



Luc Hoffmann  
Institute

# FORGING NEW PATHS

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ANNUAL REPORT 2019/2020



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This report, published 8 September 2020, covers the Luc Hoffmann Institute financial year from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020.

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# Innovation for nature and people

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**Our vision** is to contribute to a societal change whereby the role of biodiversity is widely recognised as the foundation for human development, security and continued life on Earth.

The Luc Hoffmann Institute aims to be the world's leading catalyst for innovation and transformative change to maintain biodiversity,

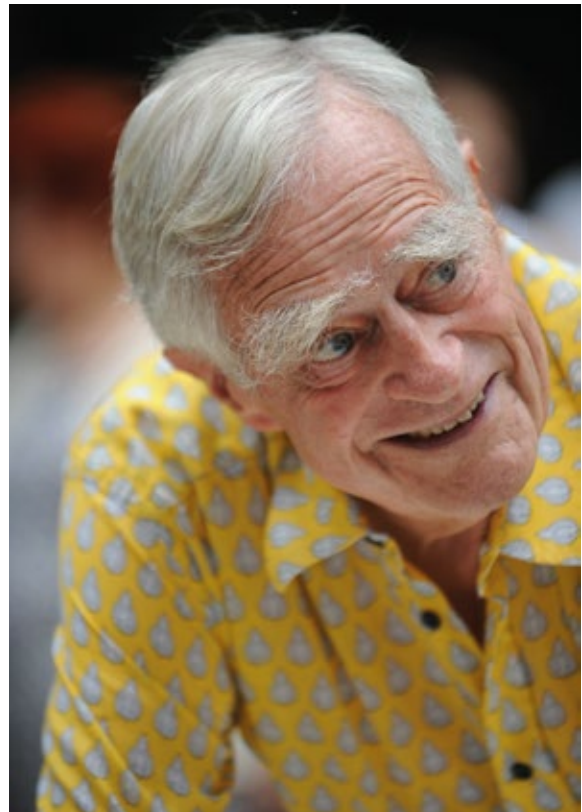
the foundation of all life on Earth. We create the conditions for new approaches to emerge, identify and mobilise the most promising innovators and ideas, and provide a flow of impactful, de-risked and exciting initiatives for investors. Our passionate and open-minded team is dedicated to driving societal change for nature and people to thrive together.

## Our legacy

Dr. Luc Hoffmann (1923-2016) premised his life's scientific and nature conservation work on the value of partnerships, inclusiveness, dialogue, and working together. He believed in influencing existing systems as well as creating new systems. He valued the work of individuals in accomplishing great things, and believed in merit regardless of a person's background (Kushlan, 2017).

*“Conservation is not the protection of nature against human development but the preservation of life-supporting systems and processes as a basis for a lasting development.”*

*Dr. Luc Hoffmann*



# Note from the Director

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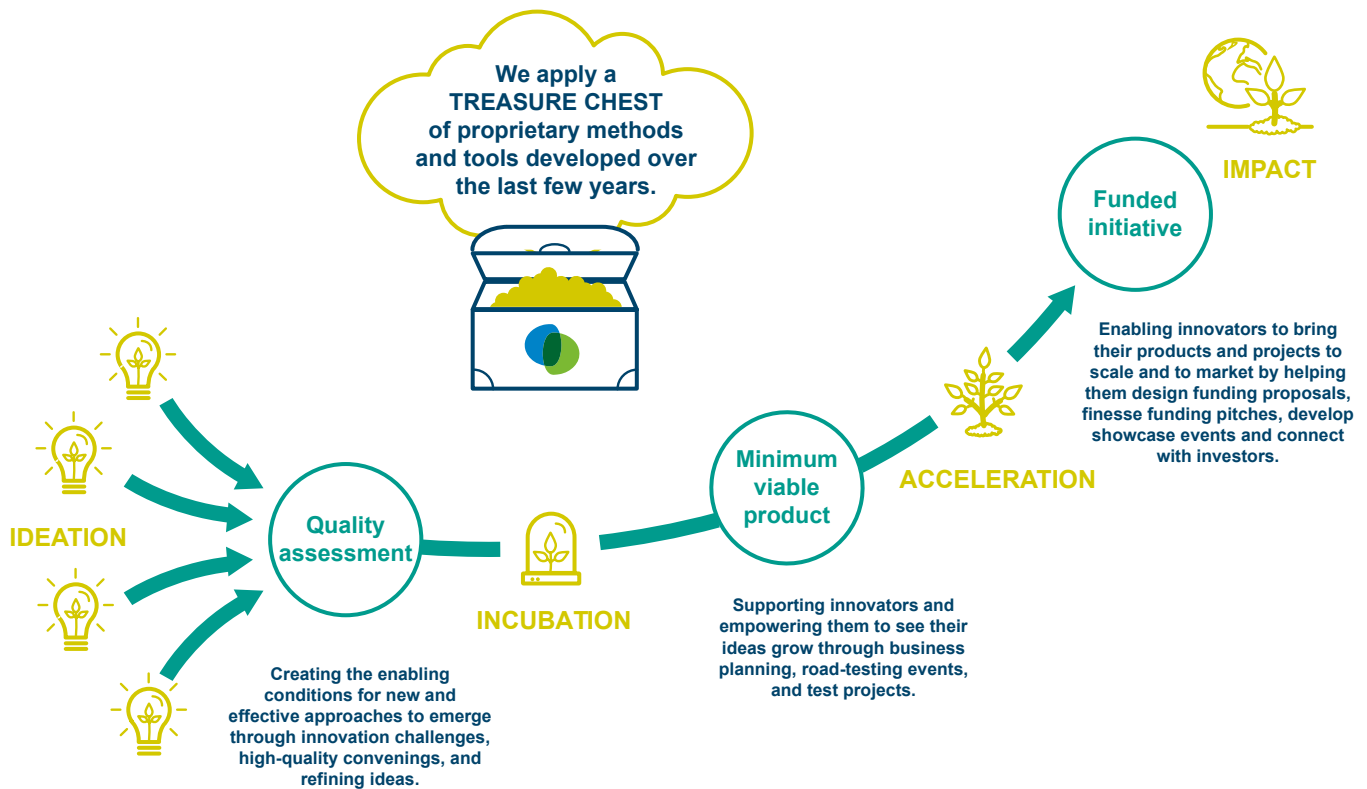


Societal innovation for nature and people is important in a post-COVID-19 world. In the short term, the post-COVID-19 world is likely to be somewhat worse than the old world that melted away in March 2020. In that old world, millions of tourists flew to Africa to see its unique wild wonders. In doing so, they created a clear economic reason for communities, governments, and others to husband and nurture their wildlife heritage. Because of COVID-19, that incentive model has collapsed, but in truth it was beginning to be challenged anyway. In a world of dangerous climate change, can it be morally acceptable to fly halfway across the planet for a safari?

The Luc Hoffmann Institute had been thinking about societal change well before COVID-19, as exemplified by our 'Beyond Tourism' initiative which is highlighted in this report. However, COVID-19 propelled us into emergency response mode with the result that we are now incubating an 'African Collaboration Platform for Resilience in Tourism-Dependent Conservation', which you can also read about in this report.

This financial year, despite a challenging global situation, the institute has been able to diversify its funding, establishing the foundations of our future after our primary donor, the MAVA Foundation, sunsets in 2022. We launched our new business model as an incubator for nature conservation, underpinned by our Treasure Chest - our unique way of innovating (Figure 1). Our quest begins with ideation, the sourcing of brilliant innovators and their ideas. We incubate the ideas that pass our quality assessment to the stage of a 'minimum viable product'. We then accelerate these ideas by testing for maximum impact and helping innovators identify and secure funding.

Demonstrating that our new business model works has been a highlight of this financial year. It clearly resonates with many people that business-as-usual



**Figure 1.** A schematic representation of the Luc Hoffmann Institute way of innovating for nature and people

conservation is not delivering effective results. We need to find new approaches that complement the last century of nature conservation. However, while there is great interest in funding the projects that emerge from our work, there is less enthusiasm for funding the core costs of making it all happen. The for-profit sector is used to the idea of an idea incubation chain, and comfortable with the fact that by the time an idea lands with a major investor, everybody along that chain has been rewarded for their contributions. However, there is no similar tradition within foundations or grant-giving government statutory bodies. There is also no “fail fast and learn” culture. For innovation, we need a not-for-profit world that feels it is both safe and valuable to support people who try things, even if some of them don’t work. Not-for-profit organisations can organise and exist around projects, but in my 35 years of experience such a model doesn’t allow for much thinking or innovation, which is what we are after.

Nevertheless, I sense that COVID-19 is encouraging a societal reevaluation of nature and the way we do business. Although it is difficult to

measure, I believe that the Luc Hoffmann Institute is firmly within this strong and building current as exemplified by our ‘Biodiversity Revisited’ initiative, which featured in the journal *Nature Sustainability* last month.

Although it is perhaps not always obvious, I am one of the world’s great optimists. My personal philosophy in life has always been to ‘expect the best, but plan for the worst’. In Zimbabwe, where I spent most of my formative years, the best outcome is always expected. However, if things don’t quite work out, the local motto is ‘ona yekutamba!’, which means ‘we’ll make a plan!’. After years of living in chaos with no means to do anything and yet successfully doing everything from educating children to having many of the best-managed national parks and nature reserves, Zimbabweans know that in every situation, you have to make a plan. And then make it work.

So let’s do just that! Ona yekutamba!

**Jon Hutton**  
 Director, Luc Hoffmann Institute



## A word from the Chair of our Advisory Council

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Despite the great surprise to the system that COVID-19 was to many of us, experts had been warning us about it just as you and I or others have been warning about climate change or biodiversity loss. So many of us choose to ignore impending crises.

At the Pardee School of Global Studies, I have been hosting a video series called "The World After Coronavirus". I interviewed Bill McKibben, environmentalist and founder of 350.org, and asked him why people might actually sit up and act now. "This pandemic...is the biggest shock to our system of my lifetime," he answered, "It's pretty amazing to be told to stay inside for months. One hopes that will cause us to pause in some of our assumptions about the world. People may be more attuned to the idea that crisis and disaster are real possibilities, not to be waived away."

Sunita Narain, Director General of the Centre for Science and Environment, India, exclaimed passionately, "Can we use this opportunity to fix the way for the future? Will we do it differently, recognising that COVID-19 is the revenge of nature? We have run out of time. All countries need to do things differently, starting today. We talk down to each other, [yet] we're all in this together." From all these interviews with leading experts and practitioners, I come away with three things:

1. We can do things we thought we couldn't. Overnight, New York City traffic closed down and emissions dropped. Staying home during COVID-19 effectively accomplished what years of policy debate over toll increases, congestion pricing, and other incentives could not.
2. We could have saved ourselves the pain of COVID-19. Why wait to be forced to do



things? As Yolanda Kakabadse, former president of WWF International says, “ecosystem health equals human health... and today there is an imbalance in that relation...the ecosystem is hitting back at us. The emergency of today has given us a very strong message: decisions can be taken in a second”.

3. Nature can't wait. We can always delay action, but the forces of nature won't let us delay them indefinitely.

To me, there has never been a better time to act, because if we don't then nature will. We have a unique chance in history to embrace diversity and inclusion and stand up for all life on Earth - now.

**Adil Najam**

*Dean of the Frederick S. Pardee School of Global Studies at Boston University*



# The Luc Hoffmann Institute Advisory Council speaks out

Why is societal innovation for nature and people important in a post-COVID-19 world?

*"The virus has acted as a catalyst and societal neglect of global commons is now obvious. We need innovation because the old system is not fit for purpose and our common future is at risk."*

**André Hoffmann,**  
President of MAVA foundation  
and Tour du Valat

*"It is the only smart way to go - either continue being part of the problem or become part of the solution by making peace with ourselves and with nature."*

**Cyriaque Sendashonga,** Global  
Director of IUCN's Policy  
and Programme Group

*"It is not important, it is necessary. If we do not innovate on our terms, nature will impose its own."*

**Adil Najam,**  
Chair of the Luc Hoffmann  
Institute Advisory Council and  
Dean of the Frederick S. Pardee  
School of Global Studies

**Renata Dwan,**  
Director, United Nations  
Institute for Disarmament  
Research (UNIDIR)

**Edward Perello,**  
Associate Director for  
Agriculture, Deep Science  
Ventures





***“This health crisis is rooted in our irresponsible relationship vis-à-vis all other living organisms, in a model of development that has made our societies extremely vulnerable. Societal innovation is absolutely crucial for inventing tomorrow’s solutions.”***

**Jean Jalbert,**  
*Director General, Tour du Valat*

***“COVID-19’s most important legacy may be a growing recognition that we must rethink the way we live with each other and with nature. That is an invitation for innovation.”***

**Jim Leape,**  
*William and Eva Price Senior Fellow at Stanford Woods Institute for the Environment*

***“Conservation needs less hand wringing and more societal innovation. Our work is the opposite of steady state; biodiversity embodies change. Seek, foster, include and let prosper diverse perspectives and practical solutions.”***

**Jensen Montambault,**  
*Director, Science for Nature and People Partnership (SNAPP)*

***“Arundhati Roy has described COVID-19 as a ‘gateway between one world and the next’. If we take with us the old economic system, conservation will fail because we know it destroys biodiversity”***

**Bill Adams,**  
*Moran Chair in Conservation and Development in the Department of Geography at the University of Cambridge*

***“This pandemic has exposed our broken relationship with nature, and highlighted our interdependencies. We must find a different way to interact with the world around us for our own health as well as the health of our planet”***

**Margaret Kuhlow,**  
*Interim Global Conservation Director, WWF-International*

***“COVID-19 has exposed the myriad ways our society is brittle and vulnerable. Only through purposeful, equitable and collaborative social innovation will we achieve a resilience that will allow nature and all people to flourish.”***

**Rebecca Shaw,**  
*WWF Chief Scientist*



# Some key figures

**Figure 2.** Geographical distribution of individuals attending the institute's main convening events, 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020

Number of attendees 1  37

### THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

**51,093** reads of staff publications on ResearchGate

At the Luc Hoffmann Institute, biodiversity and also human diversity matter greatly to us. We strive to include as many voices from as many backgrounds and sectors as possible, not only for equity and justice but also because we know that diversity can drive innovation. This financial year, we were able to achieve geographical diversity in our convenings. Participants stemmed from 34 countries across the northern and southern hemispheres (Figure 2)



### CUMULATIVE VALUE FOR MONEY

**1:5** for every CHF 1 invested by the Institute since July 2018, CHF 5 were raised for innovation



A world map where several countries are highlighted in blue, including the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, India, China, Japan, South Korea, Australia, and several countries in Africa and South America. The rest of the map is in a light grey color.

### CONVENING

**7** high-quality convenings  
(Biodiversity Revisited: Vienna  
Symposium, Bellagio, Davos)

**250** participants

**86%** of post-convening survey  
respondents recommend us

### INFLUENCE

**89%** of annual survey  
respondents recommend us

**72%** of post-convening survey  
respondents say our convenings have  
had a valuable influence on their thinking

**11,656** unique visitors to our website  
this year

**801** LinkedIn followers

**3,019** Twitter Followers

### WORKING WITH

**49**  
organisations

# Luc Hoffmann Institute-led thought leadership initiatives

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## Biodiversity Revisited

### The issue:

The diversity of life that sustains humanity is being severely degraded by human action. These changes are well documented and of existential significance to human societies, yet significant knowledge about the problem has not catalysed effective broad-based action. Research and policy efforts have been fragmented into overlapping biodiversity, climate, oceans, land degradation and sustainable development agendas. Furthermore, the predominant focus of research on describing biophysical change has not provided the necessary insight into the social and policy dynamics that would facilitate effective action.

### Our solution:

The Luc Hoffmann Institute led a collaborative, thought leadership process called “Biodiversity Revisited” to address these issues. The initiative provided a space for new awareness and thinking about biodiversity, looking critically at the narratives, science and systems that underpin it. Engaging hundreds of people from 46 countries, and supported by a core group of six partners, the #BiodiversityRevisited initiative and corresponding hashtag catalysed inclusive discussions among people from a wide range of backgrounds and disciplines. It encouraged early-career leadership on emerging issues and resulted in a five-year interdisciplinary research and action agenda for change.

### Highlights:

**300+ people from 46 countries** directly contributed to the development of the final outputs from the Initiative.

Seeds of Change, a compilation of provocations for the new research agenda, has already been **read over 2,500 times**

The **#BiodiversityRevisited** hashtag has been tweeted and retweeted **over 3,000 times** by private sector leaders, politicians, NGO leaders and research organisations.



*“Two important take-home messages of the [Research] Agenda are, on the one hand, that there is room for any and each of us to contribute towards a more sustainable, diverse, and just life on Earth, and, on the other hand, that there is still much to gain by building bridges across diverse knowledges, disciplines, and worldviews. Perhaps this Agenda can both inspire new generations of biodiversity scholars and practitioners from the natural and social sciences to humanities and beyond. It can serve as a reminder among established biodiversity communities that tackling the massive challenge of biodiversity loss worldwide effectively and equitably requires for us more than ever to listen to, and learn from, each other - and to find new ways to work together.”*

*Dr. Santiago Izquierdo-Tort, Future Earth Early Career Research Network Member, Université du Québec en Outaouais, Natura y Ecosistemas Mexicanos, Centro ITAM de Energia y Recursos Naturales*

The multigenerational, multidisciplinary and geographically diverse participants of the Biodiversity Revisited Symposium (September 2019)



# Securing the Future of Nature-based Tourism in Africa: A Collaborative Platform

## The issue:

The COVID-19 pandemic has created multiple disruptions to the way society works: the near total suspension of global travel is one of these. Where global tourism revenues have been helping simultaneously to deliver biodiversity conservation and local livelihoods, the pandemic has dramatically altered the trajectory of some national and many local economies.

## Our solution:

The Luc Hoffmann Institute aims to incubate a new Collaborative Platform that can address this shortcoming while helping to amplify existing fundraising efforts. An African community with one united voice stands a far greater chance of pushing this issue up the global agenda, where it is currently competing with thousands of other impacts ranging from health to employment.

## Highlights:

On 20 May 2020, the Luc Hoffmann Institute virtually **convened more than 70 participants**, mostly from Africa, across different sectors, geographies and disciplines, to discuss a collaborative response to the COVID-19 impacts on communities and wildlife.

A proposal to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and WWF-US was **awarded a USD 1.9 million GEF grant** to support African nature-based tourism that has been impacted by COVID-19.



*“Thanks for a wonderful, wonderful idea...I am in full support of the initiative [the Collaborative Platform] and will commit to playing my role towards making this a success. I was blown away by the network of key individuals you brought together, and was taken in by your inclusive approach. As always, I am keen on strong Africa representation and engagement, and was not disappointed. Thanks and count me in.”*

*Frederick Kwame Kumah, Vice President of African Wildlife Foundation*





# Incubating the ideas of the most forward-thinking people in conservation and beyond

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## Innovative business models

Non-profit organisations active in the environmental impact sector are under significant pressure to develop new, innovative business models and revenues to ensure financial sustainability and viability. Today, they are required to go beyond traditional models that are heavily dependent on philanthropy. In November 2018, we convened actors from the NGO and social enterprise sectors, impact investors and philanthropic foundations to seek new business models. Since then, this Luc Hoffmann Institute-led initiative has connected us with a wide range of innovators. This year we began incubating concrete ideas from two of them (Boxes 1 and 2).



### **Box 1: Beyond Hunting and Tourism's Melissa de Kock**

Melissa De Kock (WWF Norway) was ahead of the curve when she came to us with her “Beyond Hunting and Tourism” idea in the early spring of 2019: conservation in Africa was too dependent on hunting and tourism for revenue, and diversification of revenues was needed to prepare for a possible decrease or collapse in these activities. This not only affected wildlife, but the local communities living around tourism-dependent natural reserves. As a first step, the Luc Hoffmann Institute teamed up with Melissa to compile a report on incentives for community-based conservation. The report identified and categorized over 130 initiatives, but found few that could raise significant revenue outside of either hunting or tourism. We presented these results at the African Leadership University (ALU)’s Business of Conservation Conference, encouraging and challenging the numerous innovators in attendance to consider how livelihoods could be diversified. Ideas began to trickle in and to encourage more ideas, we teamed up with WWF-Norway and the ALU to begin developing a global innovation challenge for 2020-2021. The challenge gives participants the chance to win a place in ALU’s incubation programme. With the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism in Africa has collapsed and Melissa’s thinking has become prescient.



*“I really appreciated how quickly the institute took this work up, understanding its relevance, and recognising the opportunities it presents for ‘future-proofing’ conservation. The institute’s reach and influence also enabled a partnership with the African Leadership University and created important links to other initiatives which has helped to move this work forward.”*

**Melissa de Kock, Senior Adviser:  
Conservation, Climate and Communities  
Wildlife Practice & Governance Practice Focal  
Point, WWF-Norway**



## **Box 2: Internet of Elephants' Gautam Shah**

**Gautam Shah** and his company, Internet of Elephants, want to revolutionise public engagement with wildlife and in turn shift the way that conservation is supported today. By taking real conservation data and turning it into beautiful, appealing and hopefully addictive games, Gautam hopes to activate vast new numbers of people to care for and engage with wildlife in new ways. In this process, he hopes to grow the global demand for the conservation of nature to a significantly new scale. Internet of Elephants is a social enterprise with a novel approach and model to not only redistribute the benefits of people's engagement, but to create a whole new marketplace for environmental data through gamification, infusing cash, interest and action into our common mission.

We worked with Gautam on prototyping an innovative business model to achieve impact and revenues at the same time around a new game called 'Howler and Growlers' in which participants, via a mobile application, imitate the sounds of animals to score points and win against peers across social media. Internet of Elephants is at the frontier of a new business model that holds significant promise for a complimentary approach to conservation, and that we hope can disrupt people's perceptions and actions around wildlife and nature.

*"The Luc Hoffmann Institute is willing to do what others are not. Earnestly seek out individuals and organisations that are pushing the boundaries of how modern conservation is done, and helping them to succeed in their endeavours. The people I've had the pleasure to work with at Luc Hoffmann Institute have been committed to seeing me and my enterprise succeed by making strong connections in the sector, advising me on impact strategy, and promoting our work for funding and exposure."*

**Gautam Shah, Founder, Internet of Elephants**



# African Ecological Futures

## About the innovator:

Laura Pereira has an extraordinary appointment at the Centre for Complex Systems in Transition at Stellenbosch University and is affiliated with the Stockholm Resilience Centre. As a research fellow at the Centre for Food Policy at City University in London, she currently leads the governance for food system transformation in South Africa, a component of the Sustainable and Healthy Food Systems (SHEFS). She is also a senior researcher working on the Programme on Climate Smart Livestock in East Africa (PCSL) at the Copernicus Institute of Sustainable Development at Utrecht University where she works on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS) scenarios. Laura was a Co-ordinating Lead Author for UN Environment's GEO-6, a Lead Author for the IPBES Regional Assessment for Africa and is part of the IPBES Task Force on scenarios and models.

## What is the issue?

Africa is at a critical crossroads, with several possible ecological futures. The continent is youthful, is growing at an unprecedented pace and lifting millions of people out of poverty. Yet as expanding economic activity converges on sensitive ecosystems, several 'ecological frontiers' are emerging: areas where the foundation of Africa's growth could be eroded or destroyed altogether. Africa's own future is at stake today. As Africa is set to become the global economic player it deserves to be, it has a generational opportunity to design and deliver on its own vision of its desired future.

## Key accomplishments this year:

- The institute leveraged capacity in Africa on thinking around young and talented futures, working with Laura Pereira to map out actionable pathways for Africa, led by Africans.
- We began working on an external-facing, futures thinking report that links the importance of foresight and futures capacities to conservation in Africa.





*“The Luc Hoffmann Institute has been really supportive in not only helping to convene the necessary individuals for a meeting on futures capacity in Africa, but also to provide the funds and expertise to publish an external-facing report on the work that was done. I think the foresight of the institute in enabling this connection between futures thinking capacity and the African conservation agenda is critical, especially at a time like this, during a global pandemic when many of the answers that we thought were resilient (like eco-tourism for job creation) may actually be quite fragile.”*

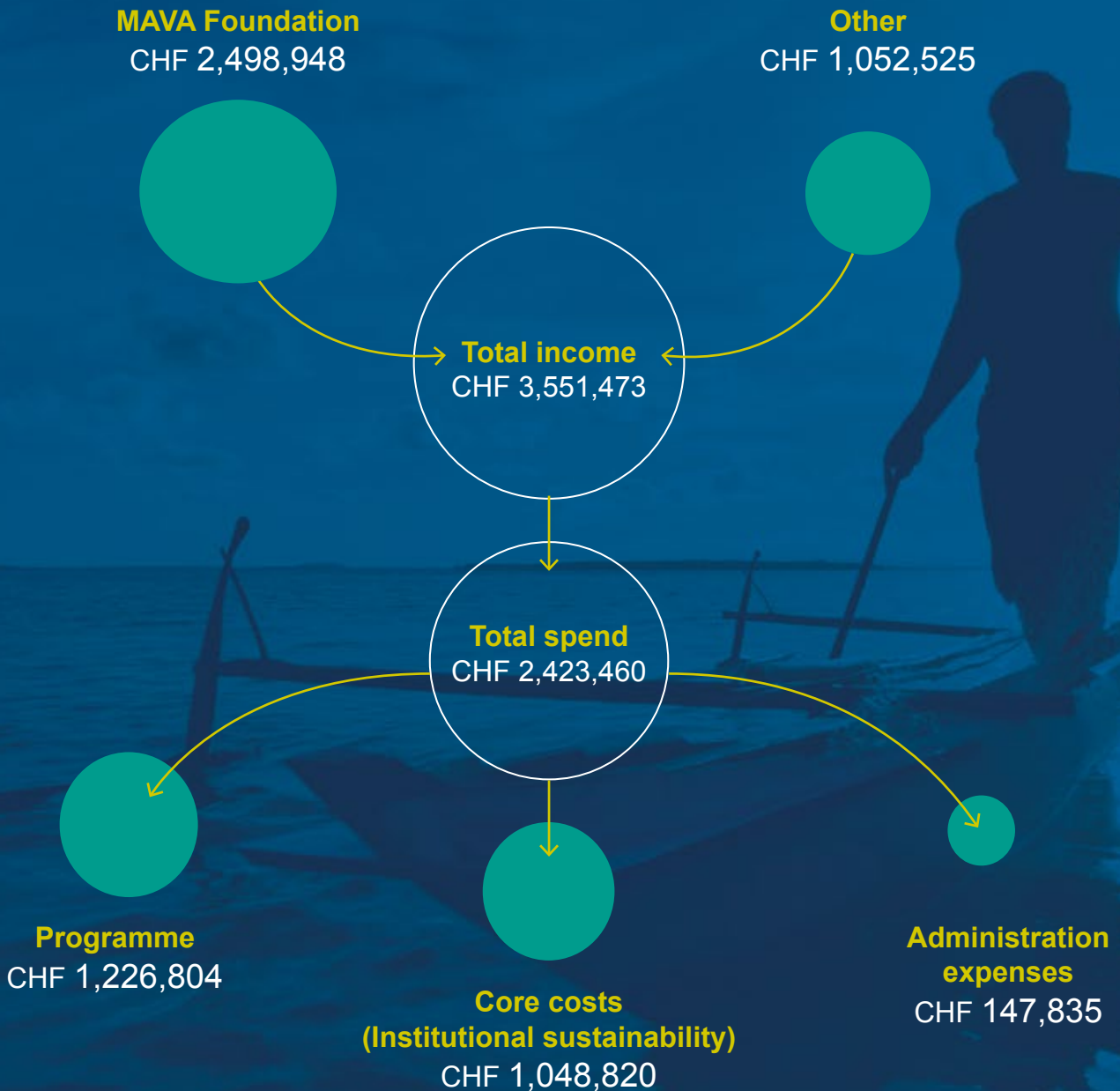
*Laura Pereira, Researcher*





# Financials

Spend and income  
1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020



Spend and income is reported using the methodology agreed with the MAVA Foundation, the institute's primary donor. A portion of income received in FY20 is reserved for activities that will be carried out in FY21 and FY22.

# Our team

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- **Anaïk Anthonioz-Blanc**  
*Programme and Communication Assistant*
- **Lucie Bauer**  
*Project Coordinator*
- **Anca Damerell**  
*Research and Projects Coordinator*
- **Adrian Dellecker**  
*Interim Head of Strategy and Development*
- **Michelle Demateis Schmitt**  
*Project Finance Account Manager*
- **Richard Gauld**  
*Head of Operations*
- **Jonathan Hutton**  
*Director*
- **Sandrine Jimenez**  
*Logistics and Administrative Coordinator*
- **Elisabeth Losasso**  
*Manager Innovation and Business Development*
- **Melanie Ryan**  
*Interim Head of Programme*
- **Andrew Thompson**  
*Administration, logistics and events support*
- **Jessica Villat**  
*Head of Communication*
- **Carina Wyborn**  
*Research Advisor*

The institute is supported by a wide range of expert inputs from partner institutions and consultants on its programme, communication, fundraising and other activities.



# The support of several organisations has made it possible to accelerate initiatives and sustain our core

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**As a result of our incubation and acceleration efforts, our partners, innovators, and thought leadership initiatives have benefitted from the generous support of:**

- The Foundation for Environmental Conservation (FEC)
- The Institute of International Education (IIE)
- Microsoft
- NOMIS Foundation
- The Rockefeller Foundation
- The Swiss Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN)
- The UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Center (UNEP-WCMC)

**The institute is able to sustain its core and catalyse innovation and transformative change for nature and people thanks to the generous support of:**







# Investing in our common future

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For the last three years, the core costs of developing and maintaining the Luc Hoffmann Institute as an incubator have been generously supported by the MAVA Foundation. This investment has given us the resources and time to demonstrate that the incubator can make a significant contribution to solving some of the world's biggest problems. Today, we want to take the incubator to scale. With the continued support of the MAVA Foundation, we are forming an alliance of visionary investors to help us succeed. We are looking not only for financial support, but also advice and unique perspectives to develop solutions together. If you are interested in joining us on this exciting journey to bring about positive change for life on Earth, please get in touch with [jhutton@wwfint.org](mailto:jhutton@wwfint.org).

## Luc Hoffmann Institute

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