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# The VCA Approach

## Verifying area-based conservation



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[v-c-a.org](http://v-c-a.org)

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# Caring for our planet - a global challenge



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## The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

A plan of action for **people, planet and prosperity**... resolved to free the human race from the tyranny of poverty and want and to **heal and secure our planet for present and future generations.**

- **SDG14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development**
- **SDG 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss**



# The CBD Strategic Plan for Biodiversity



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## Aichi Targets:

- 4: Sustainable production & consumption; use within safe ecological limits
- 7: Agriculture, aquaculture & forestry areas managed to ensure conservation
- 11: Conserve 10% of marine areas & 17% of terrestrial areas
- 12: Conservation status of threatened species improved & sustained
- 15: Restore 15% of degraded ecosystems
- 20: Mobilise financing from all sources

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“The only way to save upward of 90 percent of the rest of life is to vastly increase the area of refuges, from their current 15 percent of the land and 3 percent of the sea to half of the land and half of the sea.

That amount, as I and others have shown, can be put together from large and small fragments around the world to remain relatively natural, without removing people living there or changing property rights.”

Or in **CBD** language:

“Other effective **area-based conservation** measures”  
need to be  
“integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes.”

# Verified Conservation Areas Approach



- Scales up conservation efforts across different land uses
- Recognises voluntary efforts to conserve and restore our planet
- Encourages conservation by companies and others beyond parks
- Enables conservation to be a marketable and investable asset
- Facilitates payments for ecosystem services and biodiversity mitigation
- Assures that money invested in conservation is well spent
- Establishes transparency and accountability in natural capital



# Recognising verified area-based conservation



**VCA** - a geographically-defined area managed to conserve nature and listed on the VCA Registry

- **To list a VCA** - initially submit a proposal to draft a conservation management plan within two years
- **To register a VCA** - submit an audited area-based conservation management plan
- **To remain registered as a VCA** - submit annual audited conservation reports



# VCA Registry as of April 2016



9 pilot listings

- 3 Registered
- 6 Proposed

Each has its own webpage

- Description
- Images
- Required docs

VCA	Country	Hectares
▶ <b>Jama-Coaque Reserve</b>	Ecuador	411
▶ <b>Hintenteiche &amp; Sernitz Nature Reserves</b>	Germany	700
▶ <b>Cinco Grandes</b>	Mozambique	250,000
▶ <b>Tetepare Community</b>	Solomon Islands	14,400
▶ <b>Espai Natura Montserrat-Coll de Can Maçana</b>	Spain	177
▶ <b>Tullstorp Stream</b>	Sweden	6,300
▶ <b>Budongo Forest Reserve</b>	Uganda	42,500
▶ <b>Knepp Castle Estate Wildland</b>	United Kingdom	1,400
▶ <b>Balhaf Headland Marine Area</b>	Yemen	1,816

# Budongo Forest Reserve, Uganda



The largest block of natural high forest in Uganda and home to a large (500+) population of wild chimpanzees.

Facing a number of threats including neighbouring sugarcane plantations, illegal logging, illegal snaring and trapping, and encroachment by immigrant farmers.



# Cinco Grande Reserve, Mozambique



HOME | POLICIES & PRIVACY | CONTACT US | PHOTO GALLERY

JOIN US ON FACEBOOK

Africa Futura  
Wildlife Restoration  
LDA

Coutada 5

ABOUT US | ABOUT MOZAMBIQUE | OUR POLICIES | MANAGEMENT PLANS | MISSION & OBJECTIVES | COUTADA SYSTEM

Original signpost dating back to 1972

Click to enlarge... DOWNLOAD

More images...

A VCA-registered 250,000 hectares wilderness & wildlife restoration project

Located within a 680,000 private concession which will also include sustainable agriculture, ranching & community development initiatives

# Balhaf Headland Marine Area, Yemen



Protecting coral reefs & fish habitat in an industrial harbour

# The VCA Standard



- Sets out the VCA listing requirements for management plans, performance reports and third-party audits
- Aligned with the Performance Standards of the International Finance Corporation on environmental management and biodiversity conservation
- Requires assessments of habitats, legally protected areas, invasive alien species, ecosystem services, and primary production of living natural resources
- Requires an action plan based on the biodiversity mitigation hierarchy - avoid, minimise, restore and offset
- Supported by a **VCA Toolkit** of recommended best practice guidance

## VCA framework for conservation actions

	IFC mitigation	IUCN conservation
<b>Objectives</b>	Protect & conserve biodiversity, maintain the benefits from ecosystem services, & promote the sustainable management of living natural resources	Management of human use of the biosphere to yield the greatest sustainable benefit while maintaining its potential to meet the needs & aspirations of future generations
<b>Actions for habitats, legally protected areas, invasive alien species, and ecosystem services</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Avoid negative impacts</li> <li>2. Minimise negative impacts</li> <li>3. Restore biodiversity</li> <li>4. Offset like-for-like or better</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Preservation</li> <li>2. Maintenance</li> <li>3. Restoration</li> <li>4. Enhancement of the natural environment</li> </ol>
<b>Actions for primary production of living natural resources</b>	5. Implement sustainable management practices to credible standards as demonstrated by independent verification	5. Sustainable utilisation
Source	IFC Performance Standard 6	IUCN World Conservation Strategy

# The VCA Toolkit



The screenshot shows the VCA Toolkit website. At the top, there is a dark blue navigation bar with the VCA logo (a bee) and the text 'VCA' on the left, and 'Home' and 'VCA Register' on the right. Below the navigation bar, the page title is 'VCA Toolkit : Home'. The main heading is 'VCA Toolkit – HOME'. The text below reads: 'The VCA Toolkit offers recommended best practice guidance for conservation. The recommended tools complement the requirements for VCA registration schemes. The Toolkit includes the following sections:'. A list of sections follows, each with a downward arrow icon: BIODIVERSITY – Tools for understanding and valuing biodiversity; PLAN – Tools for developing a Conservation Management Plan; REPORT – Tools for producing Conservation Performance Reports; CONSERVE – Tools for conserving landscapes, habitats & species; USE – Tools for alternative sustainable land uses; TERMS – Definitions of key terms used for VCAs.

Includes biodiversity-related standards & certification schemes for sustainable land uses:

- ASEAN Guidelines for Maximizing Biodiversity on Golf Courses
- CCBA Project Design Standards
- EC Non-Energy Mineral Extraction and Natura 2000
- FSC Step-by-Step Guide
- ICMM Good Practice Guidance for Biodiversity and Mining
- IPECA Guide to Developing Biodiversity Action Plans for the Oil and Gas Sector
- IUCN Green List of Protected Areas
- MSC Fishery Standard
- Unilever Sustainable Agriculture Code

# The VCA Approach

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Hosted by Earthmind & the Global Footprint Network

Secretariat at the IUCN Conservation Centre in Switzerland

Governed by an international Board who approves VCA Auditors

Promoting a growing voluntary alliance to conserve our planet

Establishing a new asset class of natural capital

