



NATUREXPAIRS

The French Hub
for Protected Areas & People

2023 PROGRESS REPORT



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IN SUPPORT OF



NatureXpairs, *The French Hub for Protected areas and People*, aims to contribute to the extension and consolidation of protected areas worldwide by mobilizing French expertise in international cooperation projects.

Initiated in 2020 by the French Nature Reserves, the Federation of Natural Regional Parks, the Federation of Nature Conservancies and the French National Parks, this alliance of managers makes available complementary expertise to international partners, and enriches its practice through the experience of other countries and peer-to-peer sharing.

NatureXpairs is fully committed to the implementation of the new global framework for biodiversity, and in particular target 3 dedicated to protected areas. In addition to the deployment of cooperation projects in the field, 2023 marks the creation of NatureXpairs' visual identity, as well as its role as facilitator of the French working group dedicated to the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People (HAC N&P).

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK

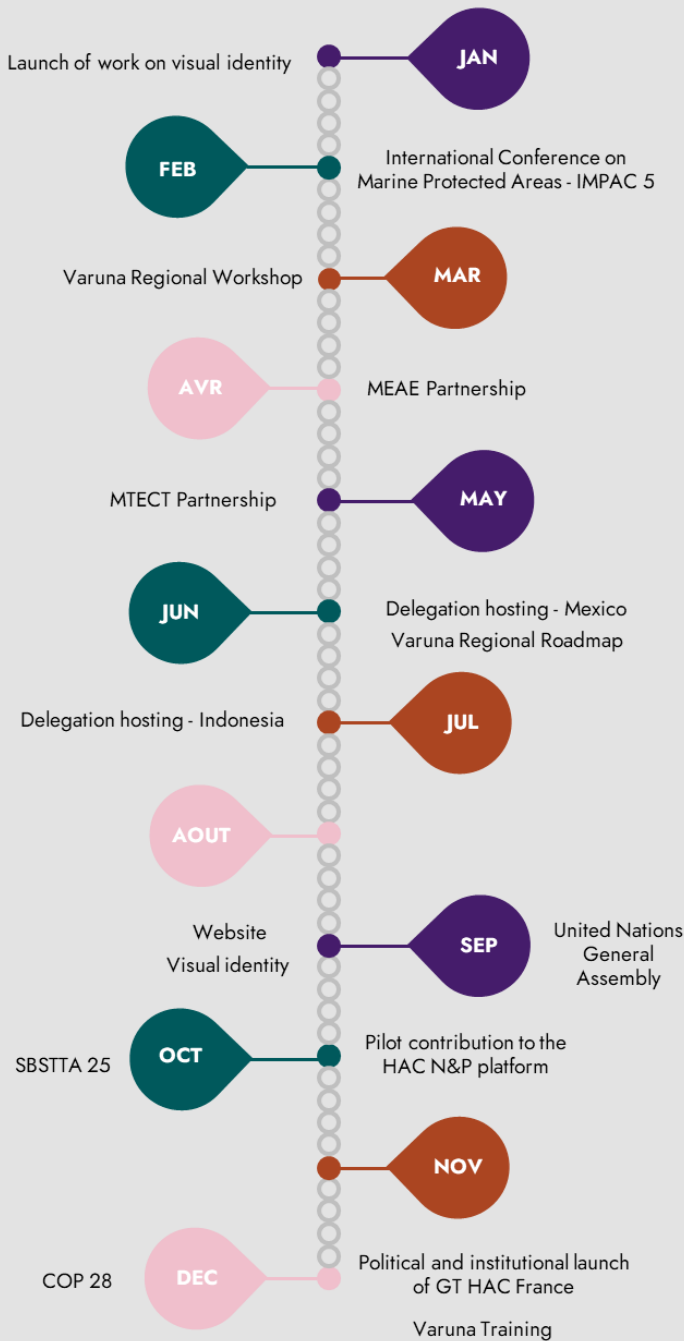
Exchanges with the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE) and the Ministry of Ecological Transition (MTECT) in 2022, facilitated by NatureXpairs' participation in COP 15, enabled to put this alliance of managers into perspective with the deployment of the [High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People](#) (HAC N&P) and to set up two partnerships for 2023.

Our partnership with the MEAE has enabled to support NatureXpairs in its role as a resource platform, with the creation of a visual identity, the launch of a website, and the coordination and structuring of a network of cooperators working on protected areas.

Since May 2023, NatureXpairs has been leading the HAC N&P France working group (see page 6) steered by MTECT and MEAE, with support from the French Agency for Biodiversity (OFB). This new key partnership with the MTECT has led to the recruitment of a full-time coordinator.

The Agence Française de Développement, which has supported the scheme since its inception, has also renewed its partnership for 2023, focusing on the identification and deployment of a structuring project for international cooperation around protected areas, involving French networks of managers and other key structures.

The partnership with the OFB has entered its second year of implementation (multi-year agreement 2022-2024).



COOPERATION PROJECTS



Funded by AFD and coordinated by Expertise France, Varuna is dedicated to preserving biodiversity in the Indian Ocean. RNF, with the OFB as co-pilot, is deploying the part of this program dedicated to networking marine protected area managers in the south-west Indian Ocean (Varuna_AMP).

This bottom-up networking is designed to strengthen managers' capacities through training, technical collaboration, mentoring and collective interest actions, in response to collectively expressed needs.



After an initial prefiguration phase in 2022, 2023 saw the recruitment of a local coordinator based in La Réunion and the first concrete actions to build the network. A regional roadmap defining the capacity-building actions required of marine area managers was drawn up, laying the foundations for the network. To this end, a regional workshop was organized in Madagascar from March 27 to 31, 2023, in conjunction with the RECOS program on coastal resilience and the WIOMPAN network.





The aim of this key meeting was to define joint actions between these three initiatives to strengthen the skills of marine area managers in the Western Indian Ocean. Bringing together 40 participants from seven territories, the results of this workshop led to a shared action plan that will be deployed until the end of 2025.

Between three and five events a year will be organized by Varuna AMP, focusing on scientific protocols and monitoring for coral reefs, seagrass beds and mangroves, community management and citizen participation in MPA management, communication and the development of income-generating activities.

A first call for companionship and actions of collective interest was launched in October, and will enable the first 5 projects to be carried out in 2023 by marine areas in Madagascar, Mauritius and the Comoros.

An initial training session dedicated to marine area management, held in the Seychelles from December 11 to 15, 2023, brought together 15 participants from 6 territories and provided managers with methods for scientific monitoring, project management, community involvement in marine area management, communication and promotion, and surveillance.



Varuna AMP has also been promoted at various international events, such as IMPAC 5 in Vancouver in February 2023, the WIOMPAN congress in Tanzania in November 2023 and several events organized as part of COP 28 in Dubai (see page 7).

COOPERATION PROJECTS



Delegation hosting

In June and July 2023, NatureXpairs supported the organization of visits by foreign delegations to French protected areas.

Hosted in France thanks to the BioConnect project funded by the AFD and with the support of Expertise France, the environment ministers from 9 Mexican states were able to discover first-hand the actions deployed to promote ecological connectivity in the Grand Est region, within the PNR Lorraine, the RNR Lachaussée and the Rupt de Mad site (managed by the CEN Lorraine), as well as on the scale of the Metz metropolis.

In the southern region, an Indonesian delegation of five experts was welcomed with a view to creating a protected area in the Likupang region. Similar issues between the two countries were identified during visits to the Calanques and Port Cros national parks, the PNR Camargue and the RNR Scamandre, and will feed into a forthcoming technical dialogue.

Other cooperation projects

Several exchanges with the French Embassies in Turkey, Thailand and Montenegro enabled NatureXpairs to present its products and identify areas for cooperation. On December 4, 2023, a webinar organized by NatureXpairs and the French Embassy in Montenegro provided an opportunity to share experiences on the management of the bark beetle crisis recently faced by Montenegro. The expertise of French managers provided input for the Montenegrin Environmental Protection Agency. Technical dialogue on this subject will continue in 2024.

Identification of a structuring project

An initial meeting organized by NatureXpairs in November 2023 brought together funders and technical partners who could be mobilized to promote the emergence of an international cooperation project on protected areas. The various mechanisms available to AFD and FFEM were presented, and initial geographies and themes were identified. The dialogue will continue in 2024, with the aim of submitting an initial opportunity note within the year.



FACILITATION OF THE FRENCH WORKING GROUP ON HAC N&P

In 2023, NatureXpairs developed its mission of making French expertise available to achieve the 30x30 worldwide, by structuring and leading the French working group dedicated to the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People, in support of the MTECT, MEAE and OFB. The HAC N&P is a group of 118 countries, co-chaired by France and Costa Rica, whose aim is to achieve Target 3 of the Global Biodiversity Framework, which aims to protect 30% of the world's land and 30% of its oceans and seas by 2030.

The main aim of the French working group dedicated to the HAC N&P is to identify and list French know-how in the field of protected areas, in order to make it available on the technical assistance tool developed by the HAC N&P Secretariat.

Structuring a working group of French players involved in the management and creation of protected areas, NatureXpairs met with some thirty organizations in 2023 and began to list their expertise for international use.



The recruitment of a coordinator in September 2023 has enabled NatureXpairs to make the first French contributions to the activities of the HAC N&P Secretariat, particularly on the 30x30 Matchmaking Platform.



NatureXpairs also acts as an interface between the French experts and the HAC Secretariat, and will support the realization of cooperation opportunities arising from this process. The political launch of the working group took place at COP 28, in the presence of French Minister Christophe Béchu.

In particular, the OFB's Conférence des Aires Protégées was mobilized to present the GT HAC N&P France, invite its various members to join, and host its institutional launch in December 2023. Bringing together some forty participants, this event set the framework for work in 2024.

FOCUS ON COP 28

At COP 28 in Dubai, NatureXpairs took part in the Madagascar and Seychelles pavilions to present Varuna_AMP's actions. COP 28 also provided an opportunity for privileged dialogue with NatureXpairs' partners: HAC N&P Secretariat, MEAE, MTECT, OFB, AFD, FFEM, Expertise France, IUCN, as well as with partner countries.

At the heart of the mobilization for the 30x30 was the HAC N&P, which organized a number of events, including a very high-level one bringing together ministers from coalition member countries, as well as a ministerial steering committee, in which NatureXpairs had the privilege of participating as an observer.

For NatureXpairs, the highlight of COP28 was the organization with the HAC N&P Secretariat of a high-level event on the French Pavilion, entitled "Ensemble, plus forts pour le 30x30". Bringing together 14 speakers, including ministers and state representatives, the event presented NatureXpairs, its role in leading the French HAC N&P working group, and highlighted French projects on climate change adaptation.

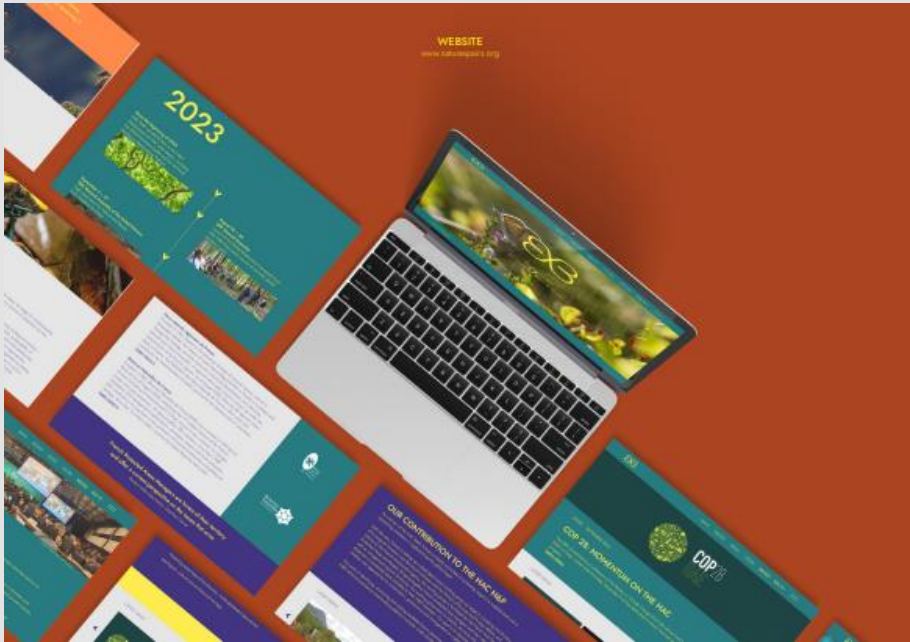
Looking at how the invited countries were committing to achieving Target 3, the event highlighted France's contribution to the HAC N&P platform, as the first country to offer technical assistance. Closing remarks by Minister Christophe Béchu underlined the key role of NatureXpairs in France's contribution to the HAC N&P.



COMMUNICATION

Launched in January 2023, the work carried out by Corinne Brunois and the ADDB agency on the visual identity of the "inter-network cell for international cooperation" was finalized in October 2023.

"NatureXpairs" is the name chosen for this alliance of managers. It refers directly to the field expertise of protected areas in France and expresses the very essence of the approach - exchanges of expertise between peers - with this desire to co-construct projects between practitioners that best meet the needs of partners.



A base line, "The French hub for protected areas and people", a graphic charter, a logo and communication elements accompany this name, clarifying the fact that this is a French initiative, which serves as a hub to encourage the emergence of international cooperation projects on protected areas, and also underlines the fundamental relationship between society and nature, echoing the HAC N&P, while highlighting the French approach to nature protection and the diversity and complementarity of our protected areas.



A website designed to showcase the projects that will emerge through NatureXpairs has also been developed for 2023. This first version of the site is intended to evolve in 2024 into a resource platform on international cooperation around protected areas and the French contribution to achieving the 30x30 internationally.

Building on this new visual identity and its website, NatureXpairs has launched its LinkedIn and X (twitter) social networks to communicate its actions and results to the international community.

A brandbook presents NatureXpairs' visual identity and graphic charter.

LINKS WITH INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION PLAYERS



Since 2022, NatureXpairs has been a member of the IUCN French Committee's Developing Countries and Biodiversity working group (SoBioDev project), participating in its meetings and work. NatureXpairs and Varuna_AMP were presented at a "Café Brousse" in June 2023.

In December 2023, NatureXpairs was listed in the directory of French biodiversity civil society organizations active in developing countries. In addition, the NatureXpairs coordinator was a member of the selection committee for the IUCN French Committee "Small Initiatives Program", funded by the FFEM.



PPI

Links have also been established with the IUCN's African Protected Areas and Conservation Program (PAPACO), as part of their capacity-building program for protected area stakeholders submitted to the FFEM. NatureXpairs, in conjunction with the Papaco internship coordinators, will be able to help identify French protected area management structures to host internships for students and professionals from African protected areas taking part in the Papaco program.



In 2023, NatureXpairs was presented to the embassy network via the DAEI and the OFB. Bilateral exchanges took place with the French embassies in Turkey, Thailand, Indonesia and Montenegro.

In November 2023, at AFD's initiative, NatureXpairs was presented to members of AFD's biodiversity sector platform, in order to promote the system to all AFD staff working on protected areas.

NatureXpairs also participates in the International Commission of the Regional Nature Parks.



NATUREXPAIRS

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