchee, Batoufam, Sharchi and Nor Yauyos-Cochas are ready to be shown.

Thirty by thirty can be reached on unconventional land. Hotel gardens, village buffer zones, peri-urban corridors, sacred forests and urban lakes are already being managed as conserved areas. Parties should open and simplify national recognition pathways.

Shared methods make local action comparable. Common diagnostic and monitoring baselines and open digital tools allow initiatives to be connected, twinned and scaled across continents. The CED offers that connective infrastructure.

The gaps are identified. Harmful subsidies lie entirely outside local reach and belong to states. Benefit-sharing, biodiversity finance and measurement of results are where targeted support would raise the impact of an already vigorous movement.

Annexes

The figures below support the analysis above. They are placed here so that the argument can be read without interruption, and verified afterwards.

Annex A. Method

Source and unit of analysis. The analysis is based exclusively on the combined document *All contributions combined* (33 pages). Each page is a standardised one-pager with four sections: the expert or presenter, the main characteristics of the destination, a summary of the initiative, and alignment with the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework. The unit of analysis is the one-pager, each counted once as a contribution. A structured database (country, region, contributor, organisation, targets, category, implementation status) was built and verified before any total was computed.

Geographic classification. Each contribution is assigned to a single country and region according to the location of the territory described, and not the contributor's place of residence. The Batoufam Sacred Forest initiative is submitted by an expert based in Montréal and is classified under Cameroon. The Mythical Bird initiative is classified under China, as stated in the one-pager. No contribution spans two countries, so no double counting arises.

Target attribution. Three levels of evidence are distinguished. *Explicit* targets are listed in the alignment table of a one-pager together with a described mechanism, and form the basis of all statistics. *Declared* targets are named by the contributor in a note without a described mechanism (Téboursouk-Dougga, Pontal do Paraná, Islas Marías / SECTUR); they are reported separately and never added to the main counts. *Inferred* targets are seven associations that the analysts consider reasonably supported by the activities described; they are flagged and never mixed with explicit counts. Where evidence was insufficient, no target was assigned.

Typology and status. Categories were derived inductively from the content. Each contribution receives one primary category, used for counts, and secondary categories where relevant. Implementation status is assessed from the wording of each one-pager and is therefore indicative.

Annex B. The Collection in Figures

B.1 Contributions by Country (n = 33)

Country	n	Country	n
Canada	7	Cabo Verde	1
Tunisia	7	China	1
Portugal	3	Colombia	1
Burundi	2	Côte d'Ivoire	1
Cameroon	2	India	1
Mexico	2	Mauritius	1
Algeria	1	Morocco	1
Brazil	1	Peru	1

Total: 16 countries, 33 contributions.

Thirty-three one-pagers were submitted by twenty-seven distinct contributors or teams, covering thirty-two destinations, since Islas Marías is described twice. Four contributors submitted more than one initiative: Carla Pinto Cardoso Rebelo (Portugal, 3), Mizen Farhat (Tunisia, 3), Kim Martel (Québec, 2) and Oscar Rwasa (Burundi, 2).

B.2 Contributions by Region (n = 33)

Region	Countries represented	n
Africa	Tunisia (7), Cameroon (2), Burundi (2), Algeria, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Mauritius, Morocco	16
Americas	Canada (7), Mexico (2), Brazil, Colombia, Peru	12
Europe	Portugal (3)	3
Asia	China, India	2

Total: 16 countries, 33 contributions.

Within Africa, North Africa accounts for nine contributions. Within the Americas, Canada supplies seven of the twelve. This reflects the geography of the CED expert network and not the geography of biodiversity action.

B.3 Contributions by Target (Explicit Attribution, n = 33)

The 33 contributions generate 239 explicit target occurrences, an average of 7.2 per contribution, ranging from one to fourteen. A contribution can address several targets, so the column does not sum to 33.

Target	Short description	n	Additional, not counted
T1	Biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning	15	
T2	Restore 30% of degraded ecosystems	22	2 inferred
T3	Conserve 30% of land, waters and seas	24	1 declared, 1 inferred
T4	Halt species extinction, recover populations	8	
T5	Sustainable and legal use of wild species	5	
T6	Reduce impact of invasive alien species	3	1 declared, 2 inferred
T7	Reduce pollution	6	1 declared
T8	Climate change impacts, nature-based solutions	13	2 declared
T9	Sustainable use benefiting people	16	1 declared
T10	Sustainable agriculture, fisheries and forestry	5	2 declared
T11	Nature's contributions to people	11	1 declared

Target	Short description	n	Additional, not counted
T12	Green and blue spaces in urban areas	9	
T13	Benefit-sharing from genetic resources	1	
T14	Biodiversity in policies and planning	21	
T15	Business assessment and disclosure	6	1 declared
T16	Sustainable consumption, reduce waste	10	1 declared
T17	Biosafety and risk management	2	1 declared
T18	Reform harmful incentives and subsidies	0	
T19	Mobilise finance for biodiversity	3	2 declared
T20	Capacity-building and scientific cooperation	16	
T21	Data, information and traditional knowledge	17	1 declared, 1 inferred
T22	Inclusive participation of IPLCs, women, youth	22	
T23	Gender equality	4	1 declared, 1 inferred

Total occurrences: 239 (16 declared, 7 inferred, not counted above).

If declared and inferred targets were added, Target 6 would reach six contributions and Target 19 would reach five. No ranking in the leading group would change.

B.4 Typology of the Initiatives

Family	n	Initiatives
Ecosystem restoration and species recovery	6	Osisko Lake; Terras do Priolo; Return of the Mythical Bird; Téboursouk-Dougga; Djerba, Biodiversity as a Vector of Excellence; Oasis Vivante
Protected areas, OECMs and area-based conservation	6	Taï National Park; Sharchi Village and Great Himalayan National Park; Derrière la forêt; Hotel Gardens; Islas Marías (Riviera Nayarit); Islas Marías (SECTUR and Navy)
Nature and culture, biocultural heritage	5	Cliche-Rancourt-Mamsalhabika; Bom Jesus do Monte; Ambam; Dahar Geopark; Batoufam Sacred Forest
Governance, planning, certification and policy	7	Alto Minho; Éco-Corridors Laurentiens; First CED Hub in Brazil; Certification of Eeyou Istchee; Djerba, Birdwatching and Coastal Ecotourism; Tourism Environment Charter; Greater Bujumbura
Community livelihoods and inclusive value chains	5	asili.ma; Destination Dahar; Farallones Hub; Nor Yauyos-Cochas; Kigwena
Innovation, knowledge, data and finance	4	AOM INVEST; Biodiversité 2030 Praia; Engagement biodiversité Charlevoix; Mycosphaera

B.5 Implementation Status

Status	n
Fully implemented or operational	15
Currently being implemented	12
Pilot or experimental	3
Proposed or under development	3

Fully implemented denotes initiatives reporting achieved results, designations or certifications. *Being implemented* denotes multi-year programmes with actions under way. *Pilot* denotes initiatives describing themselves as pilots or living laboratories. *Proposed* denotes initiatives at conceptual, agreement or design stage.

Source: Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework, CBD COP15, December 2022, and the thirty-three contributions gathered by the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations for COP17 on Biodiversity, Yerevan, October 2026.

SUCCESS STORIES

Americas

12 contributions

THE OSISKO LAKE PROJECT : A REGENERATIVE TERRITORIAL INNOVATION (LED BY COLLECTIF TERRITOIRE, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CITY OF ROUYN-NORANDA)

Canada, Québec — Rouyn-Noranda

I. THE PRESENTER



Geneviève Aubry,
Director of Collectif Territoire, based in Rouyn-Noranda, Québec, Canada.

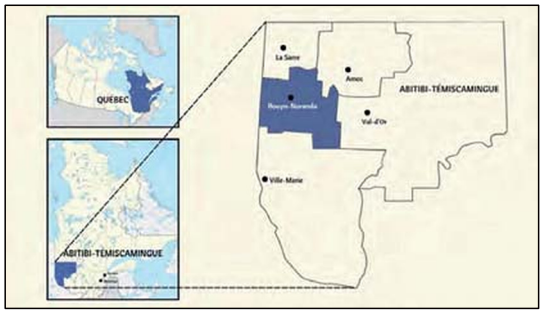
II. MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DESTINATION

Location and Context: Located in the urban heart of Rouyn-Noranda (Abitibi-Témiscamingue region, Québec, Canada), Lake Osisko serves as an iconic piece of urban blue infrastructure situated on the ancestral territory of the Anishinaabe Nations.

Ecosystem Profile: It is an urban inland water ecosystem that has historically endured decades of heavy-metal contamination and nutrient overloading from industrial and urban runoff.

Animal species: Although disturbed, the ecosystem of Lake Osisko is home to a rich biodiversity. To date, 192 species of birds have been observed at Lake Osisko. A variety of amphibians, invertebrates, and mammals can also be observed on the lake and in its surroundings. The lake also serves as a habitat for fish.

Plant species and Habitat: The environment includes aquatic habitats that are the focus of efforts to enhance ecological connectivity, preserve local genetic diversity, and regulate the urban microclimate.



III. SUMMARY OF THE INITIATIVE

The Osisko Lake Project is led by Collectif Territoire, in partnership with the City of Rouyn-Noranda and numerous community, scientific, industrial and institutional partners. It aims to rehabilitate and enhance Lake Osisko through a collaborative, long-term approach that combines ecological restoration, innovation, citizen participation and placemaking, aligning with thirteen targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework.

The approach is distinguished by three fundamental pillars:

- **Strong territorial grounding for ecological restoration:** The project tests nature-based solutions, improves ecological knowledge and reconnects people with the lake through applied research and collective action.
- **Intersectoral collaboration logic and accountability:** The project brings together industries, researchers, artists, governments, community organizations and citizens around a shared vision for the future of the lake.
- **A philosophy of desirability and inclusive governance: Centred** on the creation of "zones of enthusiastic agreement", the project fosters a participatory governance model that places the community at the heart of decision-making. The project encourages dialogue, collaboration and shared stewardship while recognizing the history and Anishinaabe heritage of the territory.

Ultimately, the Osisko Lake Project demonstrates how a collaborative, place-based approach can strengthen biodiversity, improve urban ecosystems and create meaningful connections between people and nature.



IV. ALIGNMENT WITH THE KUNMING-MONTRÉAL GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

GBF Target	Project Alignment
Target 1	Participatory, biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning of the Lake Osisko urban corridor.
Target 2	Active ecological restoration of a degraded inland water body; replicable methodology for scaling to other territories.
Target 3	Urban lake as an OECM candidate; contribution to 30x30 in densely populated areas.
Target 4	Habitat restoration supporting freshwater species recovery and genetic diversity safeguards.
Target 6	IAS surveillance and management integrated into the lake's long-term ecological management plan.
Target 7	Remediation of industrial pollution legacies; reduction of nutrient loading and chemical contamination.
Target 8	Lake as a nature-based climate adaptation solution for an urban post-industrial community.
Target 11	Restoration of the full suite of urban ecosystem services — water regulation, climate buffering, cultural benefits.
Target 12	Flagship urban blue infrastructure project; deepening city-nature connection through art, science, and tourism.
Target 15	Industry engagement as co-investors in biodiversity restoration; corporate accountability model.
Target 21	Knowledge co-production integrating science, local knowledge, and art; international dissemination via COP platforms.
Target 22	Participation governance model
Target 23	Gender-responsive leadership and inclusive participatory architecture throughout the project lifecycle.

Source: Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework, CBD COP15, December 2022.
Project contribution: Geneviève Aubry, Québec, Canada. Prepared by the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) for COP17 on Biodiversity, Yerevan, October 2026.

CLICHE-RANCOURT-MAMSALHABIKA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

Mégantic Region, Québec, Canada — MRC du Granit — Municipality of Frontenac

I. The Expert



Pierre Bédard,
Director, World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) — Mégantic Region, Québec, Canada.

II. Main Characteristics of the Destination

Destination: MRC du Granit (Mégantic Region), Estrie, Québec, Canada — site located in Frontenac, 15 km from Lac-Mégantic (Route 161).

Geographic context: Heart of the Appalachians, 6 km from the U.S. border (Maine), on the Atlantic–St. Lawrence watershed divide; 250 km from Montréal. The confluence of the "Three Lakes" (Mégantic, des Joncs, aux Araignées) drains into the Chaudière River.

Biogeographic context: Sugar maple–yellow birch bioclimatic domain. Lac aux Araignées is designated a *sensitive lake* by the MRC (30 m shoreline buffer versus 15 m elsewhere); its swamps shelter muskrat and deer wintering areas. The Marais-du-Lac-Mégantic Nature Reserve (10.7 km²), 1.6 km away, is the largest wetland south of the St. Lawrence.

Demographics: ~22,000 inhabitants Cittaslow town of Lac-Mégantic ancestral territory (Ndakina) of the Abenaki Nation.



III. Summary of the Initiative

The oldest known archaeological site in Québec (12,400 years BP), the Cliché-Rancourt-Mamsalhabika complex (four sites, 8 ha of near-natural forest) has been managed since 2015 by the Corporation du patrimoine archéologique du Méganticois (CPAM) together with the municipality, the MRC du Granit and the Abenaki of Odanak. It seeks heritage recognition and low-footprint development, consistent with ten Kunming-Montréal targets.

The model is built on three complementary pillars:

- **Protecting the land:** A conservation-oriented management agreement protects a mature mixed forest, three types of wetlands and a salmonid spawning ground – of high ecological value and free of invasive species. Development includes a visitor area, tree identification panels, an unimproved trail and guided tours.
- **Reading the land:** Forty years of research (58,000 artefacts, 14 major publications) tells the story of 12,000 years of adaptation by ecosystems and peoples to deglaciation – from caribou tundra to maple forest – offering a living lesson on climate and biodiversity change.
- **Sharing the land:** The Abenaki Nation named the site (Mamsalhabika), sits on the CPAM board, holds ceremonies there and co-invests in an "Abenaki Space" – linking Indigenous stewardship to today's conservation.

Ultimately, the Mégantic model shows that a heritage site can become a biodiversity commons: protecting a landscape while revealing the millennia-old bond between its ecosystems and the peoples who relied on them.







IV. Alignment with the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework

GBF Target	GBF Objective	Mégantic project mechanism
Target 1	Biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning	Municipality–CPAM agreement and heritage recognition locking in a natural land use; MRC "sensitive lake" status, 30 m shoreline buffer
Target 3	30x30 conservation	8 ha of mature forest, marshes and swamps conserved as an other effective conservation measure, 1.6 km from the Marais-du-Lac-Mégantic reserve
Target 4	Halting species extinction	Potential habitat of the chimney swift, bald eagle, spring salamander and wood turtle; outlet designated fish habitat and salmonid spawning ground
Target 6	Invasive alien species	Site free of invasive plants (WSP 2022); guided access and low-impact maintenance preventing introductions
Target 8	Climate resilience	Palaeoenvironmental narrative (tundra → boreal forest → maple forest) on climate-driven change; forest and wetlands conserved as carbon sinks
Target 11	Nature's contributions to people	Wetlands valued as a migratory stopover, spawning ground and water regulator — made visible to visitors
Target 16	Sustainable consumption	Cittaslow destination; low-footprint tourism (280–440 visitors/year, no built infrastructure) with local benefits
Target 20	Capacity-building and science	Université de Montréal field school (2001–2023), 3 theses, 24 reports; educational programs for schools and universities
Target 21	Access to knowledge	Interpretive trail, "Clovis" exhibition (2,300 visitors/summer), bilingual documentary, Archéolab online fact sheets
Target 22	Inclusion of Indigenous peoples	Friendship protocol with Odanak (2003/2023); Abenaki place name; ambassador on the CPAM board; Ndakina stewardship protocol.

Sources: Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework, CBD COP15, December 2022; C. Couture and C. Chapdelaine, Dossier documentaire — sites archéologiques Cliché-Rancourt-Mamsalhabika, CPAM, February 2026; MRC du Granit planning documents. Project contribution: Pierre Bédard, Director, CED — Mégantic Region, Québec, Canada. Prepared by the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) for COP17 on Biodiversity, Yerevan, October 2026.

ÉCO-CORRIDORS LAURENTIENS INITIATIVE: OPTIMIZING SUSTAINABLE RECREATIONAL TOURISM AND TERRITORIAL RESILIENCE

Canada— Québec, Laurentians (Laurentides) region

I. The Expert



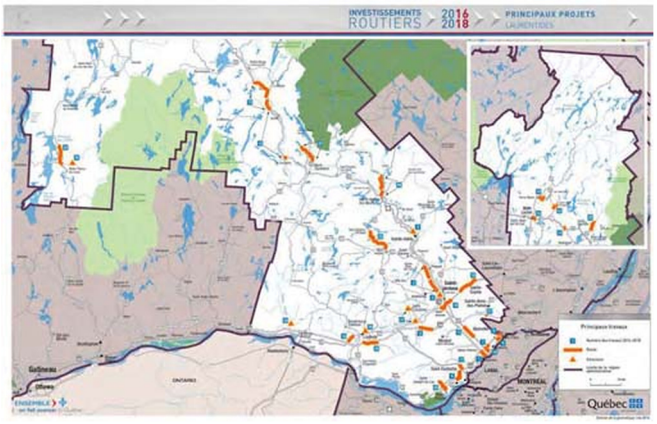
Maurice Couture, Independent Consultant (GPS Tourisme) and Expert at the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED), introducing the organisation Éco-Corridors Laurentiens, Québec, Canada

II. Main characteristics of the destination

Location and Context: Anchored in the Laurentians (Laurentides) region of Québec, Canada, featuring the prominent *Le P'tit Train du Nord* Linear Park.

Ecosystem Profile: Encompasses high-ecological-value natural environments and protected areas that are acutely sensitive to climate variability.

Conservation and Governance Features: Transforms the territory into living laboratories of sustainable destination management through a holistic, 360-degree, five-step strategic framework focused on seasonality, sustainable mobility, and responsible facility development.



III. Summary of the Initiative

The Éco-Corridors Laurentiens initiative represents a paradigmatic shift from conventional recreational tourism toward a genuinely regenerative model in the Laurentians region of Québec. Conceived as a holistic, 360-degree, five-step strategic framework, the project aligns with nine targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) to leave the territory measurably better than it was found.

The approach is defined by the following pillars:

- **Biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning:** The project conducts a rigorous baseline assessment and comprehensive inventory of existing outdoor sites to ensure all recreational land areas are subject to integrated, participatory biodiversity management.
- **Ecological restoration and climate resilience:** A pilot project optimizing the *Le P'tit Train du Nord* Linear Park operationalizes seasonal ecological intelligence and sustainable mobility, directly mitigating climate impacts and facilitating landscape connectivity.
- **Policy mainstreaming and knowledge transfer:** The initiative produces a practical toolkit and systematically disseminates methodologies at national and international scales, embedding biodiversity values into tourism planning while generating equitable community benefits through regional supply chains.



IV. Alignment with the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework

GBF Target	Theme	Link to Éco-Corridors Laurentiens Initiative
Target 1	Spatial Planning	Conducting a comprehensive baseline assessment and inventory of outdoor sites to ensure biodiversity-inclusive management of recreational land areas.
Target 2	Ecosystem Restoration	Integrating seasonal ecological services into infrastructure planning at *Le P'tit Train du Nord* to ensure recreational activities reinforce landscape connectivity and ecosystem integrity.
Target 3	30x30 Protection	Valorizing designated protected landscapes through robust visitor management to reinforce ecological representativeness and equitable governance.
Target 5	Sustainable Wild Species Use	Designing low-impact, four-season visitor experiences that minimize disturbance and apply a whole-ecosystem approach to recreational programming.
Target 8	Climate Resilience	Operationalizing sustainable mobility and seasonal programming calibrated to natural rhythms to reduce the carbon footprint and buffer against climate variability.
Target 9	Community Benefits	Fostering visitor retention, responsible facilities development, and regional supply chains to generate equitable social and economic dividends for local populations.
Target 14	Policy Integration	Establishing a 360-degree strategic framework and practical toolkit that fully embed biodiversity values into tourism development planning across multiple levels of governance.
Target 20	Capacity Building	Disseminating full methodologies, strategic orientations, and pilot results to equip other destinations with the tools necessary for biodiversity-inclusive tourism management.
Target 21	Knowledge & Data	Placing the best available data from baseline assessments and pilot outcomes in the hands of decision-makers and practitioners at national and international scales.

Source: Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework, CBD COP15, December 2022. Project contribution: Maurice Couture, Éco-Corridors Laurentiens, Québec, Canada. Prepared by the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) for COP17 on Biodiversity, Yerevan, October 2026.

FIRST CED HUB IN BRAZIL: MAINSTREAMING THE ATLANTIC FOREST AND MARINE BIODIVERSITY INTO PERMANENT PUBLIC POLICIES

Brazil, State of Paraná — Municipality of Pontal do Paraná

I. The Expert



Oliver Hillel, Contributor representing the associative sector via Instituto Orizzonte, based in Florianopolis, Brazil

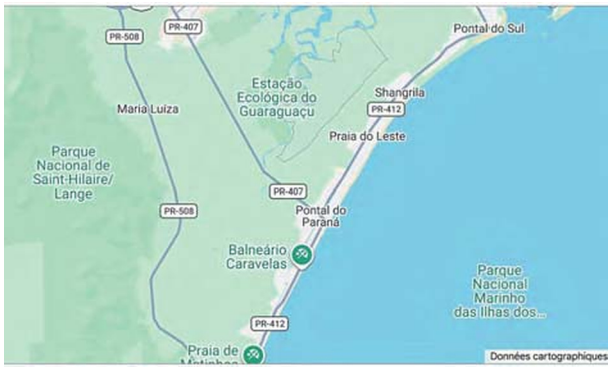
II. Main Characteristics of the Destination

Location and Context: Located in the coastal municipality of Pontal do Paraná, within the State of Paraná in southern Brazil. The municipality anchors a seven-municipality integrated destination cluster along the coast.

Ecosystem Profile: The territory is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean, the Baía de Paranaguá, and the Mata Atlântica (Atlantic Forest). The Mata Atlântica is recognized as one of the world's most threatened and biodiverse biomes, currently retaining less than 12% of its original coverage. The area also encompasses vital marine reserves and wetlands.

Tourism and Economic Assets: The destination offers exceptional assets including nature-based tourism, traditional *caiçara* coastal gastronomy, nautical tourism, and close proximity to Ilha do Mel, one of Brazil's most iconic island destinations.

Strategic Challenge: Pontal do Paraná is currently at a critical inflection point where the expansion of large-scale logistical and port infrastructure (such as the Port of Paranaguá and the PR-412 highway) coexists with a strong territorial identity based on nature and well-being.



III. Summary of the Initiative

The "First CED Hub in Brazil" initiative aims to safely navigate Pontal do Paraná's strategic inflection point by transitioning the municipality into a recognized regenerative destination. Implemented through a formal framework Cooperation Agreement signed in March 2026 between Instituto Orizzonte and the Municipality of Pontal do Paraná, the project establishes a long-term, multi-sector governance structure.

The approach is defined by the following pillars:

- **Methodological Framework and Diagnosis:** Acting as the Vice-Presidency partner, Instituto Orizzonte introduces the CED's SMED methodology alongside international biodiversity frameworks (CBD and KMGBF). The process begins with a formal destination competitiveness and attractiveness diagnosis designed to systematically capture biodiversity assets as economic and identity drivers.
- **Integrated Territorial Governance:** The initiative unites the local Secretariats of Environment, Tourism, and Economic Development under a shared institutional umbrella. This collaborative governance model ensures that isolated, project-based actions are successfully transformed into permanent public policies.
- **Biodiversity Mainstreaming:** By framing the highly threatened Mata Atlântica, marine reserves, and wetlands as the foundational pillars of the region's tourism and economic identity, the project ensures that necessary large-scale infrastructure developments do not compromise ecological integrity.





IV. Alignment with the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework

GBF Target	Theme	Link to Pontal do Paraná Initiative
Target 2	Ecosystem Restoration	Integrating the urgent need to preserve and restore the Mata Atlântica biome—which has less than 12% original coverage remaining—into the destination's core planning.
Target 3	Protection & Conservation	Structuring the territorial diagnosis to capture and protect vital local ecosystems, including marine reserves, wetlands, and coastal forests, as primary economic drivers.
Target 11	Nature's Contributions to People	Balancing the expansion of large-scale logistical and port infrastructure with the preservation of the territory's strong nature and well-being identity.
Target 12	Urban Green & Blue Spaces	Enhancing the well-being of local communities and visitors through the sustainable utilization and protection of coastal and forest landscapes within the municipality.
Cross-cutting (Target 14)	Policy Integration	Establishing a formal, multi-sector governance structure that permanently integrates environmental preservation with tourism and economic development policies.

Note: The contributor explicitly linked the initiative's diagnostic phase to Targets 2, 3, 10, and 11 in the project description, and formally checked Target 12 in the declaration.

Source: Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework, CBD COP15, December 2022. Project contribution: Oliver Hillel, Premier Pole CED du Brasil, Pontal do Paraná, Brazil. Prepared by the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) for COP17 on Biodiversity, Yerevan, October 2026.

THE FARALLONES HUB: A REGENERATIVE TOURISM INNOVATION INITIATIVE IN SANTIAGO DE CALI, DEVELOPED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE WORLD CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR DESTINATIONS

Colombia, Valle del Cauca — Santiago de Cali & Farallones National Natural Park

I. THE PRESENTER



Álvaro Llano Ulloa,
Master's Degree in Public Policy with a concentration in Environment and Energy Studies - SciencesPo



Adolfo Castro,
Candidate for Master of Environmental Management - Yale School of the Environment

II. MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DESTINATION

Location and Context: The 196,400-hectare Farallones National Natural Park represents 23% of the territory of Santiago de Cali (Valle del Cauca, Colombia) — a rare case of a major metropolis whose limits overlap a tropical biodiversity hotspot within the multinational Chocó Biogeographic Region. Its area of influence is home to peasant, Afro-descendant and Indigenous communities holding ancestral knowledge and deep relationships with the land.

Ecosystem Profile: A critical water tower for Cali, the park is the source to six of the seven rivers that cross the city. Its altitudinal gradient, ranging from 200 to 4,100 masl, encompasses ecosystems ranging from lowland rainforest to highland páramos. The territory is under pressure from illegal gold mining, drug-production operations and agricultural expansion.

Animal species: The park shelters 626 species of birds, 111 amphibians, 75 reptiles and 98 mammals, serving as vital habitat for endangered and endemic species. Its amphibian diversity is significant: 35 species are threatened, including 10 Critically Endangered, making it a critical refuge for some of Colombia's most vulnerable species.

Plant species and Habitat: Humid tropical forests, Andean cloud forests and high-mountain páramo result in 1,100+ recorded plant species, including some 400+ species of orchids. These ecosystems underpin water regulation while supporting growing opportunities for birdwatching, hiking and nature-based tourism.



III. SUMMARY OF THE INITIATIVE

The Farallones Regenerative Tourism Innovation Hub is a project currently in the conceptual development and profiling stage. The project was conceived within the framework of COP16 in Cali and emerged from a Memorandum of Understanding signed between the City of Cali (including the Tourism and Environmental Department) and the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) in 2024. While the project is currently in the conceptual development, upon securing the required funding, the initiative is expected to incubate 45 local enterprises across three incubation cohorts, following the SMED–Ecological Civilization framework and contributing to 19 targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework.

The approach is distinguished by three fundamental pillars:

A territory-based metrics system for mainstreaming biodiversity: The SMED–Ecological Civilization framework is adapted to a tropical biodiversity hotspot and urban protected area setting, creating a baseline, monitoring tools, and training for public sector staff. This helps close important information gaps on tourism revenue, local benefits, jobs, and biodiversity data that currently limit both conservation and tourism planning.

Intersectoral collaboration logic and accountability: The project aims to create a multi-stakeholder advisory council that would bring together the municipality, park management, local communities, the business sector, Cali's university ecosystem, and civil society to develop shared protocols and benefit-sharing mechanisms, building on local institutional framework.

Biodiversity as a competitive asset and inclusive governance: Through business support, mentoring, training, and incentives, the project aims to turn conservation into economic opportunities for local communities, while positioning biodiversity as a key driver of the destination's attractiveness and long-term competitiveness.

Ultimately, the Farallones Hub demonstrates how a mega-biodiverse territory on a city's doorstep can turn natural capital into shared prosperity — a replicable model for the Chocó Biogeographic Region across Colombia, Ecuador and Panama, and a living bridge between COP16 in Cali and COP17 in Yerevan.



IV. ALIGNMENT WITH THE KUNMING-MONTRÉAL GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

GBF Target	Project Alignment
Target 1	SMED baseline and monitoring protocols feed biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning across the park's urban area of influence (Farallones Plan, Territorial Planning Plan).
Target 2	Regenerative tourism models that channel enterprise activity into the restoration of mining-degraded and deforested high-altitude ecosystems.
Target 3	Strengthened effective management of a 196,400-ha protected area — 23% of Cali's territory — contributing to 30x30 in a densely populated metropolitan context.
Target 7	Conservation-compatible livelihoods that reduce illegal gold mining and chemical contamination of the six rivers supplying the city.
Target 9	45 nature-based and biotourism enterprises generating sustainable income for peasant, Afro-descendant and Indigenous communities.
Target 11	Protection of the region's water regulation, climate buffering and cultural ecosystem services for hundreds of thousands of residents of Cali.
Target 12	Flagship city–nature project: quality of and access to the green infrastructure of an urban-protected area, deepening citizens' connection with nature.
Target 14	Cross-sector mainstreaming: SMED as the reference tool integrating biodiversity into municipal planning, economic development and tourism strategies.
Target 15	Enterprises assess and reduce their biodiversity impacts along the tourism value chain; corporate accountability model linked to Green Business certification.
Target 20	Capacity-building, incubation and technology transfer, including twinning with the Abitibi-Témiscamingue Hub (Canada) and South–South replication in the Chocó region.
Target 21	Knowledge co-production with local universities and SITUR; lessons learned contributed to the CBD clearing-house mechanism and disseminated via COP platforms.
Target 22	Advisory council and benefit-sharing mechanisms ensuring the effective participation of Indigenous, Afro-descendant and peasant communities throughout the project lifecycle.

Source: Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework, CBD COP15, December 2022. Project contribution: Álvaro Llano Ulloa and Adolfo Castro, Santiago de Cali, Colombia. Prepared by the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) for COP17 on Biodiversity, Yerevan, October 2026. Photo credits: Adolfo Castro and PNN

ENGAGEMENT BIODIVERSITÉ CHARLEVOIX: A TERRITORIAL MODEL OF COLLECTIVE MOBILISATION FOR CONSERVATION AND RESILIENCE

Canada, Québec — Charlevoix

I. The Expert



Kim Martel, Expert at the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED), based in Stoneham-et-Tewkesbury, Québec, Canada.

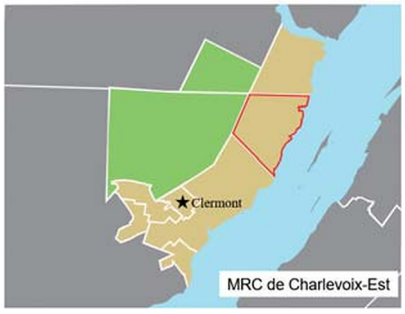
II. Main Characteristics of the Destination

Location and Context: Located in the Charlevoix region of Québec, Canada, situated between the St. Lawrence River and the mountains, and recognized as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve since 1988.

Ecosystem Profile: The territory is distinguished by exceptional biodiversity, landscapes of high ecological value, and a strong culture of territorial concertation.

Conservation and Governance Features: The initiative transforms conservation into a collective responsibility, utilizing hybrid financial mechanisms like the Charlevoix Biodiversity Fund and the Planetair Portfolio to channel carbon offset contributions into local ecosystem protection.





III. Summary of the Initiative

The "Engagement biodiversité Charlevoix" initiative operationalises regenerative tourism at a regional scale, placing biodiversity restoration at the heart of territorial development. Aligning with seven targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), the project strategically channels tourism's financial flows into ecological resilience.

The approach is defined by the following pillars:

- **Innovative biodiversity finance:** The Biodiversity Fund and the Planetair Portfolio redirect carbon offset revenues into nature-based solutions, ensuring economic benefits are retained at the regional scale.
- **Policy integration and corporate accountability:** Tourism enterprises voluntarily integrate multi-year commitments (per-night levies, GHG offsets) that align with the Integrated Conservation Plan for Natural Areas and Biodiversity.
- **Inclusive governance and regional expertise:** The project deploys monitoring tools and civic education platforms, ensuring that biodiversity governance remains a democratically shared responsibility across municipalities, citizens, and civil society.



IV. Alignment with the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework

GBF Target	Theme	Link to Charlevoix Initiative
Target 8	Climate Resilience	Redirecting carbon offset revenues into nature-based solutions to restore ecological corridors and minimize climate change impacts.
Target 14	Policy Integration	Aligning municipal and organizational planning instruments with the Integrated Conservation Plan for Natural Areas and Biodiversity.
Target 15	Corporate Responsibility	Tourism businesses voluntarily integrating multi-year commitments (per-night levies, GHG offsets) to fund concrete conservation actions.
Target 19	Biodiversity Finance	Mobilizing blended finance via the Biodiversity Fund and Planetair Portfolio to retain economic benefits within the region.
Target 20	Capacity Building	Equipping tourism enterprises and municipal officials with skills, scientific knowledge, and innovation tools to implement territorial biodiversity strategies.
Target 21	Knowledge & Data	Deploying monitoring tools and data-sharing platforms to ensure decision-makers and citizens access the best available knowledge.
Target 22	Inclusion & Equity	Ensuring biodiversity governance is co-constructed and democratically shared across municipalities, businesses, citizens, and civil society.

Source: Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework, CBD COP15, December 2022. Project contribution: Kim Martel, Charlevoix, Québec, Canada. Prepared by the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) for COP17 on Biodiversity, Yerevan, October 2026.

DERRIÈRE LA FORÊT: PROTECTING A STRATEGIC FOREST LANDSCAPE WHILE EXPANDING ACCESS TO NATURE IN A PERI-URBAN ENVIRONMENT

Canada, Québec — Municipality of Stoneham-et-Tewkesbury

I. The Expert



Kim Martel, Expert at the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED), based in Stoneham-et-Tewkesbury, Québec, Canada.

II. Main Characteristics of the Destination

Location and Context: Located in the municipality of Stoneham-et-Tewkesbury, Canada, at the northern edge of the rapidly growing Québec City metropolitan region.

Ecosystem Profile: The destination features a strategic forest territory of approximately 1000 hectares, representing one of the last large unfragmented forest areas in the region.

Conservation and Habitat Features: The project aims to enhance ecological connectivity between Jacques-Cartier National Park and the Laurentides Wildlife Reserve while protecting forest ecosystems that support watershed integrity, biodiversity conservation, and long-term climate resilience.



III. Summary of the Initiative

The "Derrière la forêt" project represents a bold conservation initiative aimed at protecting approximately 1000 hectares of strategic forest landscape in Stoneham-et-Tewkesbury. With land acquisition efforts actively underway and strong alignment with eight GBF targets, it showcases a tangible model where biodiversity conservation becomes a cornerstone of sustainable territorial planning and long-term community prosperity.

The approach is defined by the following pillars:

- **Biodiversity-centred land stewardship :** Protecting and reconnecting large forest landscapes to reinforce ecological connectivity between the Jacques-Cartier National Park, the Laurentides Wildlife Reserve, and other protected areas, thereby enhancing long-term ecosystem resilience.
- **Nature-based climate resilience:** Conserving natural infrastructure that secures drinking water supplies for more than 350 000 citizens, regulates hydrological systems, reduces climate-related risks, and delivers essential ecosystem services to surrounding communities.
- **Collaborative governance and responsible public access :** The initiative establishes a regional park under a managed carrying capacity framework to provide responsible access to nature, co-constructed through ongoing multi-stakeholder public consultation.



IV. Alignment with the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework

GBF Target	Theme	Link to Derrière la forêt Initiative
Target 1	Spatial Planning	Developing a managed territorial framework for **approximately 1000 hectares of strategic forest territory** to reduce habitat fragmentation and loss.
Target 3	30x30 Protection	**Working toward stronger ecological connectivity with surrounding protected areas** to conserve ecologically representative natural areas.
Target 8	Climate Resilience	Functioning as a nature-based solution to absorb carbon, moderate temperatures, and buffer the community against heat waves and droughts.
Target 11	Ecosystem Services	Regulating the Saint-Charles River watershed and Lac Saint-Charles to provide drinking water, mitigate flood risks, and protect soil integrity.
Target 12	Nature in Cities	Creating a regional park for peri-urban residents with contemplative trails and immersive experiences, prioritizing ecological integrity over visitor volume.
Target 14	Policy Integration	Integrating conservation objectives directly into municipal land-use planning, governance frameworks, and territorial development strategies.
Target 15	Corporate Responsibility	Establishing a framework that encourages tourism operators and recreation businesses to adopt biodiversity-responsible practices and monitor their impacts.
Target 22	Inclusion & Equity	Co-constructing the project through multi-stakeholder engagement to ensure equitable representation in environmental decision-making.

Source: Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework, CBD COP15, December 2022. Project contribution: Kim Martel, Stoneham-et-Tewkesbury, Québec, Canada. Prepared by the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) for COP17 on Biodiversity, Yerevan, October 2026.

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM CERTIFICATION OF EEYOU ISTCHEE : AN INDIGENOUS-LED TERRITORIAL STEWARDSHIP MODEL (LED BY THE CREE OUTFITTING AND TOURISM ASSOCIATION, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CREE COMMUNITIES)

Canada, Québec — Eeyou Istchee (James Bay)

I. THE PRESENTER



Robin McGinley,
Executive Director, Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association (COTA), based in Oujé-Bougoumou, Québec, Canada.

II. MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DESTINATION

Location and Context: Eeyou Istchee, the homeland of the Cree Nation, extends along the eastern shores of James Bay and Hudson Bay in Northern Québec, Canada. Nine Cree communities share a traditional territory of some 450,000 km², whose land regime and stewardship rights are entrenched in the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement (1975).

Ecosystem Profile: One of the largest intact boreal forest and taiga systems on Earth — spruce forest, peatlands, thousands of lakes and rivers, and the James Bay coastal wetlands, storing globally significant carbon and regulating freshwater flows to the sea.

Animal species: The territory supports woodland caribou, moose, black bear, beaver and wolf, and its coastal wetlands are a critical staging ground for Canada geese and other migratory waterfowl. Lake sturgeon, brook trout, walleye and northern pike underpin the destination's world-class fishing.

Plant species and Habitat: Black spruce, jack pine, tamarack, lichen woodlands and sphagnum peatlands sustain both the Cree trapline system — the traditional unit of land stewardship — and the outfitting economy.



III. SUMMARY OF THE INITIATIVE

The Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association (COTA) is the Indigenous destination management organization for Eeyou Istchee, established under Chapters 28.4 and 28.6 of the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement and incorporated in 2000. In June 2025 it became the first Indigenous DMO in North America to earn a Silver Sustainable Tourism Certification from GreenStep, aligning with thirteen targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework.

The approach is distinguished by three fundamental pillars:

- **Certified, verifiable territorial stewardship:** COTA submitted an entire Indigenous destination — not a single operator — to independent assessment against 87 criteria recognized by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council.
- **Intersectoral collaboration logic and accountability:** Local destination governance organizations and community tourism committees bring together Cree communities, institutions and businesses, resource industries, national and provincial Indigenous tourism bodies and certification partners around a shared vision for the territory.
- **A land-based economy in harmony with Cree culture and values**: Outfitting, guiding and cultural experiences turn the sustainable use of wild species into community livelihoods, supported by Indigenous purchasing, local food production, renewable energy and circular-economy measures.



IV. ALIGNMENT WITH THE KUNMING-MONTRÉAL GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

GBF Target	Theme	Project Alignment
Target 1	Spatial Planning	Tourism planned through community tourism committees and destination governance bodies within the JBNQA land regime.
Target 3	Protection & Conservation	Ecotourism assessed and guided inside Eeyou Istchee's protected areas; Indigenous-governed conservation supporting equitable 30x30 delivery.
Target 5	Sustainable Use of Wild Species	Outfitting, hunting and fishing tourism governed by the Cree harvesting regime — use of wild species kept sustainable, safe and legal.
Target 9	Sustainable Management	Land-based tourism turns biodiversity into livelihoods for the communities most dependent on it.
Target 11	Nature's Contributions to People	Boreal forests, peatlands and waters maintained as the destination's core asset — carbon storage, water regulation and cultural services.
Target 14	Policy Integration	Sustainability embedded in the mission developed by the community, purchasing policy and operating principles across the whole destination.
Target 15	Business Assessment & Disclosure	Independent third-party assessment against 87 GSTC-recognized criteria, publicly disclosed, with mandatory reassessment every three years.
Target 16	Sustainable Consumption	Circular-economy, waste, water and energy measures, local food production and low-impact visitor choices.
Target 19	Resource Mobilization	Diversified funding partnerships and resource-industry engagement channel finance into a biodiversity-compatible economy.
Target 20	Capacity Building	Certification training, tools and customized action plans transferred to Cree operators, businesses and communities.
Target 21	Knowledge Sharing	Impact measurement, community self-assessments and sustainability communications inform decision-makers, operators and visitors.

Source: Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework, CBD COP15, December 2022. Project contribution: Robin McGinley, Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association, Eeyou Istchee, Québec, Canada. Prepared by the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) for COP17 on Biodiversity, Yerevan, October 2026.

ISLAS MARÍAS INITIATIVE: FROM FORMER PRISON ISLAND TO A MODEL OF REGENERATIVE TOURISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Mexico— State of Nayarit, Isla María Madre - Puerto Balleto

I. The Expert



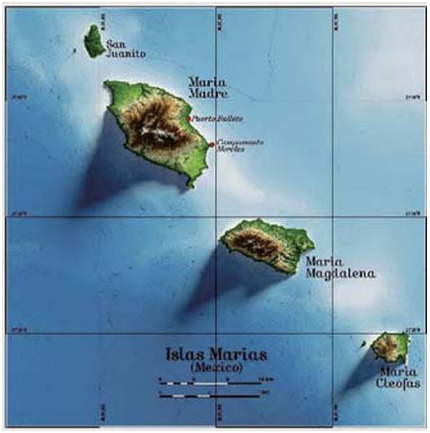
Serafin Montales García, based in Mexico City, Mexico. Project Promoters: Secretariat of Tourism of the Government of Mexico and Secretariat of the Navy - Turística Integral Islas Marías.

II. Main Characteristics of the Destination

Location and Context: Located in the Pacific Ocean, belonging to the State of Nayarit, Mexico, specifically at Isla María Madre - Puerto Balleto.

Historical Profile: The site served as Mexico's only prison island for over a century (since 1905) before being formally decommissioned from the Federal Penitentiary System by a presidential decree on March 8, 2019.

Conservation and Governance Features: Managed by an inter-institutional Presidential Commission (established November 4, 2021) chaired by the Secretariat of the Navy, coordinating with environmental and tourism secretariats to transform the archipelago into a center for ecosystem restoration and low-impact tourism.



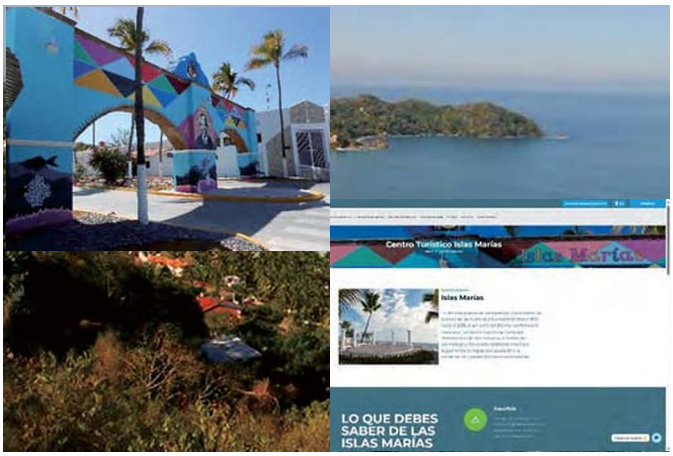
III. Summary of the Initiative

The Islas Marías initiative in Mexico represents a historic transformation, converting a century-old penal colony into a pioneering destination for regenerative tourism. Coordinated by an inter-institutional commission, the project aligns with multiple targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) by dedicating the archipelago to ecosystem restoration and environmental education.

The approach is defined by the following pillars:

Environmental education and knowledge transfer: The project establishes the "Muros de Agua" environmental education center (named in reference to writer José Revueltas) and implements targeted capacity-building for personnel to transmit conservation knowledge.

- **Sustainable use and spatial planning:** The initiative develops biocultural tourism circuits operating under a "zero footprint" concept, supported by low-impact infrastructure and managed through a single commercialization channel that strictly enforces carrying capacity limits.
- **Inter-institutional governance and policy making:** Destination management is overseen by a special working group coordinating multiple federal entities (Navy, Environment, Tourism) and civil society to elaborate a comprehensive management plan determining authorized activities.



IV. Alignment with the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework

GBF Target	Theme	Link to Islas Marías Initiative
Target 1	Spatial Planning	Establishing an inter-institutional management plan to determine authorized activities and govern the spatial transformation of the former prison island.
Target 2	Ecosystem Restoration	Dedicating the decommissioned penal site specifically to the restoration, conservation, and protection of the archipelago's ecosystems.
Target 3	30x30 Protection	Coordinating strategies through the National Commission of Protected Natural Areas to ensure the effective conservation of the island.
Target 5	Sustainable Wild Species Use	Developing low-impact, "zero footprint" biocultural tourism circuits regulated by a strict carrying capacity.
Target 14	Policy Integration	Creating a Presidential Commission coordinating federal policies across the Navy, Environment, Tourism, and local government sectors.
Target 20	Capacity Building	Transmitting conservation knowledge through the structured training of personnel responsible for visitor services on the islands.
Target 21	Knowledge & Data	Creating the "Muros de Agua" environmental education center to ensure visitors and stakeholders have access to ecological knowledge.
Target 22	Inclusion & Equity	Engaging experts, tour operators, and civil society in the decision-making and feedback processes of the inter-institutional working group.

Note: The initiative is fully aligned with Targets 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, and 23. The table above highlights the most direct and explicitly supported linkages based on the provided project description.

Source: Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework, CBD COP15, December 2022. Project contribution: Serafin Montales García, Islas Marías, Mexico. Prepared by the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) for COP17 on Biodiversity, Yerevan, October 2026.

ISLAS MARÍAS INITIATIVE: FROM CONFINEMENT TO A MODEL OF REGENERATIVE TOURISM AND CONSERVATION

Mexico— Pacific Ocean off the coast of Nayarit, Isla María Madre

I. THE PRESENTER



Gustavo Rivas-Solis,
Contributor, USA/Canada Campaign Director for Riviera Nayarit, Mexico.

II. MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DESTINATION

Location and Context: Located in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of Nayarit, Mexico, comprising the four islands of the archipelago: María Madre, María Magdalena, María Cleofás, and San Juanito. For nearly 115 years (1905–2019), Isla María Madre operated as a federal penal colony.

Ecosystem Profile: Designated as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. The reserve encompasses approximately 641,285 hectares (over 616,000 hectares marine), featuring tropical forests, mangroves, and reefs. It supports high levels of endemism (e.g., the Tres Marías yellow-headed parrot, the Islas Marías raccoon) and significant marine life, including sea turtles, sharks, and rays.

Conservation and Governance Features: Managed by Turística Integral Islas Marías (TURIIMAR) and coordinated by Mexico's Secretariat of the Navy. The model is built on low-impact visitation, ecosystem restoration (including reforestation and invasive species control), and strong institutional collaboration involving UNESCO, the Ministry of Tourism, CONANP, and the private sector.



III. SUMMARY OF THE INITIATIVE

The Islas Marías initiative transforms a historically isolated archipelago—a former federal penal colony—into a protected space where biodiversity conservation, cultural memory, and carefully controlled tourism coexist. Structured around a strategic institutional alliance, the destination's model places ecological limits at the core of its development.

The approach is defined by the following pillars:

- **Ecosystem restoration and management:** The project actively integrates priority conservation actions, including the control of introduced species, fire prevention, soil restoration, and reforestation with native plants to facilitate natural recolonization.
- **Low-impact infrastructure:** Tourism development avoids conventional mass infrastructure by adaptively reusing and remodeling former residences for visitor accommodations, thereby seamlessly connecting tourism to the island's historical fabric.
- **Robust institutional governance:** The model is underpinned by extensive collaboration involving Mexico's Secretariat of the Navy, the Ministry of Tourism (SECTUR), CONANP, and UNESCO to develop a comprehensive heritage management plan that guides sustainable tourism.



IV. ALIGNMENT WITH THE KUNMING-MONTRÉAL GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

GBF Target	Theme	Link to Islas Marias Initiative
Target 2	Ecosystem Restoration	Executing priority actions such as soil restoration and reforestation with native plants to facilitate the natural recolonization of degraded terrestrial environments.
Target 3	30x30 Protection	Strengthening the management of a 641,285-hectare UNESCO Biosphere Reserve by restricting access and integrating low-impact tourism into conservation strategies.
Target 4	Species Recovery	Protecting high levels of endemism—including the Tres Marías yellow-headed parrot, the Islas Marías raccoon, and marine species like sea turtles—through dedicated habitat management.
Target 6	Invasive Alien Species	Implementing direct conservation measures focused on controlling introduced species to protect native flora and fauna populations.
Target 14	Policy Integration	Developing a cross-sectoral alliance between UNESCO, the Secretariat of the Navy, SECTUR, and CONANP to embed biodiversity conservation within the national tourism strategy.

Source: Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework, CBD COP15, December 2022. Project contribution: Gustavo Rivas-Solis, Islas Marías, Nayarit, Mexico. Prepared by the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) for COP17 on Biodiversity, Yerevan, October 2026.

MYCOSPHAERA INITIATIVE: FUNGAL CONSERVATION AND REGENERATIVE MYCOTOURISM IN QUÉBEC

Canada, Québec— Québec City

I. The Expert



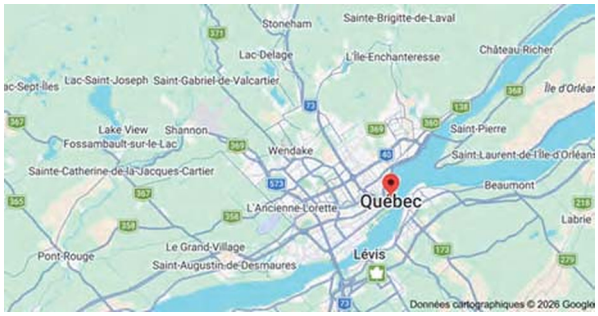
Mathias Rocheleau-Duplain, General Director at Mycosphaera, based in Québec City, Québec, Canada. https://www.bibl.ulaval.ca/evenements/champignons-la-revolution-des-fonges

II. Main Characteristics of the Destination

Location and Context: Located in Québec City, Québec, Canada, establishing North America's first mycological regenerative tourism destination.

Ecosystem Profile: The province features 760,000 km² of boreal and mixed forest covering over half of its landmass, harboring an exceptional and largely unexplored fungal diversity.

Conservation and Habitat Features: The destination focuses on fungi as the regenerative infrastructure of ecosystems—serving as decomposers, bioindicators, and symbiotic partners for 95% of terrestrial plants—which are systematically overlooked in national species at risk registries.



III. Summary of the Initiative

The Mycosphaera initiative advances fungal conservation across Québec while structuring the province as North America's premier destination for regenerative mycotourism. Aligning with five targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), the project establishes fungi as the foundational regenerative infrastructure of terrestrial ecosystems, with tourism serving as one of several levers to protect, document, and valorize a kingdom systematically overlooked by conservation policy. This commitment extends to the international stage: Mycosphaera will participate in the launch of the Global Strategy for Fungal Conservation at COP17, Yerevan, alongside PlantLife International, the Fungi Foundation, and the IUCN Fungal Conservation Committee. The approach is defined by the following pillars:

- **Scientific regeneration and area-based conservation:** The project conducts standardized mycological inventories across flagship territories, most notably the Lotbinière Seigneurial Forest (where 322 taxa were documented, including 8 potentially new to science and 2 at-risk species), directly supporting the designation of a new Sustainable-Use Protected Area (APUD) and advancing Québec's contribution to the 30x30 target.
- **Data sovereignty and species recovery:** The co-development of a field-deployable Nanopore genomic sequencing platform accelerates the taxonomic characterization of cryptic fungal diversity, addressing critical gaps in species identification and genetic safeguarding.
- **Inclusive governance and citizen science:** A community observation platform aggregates over 30,000 georeferenced records, while cultural and educational programming reconnects urban populations with forest biodiversity, thereby democratizing ecological knowledge for decision-makers and the public.
- **International policy leadership:** Mycosphaera will participate in the launch of the Global Strategy for Fungal Conservation at COP17, Yerevan, a landmark moment for the international recognition of fungal biodiversity, alongside PlantLife International, the Fungi Foundation, and the IUCN Fungal Conservation Committee, reinforcing NGO-led leadership within the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework.



IV. Alignment with the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework

GBF Target	Theme	Link to Mycosphaera Initiative
Target 3	30x30 Protection	Utilizing standardized mycological inventories and the *Forêt amie des champignons* certification to justify and manage protected area designations and OECMs.
Target 4	Species Recovery	Deploying a Nanopore genomic sequencing platform and citizen-science monitoring to advance real-time fungal species identification and safeguard genetic diversity.
Target 12	Nature in Cities	Extending forest biodiversity into urban centers through the *La Révolution des Fonges* museum exhibition, mycological theater productions, and educational festivals.
Target 14	Policy Integration	Embedding biodiversity principles into the hospitality sector (e.g., MICHELIN Green Star partnership) and advancing global policy reform through IUCN advocacy.
Target 21	Knowledge & Data	Aggregating over 30,000 georeferenced records on an open observation platform to provide decision-makers and practitioners with accessible mycological knowledge.

Source: Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework, CBD COP15, December 2022. Project contribution: Mathias Rocheleau-Duplain, Canada. Prepared by the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) for COP17 on Biodiversity, Yerevan, October 2026.

NOR YAUYOS-COCHAS LANDSCAPE RESERVE INITIATIVE: A MODEL FOR REGENERATIVE TOURISM IN SERVICE OF THE GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

Peru, Lima & Junín Regions — Yauyos

I. The Expert



Rocío Rojas, Founding Director of Turistech and the REDINTUR Women's Network. Coordinator for Peru of the Latin American Network for Rural Innovation, Red LaTIR. Expert at the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED)
https://www.linkedin.com/in/rociorojas/ ;
https://www.turistech.org/

II. Main Characteristics of the Destination

Location and Context: Situated in the Central Andes of Peru, spanning the Lima and Junín regions, this formally designated Landscape Reserve under SERNANP is a cultural crossroads for peasant communities.

Ecosystem Profile: The territory encompasses the Cañete and Pachacayo river basins, featuring high-altitude peatland wetlands (*bofedales*) that act as powerful nature-based solutions for climate resilience against glacial retreat.

Conservation and Habitat Features: The landscape features vast networks of turquoise lagoons, relict forests, and a living system of ancestral terraces (*andenerías*) supporting 51 documented varieties of native potato.



III. Summary of the Initiative

Led by Turistech in strategic partnership with the RPNYC Management Committee and the REDINTUR Women's Network, the Nor Yauyos Cochas Landscape Reserve initiative in Peru establishes a regenerative tourism model centered on gender equity and inclusive governance. The project aligns with 11 targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) by positioning local women as the primary architects of ecological regeneration and territorial decision-making—a benchmark approach that will contribute to UNAM and Red LaTIR's forthcoming academic manual on rural innovation in 2027.

The approach is defined by the following pillars:

- **Active ecological restoration:** Visitors actively participate in the rehabilitation of ancestral terraces, the recovery of infiltration canals, and the protection of high-altitude wetlands (*bofedales*) to regulate the hydrological cycle.
- **Inclusive governance and gender equity:** The RPNYC Women's Committee holds a formal seat in the destination's Management Committee to co-govern tourism revenues, anchoring value chains through women-led cooperatives in sustainable gastronomy and artisanship.
- **Knowledge sovereignty and agrobiodiversity:** The initiative safeguards endogenous knowledge regarding traditional water management and 51 native potato varieties, ensuring the fair and equitable sharing of genetic benefits generated through tourism gastronomy.



IV. Alignment with the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework

GBF Target	Theme	Link to Nor Yauyos Cochas Initiative
Target 2	Ecosystem Restoration	Embedding active restoration into the tourism experience through the rehabilitation of ancestral terraces, infiltration canals, and *bofedales*.
Target 3	30x30 Protection	Strengthening the effective management of the Landscape Reserve through community-led monitoring and alignment of tourism flows with the Master Plan.
Target 8	Climate Resilience	Protecting high-altitude wetlands (*bofedales*) as nature-based solutions to sequester carbon and buffer temperature extremes amid glacial retreat.
Target 9	Sustainable Wild Species Use	Managing wild and cultivated biodiversity sustainably to generate economic returns for women, who bear the primary burden of food security.
Target 10	Sustainable Agriculture	Promoting agroecological practices and the cultivation of 51 native potato varieties as cultural tourism assets and biodiversity-friendly food production.
Target 13	Benefit Sharing	Incorporating protocols to ensure the commercial valorization of genetic resources (native potatoes) returns benefits directly to conserving communities.
Target 14	Policy Integration	Structurally embedding the initiative within the Reserve's official Master Plan and the regional development planning processes of Lima and Junín.
Target 16	Sustainable Consumption	Countering mass tourism by designing low-impact experiences, sourcing local gastronomy, and governing excursion sizes via carrying-capacity indicators.
Target 21	Knowledge & Data	Deploying a community-managed monitoring system to track biodiversity indicators and openly disseminate endogenous agrobiodiversity knowledge.
Target 22	Community Inclusion	Structuring cooperatives and associations led by marginalized groups to anchor the tourism value chain and territorial decision-making.
Target 23	Gender Equality	Designating the RPNYC Women's Committee with a formal seat in the destination's Management Committee to co-govern tourism revenues and operations.

Source: Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework, CBD COP15, December 2022. Project contribution: Rocío Rojas, Turistech, Peru. Prepared by the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) for COP17 on Biodiversity, Yerevan, October 2026.

SUCCESS STORIES

Asia

2 contributions

THE RETURN OF THE "MYTHICAL BIRD" INITIATIVE: A CONSERVATION MODEL FOR THE CHINESE CRESTED TERN

China, Fujian— Minjiang Estuary Wetland and Matsu Islands

I. The presenter

A Drop
It is a sub-team dedicated to exploring and archiving China's wildlife, laying the foundation and providing knowledge for ecological education in China. Its ecological publishing is highly influential in China.

II. Main characteristics of the destination

Location and Context: The initiative connects the Minjiang Estuary Wetland and the Matsu Islands. Both are critical nodes on the East Asian–Australasian Flyway.

Ecosystem and Species Profile: The area supports the Critically Endangered Chinese Crested Tern (*Thalasseus bernsteini*). The two regions provide a complementary habitat system: the Minjiang Estuary Wetland serves as a rich "tidal dining hall" and courtship ground, while the uninhabited reefs of the Matsu Islands offer a predator-free "home at sea" for breeding.

Conservation and Governance Features: Driven by over a decade of institutional and civil-society cooperation, the destination features synchronized monitoring, invasive species control, and protected area development, notably the designation of the Minjiang Estuary as a Wetland of International Importance.



III. Summary of the Initiative

The "Mythical Bird" initiative exemplifies how cross-regional ecological cooperation can effectively rescue a Critically Endangered species from the brink of extinction. By seamlessly coordinating the protection of breeding grounds in the Matsu Islands with feeding habitats in the Minjiang Estuary Wetland, this endeavor has catalyzed the recovery of the Chinese Crested Tern population from fewer than 50 individuals in 2000 to over 200 by 2026.

The approach is defined by the following pillars:

- **Connected habitat restoration:** The project has executed major ecological restoration measures, including the conversion of aquaculture zones back into wetlands, the eradication of invasive smooth cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*), and the replanting of native mangroves and reeds.
- **Technological monitoring and species recovery:** Conservation teams conduct synchronized surveys and employ advanced technologies—such as solar-powered 4G cameras and social-attraction techniques—to monitor populations in real-time and encourage successful breeding on uninhabited islets.
- **Community engagement and policy mainstreaming:** The initiative actively engages local stakeholders, establishing guidelines for sea anglers to prevent disturbance, mobilizing youth volunteers, and embedding biodiversity targets within regional wetland protection regulations.



IV. Alignment with the Kunming–Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework

Target		
Target 1	Spatial Planning	Integrating cross-regional spatial planning by coordinating the management of breeding grounds in Matsu Islands with feeding grounds in Minjiang River Estuary Wetland to halt habitat fragmentation.
Target 2	Ecosystem Restoration	Executing the effective restoration of the Minjiang Estuary Wetland by clearing 211 ha of aquaculture and replanting over 173 ha of mangroves and reeds.
Target 4	Species Recovery	Implementing urgent, coordinated management actions that directly facilitated the population recovery of the Critically Endangered Chinese Crested Tern.
Target 14	Policy Integration	Mainstreaming biodiversity into governance through the Fujian Provincial Wetland Protection Regulations and institutionalized joint meeting mechanisms.
Target 22	Participation & Equity	Ensuring the active participation of local communities, sea anglers, and youth volunteers through joint educational activities and public science programs.

Source: Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework, CBD COP15, December 2022. Project contribution: A Drop, Minjiang Estuary and Matsu Islands. Prepared by the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) for COP17 on Biodiversity, Yerevan, October 2026.

SHARCHI VILLAGE AND GREAT HIMALAYAN NATIONAL PARK INITIATIVE: A CASE OF CO-EXISTENCE AND COMMUNITY SOVEREIGNTY

India, Himachal Pradesh — Banjaar Sub-Division, Kullu District

I. The expert



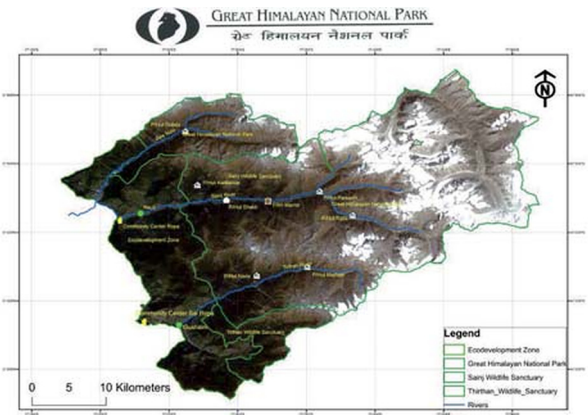
Parikshat Singh Manhas, Academia and Expert at the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED), based in India

II. Main characteristics of the destination

Location and Context: Located in the Banjaar Sub-Division, Kullu District, Himachal Pradesh, India, the village is situated at the gateway of the Great Himalayan National Park (GHNP), a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Ecosystem Profile: The destination encompasses some of the most ecologically significant terrain in the Western Himalayas, an ecosystem that historically faced acute pressures from rapid commercialization, speculative land acquisition, and unplanned infrastructure.

Conservation and Governance Features: The landscape is governed by the Sharchi Gram Panchayat, which adopted a landmark 2021 Resolution to regulate tourism development through collective sovereignty, effectively functioning as an Other Effective area-based conservation measure (OECM) for the park's buffer zone.



III. Summary of the Initiative

The Sharchi Village initiative demonstrates how a mountain community can leverage collective sovereignty to transform tourism into an instrument of ecological restoration and equitable local development. Without an external government mandate, the Gram Panchayat adopted a resolution to regulate tourism development and protect the buffer zone of the Great Himalayan National Park, thereby advancing ten targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).

The approach is defined by the following pillars:

- **Ecological restoration and area-based conservation:** The community mandates sustainable designs and reaffirms traditional wooden construction to halt the degradation of forest and riparian habitats on the park's periphery.
- **Institutional accountability and policy integration:** The No Objection Certificate (NOC) regime legally compels prospective tourism businesses to obtain explicit community consent, reinforced by a strict 10-room accommodation cap to manage carrying capacity.
- **Inclusive governance and shared prosperity:** An explicitly participatory multi-stakeholder forum ensures that the economic yield derived from biodiversity is equitably distributed across the village rather than captured by external commercial interests, thereby safeguarding local livelihoods.



Stakeholders gather in the Sharchi Village for a discussion on tourism at the Gram Sabha Meeting. [Photo courtesy of Aditi Chanchani]

Source: https://knowledge.gstc.org/a-himalayan-village-takes-charge-of-its-future/November 11, 2021

IV. Alignment with the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework

GBF Target	Theme	Link to Sharchi Village Initiative
Target 2	Ecosystem Restoration	Halting the degradation of forest and riparian habitats by requiring sustainable designs and traditional wooden construction for tourism enterprises.
Target 3	30x30 Protection	Buffer-zone governance, including the NOC requirement and accommodation caps, functioning as an Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measure (OECM).
Target 5	Sustainable Wild Species Use	Shielding wildlife habitats from overdevelopment to sustain ancestral, non-detrimental harvesting practices embedded in community norms.
Target 9	Community Benefits	Capping accommodation capacity to ensure the economic yield from biodiversity remains distributed across the mountain community.
Target 12	Ecosystem Services	Preserving clean water from intact Himalayan catchments, air quality, and landscape aesthetics through stringent limits on tourism-related pollution and construction.
Target 14	Policy Integration	The 2021 Resolution framing biodiversity and environmental protection as absolute preconditions for any local tourism development planning.
Target 15	Legal & Admin Measures	The community-originated NOC regime compelling businesses to assess and account for environmental impacts before market entry.
Target 16	Sustainable Consumption	Limiting the overconsumption of natural capital by enacting a low-impact, culturally immersive travel model rather than high-footprint mass tourism.
Target 20	Capacity Development	Community members acquiring the knowledge and institutional tools to independently design, implement, and enforce a regulatory framework against commercial pressure.
Target 22	Inclusion & Equity	Utilizing an inclusive democratic forum where community members, homestay owners, and elected representatives deliberate collectively on destination governance.

Source: Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework, CBD COP15, December 2022. Project contribution: Prof. Manhas, Parikshat Singh, India. Prepared by the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) for COP17 on Biodiversity, Yerevan, October 2026.

SUCCESS STORIES

Europe and Africa

19 contributions

TAÏ NATIONAL PARK ECOTOURISM INITIATIVE

Côte d'Ivoire, South-Western Region — Commune of Taï

I. The Expert



Pierre Akobé Akossi, an Expert at the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) and CED Director for West Africa, based in Côte d'Ivoire.

II. Main Characteristics of the Destination

Park area: The Taï National Park covers approximately **536 016 ha** of primary tropical rainforest.

Distance from Abidjan: The commune of Taï is located approximately **620 km** from Abidjan.

Animal species: The park serves as a critical refuge for endangered species, notably the Western chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes verus*), the pygmy hippopotamus, as well as several primate species such as mangabeys and red colobus monkeys.

Plant species: The park features an exceptional flora consisting of numerous endemic plant species within a primary tropical rainforest structure.



III. Summary of the Initiative

This initiative transforms the commune of Taï into an archetypal model of regenerative tourism in West Africa. Anchored around the Taï National Park, a vast primary tropical rainforest designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the project aims to durably reconcile conservation with local socio-economic development, aligning with five targets of the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework.

The reality of Taï is structured around three specific pillars:

- **The Ecological Pillar (Restoration and Protection):** Tourism becomes an active instrument of nature recovery. Visitors participate in the reforestation of endemic species and the regeneration of degraded forests, with interactive tracking of planted trees via QR codes, tangibly reinforcing the park's buffer zone.
- **The Economic Pillar (Valorization of Biodiversity):** The project proves that a living forest holds more economic value for communities than a cleared one. It generates non-extractive local employment, notably for 14 eco-guides specialized in the habituation of native primates (chimpanzees, colobus monkeys, mangabeys).
- **The Social and Rights Pillar (Governance and Equity):** The initiative is based on a tripartite institutional partnership (WCF-CI, OIPR, and local communities) where riparian populations act as sovereign co-decision-makers. It valorizes indigenous knowledge through agroforestry and traditional pharmacopoeia workshops, and an eco-museum showcasing 47 years of scientific research, while integrating a commitment to gender equity.

Ultimately, the Taï model demonstrates what regenerative tourism looks like in practice: leaving the destination's ecological, social, and cultural fabric more intact, vibrant, and just than before tourism arrived.



IV. Alignment with the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework

GBF Target	GBF Objective	Taï Project Mechanism
Target 2	Ecosystem Restoration	Active forest regeneration and endemic reforestation integrated into ecotourism circuits; QR-code tracking of planted trees; agroforestry in buffer zones.
Target 3	30x30 Conservation	Ecotourism revenue funding Taï National Park management; local eco-guides acting as informal park monitors; extending conservation footprint to bordering villages.
Target 9	Wild Species for People	Creation of direct local jobs (including 14 specialized primate eco-guides) through non-extractive use of biodiversity; traditional pharmacopoeia workshops.
Target 22	Inclusion of IPLCs	Tripartite co-governance (WCF-CI, OIPR, and local communities); riparian populations acting as co-designers; eco-museum serving as a platform for indigenous voices.
Target 23	Gender Equality	Promoting employment equity for women in eco-guiding; centering women elders as authorities in traditional pharmacopoeia; female representation in project governance.

Source: Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework, CBD COP15, December 2022. Project contribution: Pierre Akobé Akossi, Côte d'Ivoire. Prepared by the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) for COP17 on Biodiversity, Yerevan, October 2026.

AOM INVEST PROJECT: AN AFRICAN LABORATORY FOR REGENERATIVE TOURISM

Algeria—Mascara and Tlemcen

I. The Expert



Attar Hichem, an Expert at the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) based in Algiers, Algeria.

II. Main Characteristics of the Destination

Location and Context: Located in Mascara (Bouhanifia) and Tlemcen (Sidi Abdelli), Algeria, this initiative spans the semi-arid steppes and biodiversity-rich forests of the Mediterranean-African biome.

Ecosystem Profile: The project combines a 2,000-year-old Roman thermal heritage site with an under-exploited ecotourism station, focusing on nature-based solutions and the structural restoration of degraded terrestrial and riparian habitats.

Species and Habitat: The traversed ecological zones support endemic species and serve as a critical biodiversity corridor between sub-Saharan Africa and the Mediterranean Basin.



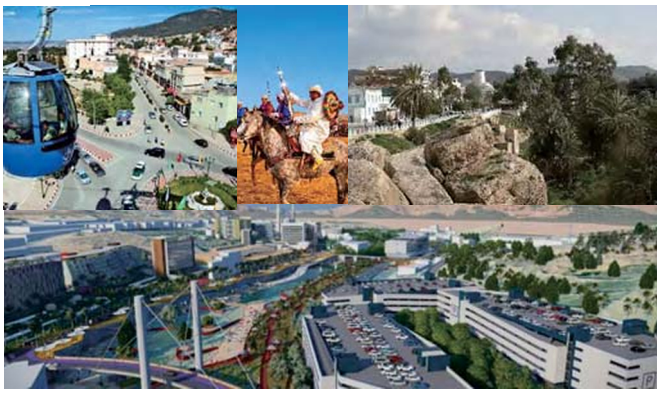


III. Summary of the Initiative

The AOM INVEST initiative serves as the African continent's first strategic laboratory dedicated to regenerative tourism. Deployed in Algeria, the project is structured around two complementary sites: the ancient thermal city of Bouhanifia (Mascara) and the ecotourism station of Sidi Abdelli (Tlemcen).

The approach is defined by three fundamental pillars:

- **Ecological restoration and resilience:** The project integrates the restoration of degraded terrestrial and riparian habitats, alongside the responsible management of hydro-mineral resources to ensure long-term ecosystem viability.
- **Innovative financial mobilization:** As the first SME listed on the Algerian stock exchange, AOM INVEST creates a replicable model for channeling public and private capital toward nature-positive tourism development.
- **Inclusive community governance:** Local communities, including women and youth, are empowered as the primary stewards and economic beneficiaries of the site's natural assets, integrating agroecological practices and ecotourism circuits.



IV. Alignment with the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework

GBF Target	Theme	Link to AOM INVEST Initiative
Target 2	Ecosystem Restoration	Sidi Abdelli: structured restoration of degraded terrestrial and riparian habitats; revitalisation of natural spaces through ecotourism circuits.
Target 3	30x30 Protection	Sidi Abdelli: conservation management of ecologically sensitive zones; integration into protected area planning frameworks.
Target 7	Pollution Reduction	Bouhanifia: sustainable waste management, responsible water treatment, and reduction of chemical inputs in hydro-mineral operations.
Target 8	Climate Resilience	Bouhanifia: energy efficiency, renewable infrastructure; Sidi Abdelli: nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based climate adaptation.
Target 9	Sustainable Resource Use	Bouhanifia: responsible long-term management of hydro-mineral geothermal resources; Sidi Abdelli: community-based natural resource governance.
Target 10	Sustainable Agriculture	Sidi Abdelli: agroecological practices integrated into the visitor experience and local food economy.
Target 11	Ecosystem Services	Both sites: restoration and enhancement of regulating, provisioning, and cultural ecosystem services for local and visitor populations.
Target 12	Nature in Human Settlements	Bouhanifia: integration of green and blue infrastructure in the thermal city design; Sidi Abdelli: nature-based ecotourism nodes.
Target 14	Biodiversity in Policy	SMED and CED frameworks embedded in master planning; biodiversity KPIs integrated into corporate governance and site management plans.
Target 16	Sustainable Consumption	Regenerative tourism model repositions tourism consumption away from extractive mass tourism toward low-footprint, restorative experiences.
Target 19	Finance Mobilisation	AOM INVEST as first listed SME in Algeria: replicable model for mobilising stock-market capital toward nature-positive tourism investment.
Target 20	Capacity Building	CED partnership for knowledge transfer; national SMED laboratory testing scalable regenerative tourism methodologies for Africa.
Target 21	Knowledge & Science	IATF participation; CED collaboration; knowledge dissemination platform for African destinations.
Target 22	Community Inclusion	Mobilisation of local communities as primary stewards and revenue beneficiaries at Sidi Abdelli; equitable governance structures.

Source: Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework, CBD COP15, December 2022. Project contribution: Attar Hichem, AOM INVEST, Algiers, Algeria. Prepared by the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) for COP17 on Biodiversity, Yerevan, October 2026

ASILI.MA INITIATIVE: A REGENERATIVE TOURISM MODEL AT THE INTERSECTION OF HERITAGE AND ECOLOGICAL RESILIENCE

Morocco— Draa-Tafilalet oasis region

I. The Expert



Bennouna Zhar Omar, Expert at the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED), based in Rabat, Morocco

II. Main Characteristics of the Destination

Location and Context: Located in the Draa-Tafilalet oasis region in Morocco, encompassing five provinces.

Ecosystem Profile: A territory of exceptional ecological fragility—featuring date palm groves, argan forests, and saffron fields—that directly confronts the disproportionate impacts of accelerating climate change.

Conservation and Governance Features: Resulting from a collaboration between the Draa-Tafilalet Regional Investment Centre and the GIZ WoMENA regional project to revitalize artisanal and equitable tourism value chains.



III. Summary of the Initiative

The asili.ma initiative stands as compelling proof that tourism, when genuinely regenerative in its design, can serve as a vector not merely for economic development, but for the active restoration and protection of biodiversity-sustaining ecosystems. Aligning with two targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), this digital marketplace channels tourism-generated economic flows directly into the hands of women's cooperatives in Morocco's Draa-Tafilalet oasis region.

The approach is defined by the following pillars:

- **Policy mainstreaming and economic development:** The project embeds biodiversity stewardship directly into a regional economic development framework, positioning ecosystem preservation as a prerequisite for growth rather than a constraint.
- **Sustainable consumption and social equity:** The secure digital platform enables global and domestic consumers to exercise values-driven purchasing decisions that reward biodiversity-compatible production methods, while allocating a portion of sales proceeds to monthly social security contributions for artisans.
- **Capacity building for terrestrial stewardship:** An integrated territorial programme empowers women's cooperatives to improve the quality of terroir products derived from fragile territories, which are essential to ensuring the preservation of local ecosystems.



IV. Alignment with the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework

GBF Target	Theme	Link to asili.ma Initiative
Target 14	Policy Integration	Integrating biodiversity-linked criteria into the investment promotion strategy of the Draa-Tafilalet Regional Investment Centre and embedding sustainable land use within a poverty eradication agenda.
Target 16	Sustainable Consumption	Providing a secure digital marketplace that connects sustainably produced terroir goods with consumers, reducing the carbon footprint by shortening supply chains, and generating durable social equity.

Source: Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework, CBD COP15, December 2022. Project contribution: Bennouna Zhar Omar, asili.ma, Draa-Tafilalet Region, Morocco. Prepared by the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) for COP17 on Biodiversity, Yerevan, October 2026.

DESTINATION DAHAR: A REGENERATIVE TOURISM LIVING LAB FOR BIODIVERSITY IN ARID REGIONS

Tunisia, South-East — Dahar Region

I. THE EXPERT



Abdelkader Chaabane, Expert at the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED), based in Tunis, Tunisia.

II. MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DESTINATION

Location and Context: Located in the arid plateaus and ancient stone villages of the Dahar region in South-East Tunisia, this destination is managed by the Fédération Tourisme Authentique Destination Dahar (FTADD).

Ecosystem Profile: The territory is characterized by hyper-arid landscapes facing increasing pressures from climate change, water scarcity, and desertification, making climate resilience an existential necessity.

Conservation and Habitat Features: The region features the UNESCO-designated Dahar Geopark for geological heritage protection, the 194-kilometre Grande Traversée du Dahar (GTD) acting as a biodiversity corridor, and "jessours" — millennia-old traditional water-harvesting and terraced cultivation systems that sustain oasis-like micro-ecosystems.



III. SUMMARY OF THE INITIATIVE

The Destination Dahar initiative, led by the Fédération Tourisme Authentique Destination Dahar (FTADD) in South-East Tunisia, serves as a living laboratory demonstrating that tourism can be an engine of ecological regeneration in the most fragile arid environments. The project aligns with twelve targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework.

The approach is defined by the following pillars:

- **Ecosystem restoration and nature-based solutions:** The project rehabilitates "jessours" (traditional water-harvesting systems) to combat desertification and erosion, and develops a 194-kilometre trail (Grande Traversée du Dahar) acting as an ecological connectivity corridor.
- **Agro-ecological innovation:** The initiative revitalises traditional, low-input agricultural techniques (intercropping, cultivation of endemic species) by linking tourism demand to local food production, thereby strengthening food security.
- **Inclusive governance and territorial intelligence:** The project deploys a digital biodiversity monitoring platform and places local communities — particularly women-led cooperatives and youth — at the heart of the destination's design and economic benefits.



IV. ALIGNMENT WITH THE KUNMING-MONTRÉAL GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

GBF Target	Theme	Link to Destination Dahar Initiative
Target 1	Spatial Planning	Integration of ecological sensitivity mapping into tourism development decisions to minimize the loss of high-biodiversity areas.
Target 2	Ecosystem Restoration	Rehabilitation of millennia-old "jessours" to restore degraded terrestrial and inland water ecosystems and enhance habitat integrity.
Target 3	30x30 Protection	Utilization of the Geopark Dahar/UNESCO designation to manage and effectively protect a significant share of the territory.
Target 7	Pollution Reduction	Sustainable destination standards addressing waste, unmanaged agricultural run-off, and the tourism sector's ecological footprint.
Target 8	Climate Resilience	Implementation of nature-based solutions (jessours, native vegetation restoration) to absorb climate shocks like drought and flash flooding.
Target 10	Sustainable Agriculture	Revitalization of traditional agro-ecological techniques (intercropping, low-input horticulture) supported by farm-to-table tourism demand.
Target 11	Ecosystem Services	Restored jessours regulating water cycles, providing climate buffering, and supporting community food security.
Target 14	Biodiversity in Policy	Mainstreaming biodiversity across tourism master planning, municipal strategies, and agricultural land-use policies.
Target 20	Capacity Building	Training programs for local guides, biodiversity monitors, and women-le micro-enterprises to build long-term institutional capacity.
Target 21	Knowledge & Science	Deployment of a digital territorial intelligence platform for accessible biodiversity data and evidence-based adaptive governance.
Target 22	Community Inclusion	Active co-design and co-benefit structures ensuring traditional knowledge holders and marginalized groups drive destination planning.
Target 23	Gender Equality	Central role of women-led cooperatives in managing artisanal production, agro-ecological gardens, and community guesthouses.

Source: Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework, CBD COP15, December 2022. Project contribution: CHAABANE Abdelkader, Tunis, Tunisia. Prepared by the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) for COP17 on Biodiversity, Yerevan, October 2026.

AMBAM BIOCULTURAL PILOT DESTINATION

Congo Basin, Cameroon — Southern Region — Commune of Ambam

I. The Expert



Bertrand Dongmo Temgoua (Ph.D.),
Academic and Expert at the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED), based in Douala, Cameroon.

II. Main Characteristics of the Destination

Destination: Commune of Ambam, Southern Region, Cameroon.

Geographic Context: Border crossroads (Gabon, Equatorial Guinea), 220 km south of Yaoundé. Capital of the Vallée-du-Ntem.

Biogeographic Context: Deep in the Congo Basin rainforest — dense forests, the Ntem River, and natural caves.

Demographics: ~72,000 inhabitants · 80+ villages · ~90 traditional chieftaincies.



III. Summary of the Initiative

This initiative aims to transform the Commune of Ambam into a flagship biocultural regenerative tourism destination. Grounded in the indivisibility of biodiversity and local cultures, the project explicitly aligns with eleven targets of the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework for 2030.

The model is structured around three complementary pillars:

- **Healing the Land:** Ecotourism circuits integrate reforestation and systematic rehabilitation of the Ntem riverbanks. Sacred sites and forest sanctuaries are protected through a community-governed conservation network.
- **Sustaining Life:** Local cooperatives (guides, crafts, gastronomy) governed by customary norms ensure biodiversity value benefits local populations directly, while preserving this vital carbon sink.
- **Empowering People:** The project valorizes endogenous knowledge — medicinal plants and agroecological practices. The 90 traditional chieftaincies are formally embedded in tourism governance — shifting from beneficiaries to sovereign co-authors.

Ultimately, the Ambam model demonstrates that tourism is a powerful lever for global action: every visitor leaves the territory measurably richer, more resilient, and more alive than before.



IV. Alignment with the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework

GBF Target	GBF Objective	Ambam Project Mechanism
Target 1	Biodiversity-Inclusive Spatial Planning	Participatory land-use mapping with chieftaincies; protection of high-biodiversity areas
Target 2	Ecosystem Restoration	Reforestation & Ntem riverbank rehabilitation integrated into ecotourism circuits
Target 3	30x30 Conservation	Community-custodianship of sacred sites, caves & forest sanctuaries
Target 5	Sustainable Use of Wild Species	Customary governance frameworks regulating biodiversity use within ecological limits
Target 8	Climate Resilience	Reforestation & forest protection as nature-based solutions; carbon sequestration
Target 9	Wild Species for People	Local cooperatives (guides, crafts, gastronomy) channelling biodiversity value to communities
Target 11	Nature's Contributions to People	Ecosystem services (water, climate, culture) made visible & economically valorised
Target 16	Sustainable Consumption	Low-footprint, meaning-rich tourism experiences; short food supply chains
Target 20	Capacity-Building & Technology Transfer	SMED monitoring tools; guide certification; cooperative management training
Target 21	Access to Knowledge	Endogenous knowledge valorised through immersive interpretation & cultural storytelling
Target 22	Inclusion of IPLCs	Co-governance by 90 chieftaincies; customary norms in management; community value chains

Source: Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework, CBD COP15, December 2022. Project contribution: Dr. Bertrand Dongmo Temgoua, Douala, Cameroon. Prepared by the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) for COP17 on Biodiversity, Yerevan, October 2026.

THE DAHAR GEOPARK INITIATIVE: REGENERATIVE TOURISM AS A PATHWAY TO NATURE-POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT IN ARID NORTH AFRICA

Tunisia, South-East — Dahar region

I. The Expert



Ernez Molka, Academic and Expert at the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED), based in Médenine–Djerba, Tunisia.

II. Main Characteristics of the Destination

Location and Context: Located in south-eastern Tunisia, at the intersection of the Gabès, Médenine, and Tataouine governorates, this arid mountain range covers approximately 6,000 km² and is integrated into the UNESCO Global Geoparks Network.

Ecosystem Profile: The destination is a living laboratory where human ingenuity and ecological resilience coexist under extreme aridity, currently facing severe threats from climate change, declining rainfall, and desertification.

Conservation and Habitat Features: The territory is distinguished by its exceptional geological wealth, such as the Jebel Tebaga with its Upper Permian marine fossils, and a unique living cultural heritage featuring troglodyte dwellings, *ksour* (fortified granaries), and *jessours* (traditional water-harvesting earthworks).



III. Summary of the Initiative

The Dahar Geopark Initiative transcends the traditional sustainable tourism paradigm to embody the deeper logic of regenerative tourism, aiming to leave the destination biologically, culturally, and economically better than it was found. Covering 6,000 km² in Tunisia, the project aligns with seven targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework.

The approach is defined by the following pillars:

- **Ecosystem restoration and climate resilience:** The project centers on the active rehabilitation of *jessours* (ancestral water-harvesting structures), a nature-based solution that regulates soil moisture, limits erosion, and revives native vegetation in the face of desertification.
- **Inclusive spatial conservation:** The UNESCO Geopark governance ensures territorial planning that formally integrates ecological values and protects invaluable global geological sites like the Jebel Tebaga.
- **Community inclusion and valorization:** Local Berber communities are the primary authors of this regeneration, utilizing small-scale tourism (heritage circuits, homestays) to transform biodiversity into a direct economic asset.



IV. Alignment with the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework

GBF Target	Dahar Regenerative Contribution
Target 1 — Spatial Planning	Participatory, biodiversity-inclusive territorial governance framework for the Dahar Geopark; formal integration of ecological values into land-use decisions.
Target 2 — Ecosystem Restoration	Active rehabilitation of jessours (traditional water-harvesting earthworks) reversing desertification, rebuilding soil fertility, and restoring ecological connectivity across 6,000 km².
Target 3 — 30×30 Protection	UNESCO Global Geopark designation as an effective area-based conservation measure (OECM), with geoconservation zones protecting sites of global geological and ecological significance.
Target 8 — Climate Resilience	Nature-based solutions (jessour restoration; agropastoral revival; low-carbon tourism) increasing landscape resilience to desertification, temperature rise, and rainfall decline.
Target 9 — Equitable Wild Species Use	Biodiversity valorised as a livelihood asset for Berber communities through short-circuit tourism, local produce, and artisanal value chains — placing economic benefits with the most dependent.
Target 14 — Policy Integration	Multi-sectoral governance architecture mainstreaming biodiversity across tourism, heritage, agriculture, and finance — catalysed by UNESCO Geopark and Swiss Development Cooperation frameworks.
Target 22 — Community Inclusion	Berber communities as primary authors of territorial regeneration; traditional ecological knowledge (jessours, ksour, agropastoralism) as the foundational resource of the entire initiative.

Source: Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework, CBD COP15, December 2022. Project contribution: ERNEZ MOLKA, Médenine–Djerba, Tunisia. Prepared by the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) for COP17 on Biodiversity, Yerevan, October 2026.

TÉBOURSOUK-DOUGGA INITIATIVE: WATER REGENERATION AS A CATALYST FOR REGENERATIVE TOURISM AND TERRITORIAL MOBILIZATION

Tunisia, North-West Region— Municipality of Téboursouk

I. The Expert



Jamel Gamra, Director for Africa, Middle East and the Mediterranean at the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED).

II. Main Characteristics of the Destination

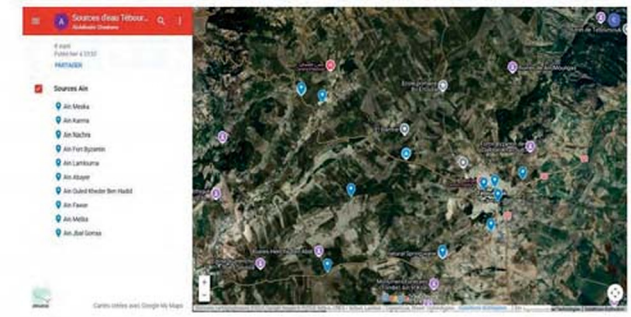
Location and Context: Located in the Municipality of Téboursouk, Béja Governorate, in north-western Tunisia, the destination is part of a historically rich rural and agricultural landscape.

Natural and Cultural Heritage: The territory combines exceptional natural, agricultural, and cultural heritage, including the renowned archaeological site of Dougga, Byzantine heritage, and a network of historical water springs, such as Aïn Fort Byzantin and Aïn Nachra. These water resources are an integral part of the territory's history, landscapes, and local life, but are increasingly exposed to water scarcity, potential overexploitation, and physical degradation.

Territorial Governance and Engagement: Led by the Governorate of Béja and the Municipality of Téboursouk, in collaboration with the Ben Abbès Foundation and the CED, the initiative adopts a participatory approach involving local institutions, communities, economic and agricultural actors, academia, and civil society. It aims to strengthen dynamic territorial capabilities for the long-term regeneration and sustainable development of the destination.

Disponible aussi numériquement sur la plateforme google My Maps via le lien suivant :

https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1h9iaZyeMk3nmDY4l72VJ_GvxjU3fdQU&usp=sharing



III. Summary of the Initiative

The Téboursouk–Dougga Initiative positions water as a catalyst for territorial regeneration, connecting biodiversity, cultural heritage, local communities, and regenerative tourism. Beyond restoring historical springs and water ecosystems, the project aims to build the dynamic capabilities of local stakeholders to anticipate change, seize opportunities, mobilize resources, and collaborate for long-term resilience.



The initiative is built around three pillars:

Water & ecosystem regeneration: Restore and valorize historical springs, local water systems, and associated biodiversity, while promoting their sustainable management and long-term protection.

- **Regenerative tourism & heritage:** Develop a "Water Springs Route" connecting the region's historical springs with Dougga's archaeological heritage, landscapes, and local knowledge. By integrating natural and cultural heritage into a shared visitor experience, the route creates mutual value: tourism supports the conservation and visibility of water resources, while the springs enrich and diversify the historical and cultural experience of the destination.
- **Collaborative governance & dynamic capabilities:** Engage communities, authorities, academia, and partners through co-development to build lasting local capacities for innovation, adaptation, and collective action.







IV. Alignment with the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework

GBF Target	Theme	Updated Link to Téboursouk–Dougga Initiative
Target 2	Ecosystem Restoration	Restoring degraded historical water springs and associated hydrological ecosystems and biodiversity, while valorizing them through the Water Springs Route.
Target 9	Sustainable Management	Promoting the sustainable use and management of vulnerable water resources while preserving their ecological, cultural, and social value and supporting regenerative tourism.
Target 14	Policy Integration	Integrating water and biodiversity regeneration into territorial, heritage, and tourism development strategies, linking natural assets with Dougga's historical and archaeological heritage.
Target 20	Capacity Building	Building the dynamic capabilities of local stakeholders to anticipate change, seize opportunities, mobilize knowledge and resources, innovate, and adapt over time.
Target 22	Participation & Equity	Establishing collaborative and participatory governance involving local communities, farmers, institutions, academia, civil society, and partners in shaping and implementing the territory's regeneration.

(Additional Note: The contributor has also formally aligned this initiative with Targets 3, 8, 19, and 21 of the Global Biodiversity Framework).

Source: Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework, CBD COP15, December 2022. Project contribution: Jamel Gamra, Téboursouk-Dougga, Tunisia. Prepared by the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) for COP17 on Biodiversity, Yerevan, October 2026.

PRAIA: REGENERATIVE TOURISM GOVERNANCE THROUGH SIMULATION AND SCIENCE

Cabo Verde— Praia

I. The Expert



Christophe Le Chevallier, Independent consultant and Expert at the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED), based in Praia, Cabo Verde. https://biodiversite2030.vercel.app/

II. Main Characteristics of the Destination

Location and Context: Located in Praia, Cabo Verde, this destination is in a Small Island Developing State where the tourism sector constitutes the primary economic pillar.

Ecosystem Profile: The island capital navigates the existential pressures of climate vulnerability, rapid urbanisation, and the cascading biodiversity risks that unchecked visitor flows impose on fragile coastal and urban ecosystems.

Conservation and Governance Features: The destination serves as the focal point for an innovative urban governance serious game designed to align the city with all 23 targets of the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework before 2030, utilizing verifiable data from 412 real-world cases.

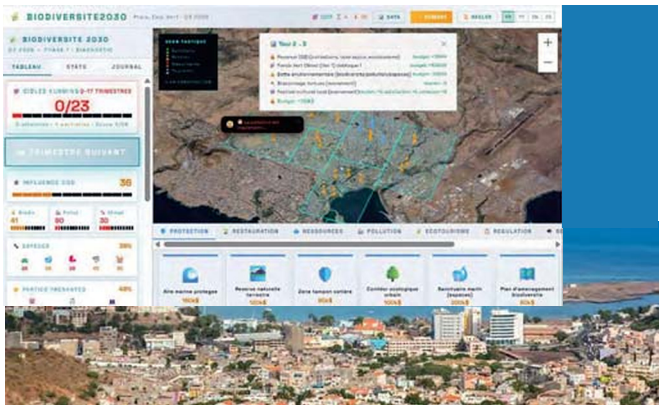


III. Summary of the Initiative

The "Biodiversité 2030 — Praia" initiative in Cabo Verde is a purpose-built urban governance serious game wherein the player assumes the office of Mayor of the island capital. This model operationalises the commitments of the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), aligning specifically with three key targets to transform tourism into an engine of ecological resilience and equity.

The approach is defined by the following pillars:

- **Risk assessment and management:** The simulation engine subjects the player to 28 stochastic events (e.g., cyclones, invasive species outbreaks) and calculates a real-time overtourism index, thereby building institutional capacity to anticipate and govern environmental threats before they result in irreversible biodiversity loss.
- **Capacity-building and technology transfer:** The platform synthesises nine foundational theoretical frameworks and introduces concrete technological interventions (such as desalination, solar energy, and urban digital twins), delivered in four languages to support practitioners across the Global South without cost barriers.
- **Access to information and open science:** Every quantitative data point within the simulation is drawn from 412 verified real-world case studies, ensuring that biodiversity governance is firmly grounded in transparent, empirically sound science.



IV. Alignment with the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework

GBF Target	Theme	Link to Biodiversité 2030 — Praia Initiative
Target 17	Biosafety	Simulation of 28 stochastic events and a dynamic overtourism index to build institutional reflexes for anticipating and managing biodiversity threats.
Target 20	Capacity-Building and Technology Transfer	Delivery of an integrated pedagogical architecture featuring 9 theoretical frameworks and technological interventions, accessible in four languages to practitioners in developing countries.
Target 21	Access to Information and Knowledge	Utilization of 412 verified real-world case studies to ground urban biodiversity planning in verifiable, transparent data and open science.

Source: Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework, CBD COP15, December 2022. Project contribution: Christophe Le Chevallier, Praia, Cabo Verde. Prepared by the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) for COP17 on Biodiversity, Yerevan, October 2026.

DJERBA INITIATIVE: BIODIVERSITY AS A VECTOR OF EXCELLENCE

Tunisia— Southern Region, Djerba

I. The Expert



Farhat Mizen, Expert for the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED), with expertise in Academic, Consulting, and Public Sector fields.

II. Main Characteristics of the Destination

Location and Context: Located in the Southern Region of Tunisia, on the island of Djerba.

Ecosystem Profile: The destination encompasses transitional habitats, fragmented ecosystems, and coastal environments characteristic of the region.

Conservation and Governance Features: Promoted by the local ecosystem and various NGOs, the initiative utilizes educational trails and integrated nature reserves to transform the destination into an active agent of ecological renewal.



III. Summary of the Initiative

The Djerba initiative harnesses the transformative potential of tourism to actively reverse environmental degradation, positioning the destination as an active agent of ecological renewal. Aligning with two key targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), this regenerative model deploys educational trails and integrated nature reserves as twin instruments for ecological restoration and community empowerment.

The approach is defined by the following pillars:

- **Ecosystem restoration:** Educational trails are purposefully routed through degraded transitional habitats to reduce anthropogenic pressure, while tourism revenues are systematically reinvested in habitat rehabilitation and reforestation with endemic species.
- **Inclusive governance and equity:** The governance architecture, anchored in the local ecosystem and delivered through a multi-NGO partnership, ensures that Djerba's communities are the central architects and primary custodians of conservation.
- **Traditional knowledge and education:** Local guides, community naturalists, and youth environmental educators embed traditional and place-based ecological knowledge directly into the visitor experience, transforming every encounter into a measurable contribution to ecological renewal.



IV. Alignment with the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework

GBF Target	Theme	Link to Djerba Initiative
Target 2	Ecosystem Restoration	Utilizing integrated nature reserves as living laboratories and reinvesting tourism revenue into habitat rehabilitation and reforestation with endemic species.
Target 22	Inclusion & Equity	Utilizing a multi-NGO partnership to ensure local communities, youth, and guides act as the foremost interpreters and custodians of Djerba's natural heritage.

Source: Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework, CBD COP15, December 2022. Project contribution: Farhat Mizen, Djerba, Tunisia. Prepared by the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) for COP17 on Biodiversity, Yerevan, October 2026.

HOTEL GARDENS INITIATIVE: REIMAGINING THE HOSPITALITY FOOTPRINT THROUGH INDIGENOUS FLORA

Tunisia— Southern Region, Island of Djerba.

I. The Expert



Farhat Mizen, Expert for the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED), with expertise in Academic, Consulting, and Public Sector fields.

II. Main Characteristics of the Destination

Location and Context: Located in the Southern Region of Tunisia, on the island of Djerba.

Ecosystem Profile: Features coastal and semi-arid conditions characterized by native tree species, local palm varieties, and halophytic plants.

Conservation and Habitat Features: Led by the local ecosystem, the project reimagines the hospitality sector as an active steward by transforming hotel grounds into functioning conservation habitats (OECMs) through the restoration of native flora.



III. Summary of the Initiative

The 'Hotel Gardens' initiative in Djerba reconceives the hospitality sector as an active, accountable steward of biodiversity. Aligning with Target 3 of the GBF, the project deliberately converts privately managed land into Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs), demonstrating that regenerative tourism does not require vast, formally designated territories to make a meaningful contribution to global targets.

The approach is defined by the following pillars:

- **Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs):** Participating hotels systematically replace exotic ornamental plants with native species (indigenous trees, local palm varieties, halophytic plants) adapted to Djerba's coastal conditions, creating functioning habitat patches.
- **Habitat quality restoration:** By limiting impermeable surface coverage, hotels restore the hydrological balance and conditions hospitable to native soil fauna, pollinators, and endemic plant communities.
- **Living conservation education:** Didactic 'garden hotel' circuits, complemented by interpretive signage and workshops, enable visitors to directly engage with the ecological rationale of native planting and understand the vulnerability of Mediterranean island ecosystems.



IV. Alignment with the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework

GBF Target	Theme	Link to Hotel Gardens Initiative
Target 3	30x30 Protection	Converting privately managed hotel grounds into Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs) by replacing exotic plants with native flora and restoring the hydrological balance.

Source: Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework, CBD COP15, December 2022. Project contribution: Farhat Mizen, Djerba, Tunisia. Prepared by the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) for COP17 on Biodiversity, Yerevan, October 2026.

DJERBA INITIATIVE: BIRDWATCHING AND COASTAL ECOTOURISM

Tunisia—Southern Region, Island of Djerba

I. The Expert



Farhat Mizen, Expert for the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED), with expertise in Academic, Consulting, and Public Sector fields.

II. Main Characteristics of the Destination

Location and Context: Located in the Southern Region of Tunisia, on the island of Djerba.

Ecosystem Profile: The destination features coastal wetlands, lagoons, halophytic environments, and seagrass beds that serve as crucial habitats for migratory birds.

Conservation and Governance Features: Promoted by the local ecosystem, the project utilizes guided tours structured around spatial planning to deliberately avoid sensitive areas and limit trampling, thereby protecting fragile coastal ecosystems.



III. Summary of the Initiative

The Djerba initiative integrates ornithological observation into a coastal ecotourism model to protect critical wetlands and lagoons. Aligning with Targets 1 and 2 of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), the project raises visitor awareness while actively safeguarding fragile halophytic environments and seagrass beds.

The approach is defined by the following pillars:

- **Spatial planning and habitat protection:** Guided tours are meticulously structured with circuits that deliberately bypass sensitive zones and limit trampling, thereby mitigating anthropogenic pressure on migratory bird habitats.
- **Awareness and ecological restoration:** The integration of these circuits into coastal ecotourism functions as an educational instrument to inform visitors about ecosystem fragility, indirectly supporting the recovery and restoration of wetland environments.



IV. Alignment with the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework

GBF Target	Theme	Link to Djerba Initiative
Target 1	Spatial Planning	Designing guided tour circuits that deliberately avoid sensitive wetland zones and limit trampling to ensure biodiversity-inclusive spatial management.
Target 2	Ecosystem Restoration	Utilizing coastal ecotourism to raise visitor awareness regarding the fragility of halophytic environments and seagrass beds, thereby supporting the recovery of degraded ecosystems.

Source: Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework, CBD COP15, December 2022. Project contribution: Farhat Mizen, Djerba, Tunisia. Prepared by the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) for COP17 on Biodiversity, Yerevan, October 2026

"OASIS VIVANTE" INITIATIVE: A REGENERATIVE TOURISM LABORATORY IN GABÈS, TUNISIA

Tunisia— Southern region, Gabès

I. The Expert



Hajer Najeh , Academic and Expert at the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED), based in Tunisia (co-leading with Soumaya Razgallah and a coalition of civil society partners)

II. Main Characteristics of the Destination

Location and Context: Located in Gabès, southern Tunisia, this destination hosts the Mediterranean basin's sole coastal oasis, operating as a unique oasis-to-sea continuum.

Ecosystem Profile: The destination features a distinct microclimate that is currently facing alarming environmental degradation driven principally by industrial pollution from coastal petrochemical complexes.

Conservation and Habitat Features: The landscape is a living mosaic of date palms, pomegranate and apricot groves, market gardens, sustained by ancient *seguia* irrigation canals, while seagrass beds thrive in the adjacent marine environment.



III. Summary of the Initiative

The "Oasis Vivante" initiative transforms the Mediterranean's sole coastal oasis in Gabès (Tunisia) into a pilot territory for regenerative tourism. Designed to address industrial degradation, the project aligns with five targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework by making every visitor an active participant in ecological restoration.

The approach is defined by the following pillars:

- **Participatory restoration and citizen science:** Visitors do not pay to observe, but to actively restore the ecosystem by replanting native date palms, maintaining *seguia* canals, and monitoring biodiversity (migratory birds, seagrass beds) alongside researchers.
- **Oasis economy and sustainable consumption:** Stays directly finance local agricultural value chains, exporting products out of the destination through certified organic products (e.g., pomegranates at Chenini Gabès).
- **Inclusive governance:** The project is co-managed by residents, with dedicated attention to the participation of women and youth in all decision-making structures, supported by a civil society coalition.







IV. Alignment with the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework

GBF Target	Theme	Link to "Oasis Vivante" Initiative
Target 2	Ecosystem Restoration	Participatory reforestation of the oasis, replanting endemic date palms, maintaining *seguia* canals, and restoration of seagrass beds in the Gulf.
Target 3	Protection of 30% of Lands and Seas	Support for the creation of a combined oasis and marine protected area leveraging tourism revenue and public awareness.
Target 8	Climate Resilience	Citizen monitoring of emblematic species and ecosystem-based adaptation through oasis restoration (palm canopy moderating temperature, carbon sequestration).
Target 16	Sustainable Consumption	Positive-impact tourism exporting value via certified organic supply chains and labelled local products harvested and processed by visitors.
Target 22	Inclusive Governance	Co-management by women, youth, and local communities in collaboration with a coalition of civil society partners.

Source: Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework, CBD COP15, December 2022. Project contribution: Hajer Najeh, Tunisia. Prepared by the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) for COP17 on Biodiversity, Yerevan, October 2026.

THE BATOUFAM SACRED FOREST INITIATIVE: REGENERATIVE TOURISM FOR ECOLOGICAL AND COMMUNITY RESTORATION

Cameroon— West Region, Royal Chieftaincy of Batoufam

I. THE EXPERT



Thierry Njomgang, Independent Consultant and Expert at the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED), based in Montréal, Canada.

II. MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DESTINATION

Location and Context: Located in the Kingdom of Batoufam in Western Cameroon, this destination is governed under the traditional authority of the Chefferie Supérieure de Batoufam (Royal Chieftaincy).

Ecosystem Profile: The destination features the Batoufam Sacred Forest (Kouoghap), the largest sacred forest in the region, which functions as a major biodiversity sanctuary and a de facto spatial conservation regime.

Conservation and Habitat Features: The ecosystem encompasses hundreds of species of medicinal plants, cultural trails, and ceremonial sites, supported by an active tri-partite reforestation partnership that planted approximately 1,000 trees over three years.



III. SUMMARY OF THE INITIATIVE

The Batoufam Sacred Forest (Kouoghap) Initiative in Western Cameroon is a living proof-of-concept for regenerative tourism, governed by the Royal Chieftaincy and co-implemented with the indigenous Baka people. The project aligns with 12 targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and proves that tourism can be an engine of ecological recovery.

The approach is defined by the following pillars:

- **Active restoration and tri-partite partnership:** Tourists, the Batoufam people, and the Baka people collaborate to reforest the sacred forest, planting approximately 1,000 trees in three years to enhance hydrological regulation and carbon sequestration.
- **Participatory governance and indigenous knowledge:** The traditional agronomic expertise of the Baka guides ecological restoration and supports local agricultural output, while ensuring the community retains free access to the forest and its cultural offerings.
- **Direct socio-economic outcomes:** The model's reputation has generated international partnerships that improve local quality of life, notably through an unprecedented upgrade to a fully-equipped hospital centre and the expansion of school infrastructure.

Source: Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework, CBD COP15, December 2022. Project contribution: Thierry Njomgang, Montréal, Canada. Prepared by the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) for COP17 on Biodiversity, Yerevan, October 2026.



IV. ALIGNMENT WITH THE KUNMING-MONTRÉAL GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

GBF Target	Theme	Link to Batoufam Sacred Forest Initiative
Target 1	Spatial Planning	Participatory, integrated land management under customary protocols that regulate visitor access, behavior, and spatial boundaries.
Target 2	Ecosystem Restoration	Unprecedented tri-partite partnership uniting tourists and communities to plant approximately 1,000 trees over three years.
Target 3	30x30 Protection	The sacred forest functions as an Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measure (OECM) protecting a high-integrity ecosystem.
Target 4	Species Recovery	Conservation of native medicinal plant species' genetic diversity, guided by the Baka people's traditional ecological knowledge.
Target 7	Pollution Reduction	Visitor codes of conduct and community monitoring that limit chemical, plastic, and organic pollution in the forest and Ketsok watershed.
Target 8	Climate Resilience	Reforestation acts as a nature-based solution, increasing carbon sequestration and the landscape's adaptive capacity to climate variability.
Target 9	Sustainable Wild Species Use	Customary protection regime ensuring sustainable, legally grounded use of medicinal plants and forest resources.
Target 10	Sustainable Agriculture	Integration of Baka agronomic expertise to demonstrably increase local agricultural output through biodiversity-friendly practices.
Target 16	Sustainable Consumption	Tourists acting as active co-stewards who plant trees and engage with artisans, reducing ecological footprints through responsible behavior.
Target 20	Capacity Building	International partnerships channeling technical knowledge and revenues to expand local school infrastructure and environmental education.
Target 21	Knowledge & Data	Active documentation and transmission of the Baka people's traditional ecological knowledge to visitors, researchers, and partners.
Target 22	Community Inclusion	Co-management by the Baka indigenous people and the Chefferie, ensuring equitable participation and free cultural access for locals.

TOURISM ENVIRONMENT CHARTER: A REGENERATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION IN MAURITIUS

Mauritius— Indian Ocean

I. The Expert



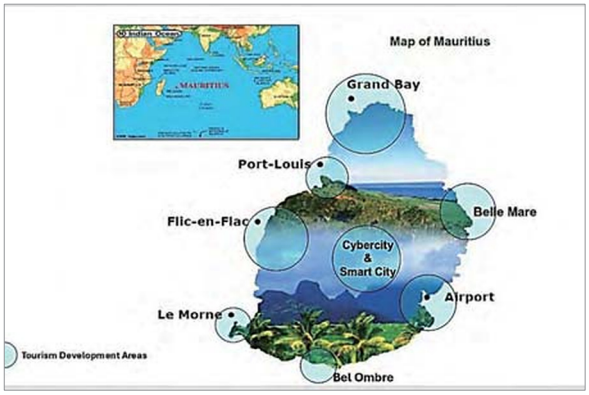
Sen Ramsamy, Expert at the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED), based in Mauritius.

II. Main Characteristics of the Destination

Location and Context: Mauritius is a Small Island Developing State in the Indian Ocean, characterized by a visitor economy entirely dependent on its natural capital.

Ecosystem Profile: The destination is a biodiversity hotspot featuring ecologically vital and highly visitor-pressured landscapes, including beaches, lagoons, forests, and coastal wetlands.

Conservation and Habitat Features: The marine and terrestrial ecosystems sustain endemic flora and marine ecosystems (including coral reefs) that require active stewardship to mitigate the extreme impacts of visitor densities relative to the landmass.



III. Summary of the Initiative

Conceived in Mauritius, the Tourism Environment Charter (TEC) translates the ambitions of the Global Biodiversity Framework into 15 daily actions for frontline tourism workers (hotel housekeepers, managers, tour operators). This operational framework aligns with four GBF targets to transform the tourism sector into a powerful vehicle for ecological regeneration.

The approach is defined by the following pillars:

- **Spatial conservation and pollution reduction:** Signatory properties function as an informal network of buffer zones, committing to protect coastal ecosystems, eliminate single-use plastics, and restrict chemical inputs in grounds maintenance.
- **Sustainable resource use:** The Charter institutionalizes responsible sourcing (e.g., sustainable seafood) and freshwater management, thereby protecting vulnerable fishing communities and coastal residents.
- **Sustainable consumption and institutional culture:** The framework reduces food waste, encourages towel reuse, and educates visitors to normalize responsible behaviors at scale.



IV. Alignment with the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework

GBF Target	Theme	Link to Tourism Environment Charter (TEC) Initiative
Target 3	30x30 Protection	TEC signatories function as an informal network of managed buffer areas, pledging to avoid degrading beach and reef ecosystems.
Target 7	Pollution Reduction	Operational practices to eliminate single-use plastics, segregate waste, and restrict chemical inputs in daily hospitality workflows.
Target 9	Sustainable Wild Species Use	Institutionalizing responsible practices like sustainable seafood sourcing to sustain the natural capital that vulnerable coastal communities depend on.
Target 16	Sustainable Consumption	Hotel-level commitments to reduce food waste, implement towel reuse programs, and educate tourists toward more responsible consumption patterns.

Source: Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework, CBD COP15, December 2022. Project contribution: Sen Ramsamy, Tourism Business Intelligence, Mauritius. Prepared by the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) for COP17 on Biodiversity, Yerevan, October 2026.

KIGWENA COASTAL ECO-TOURISM INITIATIVE: A REGENERATIVE TOURISM LABORATORY AT THE HEART OF LAKE TANGANYIKA

Burundi— Municipality of Rumonge



I. The Expert



Oscar Rwasa, Independent consultant, promoter of TABITO (www.tabito.travel) and Expert at the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED), based in Bujumbura, Burundi

II. Main Characteristics of the Destination

Location and Context: Anchored in the south-western corner of Burundi, on the forested shores of Lake Tanganyika (Municipality of Rumonge), the initiative is led by TABITO in partnership with the Burundian Office for Environmental Protection (OBPE).

Ecosystem Profile: The destination is facing compounding threats from demographic pressure eroding mountain forest cover, agricultural expansion, firewood extraction causing deforestation, and unregulated artisanal fishing.

Conservation and Habitat Features: The Kigwena Natural Forest Reserve and the lake host a globally significant assemblage of biodiversity, including resident chimpanzee communities, endemic bird species, and one of the world's richest freshwater fish faunas.



III. Summary of the Initiative

The Kigwena Coastal Eco-Tourism Initiative in Burundi represents a concrete expression of regenerative tourism, anchored on the forested shores of Lake Tanganyika. The project aligns with seven targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework by integrating ecotourism prototyping, nature-positive livelihood development, and territorial governance.

The approach is defined by the following pillars:

- **Ecosystem restoration and sustainable agriculture:** The project introduces agro-ecological practices to redirect farming away from slash-and-burn and deploys floating-cage aquaculture for fish seed multiplication, reducing pressure on wild fish stocks.
- **Biodiversity valorization:** Wildlife tourism (chimpanzees, endemic birds) and water-based recreation transform previously unmonetized natural assets into direct income for communities.
- **Inclusive governance and capacity building:** The initiative uses a "synergy hub" model for participatory planning, integrating local communities, particularly women, into biodiversity-labelled organic product value chains.



IV. Alignment with the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework

GBF Target	Target Title	TABITO/Kigwena Project Alignment
Target 2	Ecosystem Restoration	Agro-ecology adoption; hillside reforestation relief; eco-lodge zoning reduces visitor pressure on sensitive areas
Target 3	30x30 Conservation	Community-based protection of Kigwena Reserve; OECM candidacy; OBPE governance partnership
Target 9	Sustainable Wild Species Use	Wildlife tourism (chimps, birds); sustainable recreational fishing; biodiversity-labelled organic value chains
Target 10	Sustainable Agriculture & Aquaculture	Agro-ecology dissemination; floating-cage fish farming; climate-adaptive livelihood workshops
Target 14	Biodiversity Policy Integration	Multi-level governance (OBPE + Municipality); SMED performance framework; cross-sector participatory planning
Target 20	Capacity-Building & Technology Transfer	CED 2025–2028 Action Plan; floating-cage technology transfer; SMED methodology training; South-South knowledge sharing
Target 22	Inclusion & Participation	Community-led governance; women's value chain inclusion; participatory territorial planning in Kigwena & Karonda

Source: Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework, CBD COP15, December 2022. Project contribution: Oscar Rwasa, Bujumbura, Burundi. Prepared by the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) for COP17 on Biodiversity, Yerevan, October 2026.

GREATER BUJUMBURA INITIATIVE: A GREEN AND BLUE ECONOMY HUB FOR REGENERATIVE TOURISM AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Burundi— West Region, Municipality of Bujumbura

I. The Expert



Oscar Rwasa, CEO at CIPER Consulting, and Expert at the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED), based in Greater Bujumbura, Burundi. www.ciperconsultancy.wordpress.com

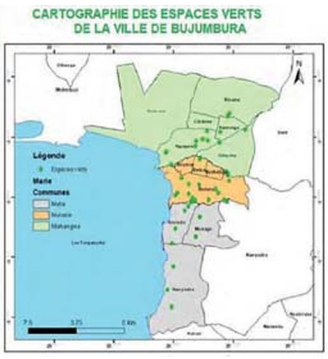
II. Main Characteristics of the Destination

Location and Context: Located in the West Region of Burundi, Greater Bujumbura is a lakeside destination along Lake Tanganyika that features nine distinct tourism circulation perimeters, ranging from the lakefront to peri-urban agricultural zones.

Ecosystem Profile: The destination presents a fragile urban-natural interface severely impacted by climate change, notably the March 2024 flooding crisis that inundated both the beach zones and protected areas.

Conservation and Habitat Features: The ecological heart of the destination is the Rusizi National Park, a globally significant hotspot of terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity situated in the Great Rift Valley.





III. Summary of the Initiative

The Greater Bujumbura initiative in Burundi demonstrates how a destination can respond to a climate crisis by becoming a living laboratory for regenerative tourism. Deployed via a Green and Blue Economy Hub in response to the major Lake Tanganyika floods of 2024, the project aligns with eleven targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework.

The approach is defined by the following pillars:

- **Ecosystem restoration and spatial protection:** The project implements post-flood rehabilitation of the Rusizi National Park (new visitor infrastructure, revised management plan, and strict zoning) to protect threatened terrestrial and aquatic species.
- **Climate resilience and urban integration:** The initiative identifies 12 urban surveillance axes (including river corridors like Ntahangwa and Rusizi) and deploys a three-tier flood risk mapping system to protect communities and ecosystem services.
- **Participatory governance and territorial intelligence:** Using the SMED methodology, the project collects ecological field data and unites public (Municipality), private (TABITO), and civil society (LTP) sectors in quarterly focus groups for evidence-based decision-making.



IV. Alignment with the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework

GBF Target	Theme	Link to Greater Bujumbura Initiative
Target 1	Spatial Planning	Nine tourism circulation perimeters defined; strict exclusion areas established for flood-vulnerable and ecologically sensitive zones.
Target 2	Ecosystem Restoration	Post-flood rehabilitation in Rusizi National Park including new visitor reception, revised management plan, and redrawn zoning schemes.
Target 3	Area-Based Conservation	Equitable, multi-stakeholder governance supporting the protection and management of the Rusizi National Park.
Target 4	Species Recovery	Quarterly monitoring, photographic surveys, and ecological data collection to track species presence and warn of anthropogenic threats.
Target 8	Climate Resilience	Three-tier urban risk zoning based on lake levels; embedding disaster risk reduction into tourism governance to minimize climate impacts.
Target 9	Community Benefits	Sustainable use of wild species generating social and economic benefits for vulnerable lakeside communities through regenerative tourism.
Target 11	Ecosystem Services	Identification of 12 urban surveillance axes restoring services like flood regulation by intact river corridors and urban sanitation improvement.
Target 14	Policy Mainstreaming	Biodiversity systematically embedded into tourism governance and municipal planning through the multi-stakeholder hub model.
Target 17	Biosafety & Risk	SMED methodology and National Platform integration providing structured, evidence-based ecological risk assessment over a three-year cycle.
Target 20	Capacity Building	Community learning approach building collective environmental expertise among tourism actors, municipal partners, and civil society.
Target 21	Knowledge & Data	Open biodiversity knowledge system utilizing photographic records, ecological measurements, community testimonies, and conference findings.

Source: Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework, CBD COP15, December 2022. Project contribution: Oscar Rwasa, Greater Bujumbura, Burundi. Prepared by the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) for COP17 on Biodiversity, Yerevan, October 2026.

ALTO MINHO INITIATIVE: A TERRITORIAL GOVERNANCE MODEL ENABLING THE TRANSITION TOWARDS REGENERATIVE TOURISM

Portugal— Northern Region , Alto Minho Intermunicipal Territory

I. The Expert



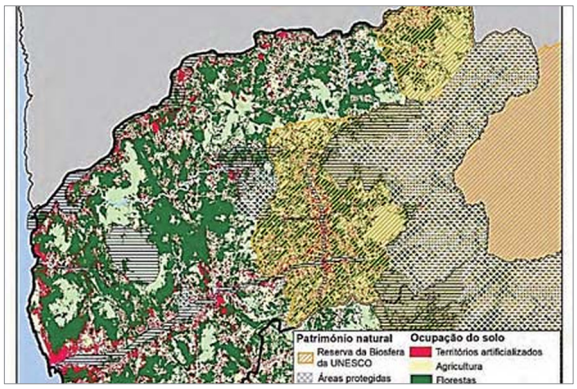
Case identified and submitted by:
Carla Pinto Cardoso Rebelo, World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) Expert for Portugal.

II. Main Characteristics of the Destination

Location and Context: Located in the Northern Region of Portugal within the Alto Minho Intermunicipal Territory.

Ecosystem Profile: The territory encompasses Natura 2000 sites, protected landscapes, river systems, and montane landscapes of high ecological integrity.

Conservation and Governance Features: Implemented through the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism (CETS) framework, the model coordinates tourism development across ten municipalities, protected areas, and the full spectrum of local stakeholders.



III. Summary of the Initiative

The Alto Minho initiative demonstrates that tourism, when rigorously governed and co-designed with communities, can become a powerful instrument for biodiversity protection at the landscape scale. Aligning with seven targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), this intermunicipal model transforms tourism from a source of ecological pressure into a regenerative force.

The approach is defined by the following pillars:

- **Biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning:** The CETS provides a shared framework through which tourism flows, infrastructure development, and land-use decisions are assessed against conservation priorities to prevent encroachment on sensitive ecosystems.
- **Policy mainstreaming and ecosystem services:** The strategy explicitly integrates biodiversity objectives into regional tourism planning and connects protected landscapes (Natura 2000 corridors) to enhance the quality and accessibility of green and blue spaces.
- **Participatory governance:** Local municipalities, tourism businesses, and civil society act as co-authors of the territorial strategy, supported by training programmes designed to democratise scientific knowledge and capacity.



IV. Alignment with the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework

GBF Target	Theme	Link to Alto Minho Initiative
Target 1	Spatial Planning	Subjecting the entire territory, including Natura 2000 sites, to participatory, integrated, and biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning to prevent encroachment.
Target 9	Community Benefits	Actively promoting nature-based and cultural tourism to ensure natural habitats yield tangible benefits for rural entrepreneurs and small-scale businesses.
Target 12	Ecosystem Services	Weaving protected landscapes and river systems into the tourism offer to significantly increase the connectivity and accessibility of green and blue spaces.
Target 14	Policy Integration	Institutionalizing CETS Alto Minho as a shared action plan that explicitly integrates biodiversity objectives into regional economic development and land management.
Target 20	Capacity Building	Equipping local actors, from municipal officers to tourism operators, with training programmes and awareness campaigns to make biodiversity-informed decisions.
Target 21	Knowledge & Data	Ensuring scientific expertise and territorial knowledge flow freely to the communities through structured knowledge-sharing processes.
Target 22	Inclusion & Equity	Placing multi-actor stakeholder participation as a structural condition of governance, ensuring communities hold genuine decision-making power.

Source: Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework, CBD COP15, December 2022. Project contribution: Carla Pinto Cardoso Rebelo, Alto Minho, Portugal. Prepared by the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) for COP17 on Biodiversity, Yerevan, October 2026.

TERRAS DO PRIOLO INITIATIVE: BIODIVERSITY RESTORATION THROUGH COMMUNITY-CENTRED REGENERATIVE TOURISM

Portugal— Autonomous Region of the Azores, Municipality of Nordeste on São Miguel Island

I. The Expert



Carla Pinto Cardoso Rebelo, Academia and Expert at the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED), based in Porto, Portugal.

II. Main Characteristics of the Destination

Location and Context: Located in the Municipality of Nordeste on São Miguel Island, within the Autonomous Region of the Azores, Portugal.

Ecosystem Profile: Encompasses protected areas and native Macaronesian laurel forest ecosystems undergoing systematic restoration.

Conservation and Habitat Features: Centred on the recovery of the Priolo (*Pyrrhula murina*), a threatened endemic bird species listed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List, whose fate is inextricably linked to the health of the native forest.



III. Summary of the Initiative

The Terras do Priolo initiative in the Azores offers one of the most compelling demonstrations in Europe of a coherent regenerative socio-ecological system integrating ecological restoration, scientific rigour, and economic development. Aligning with six GBF targets, the project transforms the destination by actively restoring native forests and recovering threatened species populations.

The approach is defined by the following pillars:

- **Ecosystem restoration and species safeguarding:** The project systematically removes invasive alien species and actively replants native laurel forests to halt the human-induced extinction of the endemic Priolo bird.
- **Conservation driven by local economy:** The creation of the 'Priolo' local brand formally links tourism services and artisanal products to the conservation mission, ensuring economic vitality flows directly from the sustainable management of biodiversity.
- **Community governance and accessible science:** Environmental awareness programmes and ongoing scientific monitoring empower local communities, the regional government, and civil society to act as co-architects of the territorial management model.



IV. Alignment with the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework

GBF Target	Theme	Link to Terras do Priolo Initiative
Target 2	Ecosystem Restoration	Systematic removal of invasive alien species and active replanting of native Macaronesian laurel forest habitats, supported by adaptive scientific monitoring.
Target 3	30x30 Protection	Channelling visitor engagement and local economic activity to support the management and ecological integrity of protected areas on São Miguel Island.
Target 4	Species Recovery	Designing habitat restoration, visitor education, and local brand development specifically to reduce the extinction risk of the IUCN-listed endemic Priolo bird.
Target 9	Sustainable Wild Species Use	Utilizing the 'Priolo' local brand to link businesses and artisanal products to conservation, generating equitably distributed economic benefits.
Target 21	Knowledge & Data	Building a knowledge ecosystem through environmental awareness programmes and accessible scientific data on Priolo populations and laurel forest recovery.
Target 22	Community Inclusion	Integrating local businesses, the Municipality of Nordeste, and civil society as co-architects of the Priolo Brand network and territorial management model.

Source: Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework, CBD COP15, December 2022. Project contribution: Carla Pinto Cardoso Rebelo, Terras do Priolo, Portugal. Prepared by the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) for COP17 on Biodiversity, Yerevan, October 2026.

BOM JESUS DO MONTE INITIATIVE: A LIVING CULTURAL LANDSCAPE RECONNECTING SPIRITUALITY, BIODIVERSITY, AND HERITAGE

Portugal— Northern Region, Braga Municipality

I. The Expert



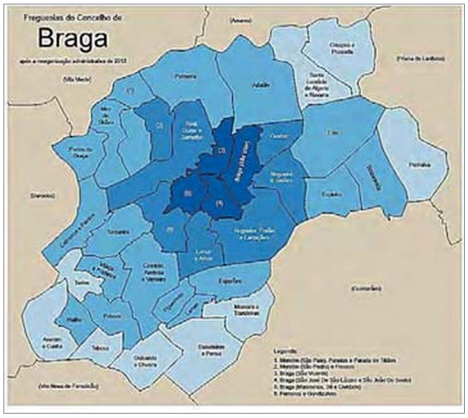
Carla Pinto Cardoso Rebelo, Academia and Expert at the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED), based in Porto, Portugal.

II. Main Characteristics of the Destination

Location and Context: Located in the Braga Municipality within the Northern Region of Portugal, managed by the Confraria do Bom Jesus do Monte.

Ecosystem Profile: A UNESCO World Heritage cultural property integrating extensive gardens, forested areas, and panoramic landscapes that contribute to environmental quality and ecological connectivity within the city of Braga.

Conservation and Habitat Features: Employs ecological restoration through the planting of native tree species to improve ecological quality and reduce fire risk, while integrating low-impact mobility such as the world's oldest water-powered funicular.



III. Summary of the Initiative

The Bom Jesus do Monte initiative in Portugal demonstrates how historic heritage landscapes can contribute to regenerative territorial transitions by reconnecting spirituality, cultural identity, and biodiversity. Aligning with four targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), the sanctuary systematically integrates environmental education and ecological restoration into its heritage stewardship.

The approach is defined by the following pillars:

- **Heritage and landscape conservation:** The project protects the cultural landscape through the integrated stewardship of architecture, gardens, forests, and scenic viewpoints to maintain the historical identity of the sanctuary.
- **Ecological resilience and biodiversity:** The active planting of native tree species and habitat enhancement contribute directly to ecological resilience and the mitigation of fire risks.
- **Spirituality and landscape experience:** The formal recognition of the spiritual and contemplative relationship between people and the landscape strengthens cultural connections with nature, thereby fostering long-term stewardship and biodiversity awareness.



IV. Alignment with the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework

GBF Target	Theme	Link to Bom Jesus do Monte Initiative
Target 11	Ecosystem Services	Integrating extensive gardens and forested areas to preserve ecological connectivity and environmental quality within the city of Braga.
Target 12	Nature in Urban Areas	Enhancing landscape experience through nature observation, biodiversity interpretation tools, and fauna and flora guides.
Target 14	Policy Integration	Integrating biodiversity and landscape values directly into the sanctuary's historical heritage management and visitor planning frameworks.
Target 22	Inclusion & Equity	Collaborating with the Municipality of Braga, regional tourism stakeholders, and community partners to co-implement environmental awareness initiatives.

Source: Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework, CBD COP15, December 2022. Project contribution: Carla Pinto Cardoso Rebelo, Bom Jesus do Monte, Portugal. Prepared by the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) for COP17 on Biodiversity, Yerevan, October 2026.

Part II

Four Illustrations

Governance, Financing, Proof

Four cases examined : Abitibi-Témiscamingue, Téboursouk-Dougga, Farallones and the Minjiang Estuary

1. From a Portrait to a Proof

The preceding part of this report drew a portrait: thirty-three initiatives, sixteen countries, four continents, each described in a one- or two-page profile, each mapped against the targets of the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework. A portrait like that is built for breadth. It shows that a pattern exists, that destinations everywhere are turning tourism into a tool for biodiversity, and that the pattern repeats often enough to matter. What it cannot do, by its own one-page format, is show how any single initiative actually works: who governs it, who pays for it, what stands in its way, what it has actually measured, and whether another territory could copy it without copying its luck.

This chapter answers that second question. It was conceived from the outset as a companion piece, not a summary: four of the thirty-three initiatives, chosen for the quality and completeness of their documentation and for the spread of contexts they cover, are examined here at full length, each along the same five lines of inquiry, governance, financing, obstacles, measured results, and the conditions under which the model could be reproduced elsewhere. The four cases are the Pôle d'innovation régénérative in Abitibi-Témiscamingue, Canada; the Téboursouk-Dougga Initiative in Tunisia; the Farallones Regenerative Tourism Innovation Hub in Santiago de Cali, Colombia; and the conservation of the Chinese Crested Tern across the Minjiang Estuary and the Matsu Islands, China. Together they cross four continents, a boreal resource region, a water-stressed Mediterranean heritage town, a mega-diverse city-edge national park, and a cross-regional seabird habitat, and, as the following pages show, four different distances from proof.

2. Four Territories, Four Starting Points

A resource region learns to govern its own interactions

In Abitibi-Témiscamingue, mines, forests, farmland, lakes and eskers share one inhabited territory, and the decisions that shape one of them tend to shape the others. The Pôle d'innovation régénérative began as a tourism project, the Sustainable Tourism Reconfiguration in Abitibi-Témiscamingue 2023-2028, and only broadened into a multisectoral undertaking once its partners realised that the conditions for a destination to thrive (healthy ecosystems, vital communities, a capacity to innovate) are the same conditions a mining or forestry region needs to regenerate. By August 2026 that broadened ambition had a legal form, the Institut de régénération territoriale, and a first track record, six enterprises supported through an initial cohort and ninety people gathered in Rouyn-Noranda for the region's first Regenerative Innovation Day. What it does not yet have is a result to point to. Its own documents say so without hedging: this is a living laboratory building the infrastructure for proof, not a territory that has already regenerated.

A heritage town discovers that its water is the destination

Téboursouk sits a few kilometres from Dougga, a Roman city on the UNESCO World Heritage List since 1997 that draws fifty thousand visitors a year generating almost no local accommodation economy. The town itself has the lowest rainfall of any delegation in its governorate and disposes of its waste in a landfill that pollutes the groundwater it depends on. The Téboursouk-Dougga Initiative starts from an inversion: instead of treating its ten historic springs as a resource that

tourism consumes, it treats their ecological condition as the very reason visitors would come. A georeferenced, open map of the springs, the initiative's first tangible deliverable, exists today. A financing plan, and a measured outcome, do not yet. Tunisia's own national reporting to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which the initiative cites throughout, records a country whose water stress index nearly doubled between 2000 and 2023, which is what gives this small, unfinanced initiative its urgency.

A national natural park meets the city that surrounds it

Two years after Cali hosted COP16 under the banner “Peace with Nature”, the Farallones Regenerative Tourism Innovation Hub proposes to answer that theme with a mechanism rather than a slogan: a territorial metrics system, adapted from CED's SMED framework, that would guide the incubation of forty-five nature-based tourism ventures across the rural districts sharing a boundary with Farallones National Natural Park. The park supplies six of Cali's seven rivers and covers almost a quarter of the municipality, and it is also where illegal gold mining, agricultural expansion and unregulated tourism (visitor numbers estimated as high as eighty thousand a year) are already outpacing any monitoring or management framework in place. The Hub asks for USD 1.5 million over three years. As of this writing it is a fully designed proposal, twinned with the Abitibi-Témiscamingue Hub for peer learning, with no cohort yet launched and no implementation result yet to report.

A bird presumed extinct becomes the one case with a number

In the year 2000, eight Chinese Crested Terns, a species undocumented since 1937 and widely presumed extinct, were rediscovered nesting among a colony of Greater Crested Terns on the Matsu Islands. By 2010 the global population was only fifty birds, among the most threatened seabirds on Earth. What changed the trajectory was treating the Matsu Islands, where the birds nest, and the Minjiang Estuary, forty kilometres away, where they feed, as a single site to be managed together: invasive cordgrass cleared, aquaculture ponds converted back to wetland, decoy birds and recorded calls used to draw the species to a new islet, and a big-data monitoring network built to compensate for a coastline no field team could patrol alone. By 2023 the population had reached 221 individuals, and it has held above 200 through 2025. Of the four cases in this chapter, this is the only one that can already show a population recovered rather than a proposal designed.

3. What the Four Cases Share, and Where They Differ

Read side by side, the four cases converge on a method even though nothing about their ecosystems, economies or institutions is alike. Each one names a single coalition responsible for the work, rather than leaving it to whichever agency happens to have jurisdiction: a purpose-built non-profit in Canada, a governorate-and-municipality partnership drawing on a pre-existing legal structure for collective resource management in Tunisia, a proposed multi-stakeholder Advisory Council in Colombia, and a volunteer alliance in China. Each one attaches an independent measurement mechanism to the work rather than reporting on itself: a university in Canada, a national biodiversity reporting baseline in Tunisia, a proprietary destination-assessment framework in Colombia, and a data analytics pipeline in China. And each one states plainly what it has not yet proven, an unusual discipline that runs through every one of these four documents and that this report has chosen to preserve rather than smooth over.

Where they differ is just as informative. The table below reads each case against the five questions this chapter was built to answer.

	Abitibi-Témiscamingue (Canada)	Téboursouk-Dougga (Tunisia)	Farallones (Colombia)	Minjiang Estuary (China)
Governance	New non-profit (Institut de régénération territoriale, Aug. 2026) coordinating mining, forestry, agriculture, water and tourism actors, with UQAT as science partner and Anicinabek participation to be defined nation by nation.	Governorate and municipality, partnered with CED and a heritage foundation, drawing on Tunisia's Agricultural Development Groups (GDA) for local water management.	Proposed Hub Advisory Council uniting the municipal environment and tourism departments, the park authority, PES landowners, universities and CED, implemented through UNEP.	Coalition of Government, rangers, citizen birdwatchers sharing banding and tracking data.
Financing	Not yet documented; carried for now by the founding partners (Tourisme Abitibi-Témiscamingue, CED, MT Lab).	Not yet documented; the initiative points to national and international instruments (BIOFIN, MEDGIRE, GEF) it has not yet accessed.	USD 1.5 million requested from the Kunming Biodiversity Fund over 2027-2029; co-funding identified but not yet quantified.	RMB 40 million-plus already invested by Changle District Government in aquaculture-pond retirement, plus central and local budget funds.
Principal obstacle	Sectoral silos and the tension between critical-mineral extraction and ecosystem health.	Acute and worsening water stress (index up from 66% to 129%, 2000-2023) in the driest delegation of its governorate.	Illegal gold mining, agricultural expansion and unregulated visitation (up to an estimated 80,000 visitors a year) outpacing any management framework.	A metapopulation split by 40 km of open water and a typhoon season that overlaps the breeding season.
Measured results	None yet; the case is explicit that it presents an approach and future learning, not ecological outcomes.	None yet; contributions are presented as intended, to be verified through a future baseline.	None yet; the Hub is at the design stage and reports intended, not achieved, alignment with 19 targets.	Population recovered from ~50 (2010) to 221 (2023), sustained above 200 through 2025; three breeding sites, up from one.
Conditions for reproduction (as stated by each case)	An anchor institution, an independent research partner, a rights-based method for Indigenous participation, and a willingness to report disappointing results.	A documented site, a heritage asset paired with an under-protected natural one, open data as the first deliverable, and a focus on capacities over infrastructure.	A protected area adjoining an urban centre, a subnational policy framework to mainstream biodiversity into, pre-identified community beneficiaries, and a peer hub for shared learning.	A closed loop of species rescue, habitat restoration, monitoring technology and institutional safeguards, transferable to other coastal rare-bird sites.

4. What Is Proven, and What Is Still a Hypothesis

It would be easy to read the spread in that table as a ranking, with China at the top and the other three still catching up. That misses the point of placing them side by side. The four cases were chosen precisely because they occupy different points on the same path, from mobilization to experimentation, from experimentation to measurement, and from measurement to demonstration, a sequence the Abitibi-Témiscamingue case names explicitly as its own roadmap. China

shows what the far end of that path looks like: a species brought back from the edge of extinction through two decades of unglamorous, well-documented work, with a number to show for it. The other three show what the earlier stages of the same path actually require, an institution capable of carrying the work past a single funding cycle, a measurement partner willing to say when results are not yet in, and a governance structure that gives the people who bear the risks a hand in the decisions.

None of the three earlier-stage cases claims otherwise, and that restraint is itself a finding. A model that only ever reports success tells a reader nothing about where it might fail. The Canadian case states outright that it “cannot claim to achieve the Framework's targets,” only to contribute to their implementation once results are documented. The Tunisian case reports no financing architecture and no measured outcome, and asks to be judged on the clarity of a model rather than on results “which remain to be built.” The Colombian case labels every one of its claimed contributions to nineteen targets as intended, to be verified once a baseline exists. Read against the Chinese case, which took more than two decades to move from rediscovery to a recovered population, that caution looks less like a weakness in the other three cases than like an accurate description of where they currently stand.

5. What This Means for COP17

This report has already argued, from the pattern across all thirty-three initiatives, that COP17 should recognize territory-rooted conservation in its indicators, direct financing to the scale at which results are actually produced, and treat these experiments as a reproducible method rather than as isolated stories. The four cases in this chapter turn each of those asks into a concrete test.

Recognition matters because three of the four cases, Canada, Tunisia and Colombia, are building exactly the kind of territory-level, multisectoral governance that current biodiversity indicators struggle to see: a resource region's own non-profit, a governorate's partnership with a heritage foundation, a proposed municipal advisory council. None of the three fits neatly into a national protected-area statistic, yet each is where the Framework's targets are actually being worked on the ground.

Financing at the scale of results matters because the gap in this chapter's own table is the clearest evidence for it. Only China, the case furthest along, has a financing instrument sized to match its results, RMB 40 million-plus already spent. Colombia has a costed ask still awaiting a decision. Canada and Tunisia have no documented financing model at all, not for lack of ambition but because the small-grant instruments their scale would need are largely absent from the current biodiversity-finance landscape. Closing that gap earlier, rather than waiting for a case to reach China's stage of maturity before it can be financed, is precisely what would let more of these territories complete the path.

Reproducibility matters because every one of the four cases has already done the work of naming its own transferable conditions, without being asked to in a uniform format. What survives the comparison, an anchor institution, an independent measurement partner, a named governance structure for the people who bear the risks, and a willingness to publish undesirable results alongside good ones, is not a coincidence of these four cases. It is a description of what COP17 would be recognizing, and financing, if it treated destination-based conservation as a method rather than a collection of anecdotes.

The four cases follow, each in the shared format used throughout this chapter: context, the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework in brief, the initiative, the territory, contribution to the targets, flagship components, financing, reproducibility, recommendations, and conclusion.

CASE STUDY — CANADA

Regenerating a Resource Region

Abitibi-Témiscamingue, Canada, as a Living Laboratory for Implementing the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework

Randa Napky

France Lemire

In Abitibi-Témiscamingue, mines, forests, farmland, lakes and eskers are all part of one inhabited territory. People work there, live there, and make decisions that touch the economy, biodiversity and community well-being all at once. Climate change, scientific research, and Indigenous cultures and knowledge add further layers to this reality. Yet responses to these challenges are still too often designed and carried out separately.

At the heart of the approach of the Pôle d'innovation régénérative (Regenerative Innovation Hub) lies a strategic question: how can a resource region move beyond simply reducing its impacts, and find, collectively, ways to progressively improve the state of its natural, social and cultural environments? This question is a working hypothesis that the Hub intends to explore with the territory's actors. It opens a space for experimentation, research and innovation for the benefit of ecosystems and communities.

KEY POINTS AT A GLANCE

Context — Abitibi-Témiscamingue is a Québec resource region where mining, forestry, agriculture, water and tourism share a single inhabited territory. COP17 is the first global review of collective progress under the KMGBF.

Initiative — The Pôle d'innovation régénérative grew out of a 2023-2028 sustainable-tourism reconfiguration and has broadened into a multisectoral territorial-regeneration approach. A first cohort of six enterprises and a public Demo Day (June 2026) were followed by the incorporation, in August 2026, of the Institut de régénération territoriale de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue as a non-profit organization to coordinate the approach region-wide.

Contribution — The Hub's mechanisms are presented as a possible contribution to KMGBF Targets 14 and 15, framed with deliberate caution: the Hub cannot claim to achieve the Framework's targets, only to support their implementation, and only insofar as results are documented.

Innovation — A single territorial infrastructure connects mining, forestry, agriculture and water actors with tourism, science (led by the Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue) and Anicinabek communities around one testable hypothesis for regeneration.

Status — Early stage. Mobilization, a first cohort and a founding governance structure are in place; the Hub does not yet present ecological results attributable to its action and is entering a demonstration phase running from 2026 to 2029.

Recommendation — COP17 is invited to recognize multisectoral, territory-scale innovation hubs governed with Indigenous and local partners as legitimate vehicles for KMGBF implementation, and to support the rigorous, science-based measurement on which their credibility depends.

1. Context: A Resource Region Is First an Inhabited Territory

Between 2023 and 2026, partners from different backgrounds came together around this question. The approach was brought to COP16; six enterprises were then selected and supported through a first cohort. On 18 June 2026, in Rouyn-Noranda, 90 people took part in the first Regenerative Innovation Day: a Demo Day, an innovation marketplace, a panel of existing initiatives and territorial-anchoring workshops. Building on this progress, the Institut de régénération territoriale de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue was incorporated as a non-profit organization in August 2026, giving the Hub a structure to steer and coordinate the approach across the entire region.

At this stage, the Hub is able to begin supporting field projects with a regenerative impact on biodiversity and to start measuring their effects at regional scale. It is building the territorial infrastructure needed to surface, test, support and measure regenerative innovations, connect initiatives more effectively, accelerate their development and strengthen the credibility of the approach. It also offers a platform to raise their visibility, foster synergies, support their durability and increase their potential for deployment at local, national and international scale.

COP17 will host the first global review of collective progress in implementing the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework. This moment invites a concrete question: how do international commitments take shape in a region where extraction, natural environments and communities coexist? The Hub brings an approach to examine and future learning; however it does not yet present ecological results attributable to its action.

At COP17, Abitibi-Témiscamingue therefore does not present itself as a territory that has already achieved its regeneration. It presents itself as a living laboratory of regenerative innovation that is creating the conditions to support, experiment, measure, document and scale solutions, and to share learnings that could contribute to the targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework.

> *The next challenge is clear: to move from mobilization to experimentation, from experimentation to measurement, and then from measurement to demonstration and scaling.*

Mines and forestry helped build the economy of Abitibi-Témiscamingue and the prosperity of Québec and Canada. Agriculture and water are also part of the region's history and daily life. But this territory is larger than its sectors of activity: people live here, communities maintain ties to places, ecosystems evolve, and decisions made today will weigh on everyone's future.

> *A resource region is first and foremost an inhabited territory.*

This idea, put forward by the Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue (UQAT) in its own reflection prepared for COP17, links five dimensions: biodiversity; resource development; communities; Indigenous territories, cultures and knowledge; and climate change. The challenge is not to choose one over the others, but to better govern their interactions. The approach therefore seeks neither to deny the region's economic vocation nor to systematically oppose development and biodiversity. It seeks to create mechanisms that allow actors to understand their interdependencies, surface solutions and projects, test them, and measure their results.

2. The Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework in Brief

Adopted on 19 December 2022 at COP15 in Montréal, the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) is the global reference for halting and reversing biodiversity loss through 2030, within a 2050 vision of living in harmony with nature. Its 23 action-oriented targets for 2030 fall into three groups: reducing threats to biodiversity (Targets 1-8), meeting

people's needs through sustainable use and benefit-sharing (Targets 9-13), and providing the tools and solutions for implementation (Targets 14-23), including mainstreaming biodiversity in policy and planning (Target 14) and business assessment and disclosure of biodiversity dependencies, risks and impacts (Target 15).

COP17, to be held in Yerevan in October 2026, is the first global review of collective progress toward the Framework's targets, at the mid-point of the 2022-2030 decade. It is against this backdrop that the Pôle d'innovation régénérative presents its own contribution: an approach still under construction, offered as a documented territorial experiment rather than a finished result.

3. The Initiative: From Regenerative Tourism to Territorial Regeneration

The Sustainable Tourism Reconfiguration in Abitibi-Témiscamingue 2023-2028, led by Tourisme Abitibi-Témiscamingue, placed community well-being at the heart of tourism action. It rested on four work areas: innovation, resource-pooling, biodiversity and identity. It also proposed to support innovative projects, create a tourism-biodiversity innovation hub, and increase dialogue with the region's major industries.

As the work progressed, a finding imposed itself: the conditions that allow a tourism destination to thrive extend well beyond tourism. The quality of natural environments, the vitality of communities, identity, innovation capacity, attractiveness and the relationship to the territory concern every development sector in the region.

The Hub, with the assistance of the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) and the MT Lab, thus moved from a project centred on regenerative tourism to a multisectoral territorial-regeneration approach. Tourism remains a lever for showcasing the territory and a mobilizing force, but the ambition is now broader: to create the conditions to strengthen biodiversity, community vitality, innovation capacity and the socioeconomic resilience of a resource region across all sectors.

A territorial innovation infrastructure

The Hub's draft 2026-2029 strategic framework proposes the following mission: “To bring together the driving forces from different sectors, to give rise to, test and propel innovative regenerative projects for biodiversity and community well-being.”

The Hub does not carry out a single environmental project. Its potential value lies in its ability to connect actors who often work separately. For a given project, one possible approach would be to define the problem and a starting situation with the people concerned; to co-design a solution and the conditions for testing it; to test it in the field; to measure its ecological and social effects, including undesirable ones; and then to decide, based on the results, whether to modify it, adopt it, or abandon it.

This sequence gives partners a concrete role: scientific expertise can inform method and evaluation; the Hub can facilitate collaboration and experimentation; and the organizations concerned can decide whether a practice deserves to be repeated. It describes a way of working still being built and documented, not a path already completed for every project the Hub supports.

Science as a condition of credibility

The word “regeneration” carries a risk: becoming an appealing intention that cannot be distinguished from environmental rhetoric. To avoid this trap, the strategic framework places integrity among the Hub's core values. Initiatives must start from local needs, be evaluated, and remain open to critique.

The scientific contribution of the Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue (UQAT) is therefore decisive. In its reflection prepared for COP17, the university identifies four conditions for credibility. It is not enough to describe a project as regenerative: the starting situation must be described, the intended changes defined, the results tracked, and the effects documented over time. UQAT holds expertise particularly relevant to this work, notably in mining and the environment, boreal forests, groundwater, agriculture and soils, and Indigenous studies and territorial governance.

The analysis will benefit from looking beyond restored area alone. Depending on the project, it can examine the state of ecosystems (water or habitats, for instance), practices actually changed, benefits defined together with communities, and the place of communities in decisions. These four dimensions, proposed in the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) working paper, are avenues for building the monitoring system, not a dashboard already adopted. Science is not meant to certify in advance the regenerative character of the Hub. It helps turn its intentions into testable hypotheses and its projects into measurable experiments.

4. The Territory: Why Abitibi-Témiscamingue, and Who Takes Part

Water marks the landscape of Abitibi-Témiscamingue: lakes, rivers, wetlands and groundwater, notably that fed by eskers. Boreal and mixed forests, farmland, and a subsoil rich in critical and strategic minerals also make up this territory. Each of these environments or resources matters, for human activity as much as for living things.

These resources give the Hub concrete issues to work on. Upstream of major watersheds, decisions concerning eskers, wetlands and water uses can have effects beyond a single site. In forest landscapes, production must contend with habitats, other land uses and climate-related disturbances. On farmland, soil and water health also condition the resilience of activities. These links make the region relevant for experimentation, but guarantee no gain: the problems, trade-offs and results will have to be established project by project.

Critical minerals make this tension particularly visible. They can serve energy-transition technologies, but their extraction also carries possible impacts on environments and land uses. Being classified as “critical” does not exempt a project from avoiding impacts where possible, from reducing them, from restoring affected environments, or from tracking results. The Hub can offer a space to work through these choices with the actors concerned.

The region also holds scientific and technical capacities directly tied to its realities. UQAT, the region's colleges and its regional organizations are developing expertise in mining and the environment, forests and biodiversity, agriculture and soils, groundwater, regional development and Indigenous studies. To this knowledge is added the knowledge and practices of Anicinabek communities, grounded in a long-standing relationship with the territory and the living world. Their participation cannot, however, be presumed or reduced to a source of expertise. It must be defined with the nations concerned, in accordance with their rights, their priorities and their governance of their own knowledge.

Residents' attachment to the region and their experience of collaboration can help bring together actors who do not always work with one another. The territory thus offers the Hub a demanding combination: environments to protect, economic activities to transform, and scientific and territorial knowledge to bring into dialogue. This is what makes Abitibi-Témiscamingue relevant for this experiment.

The participation of First Peoples

The Global Biodiversity Framework recognizes the rights, contributions, knowledge and participation of Indigenous peoples and local communities. This dimension requires a clear method and constant attention in the Hub's approach. The project's documents refer to Anicinabek communities, their knowledge and their relationship to the territory, and provide

for their presence within the Hub's ecosystem. This does not allow the Hub to speak in their name, nor to automatically present the approach as a model of Indigenous governance.

The University can support participation and capacity-building, but it does not speak for the nations.

The same principle must guide the Hub. The quality of participation cannot be judged by presence at the table alone. It also depends on participation in decisions, respect for rights, governance of knowledge and data, and communities' capacity to define their own priorities. To assess this participation, a few questions must accompany every project: who defines the issue to be resolved? Who bears the risks and who benefits from the results? Who makes decisions, and who is accountable for them? The answers will depend on each project and must be established with the nations and communities concerned.

5. Contribution to the KMGBF Targets

The Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework is a relevant reference for the Hub. Alignment must nonetheless be stated with caution. The Hub cannot claim to achieve the Framework's targets. Its mechanisms can instead contribute to their implementation, on the condition that results are documented.

Target	Official description	Case-study evidence
Target 14	Mainstreaming biodiversity in policies, planning and sectoral decisions	The Hub's territorial infrastructure is designed to connect mining, forestry, agriculture, water and tourism decision-makers around shared biodiversity and community well-being objectives, guided by science-based measurement led by UQAT.
Target 15	Business assessment and disclosure of biodiversity dependencies, risks and impacts, and action to reduce negative and increase positive impacts	Enterprises in the Hub's cohorts are supported and evaluated against ecological and social results, with a methodology that requires a baseline, defined outcomes and documented effects, positive and undesirable, before a practice can be considered for adoption or scaling.

The Hub can become a territorial mechanism for connection and experimentation in service of these ambitions. This contribution will, however, have to be established through results, and not only through intention or the number of partners mobilized.

6. Flagship Components

A. A first cohort and a public Demo Day. Six enterprises were selected and supported through the Hub's first cohort. On 18 June 2026, in Rouyn-Noranda, 90 people took part in the first Regenerative Innovation Day, combining a Demo Day, an innovation marketplace, a panel of existing initiatives and territorial-anchoring workshops.

B. A founding governance structure. In August 2026, the Institut de régénération territoriale de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue was incorporated as a non-profit organization, giving the Hub a structure able to steer and coordinate the approach across the entire region, built around four strategic work areas: governance, ecosystem, innovation and outreach.

C. A science-based measurement framework. UQAT's four conditions for credibility and CED's four proposed measurement dimensions (ecosystem state, changed practices, community-defined benefits, and community participation in decisions) together form the analytical backbone against which the Hub intends to evaluate every supported project.

D. A framework for First Peoples' participation. Anicinabek communities are present within the Hub's ecosystem, with participation to be defined, project by project, with the nations concerned, in accordance with their rights, priorities and governance of their own knowledge and data.

7. Financing Model and Replicability

A detailed financing model is not yet documented in the source materials. The Hub is led by an institutional partnership, Tourisme Abitibi-Témiscamingue, the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) and the MT Lab, and, since August 2026, by the Institut de régénération territoriale de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue, the non-profit organization now responsible for steering and coordinating the approach and, over time, for organizing its financing region-wide.

Based on the project's own account of what is acquired and what remains to be demonstrated, the conditions for replicating this model elsewhere are:

- A resource region where several sectors (extraction, forestry, agriculture, water, tourism) share one inhabited territory and a genuine interest in governing their interactions together.
- An anchor institution able to convene actors who do not normally plan together, and to sustain that convening beyond a single event.
- A research partner, comparable to UQAT, able to define credibility conditions and hold the measurement framework independent of the initiative's own communications.
- A governance structure, comparable to the Institut de régénération territoriale, able to carry the approach once initial mobilization and pilot cohorts are complete.
- A clear, rights-based method for Indigenous participation, defined with the nations concerned rather than presumed on their behalf.
- A willingness to report learnings, including disappointing ones, rather than only successes.

8. Recommendations for COP17 Delegates

This case study rests on three convictions that echo the recommendations the CED report as a whole brings to COP17 delegates: that indicators should recognize conservation forms rooted in territories, that financing should reach the scale at which results are produced, and that these experiments should be treated as a reproducible method rather than a one-off story. Applied to a multisectoral resource region such as Abitibi-Témiscamingue, this means:

- Recognize territorial, multisectoral innovation hubs, governed with Indigenous and local partners, as legitimate vehicles for KMGBF implementation in regions where extraction, natural environments and communities coexist.
- Direct financing to the scale at which results are produced and measured, rather than to the number of partners mobilized or events held.
- Require, as a condition of recognition, the rigour this case study sets for itself: a documented starting situation, a limited number of relevant indicators, tracked results over time, and transparent reporting of undesirable effects and trade-offs alongside successes.
- Support a clear, rights-based method for Indigenous participation, defined with the nations concerned, as a precondition rather than an afterthought of territorial biodiversity initiatives.

For its own experimentation, and for others considering this approach, the Hub proposes that each project should:

- establish a baseline before the intervention;
- define the intended ecological, social and economic results;
- select a limited number of relevant indicators;
- document positive effects, undesirable effects and trade-offs;
- track results over time;
- report learnings, including disappointing results;
- adapt or discontinue an intervention when results do not justify its continuation.

9. Conclusion and Next Steps

The credibility of this case study rests on a clear distinction between documented achievements, mechanisms under construction, and future results. The elements in this last category are not acquired results. They form the demonstration programme that is now opening, and that will run from 2026 to 2029.

Abitibi-Témiscamingue arrives at COP17 with questions drawn from its own territory: how to change the way resources are developed, care for natural environments, and better account for communities? The Hub comes to share the first steps of a collective response still under construction.

Since its origins in the reconfiguration of tourism, the Pôle d'innovation régénérative has brought together actors from different backgrounds, created partnerships, tested a first open-innovation process, and laid the foundations of autonomous territorial governance. It is now entering a new phase: that of proof.

The Hub's hypothesis is that a resource region can create a territorial infrastructure in which science, innovation, businesses, institutions, communities and First Peoples help surface and test solutions capable of progressively improving the state of the territory and the well-being of communities. This hypothesis remains to be demonstrated. That is precisely what gives value to the experience.

The Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework cannot be implemented by international commitments alone. It requires the participation of governments, Indigenous peoples and local communities, the private sector, the scientific community and civil society. Territories are one of the places where this convergence must become concrete.

> *The Hub's ambition is to make Abitibi-Témiscamingue a territory that experiments, measures, learns and shares, so that it will be able, tomorrow, to demonstrate what really works.*

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Key Terms

Term	Definition
Pôle d'innovation régénérative	Regenerative Innovation Hub; the multisectoral territorial initiative this case study describes, grown out of a regenerative-tourism project into a region-wide approach covering mining, forestry, agriculture, water and tourism.
Institut de régénération territoriale de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue	The non-profit organization incorporated in August 2026 to steer and coordinate the Hub's approach across the region.
UQAT	Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue; the Hub's scientific partner, responsible for defining conditions of credibility and supporting measurement.
Anicinabek	Indigenous nations with a long-standing relationship to the Abitibi-Témiscamingue territory; their participation in the Hub is to be defined with them, project by project.
KMGBF / CMB	Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework, adopted at COP15 (Montréal, December 2022).
Regenerative Innovation Day	The Hub's first public gathering, held in Rouyn-Noranda on 18 June 2026, combining a Demo Day, an innovation marketplace, a panel and workshops.

CASE STUDY — TUNISIA

When Water Connects Heritage and Nature

The Téboursouk-Dougga Initiative, Tunisia — Restoring Historic Springs as a Contribution to the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework

Jamel Gamra
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In north-western Tunisia, on the slopes of the Dorsale range, at an altitude of 400 metres, the small town of Téboursouk overlooks the olive groves of the Oued Khalled valley. It preserves a pentagonal Byzantine wall built under the reign of Justin II (565-578) and lies a few kilometres from Dougga, 65 hectares of Roman city, more than forty monuments, inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1997 and described in official regional planning documents as "weakly integrated and valorized within tourism circuits."

KEY POINTS AT A GLANCE

Context — COP17 (Yerevan, 19-30 October 2026) is the first global review of the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) since its adoption in December 2022. Tunisia is among the ten countries least endowed with water resources in the world, and its water stress index rose from 66% in 2000 to 129% in 2023.

Initiative — The Téboursouk-Dougga Initiative, in the Béja governorate (north-western Tunisia), makes the restoration of a network of historic and natural springs (aïns) the entry point for regenerating ecosystems, reactivating a World Heritage destination whose tourism potential remains underdeveloped, and strengthening the dynamic capacities of local actors.

Contribution — The initiative is formally aligned by its contributor with nine KMGBF targets: Targets 2, 9, 14, 20 and 22 as primary contributions, and Targets 3, 8, 19 and 21 as complementary ones, covering all three thematic groups of the Framework.

Innovation — Water is treated not as an input consumed by tourism, but as a common good that tourism helps to protect. The proposed "Water Springs Route" makes the springs simultaneously a target of ecological restoration and biodiversity conservation, a cultural narrative, and an economic reason to maintain and valorize them.

Status — The initiative is presented at the design and mobilization stage. The source documentation establishes the territorial diagnosis, the governance coalition and the intervention logic; it does not yet report implementation results, which remain to be documented.

Recommendation — COP17 is invited to recognize this approach as a reproducible territorial model and to support the documentation, networking and financing of similar initiatives, particularly in the Mediterranean and in Africa.

1. Context: COP17 and a Territory Under Water Stress

From 19 to 30 October 2026, Yerevan hosts the seventeenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. At the midpoint of the 2022-2030 decade, COP17 is called upon to examine implementation rather than negotiate new commitments, which gives particular value to documented territorial experiences.

Tunisia approaches this review under acute hydrological pressure. The country ranks among the ten least water-endowed states in the world and among the thirty-three most severely affected by water stress; per capita mobilized water endowment is projected to fall from roughly 500 m^3/inhabitant/year to some 427 m^3 by 2050 according to the reference

assessment, with warming of +1.1°C by 2030 and +2°C by 2050 and a working assumption of a 28% reduction in water resources. Tunisia's draft 7th national report to the CBD records a water stress index rising from 66% in 2000 to 129% in 2023, and notes that only 57% of the population uses safely managed drinking water, 65% in urban areas but only 41% in rural areas.

The Téboursouk delegation concentrates these pressures. It records 401 mm of annual rainfall, the lowest total among the nine delegations of the Béja governorate, with zero rainfall in July and August; it has no large dam and counts 2 hillside dams, 11 hillside lakes, 245 surface wells and 39 boreholes; some 22,200 of its 40,175 hectares are exposed to water erosion; and, like most delegations in the governorate, it disposes of its waste in an uncontrolled landfill identified as a source of groundwater pollution. Téboursouk's small private irrigated perimeters are, according to the same source, developed precisely “thanks to spring and well water.”

2. The Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework in Brief, and Tunisia's Implementation Gaps

Adopted on 19 December 2022 at COP15, the KMGBF is the global reference for biodiversity action through 2030, within a 2050 vision. Its mission is to halt and reverse biodiversity loss and put nature on a path to recovery; its 23 targets are organized into three groups: reducing threats (1 to 8), meeting people's needs through sustainable use and benefit-sharing (9 to 13), and tools and solutions for implementation and mainstreaming (14 to 23).

Tunisia has revised its National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan in line with the Framework, integrating 23 national targets, and indicates that it is on track for only three of them (Targets 1, 2 and 8), with the others progressing at an insufficient pace or not at all. Three gaps are directly relevant to this case study: no national biodiversity monitoring system has been established; Target 21, on knowledge- and data-sharing, records no progress, and the platform envisaged by the 2018-2030 strategy was never created; and participation mechanisms remain “mainly consultative, with limited influence over the final decision.”

WHY A NETWORK OF SPRINGS IS A STRATEGIC OBJECT FOR THE KMGBF

Tunisia's 7th national report contains no inventory of springs, nor any spring-specific ecological data; the status of free-flowing rivers is assessed there as showing “very weak” progress, with free-flowing conditions nearly absent outside rainy years. The report nonetheless records that the mineral-water industry alone has preserved 2,365 hectares of spring catchment areas and mobilized 73 municipalities, proof that catchment protection is an operational and measurable conservation practice in Tunisia. The national water study, for its part, recommends enshrining aquifers and their recharge zones, mountains, forests, and wadi beds in the Water Code as “a national heritage to be protected.” Téboursouk offers a documented site where this recommendation can be tested at a territorial scale.

3. The Initiative: Water as the Organizing Principle of a Destination

- Regeneration of water and ecosystems. Restore and valorize historic springs, local hydraulic systems and associated biodiversity, and promote their long-term sustainable management and protection.
- Regenerative tourism and heritage. Develop a “Water Springs Route” connecting the region's historic springs to the archaeological heritage of Dougga, to the landscapes and to local knowledge, so that tourism supports the conservation and visibility of water resources while the springs diversify the destination's cultural offering.

- Collaborative governance and dynamic capacities. Mobilize communities, authorities, academia and partners through co-development, to build sustainable local dynamic capacities for innovation, adaptation and collective action.

> “Beyond the restoration of historic springs and water-related ecosystems, the initiative aims to build the dynamic capacities of local actors. These will make it possible to respond collectively to current challenges, by anticipating change, seizing opportunities and mobilizing resources. They will also constitute a lasting asset for meeting the territory's future challenges.”
>
> *— Téboursouk-Dougga Initiative, project summary*

The conceptual shift is precise. In Tunisian water policy, tourism appears almost exclusively as a consumer: national guidelines recommend siting tourism zones according to local water availability and making tourism uses bear the real economic cost of the resource. The Téboursouk-Dougga Initiative reverses this relationship. Because the springs are what the visitor comes to see, their ecological condition becomes the destination's central asset rather than its constraint, and their upkeep acquires an economic clientele from within the territory itself.

The initiative's first tangible deliverable is a georeferenced and documented mapping of the water springs of the Téboursouk region. An initial inventory of ten springs, Aïn Nachra, Aïn Karma, Aïn Fort Byzantin, Aïn Meska, Aïn Lamlouma, Aïn Abayer, Aïn Ouled Kheder Ben Hadid, Aïn Fawar, Aïn Meliti and Aïn Jebel Gorraa (names established by consensus among residents interviewed), has been completed and published as an open, publicly accessible map layer, accompanied by photographic documentation of the state of the catchments. Beyond simple location, the approach aims to progressively characterize and classify these springs according to their different territorial values and functions: historical and heritage value, uses and importance for local populations, agricultural and environmental role, tourism potential, and therapeutic properties or uses where these can be documented. This mapping thus constitutes an evolving knowledge base, making it possible to identify priority springs to preserve, restore or valorize and to guide future territorial projects. In a context where the national biodiversity report records no specific inventory of springs and no operational platform for sharing this data, this initiative constitutes a concrete, open and reproducible contribution to Target 21, by improving the availability and accessibility of the knowledge needed for the conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity.

4. The Territory: Governance and Pressures on the Water Network

The project's governance is carried by the Governorate of Béja and the municipality of Téboursouk, one of the first municipalities created in the governorate, in 1904, in collaboration with the Ben Abbès Tunisia Foundation, engaged in cultural heritage valorization and territorial development, and with CED. It rests on a participatory, multi-actor approach, bringing together local institutions, communities, economic and agricultural actors, academia and civil society.

This governance can draw on a mechanism already provided for under Tunisian law: the Agricultural Development Groups (GDA). Established by Law No. 99-43 of 10 May 1999, they bring together owners and users of natural resources around collective, local management. National water policy also recommends strengthening the autonomy of GDAs and of the Regional Commissariats for Agricultural Development (CRDA) in local water management.

Pressures documented on the springs and their catchments

- Physical degradation and pollution of catchments, attested by the initiative's own photographic survey and consistent with the regional finding that Téboursouk's waste is disposed of at an uncontrolled landfill site, adversely affecting groundwater quality.

- Severe water erosion affecting about half of the delegation, Téboursouk ranking among the three most severely affected delegations in the governorate, with localized exposure to landslides.
- Quarrying in the recharge massifs, a practice the national water study denounces for the destruction of natural recharge areas it causes.
- Declining and increasingly erratic rainfall, in a delegation already the driest in the governorate, under a national projection of a 28% reduction in resources.

BOX — A PROVEN MODEL NEARBY: DJEBBA

On the northern slope of Jebel Gorraa, in the neighbouring delegation of Thibar and on the road leading to Téboursouk, the village of Djebba, the ancient Thiggiba Bure, is built at the edge of a ravine where springs cascade to form a small wadi. Its hanging gardens, cultivated in plots of less than one hectare and preserving fourteen fig varieties, were designated Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) by the FAO in 2020, and the designation for Djebba figs is one of only two protected designations Tunisia invokes under its partial protection of traditional knowledge. Djebba demonstrates, in the same landscape and on the road to Téboursouk, that spring-fed heritage agro-ecosystems can achieve international recognition there. It is the most immediate reference, partner and quality benchmark for the Téboursouk spring network. Jebel Gorraa is also identified as an active limestone quarrying area north-west of Téboursouk, the massif that lends its name to one of the inventoried springs, Aïn Jebel Gorraa.

5. Contribution to the KMGBF Targets

The alignment below is the one formally declared by the contributor, read against the official KMGBF text and the implementation status reported by Tunisia itself. The contributions are presented as intended contributions at the design stage; no measured results are yet available.

Group 1 — Reducing threats to biodiversity

Target	Official description	Case-study evidence
Target 2	Ecosystem restoration	Restore degraded historic springs together with associated hydrological ecosystems and biodiversity. Tunisia's national target is 15% of degraded terrestrial and inland-water ecosystems restored by 2030; Béja is already a priority governorate for large-scale landscape restoration through the AfDB-financed PARFD project (USD 23.72 million, 33,200 ha).
Target 3	Area-based conservation	Spring catchments and their recharge zones can be protected through community management, complementing a national protected-area network that has gained no surface area since 2010 and whose connectivity in the north-west is the subject of a WWF-DGF initiative launched in 2025.
Target 8	Climate resilience	Restoring springs and their catchments in a delegation receiving 401 mm of rain, combined with anti-erosion measures on the slopes, constitutes a nature-based solution to the projected reduction in water resources.

Group 2 — Sustainable use and benefit-sharing

Target	Official description	Case-study evidence
Target 9	Sustainable use and local benefits	The Water Springs Route converts the conservation of vulnerable water resources into local income, in a territory where 50,000 annual visitors to Dougga generate almost no local accommodation economy. Tunisia's National Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy 2035 and the EU-GIZ Tounes Wajhatouna programme provide the public policy anchors.

Group 3 — Tools and solutions for implementation

Target	Official description	Case-study evidence
Target 14	Mainstreaming in policy	Integrate water and biodiversity regeneration into territorial, heritage and tourism strategies. Tunisia assesses its own mainstreaming performance as weak and reports no success story for this target, a gap this initiative intends to fill at territorial scale.
Target 19	Resource mobilization	Combine municipal and governorate resources, national restoration programmes, tourism revenue and international cooperation. Relevant instruments include the MEDGIRE integrated water-resource management project for the Medjerda basin and the BIOFIN national biodiversity financing plan under preparation.
Target 20	Capacity-building	Building the dynamic capacities of local actors is a central lever of the initiative. It aims to strengthen their ability to anticipate change, mobilize knowledge and resources, seize opportunities, innovate and adapt their actions to territorial change. This will draw notably on a co-development approach, implemented through periodic Mastermind sessions fostering collective learning, experience-sharing and collaborative problem-solving, in a national context where the transfer of research knowledge to territories remains limited.
Target 21	Knowledge and data	The georeferenced, open inventory of springs responds to a national gap: Tunisia reports no progress on Target 21 and has no biodiversity data platform.
Target 22	Participation and equity	Establish collaborative governance bringing together communities, farmers, institutions, academia and civil society, in response to Tunisia's own finding of participation that remains mainly consultative and very limited access by women to farmland and income.

6. Flagship Components

A. Inventory and diagnosis of the springs. Georeferenced mapping and photographic documentation of the ten identified springs, published as an open map layer. This inventory establishes the baseline against which restoration can be measured and constitutes the initiative's contribution to public biodiversity data.

B. Restoration and protection of catchments. Rehabilitation of catchment structures, waste removal and protection of the recharge zones of the surrounding massifs, applying at local scale the national recommendation to treat aquifers and their recharge zones as protected national heritage, as well as the measurable catchment-protection approach already practised in Tunisia.

C. The Water Springs Route. An interpretive itinerary connects the springs to Dougga, to the Byzantine wall of Téboursouk and to the surrounding agricultural landscape. It introduces visitors to water-related uses and traditions, local know-how, gastronomy and hydro-cultural landscapes, through a narrative that guides the visitor from spring to spring. Regional planning already describes a southern cultural circuit running from Téboursouk to Dougga, to Jebel Gorraa and Djebba, then to Aïn Tounga and Testour, an existing backbone to which the spring network adds a continuous natural, cultural and hydrological narrative.

D. Collaborative governance and capacity-building. Co-development with communities, authorities, academia and partners, notably through Mastermind sessions fostering collective learning and problem-solving. The approach also draws on the GDA framework for the collective management of springs, involves local economic and agricultural actors, and pays particular attention to the participation of women and young people.

7. Financing, Replicability and Transferable Lessons

The initiative's financial architecture is not yet documented in the sources available. The national environment is nonetheless favourable and quantified: international public biodiversity financing in Tunisia averaged USD 68.64 million per year over 2015-2022; 81.5% of Tunisia's GEF biodiversity allocation remains unprogrammed; a national BIOFIN biodiversity financing plan is in preparation; and the MEDGIRE project targets the conservation and restoration of wetlands and water-related ecosystems in the Medjerda basin, the watershed that structures the Béja governorate. Converting these flows into territorial action requires precisely what this initiative produces: a documented site, a constituted local coalition and a measurable object of restoration.

Four features make the approach transferable to other heritage destinations facing water stress, in the Mediterranean, Africa, the Middle East and beyond:

- A water heritage to preserve, valorize and share. A spring is at once an ecosystem, a monument, a livelihood and a memory. It lowers the entry cost of biodiversity action and gives heterogeneous actors a single object to rally around.
- Pairing an underperforming heritage asset with an under-protected natural asset. Dougga has visitors but no local economy; the springs have local importance but no visibility. Each supplies what the other lacks.
- Documentation as the first deliverable. The open mapping precedes investment, creating both a baseline for monitoring and a public good in a national system that lacks one.
- Capacities rather than structures. The intended outcome is a territory able to keep adapting after the project ends, the condition most often missing where restored infrastructure subsequently degrades.

8. Recommendations for COP17 Delegates

To national governments

Recognize historic and natural springs and their recharge zones as a distinct category of inland-water heritage within National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, and grant them legal protection, following through on the existing national recommendation to enshrine aquifers and their recharge zones in water legislation as protected national heritage. Allow local water-user organizations to hold management mandates over restored springs.

To the CBD Secretariat

Support the documentation of springs and small freshwater ecosystems as a reporting category, currently absent from national reports; and facilitate exchanges between heritage destinations engaged in water-centred regeneration, in partnership with CED.

To destination managers and the tourism sector

Treat water not as an operating input but as a shared heritage asset whose condition is part of the proposition made to the visitor, and site and design tourism development according to local water availability.

To financial partners

Create small-grant windows suited to spring-scale restoration. Tunisia's largely unprogrammed GEF biodiversity allocation illustrates a recurring mismatch between available financing and the scale of territorial projects.

KEY RECOMMENDATION FOR COP17 DECISION-MAKERS

Historic springs constitute a natural, cultural and social heritage that remains little documented and insufficiently valorized. The Téboursouk-Dougga Initiative shows that mapping and regenerating them can become a concrete lever for biodiversity, water resilience and community mobilization. COP17 is invited to recognize this approach as a reproducible territorial model and to support the documentation, networking and financing of similar initiatives, particularly in the Mediterranean and in Africa.

9. Conclusion and Next Steps

The Téboursouk-Dougga Initiative responds to a common and rarely named situation: a territory rich in world-class heritage and living water, which is losing its population, captures little value from either, and watches both degrade. Its proposition is that the springs are the connective tissue, ecological, cultural and economic, through which the destination can be regenerated, and that the lasting outcome is not a set of restored structures but a local coalition able to keep adapting. At COP17, its value lies less in results obtained, which remain to be built, than in the clarity of a model that many territories could adopt at modest cost.

Next steps to be confirmed with the initiative's partners

- Complete the ecological and hydrological diagnosis of the ten inventoried springs: flow, water quality and associated biodiversity.
- Formalize the governance framework and the role of local water-user organizations, with documented participation of women and young people.

- Develop the dynamic capacities of local actors, notably through co-development and periodic Mastermind sessions, to build a lasting, mobilizable collective capacity for future territorial challenges.
- Establish baseline indicators aligned with the KMGBF monitoring framework, along with a financing plan.
- Pilot a first stretch of the Water Springs Route, connected to Dougga and the existing southern cultural circuit.
- Report documented results at COP18 in 2028, in a spirit of accountability and transparency.

Key Terms

Term	Definition
KMGBF	Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework, adopted at COP15 (Montréal, December 2022), the global roadmap for biodiversity 2022-2030.
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity, ratified by Tunisia through Law No. 93-45 of 3 May 1993.
CED	World Centre of Excellence for Destinations, an international organization supporting tourism destinations on their path to excellence.
COP17	Seventeenth Conference of the Parties to the CBD, Yerevan, Armenia, 19-30 October 2026.
Aïn	Arabic term designating a natural spring; the base element of most place names in the Téboursouk spring network.
GDA	Agricultural Development Group, a Tunisian structure for local collective management of natural resources, established by Law No. 99-43 of 10 May 1999.
SPANB	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan; Tunisia's was revised in 2025 to align with the KMGBF.
GIAHS	Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (FAO), held by the hanging gardens of Djebba El Olia since 2020.
Dougga	Roman city of 65 ha with more than 40 monuments, near Téboursouk; inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1997.

Case study prepared by the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED)

Contribution to the project: Jamel Gamra — Téboursouk-Dougga, Tunisia — Presented at COP17, Yerevan, Armenia, October 2026 | www.ced.travel

CASE STUDY — COLOMBIA

From COP16 Host City to Living Laboratory

The Farallones Regenerative Tourism Innovation Hub, Santiago de Cali, Colombia — Applying the SMED-Ecological Civilization Framework to Contribute to the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework

Álvaro Llano Ulloa
Adolfo Castro Dominguez

Farallones National Natural Park is the largest protected area of the Valle del Cauca department, covering 197,753 hectares of the Western Cordillera of the Colombian Andes across the municipalities of Buenaventura, Jamundí, Dagua and Santiago de Cali. Located in the Chocó Biogeographic Region, it holds four vegetation formations: humid sub-Andean, Andean and high-Andean forest, and páramo. This ecosystem diversity translates into nearly 626 bird, 111 amphibian, 75 reptile and 98 mammal species. The park covers 23% of the territory of Santiago de Cali's municipality, and six of the seven rivers that cross the city originate within it.

The park is also under pressure. Illegal gold mining, agricultural and livestock expansion and, increasingly, unregulated tourism degrade sensitive habitats, while the communities living at its edge lack the training, income opportunities and institutional support that would allow conservation to become a livelihood. The Farallones Hub responds to this situation with a commitment consistent with the spirit of COP16: that a mega-diverse protected area on the doorstep of a large city can become a living laboratory where tourism, guided by rigorous metrics and community participation, regenerates rather than consumes biodiversity.

KEY POINTS AT A GLANCE

Context — COP17 (Yerevan, 19–30 October 2026) is the first formal global review of the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) since its adoption at COP15 in December 2022. Two years earlier, Santiago de Cali hosted COP16 under the theme “Peace with Nature.” The Farallones Hub carries that momentum from negotiation into territorial implementation.

Initiative — The Farallones Regenerative Tourism Innovation Hub is a three-year project (2027–2029) proposed to the Kunming Biodiversity Fund (KBF) for USD 1.5 million, led by CED through UNEP and currently at the concept-development stage. It will incubate 45 nature-based tourism ventures, in three annual cohorts of 15, in the rural corregimientos of Cali that overlap with Farallones National Natural Park, guided by the SMED-Ecological Civilization framework.

Contribution — The project concept note associates the Hub with 19 of the 23 KMGBF targets and with four KBF thematic areas (1, 2, 3 and 7). Its most direct contributions concern sustainable use for people's benefit (Target 9), biodiversity mainstreaming (Target 14), finance (Target 19), capacity-building (Target 20), knowledge (Target 21) and the participation of local and indigenous communities (Target 22).

Innovation — The Hub adapts the SMED-Ecological Civilization framework, a territory-based metrics system, to a tropical biodiversity hotspot adjoining a large city, and links incubation, municipal decision-making and biodiversity monitoring within a single architecture. A twinning with the Abitibi-Témiscamingue Regenerative Innovation Hub (Canada) creates a North-South learning loop.

Status — The Hub is at the design stage. This case study presents a documented proposal, its rationale and its intended results; implementation outcomes are not yet available.

Recommendation — COP17 is invited to recognize city-protected-area innovation hubs guided by a territorial metrics system as a replicable mechanism for subnational KMGBF implementation, and to support the Farallones model as a reference for the Chocó Biogeographic Region.

1. Context: COP17 and the Moment of Truth for Biodiversity

From 19 to 30 October 2026, Yerevan will be hosting the seventeenth Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity. Unlike previous COPs, which primarily negotiated and refined commitments, COP17 is called upon to answer a single question: are the world's nations keeping their promises? It will process national reports and voluntary reviews to draw a global picture of implementation, identify gaps and course-correct at the mid-point of the 2022–2030 decade. The IPBES Global Assessment (2019), the scientific cornerstone of the KMGBF, established that roughly 25% of evaluated species are threatened with extinction and that all five direct drivers of loss (land and sea use change, direct exploitation, climate change, pollution and invasive alien species) remain active.

For Colombia and for Cali, COP17 follows directly on COP16. Held in Cali in October 2024 under the theme “Peace with Nature”, COP16 positioned the city as a global reference for biodiversity conservation and as the regional capital of biodiversity. Its public “Green Zone,” built around environmental education, received more than 900,000 visits, and the conference brought nearly 15,500 official tourists and a further 23,600 day visitors to the local economy. Under this impetus the city adopted the Cali Sustainable Master Plan, a long-term policy that seeks to reduce emissions by 67% by 2050 and that includes the first Local Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (LBSAP) adopted by a municipality in Colombia, the instrument through which a subnational government plans for biodiversity and contributes to its NBSAP and to the global targets.

Tourism sits at the heart of this debate. Poorly managed, it consumes and degrades the landscapes it depends on; well directed, it becomes a vector for conservation, environmental education and biodiversity financing. Farallones illustrates both sides: although ecotourism is permitted and regulated within Colombia's national parks (Resolution 0531 of 2013), the park has no consolidated tourism regulation, monitoring or management framework, visitor numbers have risen sharply (a report of the Personería del Pueblo estimates that they could reach 80,000 per year), and the National Park Authority has publicly warned of ecosystem degradation caused by visitors entering non-authorized areas. COP17 is therefore an opportunity to examine a model that seeks to convert this pressure into a regenerative asset.

“The SMED-Ecological Civilization framework will help guide the decision-making of the Farallones Hub and the Chocó Biogeographic Region, strengthening planning processes so that biodiversity becomes a valued asset capable of generating tourism revenues and fostering local innovation.”

— Farallones Hub Project Concept Note, Introduction

2. The Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework in Brief

Adopted on 19 December 2022 at COP15 in Montréal, the KMGBF is the global reference for the protection and restoration of biodiversity through 2030, within a 2050 vision of “a world living in harmony with nature.” Its four 2050 goals address ecosystem integrity and the halting of extinctions (Goal A), the sustainable use of biodiversity and nature's

contributions to people (Goal B), the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources (Goal C) and the means of implementation (Goal D), with Target 19 mobilizing USD 200 billion per year by 2030.

Its 23 action-oriented targets for 2030 fall into three groups. Group 1 (Targets 1–8) reduces threats to biodiversity: biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning (T1), restoration of at least 30% of degraded ecosystems (T2), the "30x30" conservation target (T3), pollution reduction (T7) and climate resilience through nature-based solutions (T8). Group 2 (Targets 9–13) meets people's needs through sustainable use and benefit sharing, including the sustainable use of wild species for people's benefit (T9), sustainable agriculture and forestry (T10), nature's contributions to people (T11) and nature in cities (T12). Group 3 (Targets 14–23) provides the tools for implementation: mainstreaming biodiversity in all policies (T14), corporate responsibility (T15), finance (T19), capacity-building and technology transfer (T20), access to information and knowledge (T21), the inclusion of indigenous peoples and local communities (T22) and gender equality (T23).

KEY POINT FOR DECISION-MAKERS — THE KUNMING BIODIVERSITY FUND AND ECOLOGICAL CIVILIZATION

The Kunming Biodiversity Fund (KBF) is a multi-partner trust fund established primarily to support developing countries in accelerating and upscaling their actions under their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, with a particular emphasis on the implementation of the KMGBF. The KBF can only finance UN entities; for the Farallones Hub, the channel identified is UNEP. The Fund's thematic areas targeted by the Hub are: biodiversity mainstreamed into policies, regulations, planning and strategies (1); sustainable use of biodiversity enhanced (2); biodiversity mainstreamed among businesses and consumers (3); and strengthened resource mobilization (7).

The theme of COP15 under the Chinese Presidency was "Ecological Civilization: Building a Shared Future for All Life on Earth." Its six principles (harmony between people and nature; "lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets"; a sound natural environment as universal welfare; mountains, rivers, forests, fields, lakes as one life community; strict regulation; and international cooperation) frame the Farallones Hub's approach to valuing biodiversity as a development asset.

3. The Initiative: A Territorial Incubation Model Guided by Metrics

The World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) is an international organization that supports tourism destinations on their path to excellence. Its System of Measures for Excellence in Destinations (SMED) is a structured, multi-dimensional framework for assessing, planning and improving destination performance across four fields: sustainable development, economic viability, market positioning and visitor experience, and governance and management. The project outline on which this case study is based is the first deliverable of a consultancy carried out with CED to structure the Hub for submission to the KBF in 2026.

Naming the paradox in order to overcome it

Nearly a quarter of the territory of Santiago de Cali lies within a mega-diverse national park. For the communities of the seven rural corregimientos that overlap with the park, this proximity has so far produced more pressure than opportunity: tourism grows without regulation, economic alternatives remain limited, and the value created by visitors is not measured. The Hub's response is to treat the biodiversity of Farallones not as a constraint to be policed but as the territory's primary competitive asset, on the condition that its use is guided by measurement, governed with the communities and designed to regenerate ecosystems rather than only to sustain them.

An ecosystem of actors

The Hub is designed as a place of convergence between actors that rarely plan together. The municipal Department of Environment (DAGMA) and the Department of Tourism of Santiago de Cali bring the policy instruments and the environmental authority. The management of Farallones National Natural Park represents the protected area. Local, peasant, Afro-descendant and indigenous communities hold cultural and subsistence ties to the territory and preserve ancestral knowledge. Among them, landowners registered under the Payments for Environmental Services (PES) programme are a priority group because they are already identified by local institutions, maintain close relations with the authorities and actively conserve their land. Cali's more than 20 higher-education institutions and the regional tourism information system (SITUR) provide research and incubation capacity, alongside the business sector and civil society. CED and the City of Santiago de Cali are identified as co-funding sources, and UNEP as an implementing channel.

These actors are to be brought together in a Hub Advisory Council, with operational protocols ensuring free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) and benefit-sharing mechanisms for local communities, and its plan of action guided by the SMED baseline findings.

A three-phase model of operation

Framework adaptation and baseline. The SMED-Ecological Civilization framework is adapted to the local context, a comprehensive baseline assessment is produced, and monitoring protocols are established with DAGMA and the Department of Tourism, whose staff are trained to use the matrix.

Incubation in three annual cohorts. Beneficiaries are selected through a public call. Each cohort of 15 ventures receives coworking space, group mentoring sessions of approximately four hours, pitch training, and an upgrading incentive invested according to an advisor-approved strengthening plan, closing with an official ceremony. Competitions target nature-based solutions: ecotourism, value-added biodiversity products and conservation technology.

Data, knowledge and projection. Two analysts collect, process and disseminate statistics, trends and indicators on regenerative tourism in Cali, and lessons are documented for the CBD clearing-house mechanism. A commercial mission takes ventures to international markets, and the twinning with the Abitibi-Témiscamingue Hub organizes staff exchanges, site visits, comparative analysis and shared monitoring frameworks.

The choice of a hub rather than a single grant programme is deliberate: it allows the same metrics to serve three purposes, selecting and guiding ventures, informing municipal planning across environment, economic development and tourism agencies, and reporting on biodiversity outcomes. It also gives regenerative tourism an institutional home within the municipality.

THE SMED-ECOLOGICAL CIVILIZATION FRAMEWORK: HOW IT WORKS

SMED process. A five-step cycle: a Destination Profile Questionnaire; a customized SMED questionnaire built on the four fields and 11 categories; an on-site visit by expert evaluators; a confidential report with qualitative analysis per field, comparative studies and recommendations for the short term (1–2 years) and long term (3–5 years); and follow-up for continuous improvement, with each destination joining a confidentiality-protected worldwide database.

Integration with Ecological Civilization. For Farallones, SMED is aligned with the six Ecological Civilization principles and adapted to a tropical biodiversity hotspot in an urban-protected-area context. The resulting territory-based metrics system produces a baseline, guides the Hub's Advisory Council and the selection and mentoring of ventures, and is transferred to DAGMA through monitoring protocols and staff training.

4. The Territory: Farallones National Natural Park and Santiago de Cali

The park lies in the Western Cordillera of the Andes; almost 80% of its area falls within the municipality of Buenaventura, the remainder within Jamundí, Dagua and Cali. Its cloud forests and páramos supply water to much of Valle del Cauca. The area of intervention of the Hub includes the seven corregimientos of the municipality of Santiago de Cali that overlap with the park: Pichindé, Los Andes, La Leonera, Pance, La Buitrera, Villacarmelo and Felidia. Currently only certain sectors of the park are open to tourism: Pico de Loro, Pance, El Topacio, Charco Burbujas and the Anchicayá River Canyon, while the rest is restricted.

Municipality	Area within the park (ha)	Share of park
Buenaventura	157,614	79.61%
Jamundí	14,032	7.20%
Dagua	13,573	6.85%
Santiago de Cali	12,534	6.34%

Source: Informe Situacional PNN Farallones de Cali (2019).

The social context is one of contrasts. Cali combines a dynamic business ecosystem and a dense university network with rural settlements that have limited access to roads, health and education. The rural communities are engaged in active processes of nature tourism, environmental education and conservation, but face a lack of local jobs that drives migration, informality and economic vulnerability. In addition, a history of armed conflict and illicit economies has affected social cohesion and security. Institutional capacity to support, train and strengthen community organizations is low, and interest in nature tourism is growing faster than the infrastructure and technical skills to serve it.

Governance has improved, but remains insufficient. The Farallones Plan, launched in December 2024, is a joint strategy of local, regional and national institutions and academia to promote environmental governance and community participation and to address illegal mining and deforestation; the National Council for the Fight Against Deforestation (CONALDEF) has played a central role in its implementation. On the tourism side, the city has adopted a Public Tourism Policy, a Rural and Nature Tourism Plan and, most recently, the Pance Tourism Master Plan. Yet coordination between institutions, communities and environmental authorities remains limited, and there is no robust public data on how much tourism income or employment reaches local people, on site-level visitation, or on biodiversity trends that could be linked to tourism planning.

BOX — A POLICY FRAMEWORK READY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The Hub does not start from a policy vacuum. At national level, Colombia's National Policy for the Integrated Management of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (PNGIBSE), the Biodiversity Action Plan to 2030, the Sustainable Tourism Policy Unidos por la Naturaleza and the Tourism Sector Plan 2022–2026 set the direction. At regional level, the Valle del Cauca Regional Environmental Management Plan 2015–2036 and the Comprehensive Climate Change Plan apply. At local level, the Land-Use Planning Master Plan (POT) designates Farallones as a conservation priority within the Municipal Ecological Structure. Similarly, the Cali Sustainable Master Plan, including its LBSAP and its Cali Azul-Verde nature-based solutions strategy, the Ecological Restoration Plan, the Nature Tourism Plan and the Pance Tourism Master Plan provide the operational instruments. Green Business certifications and the PES programme complete the set. The Hub's role is to bridge these policies and their implementation on the ground.

Biodiversity pressures the Hub responds to

- Illegal gold mining and chemical contamination, including mercury, threatening páramo ecosystems and the rivers that supply Cali. Several illegal mines have been closed, but the problem persists, and restoration of mining-degraded areas requires multi-decade efforts.
- Agricultural and livestock expansion driving habitat loss and fragmentation, deforestation in high-altitude páramo, soil degradation, erosion and landslide risk.
- Unregulated tourism, with visitors entering non-authorized areas and degrading sensitive habitats, in the absence of a management and monitoring framework.
- Weak value capture and information gaps: no consolidated data on local tourism income, employment or competitiveness, and limited, outdated biodiversity data, which prevents linking ecological indicators with tourism planning.

5. Contribution to the KMGBF Targets

The analysis below draws on the KMGBF target text, the Hub's project concept note and its preparatory outline. The concept note maps each of its seven “transformational changes” to the four 2050 goals and to specific targets. The tables consolidate that mapping by target group and specify the nature of the link. Because the Hub is at the design stage, all contributions are intended contributions, to be verified through the baseline and monitoring protocols.

Group 1 — Reducing threats to biodiversity

Target	Official description	Case-study evidence
Target 1	Biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning	The SMED baseline and Advisory Council feed biodiversity criteria into municipal planning (POT, tourism plans), with ecological guidelines for tourism development in and around the park.
Target 2	Restoration of degraded ecosystems	Incubated ventures and mentoring are oriented to tourism models that contribute to ecosystem restoration in mining- and agriculture-degraded areas.
Target 3	Conservation of 30% of lands (“30x30”)	Strengthens the effective and equitable management of an existing national park by giving adjacent communities a conservation-compatible livelihood.
Target 7	Reduction of pollution	Baseline and monitoring protocols document mining-related contamination. Alternative livelihoods reduce pressure on habitats.
Target 8	Resilience to climate change	Aligned with the Cali Sustainable Master Plan and its nature-based solutions strategy; intact cloud forest and páramo secure water regulation.

In this group, the Hub's contribution is structural rather than direct: it does not itself restore or protect land, but creates the incentive, information and governance conditions under which the park's existing instruments—the Farallones Plan, the PES programme and the conservation agreements—can deliver.

Group 2 — Meeting people's needs through sustainable use

Target	Official description	Case-study evidence
Target 9	Sustainable use for people's benefit	The core of the project: 45 nature-based ventures generating income for families in the corregimientos, prioritizing PES landowners and communities in vulnerable situations.
Target 10	Sustainable agriculture and forestry	Value-added biodiversity products and alternative livelihoods reduce the pressure from agricultural and livestock expansion.
Target 11	Nature's contributions to people	Recognition of the park as the water source of six of Cali's seven rivers and as a climate regulator; the metrics system values these services in destination planning.
Target 12	Nature in the city	A protected area covering 23% of a heavily populated municipal territory is connected to urban planning through the LBSAP and the Hub.
Target 13	Fair and equitable benefit sharing	Benefit-sharing mechanisms for local communities are built into the Advisory Council's operational protocols.

Target 9 is where the contribution is most direct and measurable. By placing biodiversity at the centre of the value proposition of local ventures, and by measuring the income, employment and value capture they generate, the Hub aims to demonstrate that social, economic and environmental benefits can be produced simultaneously, precisely the virtuous circle the target seeks.

Group 3 — Tools and solutions for implementation

Target	Official description	Case-study evidence
Target 14	Biodiversity in all policies	Cross-sector mainstreaming across Cali's environment, economic development, tourism and planning departments, using SMED as the reference tool.
Target 15	Corporate responsibility	Ventures adopt regenerative business models; alignment with Green Business certifications identifying companies with positive environmental impact.
Targets 16, 18	Sustainable consumption; reform of harmful incentives	Listed in the concept note: regenerative tourism products orient visitor consumption, and upgrading incentives are conditioned on advisor-approved regenerative plans; to be specified in the baseline.
Target 19	Mobilization of biodiversity finance	USD 1.5 million requested from the KBF, with co-funding from CED and the City of Cali; ventures access markets through a commercial mission.
Target 20	Capacity-building and cooperation	Mentoring, pitch training and DAGMA staff training; North-South twinning with the Abitibi-Témiscamingue Hub; regional projection in the Chocó Biogeographic Region.
Target 21	Access to information and knowledge	A data system on regenerative tourism, reports for decision-making, contribution to the CBD clearing-house mechanism and

Target	Official description	Case-study evidence
		presentation at COP17 and future COPs.
Target 22	Participation of indigenous peoples and local communities	Advisory Council with community representation, FPIC protocols and benefit sharing; peasant, Afro-descendant and indigenous communities as core beneficiaries.
Target 23	Gender equality	Listed under the governance component of the concept note; specific measures remain to be defined.

Taken together, the concept note associates the Hub with 19 targets. For the purposes of COP17 reporting, the six targets highlighted in the key points (9, 14, 19, 20, 21 and 22) are those for which the project design describes specific activities or governance arrangements; the remaining links are structural or depend on the results of the baseline.

> "Their active participation in the Farallones Hub ensures that regeneration is not only environmental, but also social and cultural, creating authentic experiences that strengthen local identity and ensure a fair distribution of benefits."

— Farallones Hub project outline, on the rural and ethnic communities of the park

6. Flagship Components

A. Adapting and applying the SMED-Ecological Civilization framework. The first component (Outcome 6, 7.8% of the KBF budget) produces an adapted framework for tropical biodiversity and urban-protected areas, a comprehensive baseline report and monitoring protocols owned by DAGMA. It is the analytical backbone of the Hub: the baseline establishes the reference values against which biodiversity, community and economic indicators will be tracked, and the training of DAGMA staff in the use of the matrix anchors measurement within the municipal environmental authority.

B. Incubating 45 regenerative tourism ventures. The largest component (Outcome 4, 22.3% of the budget) runs three annual cohorts of 15 ventures selected by public call, linked to prioritized tourism products. Each cohort follows a "strengthening route": 20 group mentoring sessions, coworking space, pitch workshops, and an upgrading incentive, the single largest budget item, USD 280,409 or 18.7%, invested under an advisor-approved plan to strengthen the business model and make the tourism product more sophisticated. The route closes with an official ceremony and certificates.

C. A data system for regenerative tourism. Outcome 2 (11.7%) addresses the information gap that currently makes it impossible to say how much tourism benefits the communities of Farallones or how ecosystems are responding. Two analysts coordinate the collection, processing and dissemination of statistics, trends and indicators, producing reports that support decision-making by the Hub, the municipality and the park authority, in line with the SMED monitoring framework.

D. Projection: communication, commercial mission and twinning. Outcomes 3 and 5 (13.0% and 14.4%) give the Hub visibility and market access. A communication plan and materials position Cali as a leading destination for regenerative tourism, and a fully coordinated commercial mission (visas, travel, lodging, interpretation) takes venture representatives to international markets. The twinning with the Abitibi-Témiscamingue Regenerative Innovation Hub, itself presented at COP17, adds staff exchanges, site visits to Canada, comparative analysis and shared monitoring frameworks, linking a tropical protected area and a boreal resource territory around a common regenerative approach.

7. Financing Model and Replicability

The Hub requests USD 1.5 million from the KBF over three years (2027–2029), with CED and the City of Santiago de Cali identified as co-funding sources; the co-funding amounts and total budget remain to be defined. Project management (staff, travel and programme support) represents 13% of the request; Outcome 1 (governance, compliance, financial management and reporting) a further 17.7%. The remaining two thirds finance the substantive components.

Component (KBF outcome)	Share of KBF request
Outcome 4 — Entrepreneurial and business capacities (incubation, incentives)	22.3%
Outcome 1 — Project governance, coordination and compliance	17.7%
Outcome 5 — International commercial mission	14.4%
Project management (staff, travel, programme support)	13.0%
Outcome 3 — Visibility, communication and public engagement	13.0%
Outcome 2 — Data, statistics and indicators for regenerative tourism	11.7%
Outcome 6 — SMED-Ecological Civilization framework, baseline and monitoring	7.8%

Source: Project budget (percentages as stated in the sources; they sum to 99.9% owing to rounding).

The financing logic is one of leverage rather than substitution. KBF resources are designed to complement existing instruments, including the Farallones Plan, the POT, the Cali Sustainable Master Plan and its Cali Azul-Verde strategy, the PES programme, Green Business certifications, the LBSAP and the Pance Tourism Master Plan. Rather than replacing these instruments, the KBF would finance the missing layer: the metrics, the incubation and the data that turn policy into community-level income and measurable biodiversity outcomes.

The model is conceived from the outset as replicable. The concept note frames Farallones as a reference for other Latin American cities at biodiversity frontiers and for the Chocó Biogeographic Region shared by Colombia, Ecuador and Panama, and demonstrates how territorial-level ecological civilization indicators can guide regenerative development. Based on the project design, the conditions for replication are:

- A protected area of high biodiversity value adjoining an urban centre, where tourism pressure and community need coexist.
- A subnational policy framework, such as a municipal LBSAP and land-use plan, into which biodiversity criteria can be mainstreamed.
- Pre-identified community beneficiaries, such as PES landowners, already engaged in conservation and known to local authorities.
- A territory-based metrics system, adapted to context, that serves simultaneously for baseline, venture guidance and public monitoring.
- Multi-stakeholder governance with FPIC and benefit-sharing protocols, and an academic ecosystem able to document results.
- Peer learning with a comparable hub in another region, and an implementing channel eligible for international biodiversity finance.

8. Recommendations for COP17 Delegates

For national governments

Parties are invited to:

- recognize municipal Local Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, of which Cali's is the first in Colombia, as formal channels for subnational contributions to NBSAPs and to the global targets.
- support the endorsement and submission of the Farallones Hub to the Kunming Biodiversity Fund.
- integrate protected-area tourism into national biodiversity reporting, so that visitation, local value capture and ecological trends are measured together rather than separately.

For the CBD Secretariat and the Kunming Biodiversity Fund

- Consider the Farallones Hub as a candidate for KBF financing under thematic areas 1, 2, 3 and 7, and as a pilot of city-protected-area innovation hubs in mega-diverse developing countries.
- Facilitate the contribution of the Hub's data and lessons to the CBD clearing-house mechanism and their presentation at future COPs.
- Encourage the extension of the Farallones-Abitibi-Témiscamingue twinning into a network of regenerative hubs sharing monitoring frameworks.

For the private sector, universities and destination organizations

- Cali's universities and business ecosystem are invited to provide research, incubation and mentoring capacity to the cohorts and to document results using the SMED framework.
- Destination management organizations in the Chocó Biogeographic Region are invited to consider a SMED-Ecological Civilization assessment as an entry point for their own regenerative tourism strategies.

For civil society and local communities

- Support the formation of the Hub Advisory Council with full community representation, and the definition of FPIC and benefit-sharing protocols before the first cohort is selected.
- Contribute to the prioritization of corregimientos and PES projects for the first cohort, and to the design of gender-responsive measures under Target 23.

KEY RECOMMENDATION FOR COP17 DECISION-MAKERS

COP17 is invited to recognize the Farallones Regenerative Tourism Innovation Hub as a reference model for subnational KMGBF implementation in urban-protected-area contexts, to support its financing through the Kunming Biodiversity Fund, and to encourage its documentation and adaptation across the Chocó Biogeographic Region and other biodiversity frontiers of Latin America.

9. Conclusion and Next Steps

Cali hosted the conference that asked the world to make “Peace with Nature”; the Farallones Hub is one of the ways the city proposes to answer its own call. The case is instructive because its difficulties are common (unregulated visitation, weak coordination, missing data, rural poverty at the edge of a rich ecosystem) and its response specific: a territorial metrics system, a community-based incubator and a governance council, financed through an international biodiversity fund and connected to a peer hub in Canada. If it delivers as designed, it will show that a mega-diverse protected area can

be a source of measured, equitably shared income for the communities that protect it, and that a municipality can carry KMGBF implementation from its LBSAP down to individual ventures.

CED is the structural partner of the Hub, bringing the SMED framework, the twinning with Abitibi-Témiscamingue and its international mission of guiding destinations toward excellence. By presenting this case at COP17, CED affirms that regenerative tourism is a systemic strategy for implementing the KMGBF, in the Global South as in the North.

Next steps identified in the project documents

- Complete the second deliverable of the CED consultancy and finalize the project concept note, including the implementing entity, focal points, co-funding amounts and endorsement letter, ahead of submission to the KBF during 2026.
- Prioritize the corregimientos and PES projects to be included in the first cohort.
- Adapt the SMED-Ecological Civilization framework, complete the baseline and establish monitoring protocols with DAGMA and the Department of Tourism at project start.
- Launch Cohort 1 (15 ventures) in January 2027, followed by Cohorts 2 and 3 in 2028 and 2029.
- Activate the twinning with the Abitibi-Témiscamingue Hub and document lessons for the CBD clearing-house mechanism and future COPs.

Key Terms

Term	Definition
KMGBF	Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework — adopted at COP15 (Montréal, December 2022), the global blueprint for biodiversity 2022–2030, with four 2050 goals and 23 targets for 2030.
COP16 / COP17	Sixteenth COP to the CBD, Cali, Colombia, October 2024 (“Peace with Nature”); seventeenth, Yerevan, Armenia, 19–30 October 2026.
KBF	Kunming Biodiversity Fund — multi-partner trust fund supporting developing countries in implementing the KMGBF through their NBSAPs.
CED	World Centre of Excellence for Destinations — international organization supporting tourism destinations toward excellence; developer of SMED.
SMED	System of Measures for Excellence in Destinations — CED's framework of four fields and 11 categories for assessing and improving destination performance.
DAGMA	Department of Environment of Santiago de Cali — municipal environmental authority and co-lead of the Hub.
LBSAP	Local Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan — Cali's is the first adopted by a municipality in Colombia.
PES	Payments for Environmental Services — programme whose registered landowners are prioritized as Hub beneficiaries.

CASE STUDY — CHINA

The Return of the “Mythical Bird”

Conservation Practice for Critically Endangered Species Based on Data Analysis: A Case Study of the Chinese Crested Tern in the Minjiang Estuary-Matsu Islands Area

Yixuan LE
Lei CHENG

Keywords: Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework; *Thalasseus bernsteini* (Chinese Crested Tern); data analytics; biodiversity conservation; Minjiang Estuary-Matsu Islands

The Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) prioritizes evidence-based endangered-species conservation and cross-regional collaborative biodiversity governance. The Chinese Crested Tern (*Thalasseus bernsteini*), classified as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List and a Class-I nationally protected wild animal of China, was presumed extinct for 63 years before its rediscovery. This case study integrates multi-source monitoring datasets and data analytical approaches to explore linkages between the species' breeding-migratory behaviours and regional climatic-environmental conditions across the Minjiang Estuary-Matsu Islands habitat complex. It systematically evaluates local conservation interventions against KMGBF targets. The global population of the Chinese Crested Tern rebounded from approximately 50 individuals in 2010 to 221 individuals in 2023. Local conservation actions directly address 12 out of 23 KMGBF 2030 targets, offering an on-the-ground demonstration for Target 4 (halt species extinctions and restore wild populations). Data tools mitigate logistical constraints of field surveys stemming from weather conditions and geographical separation, delivering quantitative empirical support for conservation decision-making. This closed-loop conservation model, combining species rescue, habitat restoration, smart monitoring and institutional safeguards, provides a transferable reference for rare waterbird conservation within China's coastal wetland ecosystems.

KEY POINTS AT A GLANCE

Context — The KMGBF calls for science-driven endangered-species recovery and cross-regional biodiversity cooperation. The Chinese Crested Tern, once considered extinct, remains one of the world's most imperilled seabirds.

Initiative — Drawing upon official case-report materials, this research applies data analysis to public monitoring datasets to unpack behavioural-environmental couplings for the Chinese Crested Tern, and assesses Minjiang Estuary-Matsu Islands conservation practices against KMGBF objectives.

Contribution — Local conservation activities directly correspond to 12 KMGBF targets. Population growth from approximately 50 individuals (2010) to 221 individuals (2023) delivers a tangible local illustration of KMGBF Target 4.

Innovation — Data analytics offset the limitations of conventional cross-regional field surveys, synthesizing heterogeneous multi-source monitoring data into quantitative evidence for conservation management.

Status — Implementation is well advanced and results-bearing: the global population has held above 200 individuals through 2024-2025, and breeding-season monitoring continues on an annual basis.

Recommendation — COP17 is invited to recognize closed-loop, data-driven conservation systems (species rescue, habitat restoration, smart monitoring and institutional safeguards) as a replicable model for coastal rare-species conservation and for transparent, evidence-based KMGBF reporting.

1. Context: The Return of the "Mythical Bird"

The Chinese Crested Tern (*Thalasseus bernsteini*), nicknamed the "mythical bird," is designated Critically Endangered (CR) by the IUCN Red List and receives Class-I national-level wildlife protection in China. Following its last confirmed observation in 1937, the species went undocumented for 63 years and was widely presumed extinct, until eight individuals were rediscovered within a Greater Crested Tern breeding colony on the Matsu Islands in 2000. Two individuals were subsequently documented for the first time within the Minjiang Estuary Wetland by Fujian-based birdwatchers in 2004.

Monitoring records indicate the global population dipped to roughly 50 individuals by 2010, rendering the Chinese Crested Tern among the most threatened avian species worldwide. Sustained collaborative conservation thereafter triggered consistent population recovery, which this case study documents and analyses.

The KMGBF advocates scientific-data-oriented endangered-species conservation and cross-regional biodiversity cooperation. The Minjiang Estuary-Matsu Islands conservation system faces substantial practical barriers: vast marine spatial coverage, restricted on-site field observation capacity, and climate-driven disruptions to breeding cycles. These real-world constraints make this site a valuable testbed demonstrating how digital monitoring and data analytics can operationalize the KMGBF. This case study conducts an integrated analysis of Chinese Crested Tern ecological activity and associated environmental drivers, and unpacks causal connections between on-the-ground conservation interventions and KMGBF targets, to generate actionable practical insights for KMGBF delivery for coastal rare waterbirds.

2. The Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework in Brief

Adopted at COP15 of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the KMGBF establishes four overarching 2050 global goals and 23 actionable 2030 targets to bend the curve of global biodiversity loss.

Four 2050 Global Goals

- Goal A: Safeguard ecosystem integrity and restore species populations.
- Goal B: Deliver sustainable use of biodiversity.
- Goal C: Realize fair and equitable benefit-sharing arising from genetic-resource utilization.
- Goal D: Enable implementation via finance, technological capacity and knowledge systems.

The 23 Action-Oriented 2030 Targets

The 23 measurable 2030 targets translate long-term 2050 ambitions into concrete decade-scale commitments. For this case study, the most relevant targets include Target 2 (restore 30% of degraded ecosystems), Target 3 (conserve 30% of terrestrial and marine areas), Target 4 (urgent species recovery and mitigation of human-wildlife conflict), Target 6 (control invasive alien species), Target 7 (reduce pollution pressures), Target 9 (sustainable use and benefit generation), Target 14 (biodiversity mainstreaming), Target 21 (knowledge generation, environmental education and public awareness-raising), Target 19 (resource mobilization), and Target 22 (open access to biodiversity data and information). Additional relevant targets (Targets 5, 8, 13, 23) are explored in Section 5.

3. The Initiative: Data-Driven Conservation for a Cross-Regional Habitat Complex

This case study forms part of China's national suite of KMGBF implementation case studies, drawing upon six-month integrated analytical work. It synthesizes multi-source monitoring datasets and deploys data analytical workflows to characterize seasonal breeding phenology and cross-regional migratory connectivity of the Chinese Crested Tern. Concurrent environmental datasets include sea-surface temperature, wind intensity and precipitation observations for the Minjiang Estuary and Matsu Islands. These datasets are used to quantify associations between species behavioural patterns and environmental conditions, and compare habitat-use and nesting performance under divergent climatic regimes. Conservation-outcome metrics are extracted from publicly released monitoring reports and policy documents from the Fujian Provincial Forestry Department and Fuzhou Municipal Government; these interventions are systematically cross-referenced against official KMGBF text.

Addressing core practical constraints

Conservation within this marine-coastal system is hampered by extensive sea-area coverage, limited field-survey access, and climate variability that disrupts breeding events. Conventional manual field surveys suffer from sparse spatial-temporal sampling, compounded by geographical barriers and adverse weather. Data analytical workflows overcome these gaps by harmonizing heterogeneous datasets: bird-banding records, image-based tracking, remote sensing, the integrated “sky-ground-land” monitoring network and meteorological observations. This integrated analytical pipeline generates quantitative evidence for conservation planning.

Conventional manual field surveys	Data-analysis approach
Constrained spatial-temporal sampling scope; impeded by large marine domains, meteorological conditions and geographical separation	Integrates multi-source inputs: banding data, visual tracking, remote recording, “sky-ground-land” monitoring and climate observations to produce quantitative conservation evidence
Relies heavily upon on-site human observers	Compensates for field-survey limitations; enables systematic evaluation of species activity patterns; supports breeding-season early-warning management, habitat restoration planning and cross-jurisdictional collaborative conservation

Multi-actor governance architecture

The conservation system mobilizes a diverse coalition of stakeholders: the Fujian Provincial Forestry Department and Fuzhou Municipal Government (providing official monitoring and policy datasets); Changle District Government (delivering ecological-compensation funding for aquaculture-pond decommissioning); on-site reserve rangers undertaking routine patrols; Fujian-based citizen birdwatchers (who documented the species at Minjiang Estuary Wetland in 2004); volunteer public participants contributing to synchronized wintering-waterbird surveys; and partners on the Matsu side sharing bird-banding and satellite-tracking datasets. Independent research on the Korean Yushan Island breeding population provides external scientific benchmarks for breeding-parameter comparisons.

Three-stage closed-loop conservation model

- Monitoring and problem diagnosis: document population collapse, with fewer than 50 wild individuals remaining.
- Targeted human intervention: deploy social-attraction techniques (decoy birds and playback vocalizations) at Simu Islet; deliver large-scale habitat restoration work across Minjiang Estuary Wetland.

- Quantitative outcome verification: population recovery to 221 individuals; expansion of occupied breeding sites from one to three locations, producing empirically verifiable conservation results.

This complete rescue-to-recovery cycle integrates species rescue interventions, habitat restoration, digital monitoring technologies and formal institutional safeguards into a cohesive closed-loop system, forming the core logic underpinning this KMGBF demonstration case.

4. The Territory: Minjiang Estuary-Matsu Islands Habitat Complex

The Minjiang Estuary and Matsu Islands collectively constitute an irreplaceable breeding and foraging habitat complex for the Chinese Crested Tern. The Matsu Islands possess suitable uninhabited islets for ground nesting but lack extensive intertidal foraging flats. Conversely, the Minjiang Estuary contains high-quality tidal-flat foraging habitats but lacks predator-free offshore islets for nesting. Consequently, the same metapopulation nests and breeds on Matsu's offshore islets, while relying on Minjiang Estuary wetlands for courtship, foraging and chick provisioning. Breeding grounds and primary foraging habitats are geographically separated. Monitoring records for Minjiang Estuary Wetland, Simu Islet and Matsu Islands all refer to this single interconnected metapopulation, given frequent movements.

Habitat connectivity between these sites is functionally critical for sustaining the Chinese Crested Tern metapopulation. The Minjiang Estuary Wetland Reserve covers 2,100 ha, of which 2,096 ha consist of wetland habitats. To date, 352 bird species have been recorded here, while the tally of nationally protected key wildlife species has increased from more than 30 to 45 species. Annual monitoring between 2017-2021 confirms that over 50,000 waterbirds regularly use or overwinter within the wetland system.

Site-level conservation status has progressively advanced: from county-level protected area, to national nature reserve, to Ramsar-designated Wetland of International Importance, to inclusion on the World Heritage Tentative List, supported by formal functional-zoning management arrangements.

BOX — RAMSAR WETLAND OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE DESIGNATION

Ten waterbird species occurring at the site (including Chinese Crested Tern, Spoon-billed Sandpiper and Black-faced Spoonbill) exceed the 1% global-population threshold required under the Ramsar Convention criteria for international-importance designation. In the most recent three-year monitoring window, 16 waterbird populations satisfy this 1% threshold. Black-faced Spoonbill counts reached 755 individuals in 2025, nearly doubling compared with levels recorded at the close of China's 13th Five-Year Plan. Furthermore, complete migratory pathways of the Spoon-billed Sandpiper were captured via remote imagery for the first time.

Key threats to species and habitats

- Climate-driven breeding disruption: the April-September breeding season coincides with the western North-Pacific typhoon season. July-September typhoon-associated high winds and storm surges damage nests and eggs, driving breeding-failure events.
- Storm events and predation pressure: documented as primary drivers of breeding failure within the reference Yushan Island (Republic of Korea) breeding colony.
- Invasive alien plant (*Spartina alterniflora*): degrades intertidal-flat foraging habitats; the invasive species occupies 137,000 mu across Fujian Province.

- Former aquaculture infrastructure: abandoned and active aquaculture ponds occupy historical wetland territory and generate water-pollution pressures.
- Marine debris: approximately 65 tonnes of marine litter are cleared annually from site habitats.
- Human disturbance within core protected zones: mitigated through controlled public access and dedicated ranger patrols.
- Conservation-implementation constraints: large-scale marine geography and limits to feasible on-site field observation.

5. Contribution to the KMGBF Targets

Systematic evaluation of Minjiang Estuary-Matsu Islands conservation interventions demonstrates that local activities directly address 12 KMGBF targets. Target-mapping draws from published literature and official public releases from the Fujian Provincial Forestry Department, with item-by-item comparison against KMGBF official text. Star ratings reflect author-assessed alignment strength: more stars denote a more direct correspondence between field interventions and target requirements. Targets are grouped following the KMGBF's official structure.

Group 1: Mitigate biodiversity threats and deliver species recovery

Target	Official description	Case-study evidence	Rating
Target 4	Halt species extinction and restore population abundance	Chinese Crested Tern population growth: ~50 (2010) to 221 individuals (2023); Black-faced Spoonbill reached 755 individuals (2025); first full imagery documentation of Spoon-billed Sandpiper migration core	★★★
Target 2	Restore 30% of degraded ecosystems	*Spartina alterniflora* removal across 4,590 mu; native-vegetation restoration across 2,980 mu; 3,797 mu aquaculture-pond-to-wetland conversion; integrated mountain-river-forest-farmland-lake-grassland ecological governance	★★★
Target 3	Conserve 30% of terrestrial and marine areas	Progressive upgrade of protected-area status (county-level to national nature reserve to Ramsar site to World-Heritage tentative list); formal functional-zoning management	★★★
Target 6	Control invasive alien species	Province-wide systematic *Spartina alterniflora* management (total infestation 137,000 mu); dynamic eradication and monitoring mechanisms	★★
Target 7	Reduce pollution pressures	Annual marine-litter clearance (~65 tonnes); remediation of aquaculture-derived pollution sources	★★

Target 4 offers the clearest practical illustration of KMGBF delivery, manifested by the full rescue-recovery cycle: monitoring identifies severe population depletion (fewer than 50 individuals), targeted human intervention follows (social attraction, habitat rehabilitation), and quantitative verification confirms the result (221 individuals, expansion to three occupied breeding sites). A second layer of support comes from Targets 2, 3 and 6: Chinese Crested Tern population recovery is embedded within broader Minjiang Estuary wetland ecosystem restoration. Invasive-species control removes foraging-habitat degradation pressures, aquaculture-pond-to-wetland conversion directly matches the species' unique ecological requirement of nesting-foraging habitat separation, and protected-area-status upgrading establishes long-term institutional safeguards. Over the past three monitoring years, 16 waterbird populations at Minjiang Estuary

Wetland exceed the Ramsar 1% global-population threshold, demonstrating tight coupling between species-population recovery and habitat restoration.

Group 2: Sustainable use and equitable benefit generation

Target	Official description	Case-study evidence	Rating
Target 9	Deliver sustainable use and biodiversity-derived benefits	Transition toward ecological aquaculture; wetland-park construction; bird-watching-oriented ecotourism development	★★

Group 3: Implementation mechanisms and systemic enabling tools

Target / Goal	Official description	Case-study evidence	Rating
Goal D	Implementation mechanisms: finance, technology and knowledge systems	RMB 40 million ecological-compensation investment; cooperation for bird-banding and satellite-tracking; biodiversity-data sharing	★★★
Target 14	Biodiversity mainstreaming	Biodiversity conservation embedded within the “Ecological Home, Beautiful Fuzhou” Development Plan Outline (2023-2035), including quantitative performance indicators: key-species protection rate 80% (2025 target), 85% (2035 target); supporting legal safeguards	★★
Target 19	Knowledge generation, environmental education and public awareness-raising	28 formal nature-education bases; six published illustrated field guides; 21 consecutive years of coordinated wintering-waterbird surveys with public-citizen-science participation	★★
Target 20	Mobilize diversified financial resources	Mixed investment model: central-government budget projects, local public fiscal allocations, dedicated ecological-compensation funds	★
Target 21	Open access to biodiversity data and information	Integrated “sky-ground-land” monitoring network; more than 2,000 infrared camera units deployed within provincial-level-and-above protected areas; accumulated over 3 million wildlife image records; core analytical foundation for this study	★★

The third alignment layer addresses Goal D and cross-regional cooperation. Minjiang Estuary-Matsu Islands coordination is this case's most distinctive feature: nesting habitats and principal foraging habitats are separated. Exchange of bird-banding and satellite-tracking datasets delivers Goal D-endorsed technical cooperation and knowledge sharing at cross-regional scale, while the “sky-ground-land” integrated monitoring network locally operationalizes Target 21 for open biodiversity data and knowledge access. The RMB 40 million aquaculture-pond-retirement ecological-compensation mechanism also advances Target 18 priorities, reforming environmentally harmful subsidies and redirecting capital flows toward biodiversity-friendly activities.

Several KMGBF targets receive comparatively limited implementation within this existing conservation framework: Target 5 (sustainable wild-harvest management), Target 8 (climate-change adaptation; climate-breeding correlations are monitored, yet formal systematic climate-adaptation management plans remain absent), Target 13 (genetic-resource benefit-sharing), and Target 23 (gender equality considerations). Future conservation programming can strengthen performance against these targets through climate-adaptive habitat management planning, systematic genetic-resource

surveys and complementary measures. Symmetric, transparent reporting of both strong and limited target alignment is consistent with official KMGBF assessment standards.

6. Flagship Components and Key Findings

Data analysis yields four interconnected result clusters, each directly translating into actionable conservation-management levers: population recovery trajectories; reconstruction of annual breeding phenology and movement ecology (including the Simu Islet social-attraction experiments); statistical relationships between climatic drivers and breeding performance outcomes; and the functional contribution of habitat-quality improvement.

Population dynamics: recovery from ~50 individuals to 221 individuals

Year	Global population	Minjiang Estuary-Matsu count	Key events
2000	Estimated < 50	8 individuals (Matsu Islands)	Rediscovery within Greater Crested Tern colony; ending 63-year documented absence
2004	Estimated < 50	2 individuals (first Minjiang Estuary Wetland record)	Minjiang Estuary confirmed within known species distribution range
2010	~50	—	Global-population floor; among world's most threatened seabird taxa
2015	—	—	World's first banded individual “Maniu” hatched on Matsu's Tiejian Island
2021	Nearly 150	—	Global population approaching 150; extinction risk substantially alleviated
2022	—	7 individuals (Simu Islet)	Successful social-attraction deployment; complete breeding cycle remotely recorded; fledgling “Huabao” successfully fledged
2023	221 (176 adults + 45 fledglings)	12 nesting individuals (six breeding pairs)	All-time global population high; local Simu Islet nesting record maximum for monitoring history
2024	> 200	~120 breeding individuals across Fujian-Zhejiang	Zhoushan Archipelago attraction site peak count 109 individuals (+43.42% relative to 2020)
2025	> 200	3 individuals first detected 11 April	Global population sustained above 200 individuals; breeding-season monitoring ongoing

Note: statistical definitions differ inter-annually (2010-2021 estimates predominantly count adult birds; the 2023 enumeration incorporates fledgling young of the year), so direct unadjusted year-on-year comparison is not appropriate. Minjiang Estuary-Matsu records integrate observations from Minjiang Estuary Wetland, Simu Islet and Matsu Islands, treated as a single interconnected metapopulation given frequent movements.

Global-population time-series data document a population nadir below 50 individuals (2000-2010), followed by sustained recovery to a historical peak of 221 individuals in 2023. Population levels remained above 200 individuals during 2024-2025, markedly mitigating overall extinction risk. More than 50,000 waterbirds regularly overwinter or occupy Minjiang

Estuary Wetland (2017-2021 monitoring). Ten waterbird species meet Ramsar's 1% global-population threshold for international-importance designation.

Breeding phenology and movement ecology

Analytical reconstruction of full annual life-cycle phenology demonstrates that Chinese Crested Terns depart Southeast-Asian non-breeding grounds for northward migration in late March annually. Within the Minjiang Estuary-Matsu habitat complex, courtship, mating, nesting and chick-rearing activities occur between April and September. On-site monitoring recorded three Chinese Crested Tern individuals arriving at Minjiang Estuary Wetland on 11 April 2021. Bird-banding and image-tracking datasets document frequent movements: “Maniu”, the world's first banded Chinese Crested Tern (hatched on Matsu Tiejian Island, 2015), returns to Matsu every summer and routinely commutes between Matsu and Minjiang Estuary throughout breeding seasons.

Flagship intervention: the Simu-Islet social-attraction programme quantitatively validates habitat-restoration effectiveness. In 2022, deployed decoy terns and conspecific call playback successfully attracted seven Chinese Crested Terns. The complete breeding cycle was remotely recorded for the first time, producing the successfully fledged chick “Huabao”. During the 2023 breeding season, attraction efforts supported nine nests and 18 individuals; by late June, six pairs (12 individuals) were confirmed nesting and laying eggs, representing the highest local nesting count across monitoring history.

Climatic-factor impacts upon breeding success

Statistical analysis confirms regional climatic conditions exert a strong influence over migration-arrival timing, nest-site selection and chick-survival rates. Benchmark reference data originate from the Yushan Island (Republic of Korea) breeding colony. For 2018-2020, first breeding-island arrival dates fell on 29 March, 30 March and 21 March respectively. Egg-laying was concentrated around 18-19 April, with one egg per nest (n = 11 nests); incubation duration ranges 26-28 days, and fledglings depart breeding sites 37-43 days post-hatching. Across five monitoring years, only four out of 11 monitored nests successfully produced fledglings; storm events and predation constituted the primary breeding-failure drivers. Within the Minjiang Estuary-Matsu system, the April-September breeding window substantially overlaps western North-Pacific typhoon activity. Flagship intervention: these analytical results highlight a management priority that nest-site reinforcement and monitoring-equipment deployment must be completed prior to typhoon-season onset to maximize chick-survival probabilities.

Functional contribution of improved habitat quality

Flagship intervention: Minjiang Estuary wetland ecological restoration. The reserve spans 2,100 ha (2,096 ha of wetland). Restoration actions include removal of 4,590 mu of invasive *Spartina alterniflora*, native-vegetation restoration over 2,980 mu, and conversion of 3,797 mu of former aquaculture ponds back to natural wetland. Changle District Government has cumulatively allocated over RMB 40 million in ecological-compensation funding to finance aquaculture-pond retirement. Site biodiversity has increased: a total of 352 bird-species records, with nationally protected key-species counts rising from more than 30 to 45 species. Measurable wetland-baseline-quality improvements co-occur with Chinese Crested Tern population recovery, empirically validating coupled habitat-and-species-conservation relationships.

In summary, habitat spatial connectivity between Minjiang Estuary and Matsu Islands is a foundational requirement for sustaining the Chinese Crested Tern metapopulation. Data analytical workflows overcome field-survey limitations imposed by meteorology and geography, enabling systematic assessment of species activity patterns and delivering empirical evidence for breeding-season early-warning systems, habitat-restoration planning and cross-regional collaborative conservation.

7. Financing Mechanisms and Model Replicability

Conservation delivery is supported via a diversified mixed-financing model combining central-government budget project funds, local public fiscal appropriations and dedicated ecological-compensation funds (aligned with KMGBF Target 19). The most tangible financing instrument is the ecological-compensation mechanism: Changle District Government's cumulative investment of more than RMB 40 million for aquaculture-pond retirement, which also advances Target 18 priorities to reform environmentally harmful subsidies and redirect investment flows toward biodiversity-positive activities. Technical cooperation on bird-banding, satellite-tracking and cross-regional data sharing delivers Goal D-mandated technology and knowledge-sharing components. The source case materials do not provide further granular breakdowns of financing volumes or funding-source allocations.

The model's transferability originates from its closed-loop conservation logic. Demonstrated alignment against 12 KMGBF targets illustrates that local conservation systems integrating species rescue, habitat restoration, monitoring-technology deployment and institutional safeguards can deliver effective KMGBF implementation. This framework offers a reference template for rare-bird conservation across China's coastal-wetland networks. Core components of this replicable closed-loop model are:

- Species rescue: social-attraction interventions and breeding-season early-warning management responding directly to severe population depletion (fewer than 50 individuals).
- Habitat restoration: invasive-species (*Spartina alterniflora*) control, native-vegetation rehabilitation and aquaculture-pond-to-wetland conversion, financed by dedicated ecological-compensation instruments.
- Monitoring-technology infrastructure: bird-banding, image and satellite-tracking, remote breeding-event recording and the integrated “sky-ground-land” monitoring network, generating input datasets for big-data analytical workflows.
- Institutional safeguards: progressive protected-area-status upgrading, functional-zoning management, formal legal protections, and biodiversity mainstreaming within municipal-level development planning.
- Cross-regional collaborative governance: cross-regional bird-banding and satellite-tracking-dataset information sharing, as promoted within KMGBF biodiversity provisions.

8. Recommendations and Key Lessons

The source case documentation does not provide audience-specific formal recommendations targeted toward national governments, the CBD Secretariat, private-sector stakeholders or civil-society organizations. The forward-looking strategic priorities extracted from the analysis are outlined below.

Breeding-season operational management

Complete nest-site reinforcement and monitoring-equipment deployment prior to typhoon-season onset. Given the temporal overlap between April-September breeding activity and the regional typhoon season, timed pre-typhoon management action is critical to improve fledgling-survival outcomes.

Expanding KMGBF-target coverage for future programming

- Develop formal climate-adaptive habitat-management planning. While climate-breeding-performance relationships are monitored, structured climate-adaptation management frameworks are currently absent (Target 8).
- Undertake systematic genetic-resource surveys and associated supporting activities to strengthen performance against currently under-addressed targets: Target 13 (genetic-resource benefit-sharing), Target 5 (sustainable-harvest governance), and Target 23 (gender-equity integration).

Reporting and assessment best practice

Apply symmetric, transparent reporting of both strong and limited KMGBF-target alignment, consistent with official KMGBF assessment methodologies. Deploy data-analytical outputs to generate empirical evidence supporting breeding-season management alerts, habitat-restoration decision-making and cross-regional collaborative conservation.

CORE KMGBF-IMPLEMENTATION LESSON

Digital monitoring infrastructure is a vital enabling tool for delivering KMGBF biodiversity-conservation objectives. Where local conservation practice assembles species-rescue action, habitat-restoration programming, monitoring-technology deployment and institutional safeguards within a unified closed-loop system, it delivers a powerful practical demonstration of KMGBF on-the-ground implementation.

9. Conclusions and Future-Work Priorities

Digital monitoring and data analytical tools are critical enabling instruments for operationalizing KMGBF biodiversity-conservation ambitions. This Chinese Crested Tern conservation case within the Minjiang Estuary-Matsu Islands habitat complex demonstrates how data-based analysis of imperilled-species behavioural-environmental couplings can underpin cross-regional collaborative conservation. Population recovery from approximately 50 individuals (2010) to 221 individuals (2023) delivers direct local-scale empirical proof-of-concept for KMGBF Target 4 (halt species extinctions and restore wild-species populations). Measurable alignment against 12 KMGBF targets further illustrates that closed-loop conservation systems combining species rescue, habitat restoration, smart-monitoring technology and institutional safeguards deliver robust KMGBF implementation outcomes. This practical model provides transferable insights for rare-waterbird conservation across China's coastal-wetland ecosystems.

Explicit future-work priorities derived from this analysis include:

- Develop formal climate-adaptive habitat-management frameworks building upon existing monitored climate-breeding-performance relationships.
- Conduct systematic genetic-resource surveys and associated complementary activities to strengthen performance for currently under-addressed KMGBF targets (Targets 5, 13, 23).
- Sustain continuous breeding-season monitoring work; ongoing monitoring was active in 2025 while the global population remained above 200 individuals.

Data analytical workflows mitigate operational limitations of field surveys and supply the empirical evidence base for breeding-season early-warning management, habitat-restoration design and cross-regional collaborative biodiversity conservation.

Key Terms

Term	Definition
KMGBF	Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework: establishes four 2050 global goals (A-D) and 23 actionable 2030 targets; prioritizes science-driven endangered-species conservation and cross-regional biodiversity cooperation.

Term	Definition
Chinese Crested Tern (*Thalasseus bernsteini*)	Nicknamed the “mythical bird”; IUCN Critically Endangered (CR); Class-I nationally protected wild animal within China.
Target 4	KMGBF target focused on urgent species-population recovery and human-wildlife-conflict reduction; the target most directly exemplified by this case study.
Ramsar Convention (Convention on Wetlands)	Wetland sites qualify for “Wetland of International Importance” designation when waterbird-species populations exceed 1% of their respective global populations.
Social (artificial) attraction	Habitat-management technique deploying bird decoys and conspecific-vocalization playback to encourage tern nesting; trialled and implemented at Simu Islet starting 2022.
“Sky-ground-land” integrated monitoring network	Multi-modal monitoring infrastructure, with more than 2,000 infrared camera units deployed within provincial-and-above protected-area estates, accumulating over 3 million wildlife image records; the primary empirical data source for the big-data analysis.
Ecological compensation	Policy instrument deployed by Changle District Government, with more than RMB 40 million invested to retire aquaculture ponds and restore natural wetland habitat.
“Maniu” / “Huabao”	“Maniu”: world's first banded Chinese Crested Tern, hatched on Matsu Tiejian Island (2015). “Huabao”: first chick whose complete breeding cycle was remotely recorded at Simu Islet (2022).

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Conclusion

CONCLUSION

In Conclusion: What the Two Parts of This COP17 Biodiversity Book Reveal

Yerevan, Armenia | October 2026

A Proposition to Be Tested

This book pursued one primary objective: to test a fundamental hypothesis. It proposes that tourism, when designed to regenerate the ecosystems on which it depends, can become a genuine lever for implementing the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework.

To test this hypothesis, we subjected it to two successive phases of analysis. The first, presented in Part 1, offered a global perspective. The second, developed in Part 2, was more focused and rigorous.

Part 1: A Global Analysis

In preparation for COP17, twenty-seven CED experts and partners from sixteen countries responded to the call for contributions. They submitted thirty-three case studies on regenerative innovations. Taken together, these initiatives illustrate six ways in which tourism can benefit biodiversity:

- By financing ecological restoration through revenue generated by visitors;
- By transforming visitors into an active workforce and integrating them into a network mobilized for biodiversity;
- By proactively establishing their own conservation rules, even before such rules are imposed on them;
- By protecting territories that had previously appeared on no map;
- By entrusting decision-making to the communities that inhabit the territory;
- By seamlessly integrating culture and nature into a single narrative.

Another major finding emerges: on average, each initiative alone contributed to advancing seven of the twenty-three targets established under the Framework.

Part 2: An In-Depth Examination

Part 2 examined four of these cases in order to address a more demanding question: does the initial hypothesis withstand rigorous scrutiny of their governance, financing, challenges encountered, and actual results?

These four initiatives are at different stages along the same continuum, ranging from initial mobilization to concrete demonstration. Presented in chronological order of progression, they illustrate this progression:

- **Téboursouk, Tunisia.** Structured around ten historic water sources, this initiative has produced an open map of the resource it seeks to protect. The challenge is critical: in this governorate, the water stress index has nearly doubled since 2000. However, funding and tangible results for the project have yet to materialize.
- **Santiago de Cali, Colombia.** The authorities responsible for Farallones National Natural Park have developed a comprehensive proposal to better regulate this territory, which is under significant pressure from mining, agriculture, and as many as 80,000 visitors annually. They are currently awaiting funding that would enable the project to be launched.
- **Abitibi-Témiscamingue, Canada.** In this region of Québec, whose economy relies heavily on natural resources, the Regenerative Innovation Hub has brought local stakeholders together around regeneration and how it can contribute to regional development and biodiversity. This mobilization gave momentum to the process leading up to COP17, with support from the CED.
- **Minjiang Estuary and Matsu Islands, China.** Twenty years of coordinated habitat restoration have produced results. The population of Chinese Crested Terns grew from fewer than 50 individuals in 2010 to 221 by 2023, a level it has held since. Of the four cases examined, this is the only one that can already present quantified results rather than a project still under development.

A Shared Commitment to Rigour

None of these four cases claims to have achieved more than it can demonstrate. All adhere to three fundamental principles:

- Clearly identifying the entity responsible for the initiative.
- Partnering with an independent organization to evaluate results.
- Transparently acknowledging what remains to be demonstrated.

This analytical rigour runs throughout the book, from the brief examples of regenerative innovations in Part 1 to the detailed profiles in Part 2. For a reader attending COP17 in Yerevan, this objectivity is just as valuable as any individual result. Indeed, a model that highlighted only its successes would offer no opportunity to learn from situations in which failure may occur.

An Open and Evolving Initiative

The response detailed earlier in this conclusion is only a first wave. It is highly likely that other territories are currently undertaking comparable work, although they have not yet been contacted or have not documented their experiences. Compiled within a limited timeframe, this book therefore provides a snapshot of an approach that continues to evolve. The initiative remains wide open.

For this reason, the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) will continue to collect examples of regenerative innovations. Over the coming years, it will also monitor the evolution of the thirty-three projects presented here, including Lake Osisko, Téboursouk-Dougga, Farallones National Natural Park, and the Minjiang Estuary. Its objective is to draw new lessons from their development and share them with the rest of the world.

Contribution to the Concept of Regenerative Tourism

As stated in the introduction, regenerative tourism is now a widely used term, embraced by tourism ministries, industry professionals, and researchers, yet its definition remains fluid and lacks a broadly accepted conceptual framework. This book contributes tangible evidence to the development and clarification of the concept through thirty-three success studies and four illustrations, each explicitly linked to specific targets of the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF), rather than to broad commitments to sustainability. By grounding regenerative tourism in measurable actions and outcomes, target by target within the KMGBF, the book provides an empirical foundation for further conceptual development.

The invitation to the academic community is therefore direct. Much of the literature on regenerative tourism continues to proceed deductively: a definition is proposed first, and examples are then identified to illustrate or support it. This book creates an opportunity to reverse that approach. Rather than beginning with a predetermined definition, scholars could draw on thirty-three documented practices spanning sixteen countries and four continents to develop the concept inductively, allowing recurring principles, mechanisms, and characteristics to emerge from observed experience.

The structured database underpinning this book, described in the Method notes to Part One, provides a ready corpus for such research. For each contribution, it records the country, region, contributor, relevant KMGBF targets, category, and implementation status. Importantly, the corpus encompasses both initiatives reporting concrete results and those that remain at the stage of intention or planned implementation. This diversity is particularly relevant to the development of a rigorous conceptual framework, as it makes it possible to distinguish among regenerative ambitions, implemented practices, and demonstrated outcomes.

Beyond COP17

At the time of this book's publication, two major questions remain: what the Conference of the Parties will actually succeed in accomplishing in Yerevan, and how the international community will follow up on those outcomes.

The thirty-three initiatives described in these pages, including the four cases examined in depth, have not all waited for these answers before beginning their work. The CED, together with its experts and partners, intends to continue moving forward at its own pace. These are challenging times both for nature and for the international cooperation it requires. The commitment of the people and the resilience of the places presented in this book are what allow us to maintain our optimism.

Annexes

Annex A. Authors List

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	**A Drop** A sub-team dedicated to exploring and archiving China's wildlife, laying the foundation and providing knowledge for ecological education in China.	The Return of the "Mythical Bird" Initiative: A Conservation Model for the Chinese Crested Tern	China, Fujian — Minjiang Estuary Wetland and Matsu Islands
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Annex B. The Biodiversity COPs, from Rio to Yerevan

Three Decades of Negotiations, and What COP17 Can Achieve

I. A Convention Born from a Summit

The Convention on Biological Diversity opened for signature at the Rio Earth Summit in June 1992 and entered into force on 29 December 1993. It set three objectives of equal standing: conserving biological diversity, using its components sustainably, and sharing the benefits from genetic resources fairly and equitably. The first COP was held in Nassau in 1994. The early years were spent building the institution before setting targets, which explains part of the delay still being made up today.

II. The COPs That Marked a Turning Point

- **Jakarta, 1995.** The Jakarta Mandate on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity, the Convention's first thematic programme.
- **Montréal and Nairobi, 2000.** The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, the first binding instrument born from the Convention.
- **The Hague, 2002.** A strategic plan and the first numeric target: slow the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010.
- **Nagoya, 2010.** The twenty Aichi Biodiversity Targets (2011–2020) and the Nagoya Protocol on access and benefit-sharing. The first complete architecture: targets, timeline, legal instrument.
- **Cancún, 2016.** Mainstreaming biodiversity into economic sectors, including tourism, which grounds the legitimacy of the CED's work within the Convention.
- **Kunming and Montréal, 2021–2022.** COP15 held in two parts; the Kunming Declaration framed around the theme of ecological civilization; adoption of the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework, 4 goals for 2050, 23 targets for 2030, including 30x30 and the restoration of 30% of degraded ecosystems.
- **Cali, 2024, and Rome, 2025.** A permanent subsidiary body under Article 8(j); the Cali Fund on digital sequence information; the session suspended for lack of quorum, then resumed in Rome: a strategy to mobilize $200 billion a year by 2030, a permanent finance mechanism under the authority of the COP by 2030, and a planning, monitoring, reporting and review framework that sets the global stocktake for COP17.

III. Two Missed Deadlines, One Lesson

The 2010 target was missed. The 2020 assessment of the Aichi Targets found that none of the twenty targets had been fully met, and six had been partially met. The recurring causes: global targets never translated into national obligations, financing that arrived late and fell short, missing indicators, and no accountable actor at the territorial level.

IV. What Is at Stake in Yerevan

COP17, Yerevan, 19 to 30 October 2026. The first global stocktake of the Kunming-Montréal Framework. Going into the conference: most targets are off track, although some protection-related targets are showing progress; about 17.6% of land and 8.4% of oceans are protected; financing remains well short of the $30 billion expected annually; and roughly $2.6 trillion a year in harmful public subsidies persists, according to the OECD. Five items are on the agenda: the stocktake and its indicators, a methodological framework for biodiversity credits, replenishing the finance mechanism, invasive alien species, and the mandate toward COP18.

V. From the Systemic Diagnosis to Local Proof

The first volume of the Ecological Civilization trilogy made an overarching argument: without a change in the growth-based economic model, no target will be met. A systemic and sobering reading, one the $2.6 trillion in harmful subsidies bears out.

This report brings the lens closer: the shore of Lake Osisko, the jessour terraces of the Dahar, the Minjiang Estuary-Matsu Islands, the sacred forest of Batoufam. At this distance, nature responds faster than expected when a community acts with method and tourism revenue flows back to the territory. Thirty-three cases, sixteen countries, four continents. A few examples: the Chinese Crested Tern grew from fewer than 50 individuals in 2010 to more than 200 by 2023; 211 hectares of aquaculture ponds returned to wetland and 173 hectares of mangroves replanted in the Minjiang Estuary; 1,000 trees planted in three years at Batoufam; 322 fungal taxa documented at Lotbinière, including 8 potentially new to science; and millennia-old jessour terraces brought back into service in the Dahar.

The two scales hold together: the systemic reading gives the direction, the fieldwork supplies the proof and the political consent.

VI. Staying Optimistic, with Method

Three requests to COP17: recognize territory-led forms of conservation in the indicators, including OECMs (other effective area-based conservation measures) and Indigenous and community governance; bring financing down to the scale where results actually happen; and treat these experiences as a method that can be replicated.

Sources: decisions of COP1 through COP16 and the resumed Rome session (February 2025); Global Biodiversity Outlook, 5th edition, 2020; national reports and compilations published ahead of COP17; OECD estimates of harmful public support.

Annex C. World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED)

A. Background and mandate

The World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) was established in 2006 in Montréal, Canada, within the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) and in association with the World Tourism Organization (now UN Tourism). Its establishment responded to the need for a structured assessment framework enabling tourism destinations to evaluate their performance, identify strengths and areas for improvement, and define locally appropriate actions to advance sustainable development.

The CED's mission is "to bring tourism destinations around the world to excellence by helping them achieve their sustainable development goals and increase their capacity to generate economic, social and cultural benefits". Its vision defines excellence as the capacity "to showcase the geographic originality of a place, namely its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage and the well-being of its residents".

This approach recognizes the interdependence between environmental and cultural conservation, territorial identity and local economic development. Nearly two decades of implementation have progressively broadened the CED's approach from the assessment of sustainable tourism performance to the strengthening of adaptive capacities and, more recently, to the integration of biodiversity and regenerative approaches.

B. System of Measures for Excellence in Destinations (SMED)

The CED's principal programme is the System of Measures for Excellence in Destinations (SMED) (in French, Système de mesures pour l'excellence des destinations). Developed in 2007 by a team of international experts from academia, the tourism industry and international organizations, including the World Tourism Organization and the National Geographic Society, the SMED provides a structured framework for assessing tourism destinations.

Rather than ranking destinations, the SMED provides a diagnostic assessment conducted on site and involving local stakeholders. Its purpose is to establish a comprehensive picture of a tourism destination at a given point in time and to support the identification of priorities for action.

The SMED serves as a decision-support tool, a mechanism for stakeholder engagement and a structured framework for the continuous improvement of tourism destinations. It is implemented as a four-month programme during which the CED supports the destination management organization (DMO) through five phases:

(a) Preparation of a destination profile and stakeholder mapping;

(b) Preparation of fieldwork;

(c) Site visits, interviews and three-hour participatory workshops;

(d) Co-production of a roadmap, followed by its presentation at a public event;

(e) Follow-up and implementation of the roadmap.

The SMED performs five principal functions:

(a) Diagnostic assessment. Strengths and areas for improvement are identified on the basis of verifiable information and stakeholder input;

(b) Stakeholder engagement and local coordination. The assessment process brings together stakeholders around shared strategic objectives and actions and supports the DMO in its role as a coordinating body for territorial tourism development;

(c) Destination positioning and identification of strategic assets. The process identifies the distinctive attributes of the destination, supports the refinement of its positioning and brand, and helps identify assets that may be promoted to priority markets and media;

(d) Benchmarking and exchange of good practices. Destinations can assess their performance in relation to other destinations and relevant international benchmarks. Participating destinations also become part of a global network for the exchange of experience and good practices;

(e) Strategic recommendations and implementation planning. The assessment results in concrete and achievable strategic actions incorporated into a shared roadmap. Recommendations draw on site visits, interviews, participatory workshops, academic literature and experience gained through other SMED applications.

C. Evolution of the SMED framework

The SMED framework has evolved progressively in response to changing conditions affecting tourism destinations and to lessons derived from its application in the field. Three principal stages can be identified.

1. Sustainable performance

The original SMED assessed destination performance across the three established dimensions of sustainable development — economic, social and environmental — taking into account both short- and long-term requirements. The objective was to assess the capacity of a destination to sustain its development over time.

2. Governance and adaptive capacity

In 2020, as the global tourism industry came to a halt, the CED and its partners launched Reconfigura Destino in response to the World Tourism Organization's call for recovery. The programme pursued two principal objectives: strengthening good governance at the destination level and developing digital capacities.

The approach is based on three dynamic capacities — sensing, seizing and reconfiguring — and four pillars: governance, technology, collaborative innovation and new jobs. This stage broadened the SMED approach by placing greater emphasis on the capacity of destinations to anticipate, respond to and adapt to changing conditions.

3. Regenerative approaches and biodiversity

The adoption of the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework in December 2022 provided a further basis for the evolution of the CED approach. Beyond reducing negative impacts and strengthening adaptive capacity, the framework introduced greater consideration of the contribution that destinations can make to the ecological condition and resilience of their territories.

The SMED subsequently incorporated a biodiversity component and a framework inspired by ecological civilization. This approach has been applied to territories with different environmental, social and economic characteristics, including a Colombian metropolis adjoining a tropical biodiversity hotspot and an African city affected by flooding.

The case studies presented in the present publication refer to this approach as the SMED–Ecological Civilization framework. It reflects the progressive evolution of the CED methodology from measuring sustainable performance, to strengthening adaptive capacity, and subsequently to assessing and supporting the contribution of destinations to territorial regeneration and biodiversity.

D. Selected applications

The SMED programme has been applied to destinations of different sizes and characteristics on several continents, including large, medium-sized and small urban destinations; rural and nature-based destinations; and destinations at emerging, growth and mature stages of development. The following examples illustrate the diversity of its applications:

(a) Mégantic Region, Québec, Canada. A rural territory of 22,000 residents where the diagnostic provided a foundation for a long-term strategy addressing heritage and natural resources. The CED currently supports the Corporation du patrimoine archéologique du Méganticois, which manages the oldest known archaeological site in Québec;

(b) Douro Valley, Portugal. A wine-growing landscape inscribed on the World Heritage List, where the application addressed issues associated with tourism pressure on a living cultural landscape;

(c) Abitibi-Témiscamingue, Québec, Canada. A mining and forestry region where the SMED was used to support the development of a coherent tourism offering based on the region's natural environment and industrial identity. The region is now twinned with Santiago de Cali, Colombia, as part of a North–South exchange of methods and experience;

(d) Santiago de Cali, Colombia. In 2024, following the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP16), the City and the CED signed a memorandum of understanding. The SMED–Ecological Civilization framework is being adapted to a national park covering 196,400 hectares, representing 23 per cent of the municipal territory and feeding six of the city's seven rivers;

(e) Greater Bujumbura, Burundi. Following the flooding of Lake Tanganyika in 2024, the SMED has provided a basis for ecological data collection and quarterly working groups bringing together the municipality, the private sector and civil society;

(f) Ambam, Cameroon, and Bouhanifia-Sidi Abdelli, Algeria. These recent applications, respectively in an equatorial forest setting and a semi-arid environment, illustrate the adaptability of the framework to different territorial and ecological contexts.

E. Governance and expert network

The CED operates through a governance structure comprising its Board of Directors, executive leadership and an international network of experts and partner organizations.

The Board of Directors, chaired by Sylvain St-Amand, provides strategic direction and safeguards the independence of the CED methodology.

Day-to-day management is led by François Bédard, founding Director of the CED and associate professor in the Department of Urban Studies and Tourism at UQAM.

The CED's international expert network comprises more than 50 experts and partners across four continents. Of these, 27 contributed the 33 case studies presented in the present publication and are identified in the annex containing the list of authors.

F. Contribution to COP17

International cooperation and participation in global policy processes form part of the CED's broader engagement in sustainable and regenerative destination development.

The CED is participating in the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP17), held in Yerevan, Armenia, with an observer delegation. The present publication constitutes the CED's contribution to the meeting.