

# AFRICA'S PROTECTED NATURAL ASSETS

The importance of  
conservation areas for  
prosperous and resilient  
societies in Africa

Case study 1

**BANCO NATIONAL PARK,  
CÔTE D'IVOIRE**



## GREEN VALUE

NATURAL CAPITAL IN AFRICA



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The Green Value Initiative is the umbrella program of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) on the value of nature in Africa. In providing multiple benefits such as clean air and water, productive soils, extreme weather and erosion protection, health benefits, and solutions to climate change, Africa's natural wealth is an important asset that contributes significantly to the continent's welfare and achievement of societal development goals. The Green Value Initiative supports its African partner countries and development institutions to integrate the value of these assets in decision-making. Its objective is to mainstream natural capital into policies and planning, financial markets and development finance, as well as measures of economic progress and national accounts (natural capital accounting). With that, the Green Value Initiative contributes to one of the key building blocks for transformative change towards nature-positive economies and development in Africa.

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## BANCO NATIONAL PARK, COTE D'IVOIRE

### CASE STUDY

### Urban national park prevents water pollution and shut down of adjacent wells



**STATUS:** National park

**SIZE:** 3438 ha

**ECOSYSTEMS:** Tropical forest

**KEY ECOSYSTEM SERVICES:** Water provision, water retention, air pollution control, recreation and opportunities for nature tourism

**NEARBY POPULATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE:** Surrounded by Abidjan's urban neighborhoods; infrastructure includes multiple walking trails and environmental education and training facilities

**LAND-USE:** Recreation and environmental education

**CHALLENGES:** Pollution, unsustainable hunting and illegal use of forest areas as gardens

Banco National Park is a 3600 ha park within the city limits of Abidjan. Established in 1926 as a research site for tropical forestry and declared a national park since 1953, it has a long history. Despite the rapid growth of the Ivorian capital in the last few decades especially, it remains a natural place of refuge.

#### APPROACH OF THE ASSESSMENT

The natural capital assessment sought evidence and numerical arguments to highlight the role of the park in the life of the city and to advocate for its conservation within city planning processes. Various ecosystem services were examined on the basis of extant data collected at different agencies, government bodies, state and non-state institutions.

#### SOME KEY FINDINGS

In addition to a level of biodiversity observed nowhere else in the city, the results showed that the park plays an important role in the provision of water to the city: the freshwater wells located on the park's periphery account for 64% of the total water pumped from Abidjan's groundwater reservoir. Without the water purification provided by the park, water treatment costs and therefore water prices would be higher. In fact, some wells situated in other areas of Abidjan which do not benefit from these services had to be shut down due to pollution.

The park also provides a huge 'sustainable urban drainage system' with a largely unrecognized water retention function. Its arboreal vegetation and natural soils mitigate run-off during heavy rains. Abidjan is regularly affected by rain-related flood events which threaten human lives and the city's infrastructure. While the retention function can be seen in physical data, not enough numbers are available to quantify exactly the savings Abidjan accrues from damages prevented by the park's green infrastructure.

The assessment also revealed high option values linked to the educational and recreational values provided by such a large natural area within the city limits. Located in the city of Abidjan, home to 5 million people, the park currently receives only 10,000 visitors per year. It therefore offers an immense untapped potential for leisure, outdoor sports, environmental education and research activities. This includes employment opportunities in nature-related tourism and jobs associated with recreational activities.



Banco National Parc is a remnant tropical forest surrounded by highways and urban neighborhoods.

Source: Authors' analysis