

# ANNUAL REPORT 2022

EUROPA OXALÁ

AFRICA  
museum



ANNUAL REPORT  
**2022**





J. Van de Voorde © RMCA

*Bart Ouvry, Director General of the RMCA.*

# Introduction

Bart Ouvry  
Director General  
of the RMCA

2022 was a year of farewells for the Africa-Museum. Guido Gryseels retired on 29 August after over two decades as Director General. Guido was an exceptionally warm director, a bridge builder who led the museum through a process of radical change. At the time of his appointment as director, the institution still operated largely as a colonial institution, as the museum's mission statement from the 1990s illustrated with the museum logo referring to Leopold II and the mission to 'highlight Belgium's achievements in Africa'.

His first undertaking as director was to thoroughly review the institution and to develop a strategic plan together with the staff and the scientific council. The result was a new mission statement with clear guidelines and a reform plan for the institution. This reform plan was largely achieved under his leadership. The first priority was the renovation of the permanent exhibition and major changes to the museum building. Guido thus paved the way for a museum that is not only about Africa, but also wants to work with Africans. From the beginning of his directorship, he involved the African diaspora in the museum's operations. COMRAF was established on his initiative, first in the form of a working group for the organisation of cultural activities; later (from 2004) with the aim of supporting the museum in its renovation. In addition, African museum directors and

experts were also consulted. Other stakeholders were also involved in the renovation process. That collaboration was not always straightforward, but Guido worked hard to get or keep everyone on board throughout the whole process.

While the AfricaMuseum was still heavily coloured by the colonial message and stereotyping of Africa and Africans before the renovation, Guido wanted an institution that fulfilled its social role for a more diverse society where citizens of African descent are also accorded the respect and recognition they deserve. He took meaningful steps in terms of diversity, global citizenship, and multiperspectivity within the museum, with a view towards a society in which racism and xenophobia are no longer acceptable. Today, the museum has an extensive educational and cultural programme around decolonisation, engaging in dialogue with citizens of African descent and co-creation with a variety of partners.

Guido Gryseels took a leading role in the social debate around restitution by seeking answers to questions about restitution and reconstitution of African heritage constructively and in partnership. Under his influence, more attention was devoted to researching the provenance of the collections and archives and making the collections, databases, and archives accessible online through digitisation. Secretary of State Thomas Dermine was the driving force behind Belgian legislation

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around restitution, with our country playing a pioneering role by being the first former colonial state to create a legal framework enabling stolen artefacts to be returned to the African state from which they were taken.

Furthermore, under Guido Gryseels' influence, the link with international cooperation was greatly expanded, both in terms of budget and impact, and the scientific institute was also completely reformed. The keywords of the mission and vision

Guido Gryseels was highly appreciated by our colleagues at the AfricaMuseum, in the media, in broad circles at home and abroad because of his genuine interest in people and his great willingness to listen. He always showed commitment, trust and respect, even for other opinions.

Allow me also to express my gratitude to Karel Velle, Director General of the State Archives, who took on interim leadership of the AfricaMuseum



*The farewell party on 29 August 2022.*

that Guido Gryseels formulated with the staff at the start of his directorship have become milestones and cornerstones in the study. As a result, the scientific institute has developed into a high-performing and robust group of researchers with top-level scientific output, for which the RMCA receives international and national recognition.



*The farewell party on 29 August 2022.*

from September 2022. Karel did so under difficult circumstances, with rising energy costs as a consequence of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. His experience and enthusiasm enabled our house to weather the storm successfully. His collegial and sympathetic approach was highly appreciated by all colleagues.



*The farewell party on 29 August 2022.*

With this tribute to my two colleagues, I want to emphasise the continuity in my approach since I became the new director in May 2023. The foundation for my policy as Director General was laid by my predecessors: innovation of the permanent exhibition; a critical and scientifically informed view of our past; social commitment with a connecting role for the AfricaMuseum; the fight against racism and empathy with the victims of racism and indiscriminate violence anywhere in the world; international scientific cooperation with a view to strengthening the capacity of our fellow scientists in Africa; dialogue with the Belgian and international public, both the African diaspora and anyone who shows an interest in Africa... These are all efforts that are underway and that I want to tackle even more intensively. What's more, it is necessary more than ever for us to consider the young Africa, the dynamic Africa that plays and will play a significant role as our near neighbour, for the Belgium and Europe of tomorrow.



*Karel Velle, interim Director General from September 2022 to 30 April 2023.*

# 01





# MUSEUM LIFE

## || One of the busiest cultural activities of 2022, with more than 200 entries, was the organisation of the *Metises of Belgium* event. ||

After two difficult years, 2022 became the year when the coronavirus pandemic came under control and all restrictive measures were gradually lifted. It was a relief to be able to pick up the thread again. From March, visitors could tour the museum at their own pace once more without following a set itinerary, and all the hands-on media were also made available again during 2022. For the first time since the compulsory closure of the museum due to the pandemic, Studio 6+ could be reopened, offering a space for children as young as 6 to work on their own in a creative way with the themes from the adjacent 'Rituals and Ceremonies' room.



In 2022, Studio 6+ welcomed kids aged 6 and up to explore their creativity.

Special activities could also to be organised once again for a live audience. One of the busiest cultural activities of 2022, with more than 200 entries, was the organisation of the *Metises of Belgium* event. This was organised in collaboration with the production house De Chinezen on the occasion of World Children's Day. With this afternoon, the museum created a space for encounters and exchanges between *Metises* and their loved ones from French-speaking and Dutch-speaking Belgium, while informing the wider public about the theme.

The programme of cultural activities resumed from March with a variety of activities such as reading groups, book presentations with signing sessions, MuseumTalks (lectures and debates by and with various experts inside and outside the RMCA) and film screenings. The focus was mainly on the current debate surrounding the decolonisation of museums, the restitution of objects from the colonial period and combating racist stereotypes.

Following the COVID-19 epidemic, the programme of cultural activities resumed in March with a variety of events on a range of topics.



## TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS

Social debates were central to the selection of the two major temporary exhibitions on view at the museum this year. *Human Zoo. The age of colonial exhibitions*, which opened its doors in late 2021, ran through 6 March 2022. In the autumn, the travelling exhibition *Europa Oxalá* showed the work of 21 European artists of African origin.

### **Human zoo. The age of colonial exhibitions** **9 November 2021 to 6 March 2022**

This exhibition, which opened its doors in late 2021, focused on the phenomenon of people as 'living exhibits'. The exhibition featured some exceptional images and documents that had never been shown to the public before. From 9 November 2021 to 6 March 2022, *Human Zoo* was on display at the AfricaMuseum on the occasion of the 1897 colonial exhibition, which took place 125 years ago in Tervuren. The museum invited visitors to think about the impact of human zoos. Artists Teddy Mazina (with his photographic project *Muzungu Tribes*) and Roméo Mivekannin (with the

work *Hommage aux 7*) made significant contributions to the exhibition. This exhibition was framed by extensive cultural programming, including a weekly online MuseumTalk on Wednesday evenings on topics such as racism, imagery, and decolonisation, and introductory tours on Sundays. Groups were able to book themed tours. There were also several film screenings, such as *Boma-Tervuren*, *Le voyage*, and a commemorative walk was organised four times in the vicinity of the museum. During this walk, the group stopped at ten spots around the museum that carry a piece of colonial history. Why were 267 Congolese people brought to Belgium in 1897? How did their stay in Tervuren go? What recognition and remembrance do they receive today?

A wall with casual racist statements or micro-aggressions directed at people of African descent made the link to contemporary racism and prompted visitors to reflect and talk. This installation generated a great many reactions, both from the press and the public.



As a preamble to *Human zoo. The age of colonial exhibitions*, a wall displaying casual racist statements and micro-aggressions directed at people of African descent made the connection to racism today.

## **Europa Oxalá** **7 October 2022 to 5 March 2023**

For this exhibition, the museum focused heavily on contemporary art. The 21 European artists of African origin, born and raised in a post-colonial context, reflected on their heritage, memories and identity. This original exhibition provided food

of centuries of integration and expresses the idea of a future under construction in a Europe that is the common space for these artists.

*Europa Oxalá* was a travelling exhibition previously shown at the Mucem in Marseille (20/10/2021 > 16/01/2022) and at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon (04/03/2022 > 22/08/2022)



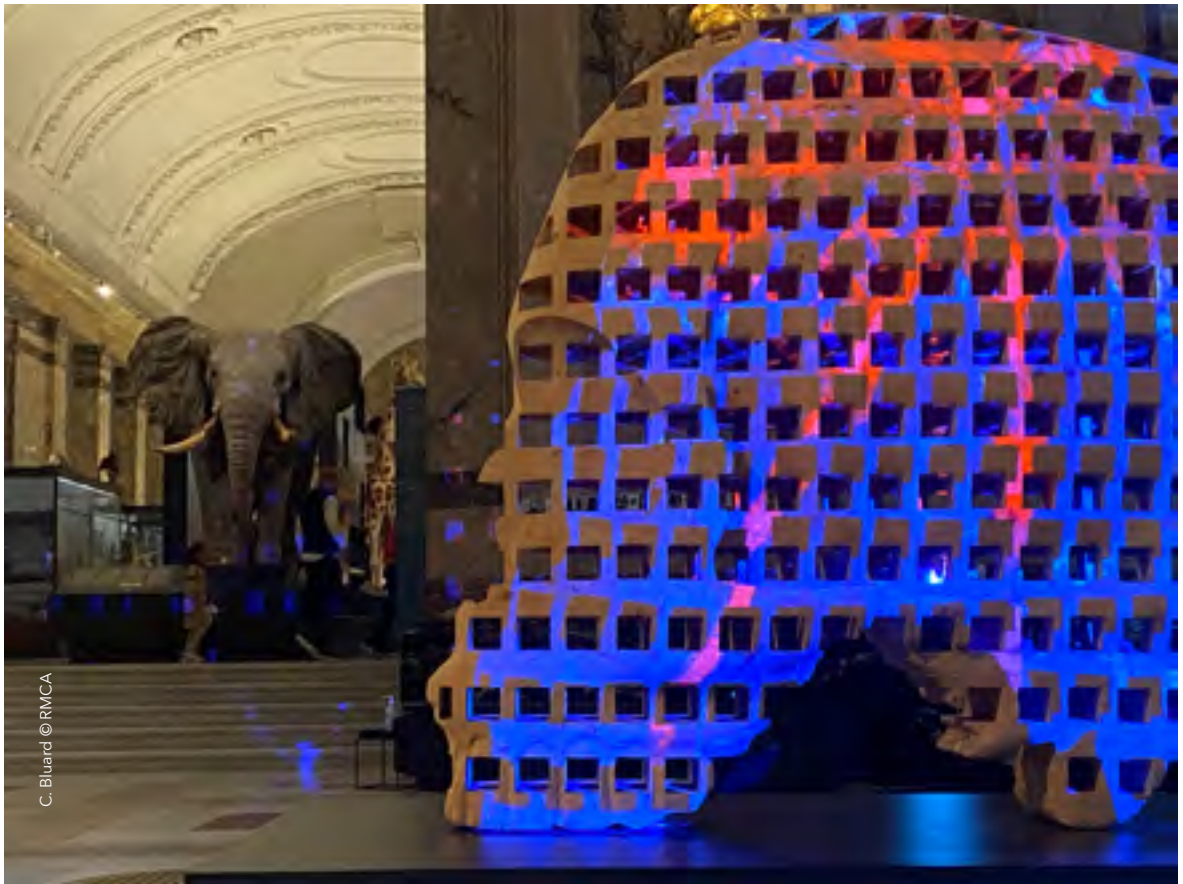
*Europa Oxalá* was a travelling exhibition with previous runs at the Mucem in Marseilles (20.10.2021 > 16.01.2022) and the Fondation Calouste Gulbenkian in Lisbon (04.03.2022 > 22.08.2022).

for thought on racism, the decoloniality of the arts, the status of women and artists in contemporary society and the deconstruction of colonial thought. According to the exhibition's curators, António Pinto Ribeiro, Katia Kameli and Aimé Mpane, this exhibition aims to break down the clichés, and give us the chance to see and feel a new energy, with a view to the future. The title of the exhibition points precisely in that direction, because it uses a word - 'oxalá' (a Portuguese expression meaning 'Let's hope') - that is the fruit

Co-production: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (Delegation in France, Paris/Centre for Modern Art, Lisbon) / Mucem, Marseille (France).

This exhibition was also accompanied by various activities. These included meetings with the artists, several MuseumTalks and film screenings (*Le Roman algérien* by Katia Kameli and *Europa, Based on a true story* by Kivu Ruhorahoza) in the programme. One of the most haunting activities as part of this exhibition was the video mapping

|| For this exhibition, the museum focused heavily on contemporary art. ||



In a performance called *Figures of the past and technologies of the present*, Ben Richards transformed and assembled sound and image archives from the AfricaMuseum.

and sound creation about Aimé Mpane's works in the grand rotunda. In his performance *Figures of the past and technologies of the present*, Ben Richard played, transformed and assembled sound and image archives from the Africa-Museum. The Mandji non-profit organisation offered a musical programme in November with an acoustic concert by Sarah Carlier and Bao Sissoko.



Thomas Dermine, State Secretary for Economic Recovery and Strategic Investments, in charge of Science Policy, and exhibit curator Katia Kameli, during the exhibit's press opening.

## Sun 5 April 2022 to 24 April 2022

In addition to the two major temporary exhibitions, the permanent exhibition area hosted *SUN*, an installation by British artist Alex Rinsler and solar expert Prof. Robert Walsh.

The sun determines life and climate on this globe. Human activity is altering the latter, and climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing humanity. The AfricaMuseum and the Solar-Terrestrial Centre of Excellence are conducting world-leading research on the sun and Earth's climate. The spectacular installation by British artist Alex Rinsler and solar expert Prof. Robert Walsh (University of Central Lancashire) at the permanent exhibition provided a lifelike representation of the sun. A 3D projection with state-of-the-art telescope images on a giant, suspended sphere 6 metres in diameter showed 10 weeks in the life of our sun. Smoke and sound effects completed the unique experience.

This installation came about in collaboration with the Solar-Terrestrial Centre of Excellence in Uccle and was on display for the first time outside the United Kingdom.



*SUN*, an installation by British artist Alex Rinsler and sun expert Prof. Robert Walsh, showed 10 weeks in the star's life.

## EXTRA MUROS EXHIBITIONS

*Extra muros*, we participated in the annual exhibition at the Royal Palace and, of course, a great many collection pieces were on loan in various exhibitions worldwide.

### Ensuring the future 23 July 2022 to 28 August 2022 Science & culture at the Palace

The various institutions belonging to the Federal Public Planning Service Science Policy (BELSPO) once again collaborated on a themed summer exhibition at the Royal Palace in Brussels.

This exhibition made it clear that science and art are essential to the future of our planet.

The AfricaMuseum presented the *arbre de l'authenticité*. This is a spectacular giant tree in Yangambi, a UNESCO biosphere reserve in the DR Congo where AfricaMuseum scientists, along with Congolese partners, are researching the impact of the climate on carbon storage in rainforests. This tree has attracted the attention of many visitors in Yangambi for decades.



Mbangu mask. EO.1959.15.18, RMCA Tervuren collection.

## Notable loans

### **Picasso & Abstraction**

**Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium (RMFAB), Brussels (14.10.2022 > 12.02/2023)**

Working closely with the Musée national Picasso-Paris, the RMFAB dedicated a unique exhibition to Pablo Picasso. The two institutions deciphered a theme never before explored: for the first time ever, Picasso's relationship with abstract art was highlighted. The AfricaMuseum was present with five objects, including the world-famous Mbangu mask.

### **Angola. Restitution des identités.**

**Féminité, Pouvoir et Royauté**

**OACPS, Brussels (21.11.2022 > 14.12.2022)**

As part of the tenth summit of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) in Luanda (Angola), Brussels hosted the exhibition *Restitution des identités*, an initiative by Nicole Kanda and organised in collaboration with the OACPS and the AfricaMuseum. This exhibition was mainly devoted to the art and history of



EO.1967.63.1962, RMCA Tervuren collection.

Angola and sought to promote cultural reappropriation and pride through figures of power, symbols of royalty and femininity. The museum was not only present with 14 pieces, but also developed a cultural programme in partnership with the feminist and decolonial non-profit organisation Bamko and the educational and decolonial non-profit organisation Belgik MoJaik. The offering included MuseumTalks, guided tours for adults, and a circuit for families and schools in the form of an activity booklet.

## FAMILY-FRIENDLY MUSEUM

The AfricaMuseum is a perennial favourite for a family outing. Several activities were also organised for this target group in 2022. During AfricaSundays, workshop spaces were opened up to activities for families, often linked to specific themes, such as DRC's Independence Day, the



Young and old alike joined in creative and musical activities during AfricaSundays.





Young and old alike joined in creative and musical activities during AfricaSundays.

temporary exhibition *SUN* or Heritage Day. For example, as part of *SUN*, some inspired storytellers brought African and Scandinavian tales about the sun to sun-lovers large and small. For Heritage Day, there was a free offering with the core theme of 'School', including onsite guides for individual visitors and workshops for families.

During the months of July and August, the museum once again participated in *Schatten van Vlieg*. With this free activity booklet full of things to do, questions and tasks, families were able to enjoy a fun and relaxed visit to the AfricaMuseum. And, of course, the *Watoto* activity booklets continued to be available to families with children too.

## INCLUSION

This year, special attention was paid to inclusion and diversity, and work was done to make museum visits inclusive for people with disabilities. As part of Braille Day, more than 100 blind and visually impaired young children were invited to an interactive visit of the AfricaMuseum. This day was preceded by extensive training in collaboration with Braille League. This experience will result in a permanent offering for people who are blind or visually impaired.

## SCHOOLS

With the lifting of the coronavirus measures, schools were once again able to go on proper outings. In order to raise teacher awareness, a strong effort was made this year towards teacher training.



On Braille Day, more than 100 blind and visually impaired young children were invited to an interactive visit of the AfricaMuseum.

During the Journée 'Ouverture aux langues et aux cultures', the AfricaMuseum offered guided tours on Belgian colonial history and presented its workshops for schools. The day focused on the themes of inclusivity and the use of decolonial language. With more than 170 participants from over 10 countries, this was among the most popular training courses in 2022.

There was also a close collaboration with Annoncer la Couleur for the two-day training 'Grandir et Stéréotypes' for teachers from French-speaking schools.

On the Dutch-speaking side, the study day 'Dekolonisatie in het Onderwijs' was organised in collaboration with the Wij-Zij Netwerk, GO! Onderwijs van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap, Katholiek Onderwijs Vlaanderen, OVSG Onderwijsvereniging van Steden en Gemeenten, the Hannah Arendt Instituut, and Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). Criticism and awareness surrounding this issue and the importance of multiple perspectives are growing rapidly. More and more students want a different perspective, are curious about this period and are asking critical questions. As such, this study day focused on how to deal with the colonial past in lessons, and whether and how to decolonise education.



*School trips could resume after COVID-19 measures were lifted.*

The first day of the Global Teacher Academy, an initiative by Enabel (now BeGlobal) took place at the AfricaMuseum. This was a training programme on 'Colonial past, decolonial future?' that challenged teachers to look at some global challenges in their own way and translate these into their job as teachers or supervisors. This kick-off focused on Belgian colonial history and decolonisation. This was done in collaboration with the non-profit organisation Bamko and Echo Expertisecentrum Diversiteitsbeleid (NL).

The relevance of such training was once again demonstrated by a survey conducted by the AfricaMuseum in 2022, along with the University of Antwerp, into the knowledge Belgians have on Belgian colonial past: of the 12 general knowledge questions about that past, on average only 4 were answered correctly.

## PARTNERSHIPS

In 2022, an alliance and partnership with the non-profit organisation Bamko was developed with the aim of offering educational activities from a feminist and decolonial perspective. This partnership contributes to the RMCA's mission 'as a dynamic platform for meeting and dialogue with people of different generations and cultures' and responds to a growing demand from visitors to provide 'decolonial' tours. These tours took place on an ongoing monthly basis at the museum from February 2022.

A new collaboration was also established with Africalia's platform for cultural collaboration in Belgium. This platform, also known as the Plateforme pour la Décolonisation des Esprits par la Culture et l'Art ('Platform for the Decolonisation of Minds through Culture and Art', DECA), is a professional network for dialogue and reflection among cultural sector actors. The programme touches upon various decolonial issues in the cultural sector, particularly showcasing artistic creations that start from the point of view of persons of African descent and their experiences. It also highlights the representation of African diasporas in cultural institutions.

For the first time, the museum was a partner in the international project TheMuseumsLab, initiated by Germany and aimed at museum professionals. It is a platform for further education and exchange on the future of museums in Europe and Africa.

Two members of the RMCA were selected to participate in the 2022 programme and the museum hosted two people in residency for 10 days, namely a member of the Stiftung Humboldt Forum and a person in charge of the Department of Museums and Monuments in Malawi.

In addition, the AfricaMuseum supported several other initiatives such as the Biennale de Lubumbashi (DRC), themed around 'Toxicity', or Teddy Mazina's travelling exhibition *Mzungu Tribes* in Dakar (Senegal).

## ARTISTS IN ARCHIVES AND COLLECTIONS

The museum facilitates access to archives and collections for artists and cultural actors of African origin. Last year, more than 30 artists made use of this. Besides that, the museum launches a call for an artist residency every year, funded by the AfricaMuseum under the FORUM programme (DGD), for artists and cultural actors living in Africa. This residency is one to three months long. This year, the museum welcomed **Arnaud Makalou** from Brazzaville (Republic of Congo).

In collaboration with *EUROPALIA TRAINS & TRACKS*, photographer Arnaud Makalou (°1980) participated in a multidisciplinary programme which started from the train's impact on society. With the project *La Traversée, à propos du chemin de fer belge*, he wanted to create a 'crossing' beyond the yoke of the colonial past. The title of his first photo series - *La Traversée* - refers to the different dimensions that this 'crossing' involves for him: mental, physical, and temporal.

**Nada Tshibwabwa**, who lives and works in Kinshasa (DR Congo), participated in another artist residency from February to May 2022 as part of the European project 'Taking Care'. This residency focused on the theme of 'ecological knowledge'. François Mutamba Tshibwabwa, alias Nada Tshibwabwa (°1990), is an artist and musician. His extraordinary work is based on materials he found on the streets of Kinshasa. He uses it to make masks, robots or costumes for performances. Alongside this, he is talented in drawing and painting. In his work, Nada Tshibwabwa questions our relationship with the environment and the price of the digital revolution.



In spring 2022, the museum welcomed Arnaud Makalou (left) of Brazzaville (Republic of Congo) as its artist in residence. He is shown here with Alexandre Kyungu (right).

# 02

# RESEARCH

# The RMCA as a scientific institute: research into the societies, biodiversity, and geology of Africa

The Royal Museum for Central Africa is a research institute with internationally-recognised expertise. More than 80 scientists and around 100 African PhD students and trainees conduct research into past and present societies, biodiversity, and geology of Africa. They rely on the museum's unique collections, fieldwork, and collaborative networks with international, and in particular African, institutions. The RMCA is active in more than 20 African countries and emphasises the exchange of knowledge with its African partners, as well as capacity-building. Contributing to the sustainable development of Africa is a priority in the research programmes, with a significant environmental, social and economic impact.

[The RMCA has three research departments >>](#)



I. Orla © RMCA

# 1. CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY & HISTORY

**focus** Societies of the past, the colonial past, political systems, cultural expressions, languages and music of peoples in or from Africa.

The Cultural Anthropology and History department covers various disciplines dedicated to African societies of today and the past, in particular how they functioned and what they achieved. The researchers study languages, deep history and archaeology, the (post)colonial past, political systems, cultural expressions, and music of population groups in or from Africa. The fieldwork is done in Africa, but also among the African diaspora.

# 2. BIOLOGY

**focus** Biodiversity of animal species and sustainable management of the tropical rainforests in Africa.

The Biology department enhances the knowledge of the biodiversity of animal groups in Africa. The biologists study the taxonomy and phylogeny of different groups of vertebrates and invertebrates. The wood biologists unravel the structure and function of wood, as well as the role of trees and fauna in African ecosystems, and contribute to the sustainable management of the tropical rainforests in Africa. The fieldwork goes hand in hand with the study of the vast and unique collection.

# 3. EARTH SCIENCES

**focus** Mineral resources, geodynamics, surface environments and risks of natural hazards in Central Africa.

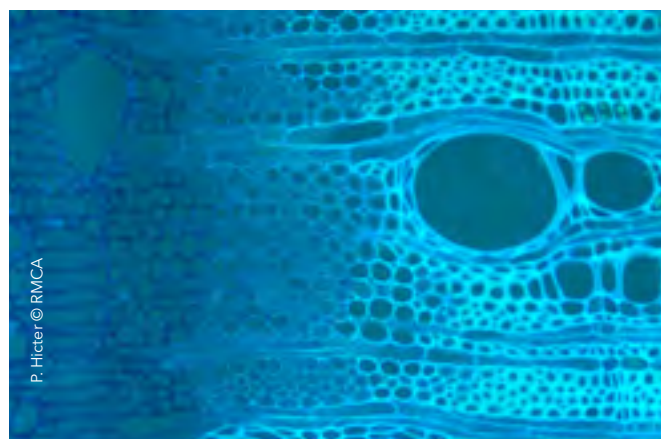
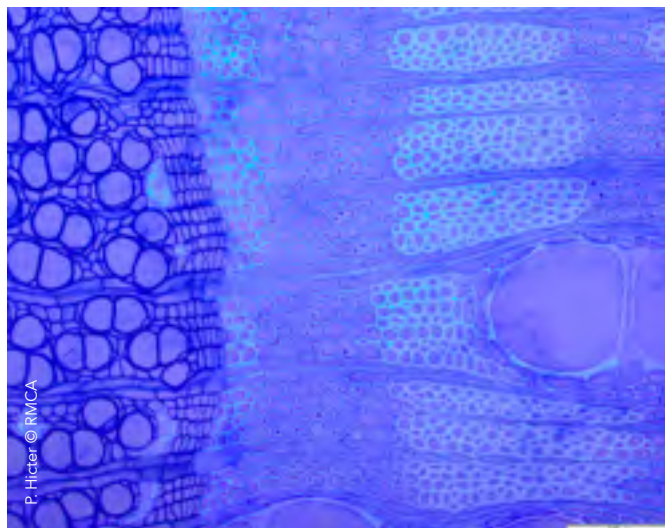
The scientists in the Earth Sciences department study the geology, geodynamic processes, and natural (mineral) resources in Central Africa with a view to sustainable management and the impact of extraction on human societies. They study volcanoes, seismic events, and landslides for the effective management of associated risks. By determining the soil change in Africa, they evaluate the impact of global changes on the natural environment of the continent.

**A selection of the most important research activities from 2022 is highlighted.**

## 'TREE4FLUX': a supersite in the heart of DRC to measure greenhouse gas fluxes

As the second largest contiguous tropical forest in the world after the Amazon, the Congo Basin plays a fundamental role in the global carbon balance. Yet studies have not gone far enough to allow a precise quantification of its function as a carbon sink.

In 2020, Ghent University and the Institut national d'Études et de Recherches agronomiques (INERA) of Yangambi installed a flux tower in the Yangambi biosphere reserve, the first ever such structure in the Congo Basin. The tower measures greenhouse gas exchanges between the forest and the atmosphere in order to determine the forest's importance as a carbon sink. To validate and strengthen the data obtained from the flux tower, the RMCA launched the TREE4FLUX project in 2022. It tasks researchers with investigating the dynamics of tree growth (and thus carbon absorption) in various parcels of forest surrounding the flux tower. The wood biology lab created in 2019 by the RMCA at Yangambi plays a key role in this project. Data from the 'TREE4FLUX' project will complement flux data obtained from the tower, making Yangambi the first supersite for measuring CO<sub>2</sub> fluxes in the Congo Basin forest. The 'TREE4FLUX' project is funded by the Belgian Science Policy Office (BELSPO).



Cross-section of dormant (top) and active (bottom) cambium of *Scorodophloeus zenkeri* under UV light.



## Provenance of ethnographic collections

Recent years have witnessed an intensification of the political and social debate on the historical context and modes of acquisition of cultural heritage collected during the colonial period. Launched in 2022, 'PROCHE' is a provenance research project on the ethnographic collections at the RMCA, particularly those from DRC.

The project's goal is to document the entire process of an object's acquisition and to contextualize its various historical backgrounds, so that any person or organization can conduct their own investigations to determine the nature of a transaction (e.g. looting, theft, transfer, or gift).

'PROCHE' aims to compile, index, and analyse the available data on the circumstances that led to their registration in the cultural heritage of the Belgian federal government. Information will be made available online through an open access database, the first version of which was launched in February 2023.

In-depth research will be carried out by a mixed team of RMCA and Congolese researchers specialized in history, anthropology, art history, and law. Through its network of national institutions focusing on heritage, the Institut des Musées nationaux du Congo (IMNC) is an essential partner in this research together with the academic sector in DRC, particularly the Université de Kinshasa, where three doctoral theses are in progress.

The 'PROCHE' project is a program of the Belgian Science Policy implemented by the RMCA. Currently two data managers and four researchers of the project work in close collaboration with various other RMCA departments.



<https://proche.africamuseum.be/>



*In February 2022, the inventory of 83,200 cultural goods managed by the RMCA, originating from the DRC and more broadly from Central Africa, was transmitted to the Congolese Prime Minister Jean-Michel Sama Lukonde, in the presence of Prime Minister Alexander De Croo and State Secretary Thomas Dermine.*

## Sustainable management of Central African mineral resources

The geology of Central Africa has gifted the region with a great diversity of mineral deposits. Some of these mineral georesources are crucial for energy transition.

For instance, cobalt, manganese, lithium, and tantalum are needed to make batteries. Yet the use of such essential resources have not contributed sufficiently to the region's development.

The 'GeoRes4Dev' project aims to improve expertise and academic research on mineral resources and their societal impact in DRC, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, and Burundi.

To do so, it engages in capacity-building activities with their universities and research institutes in the areas of training, research, and services to society. With stronger local research capabilities, these four countries will be better equipped to tackle all aspects of resource enhancement and use.

Project activities continued in 2022. Six Ph.D. and twelve DEA/ Master scholarships were awarded this year: 11 in DRC, three each in Burundi and Republic of Congo, and one in Rwanda. Several lectures, seminars, internships, and field missions were also organized this year.

Funded by Belgian Development Cooperation (DGD) for the 2019-2023 period, the GeoRes4Dev project is led by the RMCA in collaboration with the Université du Burundi, Université officielle de Bukavu, Université de Lubumbashi, Université de Kinshasa, the Centre de Recherche géologique et minière, Université Marien Ngouabi, and Ghent University.

 <https://geores4dev.africamuseum.be/en>



Sampling water at a spring in the region of Nzonzi, Republic of the Congo.



Discussion between the scholars of the Université de Kinshasa and Université Marien Ngouabi students.

## Fishes of Lakes Kivu, Edward, and Albert

The lakes of the East African Rift play host to the greatest diversity of fishes in the world. Most of these species belong to a single fish family, the cichlids. According to estimates, more than 1,900 species can be found in the region, with each of the species usually found in only a single lake.

A remarkable number of non-cichlid fauna also call the region home. While most investigations are conducted on the three largest lakes (Victoria, Tanganyika, and Malawi), the 'KEAFish' project focuses on the fishes of the smallest lakes in the northern rift valley: Kivu, Edward, and Albert, or KEA.

The area is one of the most enigmatic regions in terms of biogeography. It features a turbulent tectonic history and likely acted as a species reservoir during recent climatic changes such as the major drought of some 15,000 years ago, which resulted in the near-desiccation of neighbouring Lake Victoria. A solid taxonomic foundation is necessary for formulating biogeographic scenarios of the region. Under the 'KEAFish' project, scientists are using a combination of morphological and genetic approaches to revise the taxonomy of certain key fish groups.

In 2022, the researchers completed the identification of all the collections made in the past ten years in the KEA region. A scientific expedition was also organized in Rwanda and numerous genetic and morphological analyses were carried out, particularly on the genera *Enteromius*, *Clarias* and *Haplochromis*. For the latter genus, results showed that most of the species in lakes Kivu and Edward are related and form a single radiation, suggesting a strong historical connection between the two lakes. Meanwhile, the *Haplochromis* species in Lake Albert belong to a second radiation.

Funded by the Belgian Science Policy Office for the 2020-2025 period, 'KEAFish' is led by the RMCA in collaboration with the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences, KU Leuven, University of Antwerp, the Institut supérieur pédagogique de Bukavu and the National Fisheries Resources Research Institute (Uganda).



*Dominant male Haplochromis glaucus, a new species from Lake Edward described in 2022.*

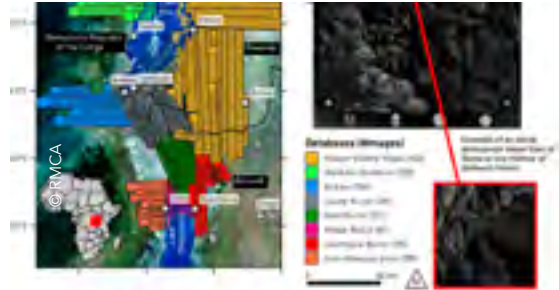
## Collection of historical aerial photos as a research tool

The Western branch of the East African Rift (East DRC, Rwanda, Burundi) is a region with a rapidly growing population. As in many other parts of the world, there has been little research in this region on the interactions between demography, land use and land cover change, and how this affects the environment. The lack of historical data is a limiting factor.

The RMCA holds a vast collection of aerial photographs dating back as far as the 1950s. As part of a project called 'PaStECA' (Historical Aerial Photographs and Archives to Assess Environmental Changes in Central Africa), researchers have digitised and georeferenced these aerial photos. This allows them to study changes in the environment since the mid-20th century and assess the impact of these changes on geohydrological risks in the region. Thanks to these photos, the scientists have been able to quantify how human activity is related to the occurrence of landslides. The analysis of over 50 years' worth of images revealed that population dynamics, conflicts, and deforestation influenced these slope movements and their associated risks in both rural and urban contexts, with differences between the three countries.

The project's findings have been discussed in more than 10 scientific papers and 2 doctoral theses. They underscore the need to preserve and promote the aerial photographs and archives conserved at the RMCA as a support for investigations of current environmental changes, particularly in Central Africa. Funded by the Belgium Science Policy Office for the 2021-2022 period, 'PaStECA' was led by the RMCA in collaboration with KU Leuven and the Université libre de Bruxelles.

 <https://pasteca.africamuseum.be/>



Map of the 'PaStECA' study area, showing the outlines of several thousand digitised aerial photos and the orthomosaics produced.



Results from the 'PaStECA' project contributed to the creation of an educational exhibit in Bukavu (DRC) to raise awareness of natural hazards.

## 'Taking Care'

The 'Taking Care' project is the latest in a series of projects involving several European museums of ethnography and world cultures since 2007, all part of a wider reflection on the role and mission of museums that were created in a colonial context and are now part of rapidly evolving European societies.

2022 was a particularly active year for the RMCA. In addition to participating in various workshops organized by the European partners, the museum continued working on a Provenance trail. This experimental exhibit, nested within the permanent exhibition, puts several museum pieces on display. Online texts as well as an app provide more context and information on the provenance of each object, from how it was obtained to how it reached the museum and so on. The exhibit was the prelude to more extensive provenance research in the museum, which is the topic of a forthcoming publication.

The RMCA also welcomed Nada Tshibwabwa from the DRC, who was selected from a field of over 140 applicants for a three-month artist residency. The artist is known for crafting masks from discarded mobile phones. During his immersion in the reserves, he was particularly interested in the Luluwa pieces. Tshibwabwa also performed in costume, created a painting, and led a musical performance at the museum as part of his residency for 'Taking Care'. His Tervuren stint is featured in a documentary video:



[https://youtu.be/YyK7\\_dYel-o](https://youtu.be/YyK7_dYel-o)

Finally, the RMCA organized an international workshop on 'Museums, Collections, and Sustainability' in Tervuren from 2 to 4 May 2022. Three keynote speakers (from Sweden, Uganda, and Rwanda) were invited. All 14 European project partners were present, and topics that are of paramount importance to the RMCA (decolonization, management of sensitive collections, public-oriented services, etc.) were on the agenda.



*Nada Tshibwabwa's performance during his museum residency as part of the 'Taking Care' project*



*Group picture of the international workshop 'Museums, Collections and Sustainability', held at the RMCA from 2 to 4 May 2022.*

## Citizen science in the fight against tropical disease

Freshwater snails are vectors of tropical diseases such as schistosomiasis or fasciolosis. Current measures used to control their spread are often inadequate because the realities in affected communities are not fully taken into account.

With the 'ATRAP' project (Action Towards Reducing Aquatic snail-borne Parasitic diseases), an RMCA-led team of researchers uses citizen science to contain the spread of infectious diseases in Uganda and DRC. Citizens are actively involved in snail monitoring and also act as communicators to the wider community. Their involvement offers an unprecedented opportunity to improve data collection, make the most of local knowledge, and establish lasting collaborations between scientists and the community.

In 2022, the researchers compared the results of citizen scientists with those of an expert who took samples from the same sites. They found that citizen scientists could identify the same risk areas as the expert, even though they generally collected fewer snails.

In total, more than 100,000 snails were mapped by the citizen scientists, including species that had not yet been found in the region, but which could play a significant role in disease transmission.

The citizen scientists also organized awareness campaigns, reaching over 16,000 persons. A survey found that a year after the campaigns, a greater number of community members saw the need for preventive measures.

'ATRAP' also won the 2022 Digital4Development prize in the iStartUp category for its use of Deep Learning for real-time snail identification.

Funded by Belgian Development Cooperation (DGD) for the 2019-2023 period, the project is led by the RMCA in collaboration with the Mbarara University of Science & Technology, Institut national de Recherche biomédicale (Kinshasa), Université de Kinshasa, KU Leuven, Institute of Tropical Medicine, and the University of Antwerp. The project was presented in several national and international conferences in 2022.



<https://www.africamuseum.be/atrap>



Educational outreach campaigns in Congolese schools about snails that spread schistosomiasis.



Citizens collecting snails in Uganda

## Researchers discover a new snake family

Several snake families belong to the superfamily Elapoidea, which comprises more than 700 species from all over the world. Cobras and mambas are probably its best-known snakes, but this superfamily is extremely diverse as a whole. This group of snakes is a classic example of evolutionary radiation, a phenomenon in which a large number of species appears in a short time. Their phylogenetic classification - that is, describing the relationships between the species - is traditionally quite difficult to establish.

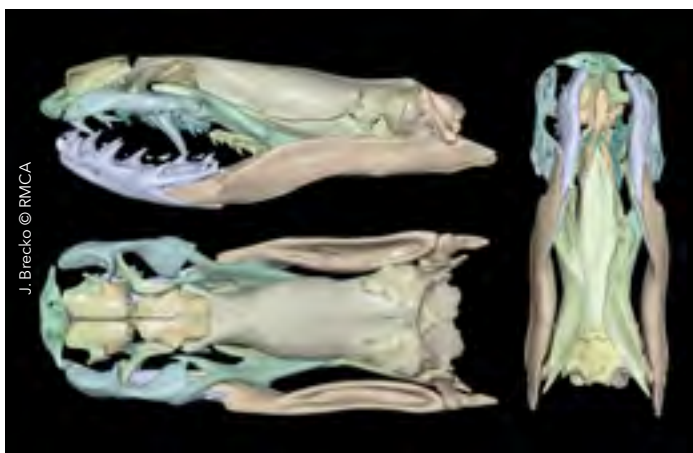
By analysing data from over 4,600 genes, an international team of researchers has managed to resolve the phylogeny of the Elapoidea. Through their work, they have also discovered that the superfamily contains a new family of snakes, the Micrelapidae. It comprises four snake species which live in east and north-east Africa and the Middle East. The identification of a new family of vertebrates is an extremely rare event.

The scientists also used nanoCT and microCT scans in addition to the genetic data. After a specimen's skull has been scanned, its cranial bones can be virtually isolated and studied one by one. The morphological characteristics of each specimen can thus be compared with greater precision. The RMCA conserves nearly 17,000 snakes. Meanwhile, some 20,000 others are kept at the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences. These specimens, some of which are over a century old, continue to enrich scientific knowledge. Their conservation is thus crucial for research.

The study was led by the University of Helsinki in collaboration with partners including the RMCA. It was published in the journal *Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution*.



Müller's snake (*Micrelaps muelleri*), a venomous snake from the Middle East, is one of the species in the new Micrelapidae family.



Digitising a skull makes it possible to conduct a 'virtual dissection'. By isolating each of the cranial bones, scientists can study and compare the different bones between specimens.

## The Congo Free State : what could archives tell us?

For several years, there has been a lively debate about Belgium's colonial history in DRC, and in particular, about the Congo Free State (CFS) created by King Leopold II.

While historical research is based on various methodologies and sources, written archives are still fundamental sources for anyone who wants to study the colonial phenomenon.

In the new collective work *The Congo Free State: What Could Archives Tell Us? New light and research perspective*, 13 historians and archivists from universities or scientific institutions in Belgium, DRC, France, Italy, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States delve into lesser-known or unpublished archives produced during the CFS period (1885-1908). A large portion of these archives are held at the AfricaMuseum.

The book is divided into three parts. The first part provides an overview of the main institutions housing the CFS-related archives (RMCA, State Archives, and the Royal Palace), thus helping readers to navigate through the maze of available archives. The other two sections shed more light on lesser-known or revisited themes and navigate between global and local history, diplomacy, justice, trade, and capital.

The nuanced analyses of the authors show that many aspects of that period have yet to be revealed.

Published by Peter Lang in 2022, the book was co-edited by two RMCA historians.





## Fourth edition of the 'Digital for Development' (D4D) Prize

Prize D4D rewards outstanding initiatives that use digitisation as a driver of development. Winning projects and ideas have found innovative ways to use the potential of (new) technologies in the service of the Sustainable Development Goals defined by the United Nations.

Prize D4D consists of 3 categories:

- The success story - iStandOut
- The innovative idea/ startup- iStartUp
- The public award - iChoose

Winners were awarded on 24 November 2022 by Heidy Rombouts, Director-General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid, on the recommendation of a panel of experts.

The 'Projet de Digitalisation de l'Agriculture en milieu paysan au Mali' bagged the iStandOut prize. The project is led by a consortium of two Malian digital startups, AgriBox and Bi Musso, and the Malian network Agri Vision Sahel. It proposes digital applications and solutions to improve the flow of goods to growth markets and the yield of agricultural production.

The iStartUp prize for the most promising innovation was given to the project 'Citizens and Machine Learning to End Snail-Borne Diseases', a collaboration between the RMCA, Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Université de Kinshasa, and KU Leuven. The jury was impressed by the combination of high potential impact, machine learning technology, and the citizen science approach in the fight against schistosomiasis, a disease transmitted by freshwater snails. Currently, data collected on snail populations need to be validated by experts. The application presented could replace this time-consuming process.

Finally, the public iChoose prize went to a project called 'The Sustainability-As-A-Service Protocol: A New Fundraising Protocol For Emergency Preparedness & Response'. It proposes a new fundraising protocol in order to reduce response times in the wake of natural disasters such as hurricanes, floods, droughts, storms, and earthquakes.

Prior to the awards ceremony, there was an innovation fair featuring four keynote presentations and 10 stands.

The event was attended by 138 persons, with another 31 participants joining online to watch the presentations and the awarding ceremony.

Held every two years, the Prize D4D is an initiative of the RMCA with the support of the Directorate-General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid (DGD).



Group photo with Prize D4D nominees.

 <https://prized4d.africamuseum.be/>

### Study visits and training courses for African researchers

For many years now, the RMCA has been organizing study visits and training courses for early-career African researchers thanks to the financial support of Belgian Development Cooperation (DGD). These take place at the museum and, for projects set up in Africa, in the field. The project goals and the capacity-building programme are designed around the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SGD).

There is a wide range of capacity-building activities. In addition to scientific and technical training courses for individuals or groups, there are also grants for students pursuing masters, doctoral, and post-doctoral degrees; funding to participate in conferences; and residencies for artists and journalists. Study visits and training courses could resume in 2022 after Covid-19 measures were relaxed, although visas were sometimes granted with an enormous delay; the renewed possibility of international travel was accompanied by a sharp uptick in visa applications in general.

The non-essential research trips initially slated for 2021 were rescheduled to 2022. These trips fall within the framework of various research projects as well as the FORMARCH course on archives, organized in Benin with the École du Patrimoine africain (EPA).

Five African scientists received training in the use of 'Advanced tools for the monitoring and identification of African fruit fly pests' at the Stellenbosch University, South Africa.



Farewell drink for the PhD students of the ATRAP project (see p. 28 to learn more about ATRAP).

### DGD-funded training and study visits at the RMCA for African researchers

65

persons



69% 31%  
men women



From 10 African countries, 50% from the DRC

## Science Days

On 17 and 18 October 2022, the RMCA organized the Science Days, an in-house conference that brought together the museum's scientific departments. The objective was threefold:

- to get acquainted with colleagues;
- to provide an overview of expertise and ongoing research within the RMCA;
- to encourage possible synergies and collaborations - in terms of methodology, geography, or theme - between colleagues, services and departments.

Each scientific service presented its activities on the first day.

The following morning, a large poster session was held, allowing colleagues to have numerous discussions. All museum staff members were invited to this session.

The Science Days brought together 110 museum colleagues.

A survey made after the event revealed that 80% of participants found the event useful or very useful for various reasons:

- sharing information between services and departments (according to 97% of participants);
- meeting (new) colleagues in a relaxed manner (91%);
- getting inspiration for new collaborations (74%);
- creating a sense of belonging (68%).



Science Days 2022.



Several PhD students attended Science Days, an in-house event in which RMCA scientists presented their work to their colleagues.

## PUBLICATIONS

In 2022, the Publications service operated at its pre-pandemic pace once more.

Our publications were distributed on all of our channels (shop, direct sales, trade distributors, etc.) with sales figures topping those of the previous year. This marked an improvement in the financial situation although they fell short of the figures for 2019, the year following the museum's reopening.

More income was generated by print-on-demand orders for our online publications, as well as other orders for prints that the service can supply thanks to its semi-professional machines.

The desire to broaden the reach of our publications to more readers, including those in Central Africa, can be seen in the trend of publishing work in Open Access or online more regularly.

The catalogue of our usual collections also expanded by several publications that were printed and sold in bookstores.

### Surprises for our director

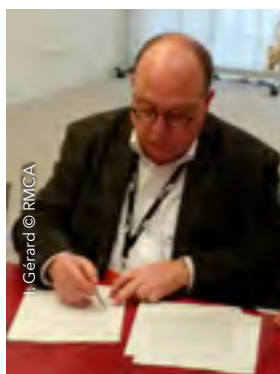
For the retirement of Guido Gryseels, two books were prepared in the greatest secrecy: a *Liber amicorum* of his Belgian and international colleagues and friends, as well as a book of tributes from museum staff. The combination of graphic design, leather binding by a craft bookbinder, humour, and amusing or nostalgic photos made for two delightful souvenir albums.

### European Journal of Taxonomy

In 2022, 199 articles were published in EJT, for a total of 8,070 pages.

One published article and seven submissions came from African authors. Four papers presenting material from Africa were also published. Two of these were written by scientists from our institute (see list below).

At yearend, a new agreement (2023-2027) between the consortium's members was signed during the Steering Committee meeting held in Tervuren.



The acting director of the RMCA, Karel Velle, signing the new co-publishing agreement for the European Journal of Taxonomy with his European colleagues.

### Africana Linguistica now an Open Access journal

The RMCA's journal of linguistics transitioned to an open access model, becoming a Gold Open Access journal in 2022. As the museum does not wish to penalize authors with lesser financial means, it reached an agreement with its trade co-publisher so that fees would be shouldered by the museum instead of the authors, with a maximum amount for each annual volume.



The graphic artist of the Publications service offers the book of tributes from museum staff.



The head of the Publications service presents the *Liber amicorum* to the director during the plenary session.

## LIST OF RMCA PUBLICATIONS 2022\*

### Exhibition catalogues and guides

Mpane, A. & Müller, J.P. (eds), *The Grand Rotunda of the Royal Museum for Central Africa Tervuren/Kontich: RMCA/BAI*, 184 p. (Also available in French: *La Grande Rotonde du Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale* & Dutch: *De Grote Rotonde van het Koninklijk Museum voor Midden-Afrika*) (PR)



### Social Sciences and Humanities

Katz-Lavigne, S., Ndayiragije, R., Ramazani Kalyongo, L. & Chemouni, B. (eds), *Conjonctures de l'Afrique centrale 2022*. Series 'Cahiers africains', no. 98. Paris/Tervuren/Antwerpen: L'Harmattan/RMCA/CRE-AC, 316 p. (PR)



De Coninck, F., *Conflicts et diplomatie en Afrique centrale. Témoignage d'un ambassadeur. 1994-2022*. Series 'Cahiers africains', no. 99. Paris/Tervuren: L'Harmattan/RMCA, 390 p. Forewords by **G. Gryseels** and **Th. Trefon**.

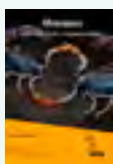


**Devos, M.** & Ricquier, B. (eds), *Cooking with Linguists. Culinary Lexicon and Recipes in selected Bantu Languages*. Series 'Tervuren Series for African languages Documentation and Description', 320 p. Available for free on <https://www.africamuseum.be/fr/research/discover/publications/series/tervuren-series-for-african-language-documentation-and-description> (PR)



### Zoology

**Jocqué, R.**, *Miniseks. Hofmakerij bij ongewervelden*. Series 'Zoölogische Documentatie', 176 p.



### Various

*Liber amicorum dedicated to G. Gryseels*, 308 p.

*Museum News Special Edition: Guido Gryseels 2002-2022*, 56 p.



*Jaarverslag/Rapport annuel/Annual Report 2021*, 82 p.



### Online publications

Essele Essele, K., *Continuités et innovations sonores des cérémonies funéraires chez les Eton du Sud-Cameroun*. Series 'Documents de Sciences humaines', 378 p.



Dibwe, D., *Le Chef songye Kamanda ya Kaumbu. Au rendez-vous de l'histoire et de la mémoire congolaise*. Series 'Documents de Sciences humaines', 105 p. (Previous version published by Presses de l'Unilu in 2007.)



**Nkulikiyinka, J.-B.**, *L'Écho des monts et des vallées. Chants populaires du Rwanda transcrits, traduits en français et commentés*. Series 'Documents de Sciences humaines', 320 p.



### Open Access

**Devos, M.** & **Maniacky, J.** 2022. *Africana Linguistica* 28: 229 p. Louvain/Tervuren: Peeters/RMCA (PR; IF 0.067)



\* NB. Impact factors are dated June 2022.

**European Journal of Taxonomy** (published by a European consortium including the RMCA), vol. 788 to 855 within some papers by RMCA's scientists:



Vranken, N., Van Steenberge, M., Heylen, A., Decru, E. & **Snoeks, J.** 2022. 'From a pair to a dozen: the piscivorous species of *Haplochromis* (Cichlidae) from the Lake Edward system'. *European Journal of Taxonomy* 815: 1-94. <https://doi.org/10.5852/ejt.2022.815.1749> (PR; IF 1.398)

**Jocqué, R.**, & Bosselaers, J. 2022. 'Studies in the Liocranidae (Araneae): revision of *Andromma* Simon, 1893'. *European Journal of Taxonomy* 850 (1): 1-78. <https://doi.org/10.5852/ejt.2022.850.1997> (PR; IF 1.398)

Gijanto, L. & **Cornelissen, E.** (eds), *Nyame Akuma* 97: 56 p.



#### Publications Service's paper



Agosti, D., Benichou, L., Addink, W., Arvanitidis, C., Catapano, T., Cochrane, G., Dillen, M., Döring, M., Georgiev, T.,

**Gérard, I.**, Groom, Q., Kishor, P., Kroh, A., Kvaček, J., **Mergen, P.**, Mietchen, D., Pauperio, J., Sautter, G., Penev, L. 2022.

'Recommendations for use of annotations and persistent identifiers in taxonomy and biodiversity publishing'. *Research Ideas and Outcomes* 8: e97374. Available online: <https://riojournal.com/article/97374/> (PR)

## COMPLETED DOCTORATES

The following researchers completed their doctoral studies in 2022 with the scientific and logistic support of the RMCA:

### Earth Sciences

#### Désiré Kubwimana

*Mouvements de terrain dans les reliefs de Bujumbura (Burundi) : apport des géosciences, inventaire, caractérisation et prédiction d'un aléa par les méthodes géostatistiques*

Advisors: Ait Brahim Lahcen (Université Mohamed V de Rabat), Tarik Bahaj (Université Mohamed V de Rabat), Olivier Dewitte (RMCA)

Defended on 1 April 2022

### Biology

#### Emmanuel Abwe

*The fish fauna of the Kundelungu National Park (DR Congo): diversity, ecology and conservation*

Advisors: Jos Snoeks (RMCA), Emmanuel Vreven (RMCA), Auguste Chocha Manda (Université de Lubumbashi)

Defended on 19 January 2022

#### Mare Geeraerts

*Reconstructing Nile tilapia stocking in Africa: parasites, next-generation-sequencing and museum collections*

Advisors: Tom Artois (UHasselt), Maarten Vanhove (UHasselt), Tine Huyse (RMCA)

Defended on 3 March 2022

# THE SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTE IN FIGURES

## Who?

**3**  
departments

**80**  
researchers

More than  
**15**  
disciplines

**70**  
partner institutions and  
universities

## What?

In 2022

- **Around a hundred ongoing projects** including 10 begun in 2022
- **197 presentations** in scientific conferences
- **198 published articles**, of which 122 were peer-reviewed \*

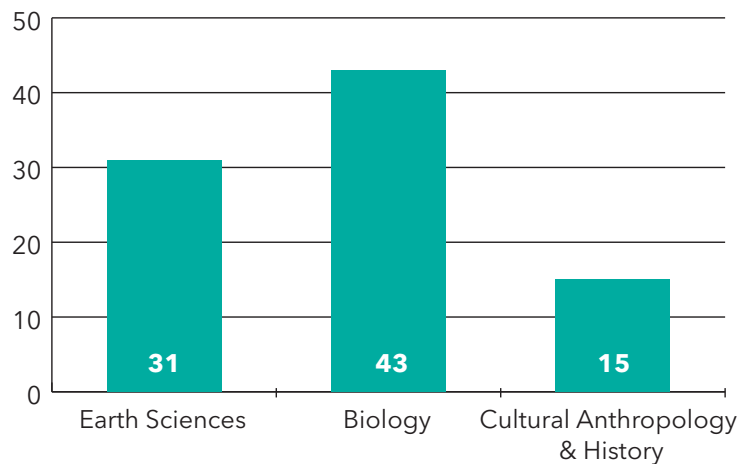
## Doctoral theses

- **3 doctoral degrees completed** in 2022\*\*
- **89 ongoing doctoral research projects** in 2022
  - including 13 begun in 2022
- 64% of doctoral students are from 12 countries in Africa
- 34% of doctoral students are Congolese
- 22% are Belgian
  
- Supervision of **53 master's or DEA students**

## 425 researchers came to the RMCA

to conduct research and/or consult the collections, archives, or libraries.

Number of doctoral students per department



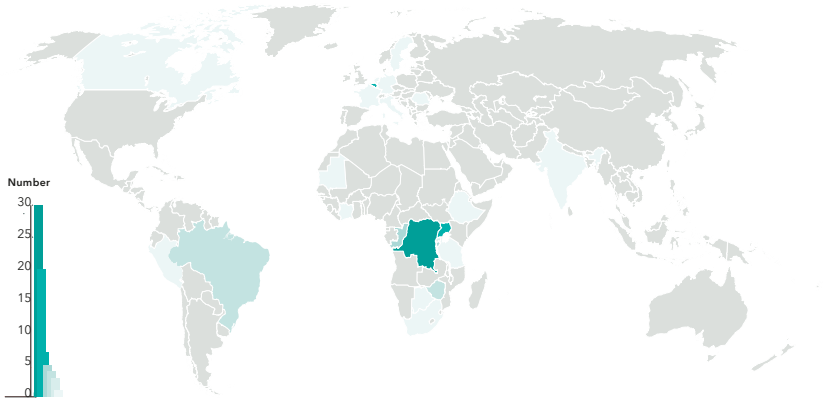
\* (see p. 40)

\*\* (see p. 37)

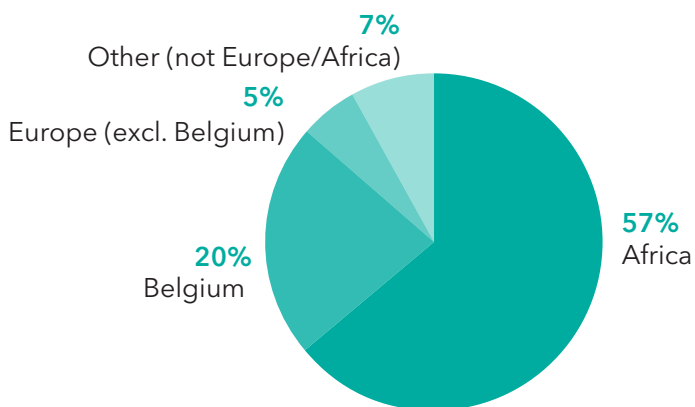


## Taxonomy

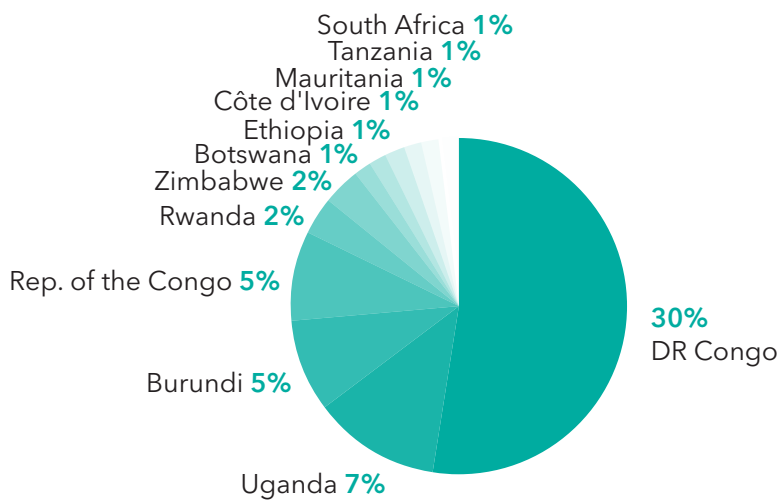
Doctoral students by nationality



Origin of doctoral students



Country of origin of African doctoral students



41

new animal species described

25

spiders

10

fishes

5

millepedes

1

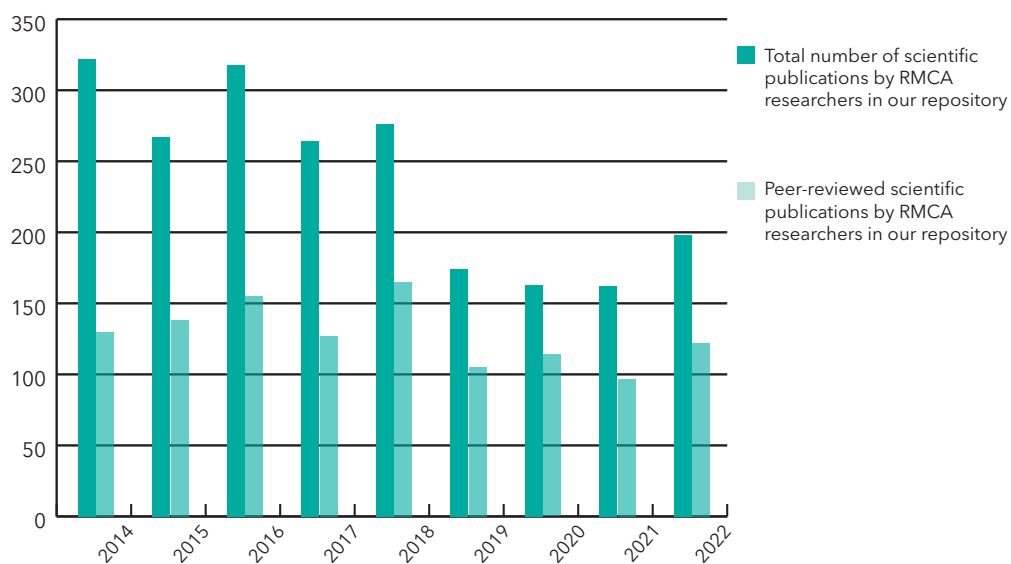
flatworm

## PUBLICATIONS OF RMCA SCIENTISTS

Every year, the researchers of the museum publish articles in scientific journals or books, monographs, etc. with prestigious international publishers. In 2022, they published 198 texts, of which 122 were peer-reviewed.

References to these publications by RMCA staff members can be consulted on our website.

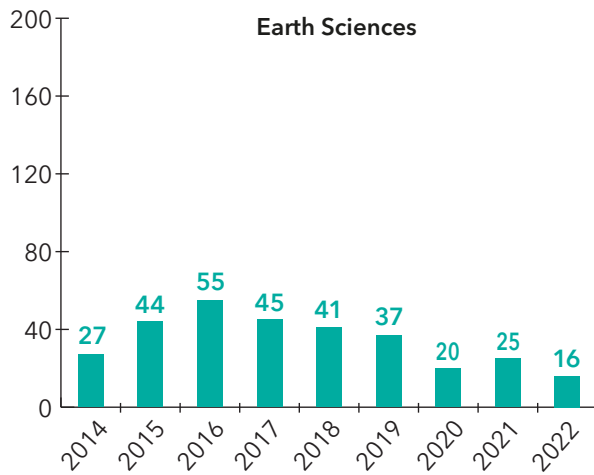
<https://www.africamuseum.be/en/research/discover/publications/repository>



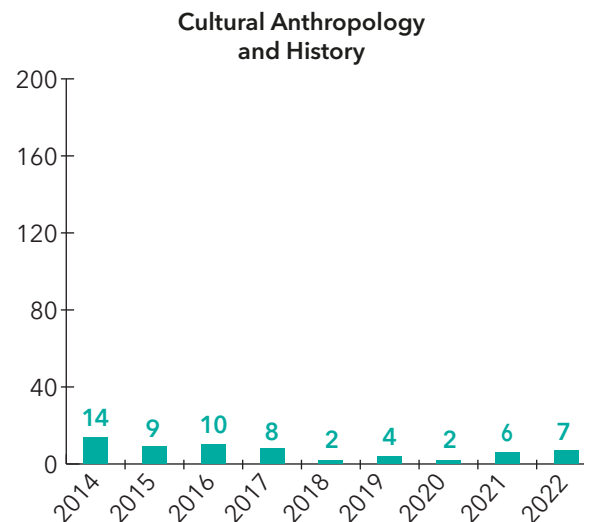
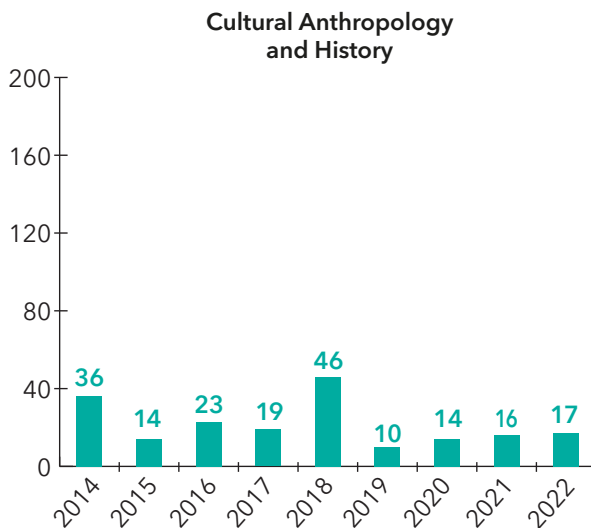
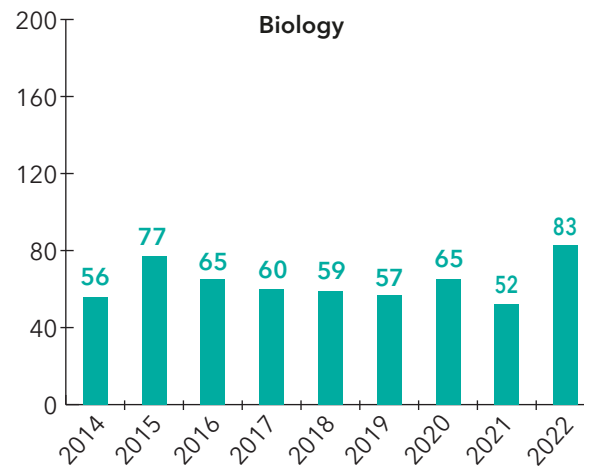
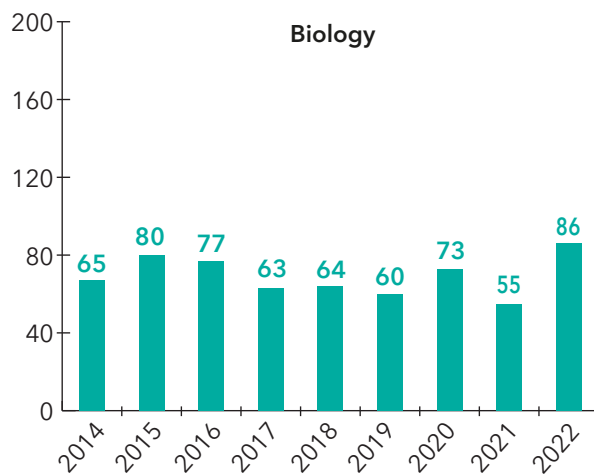
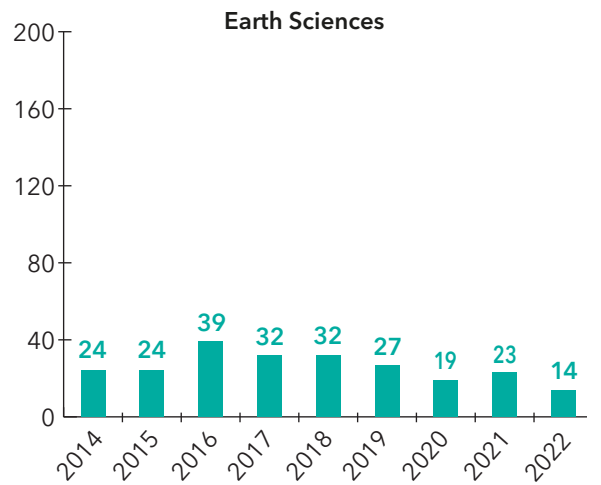
### Statistics per discipline and per type in 2022

	Earth Sciences	Biology	Cultural Anthropology and History	TOTAL	
<b>Total number of peer-reviewed scientific publications</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>119*</b>	> <a href="#">Detail 1</a>
Articles in scientific journals	14	83	7	104	> <a href="#">Detail 2</a>
Chapters in (edited) book	2	1	8	11	
Books and catalogues (as author or editor)	0	2	2	4	
<b>Total number of non-peer-reviewed publications</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>74*</b>	
Journal articles	1	1	1	3	
Maps	0	0	0	0	
(edited) books/catalogues	0	1	2	3	
Chapters in (edited) book	0	0	2	2	
Chapters in (edited) catalogue	0	0	0	0	

**Detail 1: Number of peer-reviewed scientific publications**



**Detail 2: Number of articles in scientific journals**



# 03



# COLLECTIONS & LIBRARIES

**The RMCA's international reputation is based on its vast expertise and its unique collections in the humanities and natural sciences from the Central African region. These collections are both valuable heritage and of great scientific value. They form the basis for the large range of research projects. The fact that less than 1% of the collections can be seen in the new permanent exhibition gives an idea of its size.**

The museum is responsible for the physical management of these diverse and extensive collections, to conserve them and digitize them. It makes its collections available to the public in various ways. The collection is promoted through research, exhibitions, publications, and databases. Collection pieces are loaned out all over the world for exhibitions or scientific research. In addition, researchers can also consult documents or analyse artefacts and specimens on-site. The collection continues to grow. These days, it expands primarily in the context of research projects in collaboration with African universities and museums.

The museum also has a network of libraries, consisting of a central library and more than ten specialised sub-libraries in various disciplines within the humanities and natural sciences. The complete collection of the museum contains more than 130,000 books and several thousand journals, as well as valuable historical works.

## COLLECTION FIGURES

### Cultural Anthropology & History

<b>122 000</b>
ethnographic artefacts
<b>75 000</b>
archaeological artefacts
<b>9000</b>
musical instruments
<b>4000</b>
ancient maps
<b>500 000</b>
historical photographs
<b>20 000</b>
historical objects and Western artworks
<b>3 km</b>
historical archives
<b>70</b>
historical films on the Belgian Congo, Rwanda and Burundi (1940-1960)

### Biology

<b>10 000 000</b>
specimens among which:
<b>6 000 000</b>
insects
<b>1 200 000</b>
fishes
<b>500 000</b>
butterflies
<b>300 000</b>
spiders
<b>195 000</b>
amphibians
<b>150 000</b>
birds
<b>135 000</b>
mammals
<b>80 000</b>
wood samples
<b>62 000</b>
reptiles
<b>17 000</b>
snakes

### Earth Sciences

<b>264 000</b>
aerial photographs
<b>160 000</b>
rock samples
<b>25 000</b>
maps
<b>22 000</b>
palaeontological specimens
<b>19 000</b>
minerals
<b>1 km</b>
geological archives

## FIGURES FOR THE COLLECTIONS, ARCHIVES, AND LIBRARIES

### Loans

**425**

persons visited the RMCA for research purposes and/or to consult the collections, archives, or libraries

**860**

ethnographic and historical objects consulted by external visitors

**1500**

More than zoological specimens on research loan

**370**

objects on loan, in particular

for **19**

exhibitions in Belgium, France, Austria, Italy, Luxembourg, Monaco, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the USA



I. Otto © RMCA



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## Expertise and services

**55**  
assessments of  
ethnographic objects

Identification of **12**  
wood samples

---

## Acquisitions

More than **2500**  
zoological specimens,  
including

**1295**  
flies

**509**  
samples of  
Nile tilapia fins  
for genetic analysis

around **500**  
samples of flatworms  
for genetic analysis,  
and about a hundred  
freshwater snails

**196**  
butterflies

**417**  
wood samples

**61**  
archive documents,  
photo albums,  
postcard collections,  
paintings,  
etc.

## Efficient and accessible collection management

The RMCA conserves unique and diverse collections in the human and natural sciences. Each collection type has specific needs and must be conserved in a particular way.

In 2022, special attention was given to improving the conservation and accessibility of the paintings, archives, and library collections. Three new mobile shelving systems as well as an art storage system were installed for the archives, library, jars for the wet collection, and paintings, respectively.

The installation of the art storage racks makes it possible to keep the entire painting collection in the same location. This is a major improvement for its conservation and management. Conservators took advantage of the ongoing relocation to clean the largest paintings and place them on a roll. With the collection currently divided between two buildings, the move will only be completed sometime in 2023-2024.

A reorganization was carried out in order to install the mobile shelving systems. Archives that have already been digitized and/or are consulted less often are now stored in an external storage site in Péronnes-lez-Binche. Not only does this provide more room, but it also makes for more efficient use of space on the Tervuren site in order to keep collections geographically intact.

The archival fonds, library, and documentation of the former Contemporary History service were also integrated in 2022 into a centralized archives and library management system that is available to our users and researchers.

An innovative system was also put in place to allow quick and easy access to less-consulted books and periodicals whilst ensuring better storage conditions for them and greater efficiency in consulting the library collections.



*The installation of racks makes it possible to store the collection of paintings in the same place.*



## Hidden collections: new research on old specimens

A new project launched in 2022 will study old specimens to learn how viruses evolved and diversified. Many major zoonotic viruses such as Ebola, Zika, and the precursors of HIV are – and continue to be – transmitted by Afrotropical mammals found in the Congo Basin. The basin’s mammalian fauna is also among the most diverse in the world. Thousands of specimens from the area are conserved in the museum collections of the RBINS, RMCA, and CSB-UNIKIS. Meanwhile, thousands of human pathology specimens from the region are stored securely at KU Leuven. Viral genome material found in human host tissue is thus present in this collection.

The main goal of the research project is to estimate the extent to which these zoonotic viruses can emerge from the African tropics. To determine this, the evolutionary history of viruses is reconstructed in relation to their hosts, using viral genome data from the human tissue specimens.



*Research on old specimens could make it possible to learn more about the evolution and diversity of viruses.*

## New level reached in the digitization of natural history collections

Between them, the RMCA and the RBINS conserve nearly 50 million natural history specimens, a priceless heritage of past and present biodiversity. Their combined holdings represent one of the largest collections in Europe - surpassed only by the Natural History Museum of London and the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle in Paris - and one of the 10 largest collections in the world. An estimated 0.5% of these specimens were used to describe species for the first time (so-called type specimens) or were the subject of detailed and illustrated descriptions. The legacy of these 250,000 specimens is unique on a global scale. In 2022, cartography was begun for each individual specimen of the bird collection, with all related metadata, in order to establish a full 2D inventory. Various techniques were also used to pursue work on the 3D digitization of precious type specimens from the vertebrate collection. Moreover, type specimens from the entomology and invertebrate collections as well as several vertebrate specimens were digitized in a more advanced manner using 2D+ digitization (focus stacking).



*The cartography of every single specimen in the bird collection will go towards building a full 2D inventory.*

# 04



# THE MUSEUM IN FIGURES

# FINANCIAL REPORT

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Expenditure and revenue (in k€)</b>					
Revenue	17 518	19 561	16 605	17 522	20 719
Expenditure	20 009	18 127	16 058	17 864	20 355
<b>Balance</b>	<b>-2491 <sup>(1)</sup></b>	<b>1434</b>	<b>546</b>	<b>-341</b>	<b>364</b>
<b>Sources of revenue</b>					
Human resources envelope	- <sup>(2)</sup>	- <sup>(2)</sup>	- <sup>(2)</sup>	- <sup>(2)</sup>	- <sup>(2)</sup>
Endowment	10 197	10 197	10 587	10 730	12 176
Own funds	952	3382	1237	1440	1 884
Projects	5560	4967	4727	5240	6 452
Other	809	1015	52	111	207
<b>Total</b>	<b>17 518</b>	<b>19 561</b>	<b>16 605</b>	<b>17 522</b>	<b>20 719</b>
<b>Expenses by source (in k€)</b>					
Personnel	11 294	11 985	11 294	11 780	12 823
Human resources envelope	0	0	0	0	0
Personnel own funds	0	0	0	0	0
Statutory personnel	5230	5841	5337	5540	5983
Contractual personnel	6063	6144	5957	6239	6840
Operations	4962	5328	3927	5570	6924
Equipment and library	3753	814	836	513	607
<b>Total</b>	<b>20 009</b>	<b>18 127</b>	<b>16 058</b>	<b>17 864</b>	<b>20 355</b>

(1) Deficit and derogation from ESA balance with the approval of the Minister for the Budget

(2) Since 01.01.2018, endowment and human resources envelopes have been merged

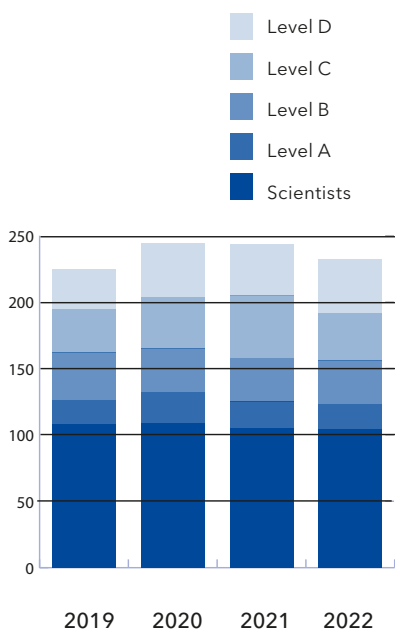


# STAFF FIGURES

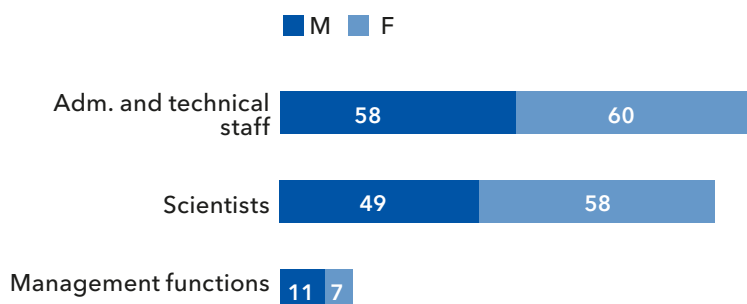
## Distribution of statutory and contractual staff by level

	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Scientists</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>108</b>
Statutory	31	34	30	30
Contractual	74	70	85	78
<b>Level A</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>
Statutory	12	12	11	11
Contractual	8	7	7	7
<b>Level B</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>36</b>
Statutory	22	23	26	29
Contractual	11	9	7	7
<b>Level C</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>33</b>
Statutory	18	19	20	19
Contractual	29	17	14	14
<b>Level D</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>30</b>
Statutory	1	1	1	0
Contractual	38	39	34	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>225</b>

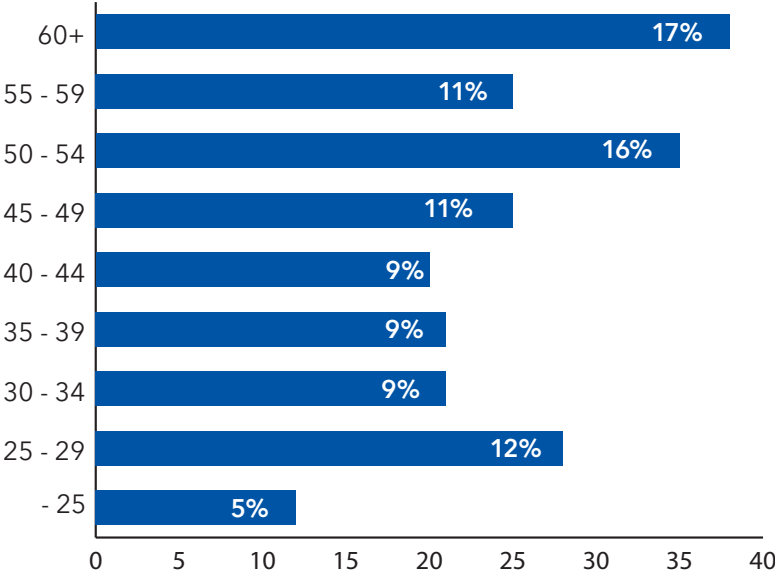
### Distribution by level



### Distribution M/F



# Age pyramid



## PUBLIC SERVICES

### Visitors

AfricaMuseum welcomed 125,753 visitors in 2022,

- 15,277 persons visited the temporary exhibitions *Human Zoo. The age of colonial exhibitions* and *Europa Oxalá* in 2022

### Guided tours

There were 1,413 guided tours, including 38 interactive tours.

There were 261 workshops, including 159 music workshops and 102 others.





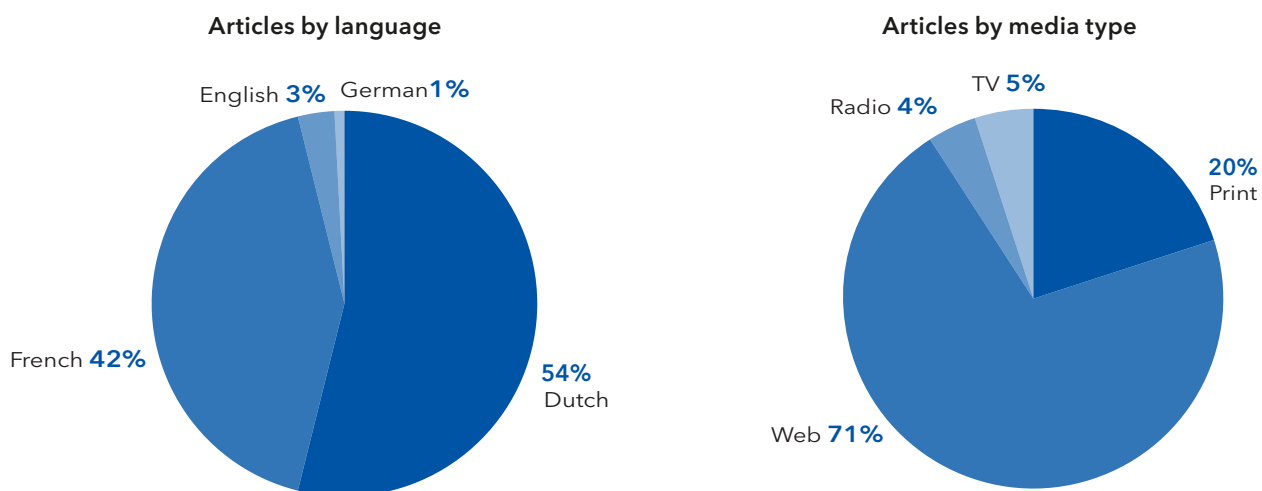
© Nathan De Fortunato

## Media coverage

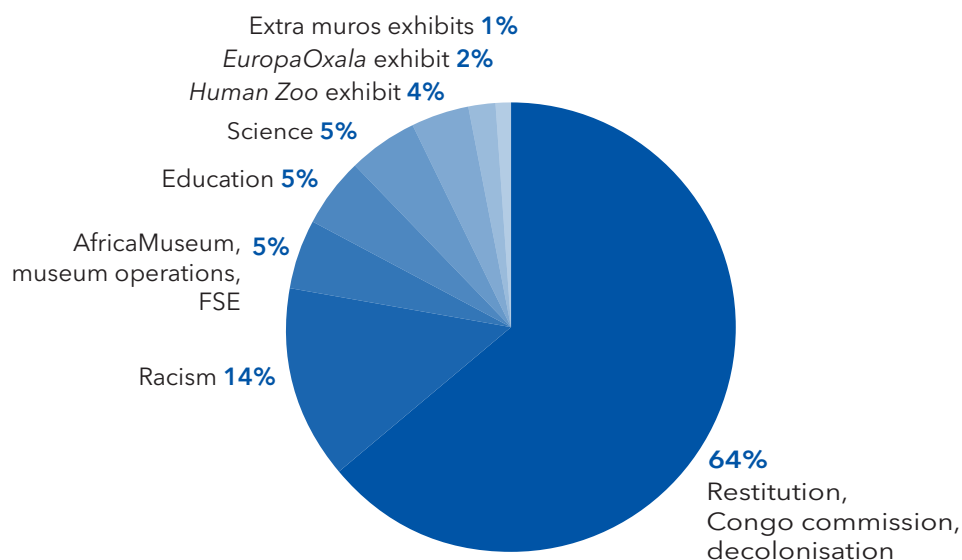
Total number of articles published: 618

- Belgian media: 603 (decrease of 26% compared with 2021)
- International media: 15 (decrease of 69% compared with 2021)

### Belgian media



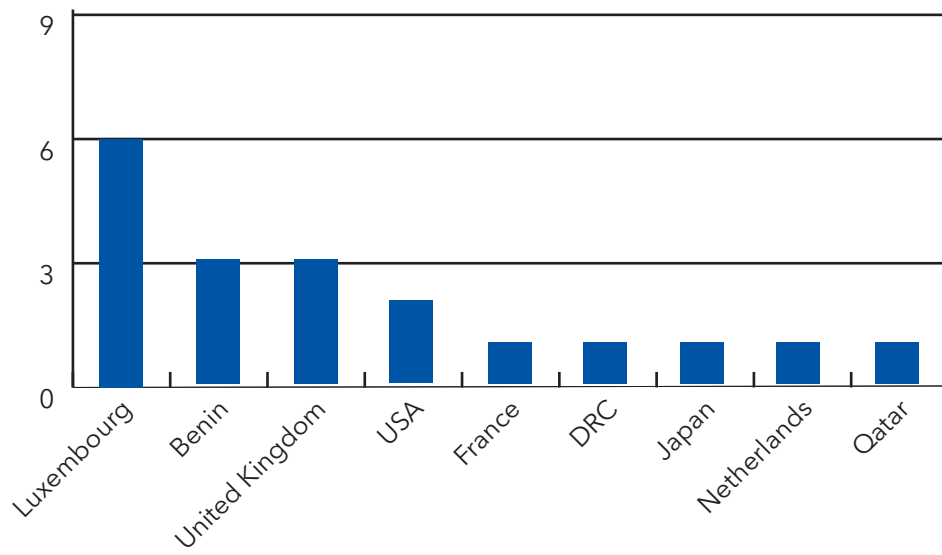
### Topics covered



## Foreign media

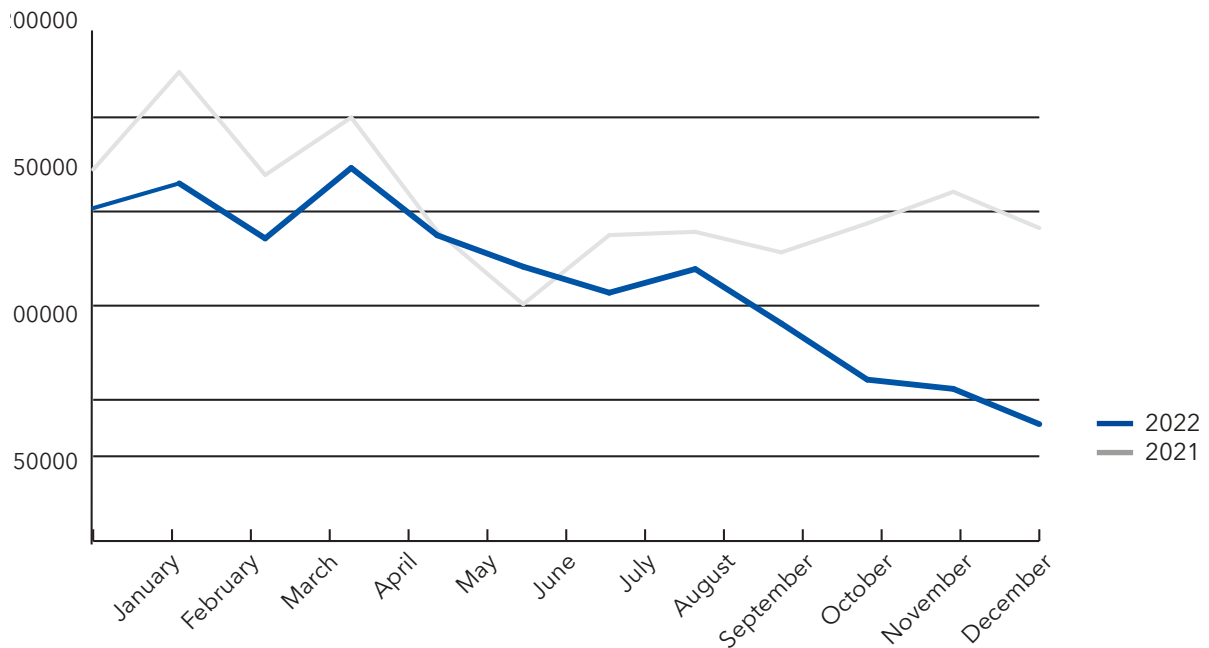
19 articles in 9 countries.

Overview of the number of articles by country



## Website

In 2022, the museum's webpages were visited 1,323,260 times, a 24% decrease compared with 2021.



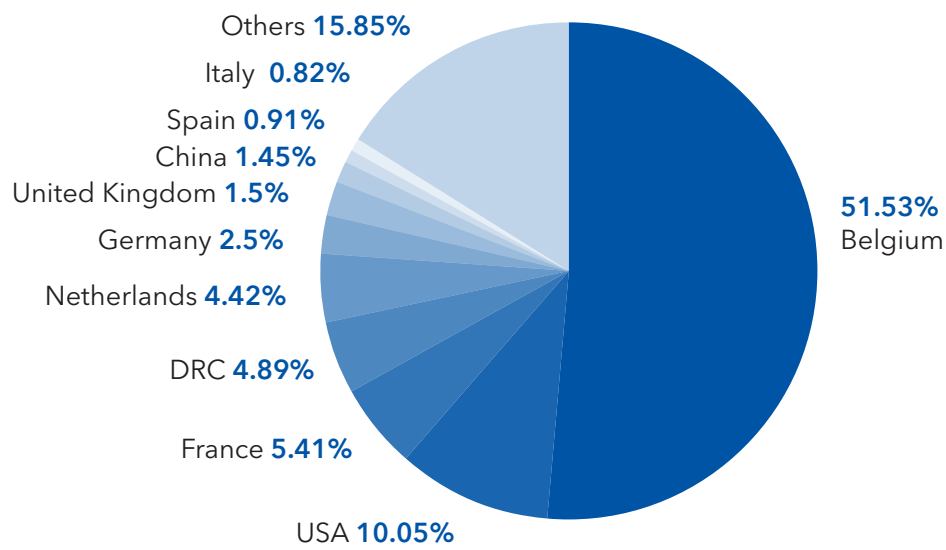
### Website consultations

- 262,270 unique visitors (based on IP address) consulted the website a total of 398,299 times, which averages at 1.5 times per visitor.
- On average, a site visit lasted 2 minutes and 51 seconds.
- For the second consecutive year, more users visited the website using a mobile device (smartphone or tablet, 56%) rather than a computer (44%). This trend is increasing year-on-year.
- 87% of visitors landed on the website directly or via a search engine, a slight increase compared with previous years. 5% of visitors reached the site via an ad, while 3% reached it via social media.

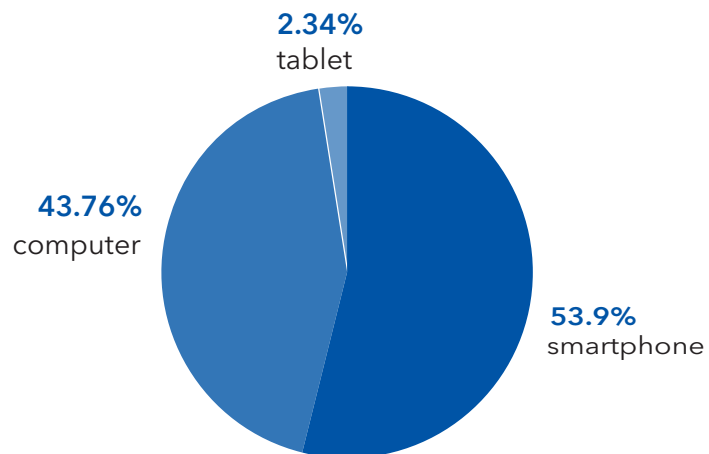
### Origin of website visitors

52% of visitors viewed the website from Belgium. This is a sharp decrease compared with 2021 (65%). After the USA (10%) and France (5%), the DRC (5%) and the Netherlands (4%) accounted for the greatest number of visits.

### Origin of website visitors



### Device type

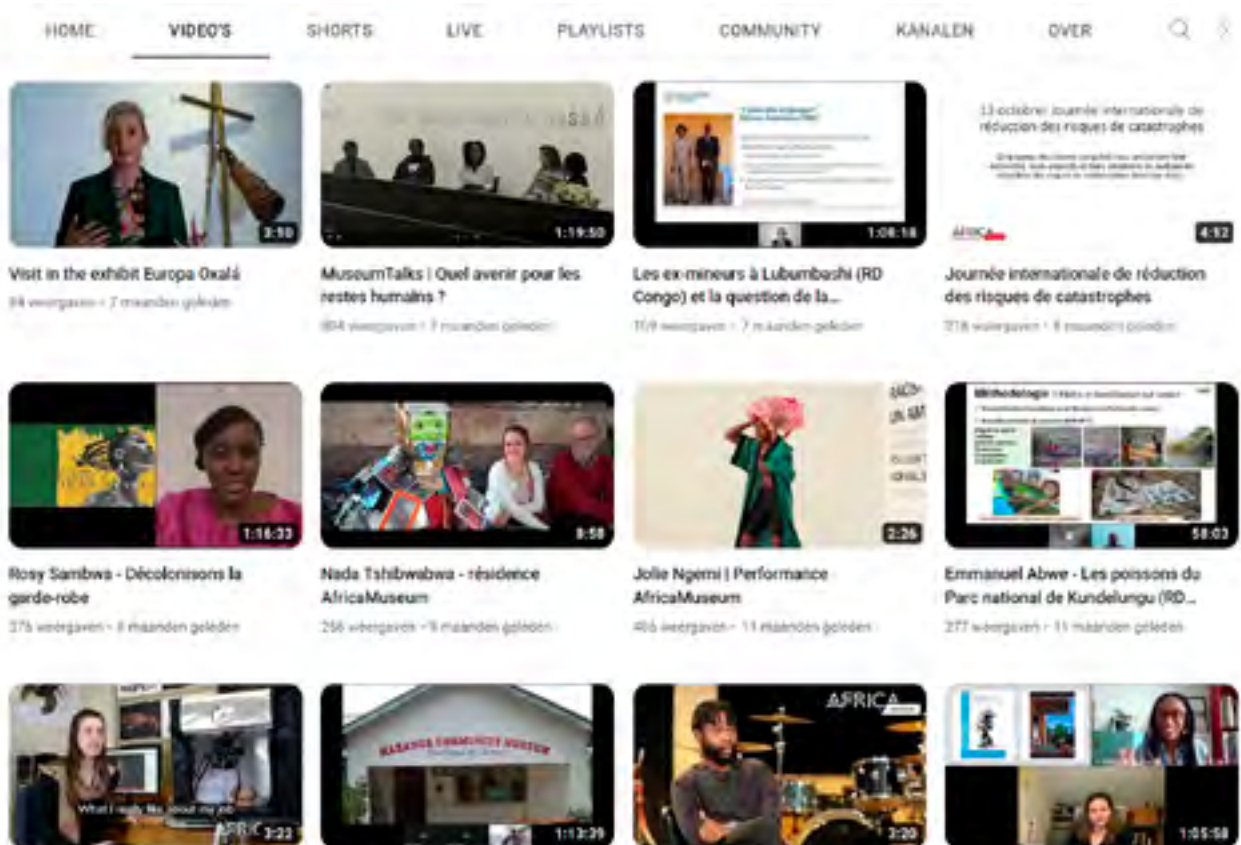




## Social media

In 2022, the museum's social media accounts posted the following figures:

- The Facebook page AfricaMuseum EN went from 10,390 to 11,650 followers, a 12% increase.
- The Facebook page AfricaMuseum België went from 2,311 to 2,648 followers, a 15% increase.
- The Facebook page AfricaMuseum Belgique went from 2,851 to 3,522 followers, a 24% increase.
- The Instagram account went from 4,916 to 5850 followers, a 19% increase.
- The Twitter account went from 6,738 to 7,139 followers, a 7% increase.



Videos of MuseumTalks, performances, interviews, and more were posted on YouTube.

# 05



**WHO WE ARE**

## Mission statement

The museum must act as a world centre for research and knowledge dissemination on the past and present societies and the natural environments of Africa, in particular of Central Africa, to foster - among the general public and the scientific community - a better understanding of and interest in this field and, through partnerships, to make a substantial contribution towards the sustainable development of Africa. Thus the core tasks of this Africa-oriented institution consist of acquiring and managing collections, conducting scientific research, implementing the results of this research, disseminating knowledge, and presenting to the public a selection from its collections.

## Governance and advisory bodies

The RMCA is a federal scientific institution under the aegis of the State Secretary for Science Policy. Administratively speaking, the RMCA is an independently-managed public institution with three governance bodies and one advisory body.

### Management Committee

The management committee is responsible for the financial, material and administrative management of the RMCA, and serves the same function for the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences. Chaired by a representative of the Belgian Federal Science Policy Office, it is made up of four external members (university academics and management experts), the managing directors of each institution, and two representatives of the Belgian Federal Science Policy Office.

### Members with a deliberative vote:

- Frank Monteny, Chair, Director General - PPS Science Policy
- Guido Gryseels, Deputy Chair, Director General, RMCA (until 31/08/2022)
- Karel Velle, Director General a.i., RMCA, Deputy Chair (from 01/09/2022)
- Patricia Supply, Deputy Chair, Director General ad interim, RBINS
- Ingrid Vanden Berghe, External member
- Alain Heynen, Advisor - PPS Sciences Policy
- François Mairesse, External member
- Koen Verhoest, External member
- Claude Bragard, External member

### Members with advisory rights:

- Marie-Solange Mukarwema, Accountant, RBINS
- Yves Geens, Accountant, RMCA
- Brigitte Lauwaert, Head, Mathematical Models Management Unit, RBINS
- Didier Van den Spiegel, Head of service, RMCA
- Françoise Stassart, Vice-secretary Attaché - PPS Science Policy
- Jacques Lust, Secretary, Attaché - PPS Science Policy
- Lieven Dejaegher, Inspector of finance
- Pierre De Maret, Chair, Scientific Council, RMCA
- Bruno Danis, Chair, Scientific Council, RBINS

## Director's advisory committee

### Members with voting rights:

- Guido Gryseels, Director General RMCA, Chairman (until 31/08/2022)
- Karel Velle, Director General a.i., RMCA (from 01/09/2022)
- Els Cornelissen, Head of Department a.i. Cultural Anthropology and History
- Marc De Meyer, Head of Department a.i. Biology
- François Kervyn de Meerendré, Head of Service and Head of Department a.i.
- Jacky Maniacky, Head of Culture and Society Service
- Didier Van den Spiegel, Head of Biological Data and Collection Management Service
- Bruno Verbergt, Operational Director for Public Services (until February 2021)
- Patricia Van Schuylenbergh, Head of History and Politics Service

## Recruitment and promotion board

The committee is responsible for the selection and promotion of statutory scientific staff. It is chaired by a Federal Science Policy representative and is made up of two external experts from universities and the RMCA's Director-General.

### Members:

- Robert Van De Walle, President, BELSPO
- Guido Gryseels, General Director, RMCA
- Karel Velle, Director General a.i., RMCA, (from 01/09/2022)
- Sara Geenen, Professor, UAntwerpen
- Caroline Nieberding, Professor, UCLouvain



*Voting members of the Management Committee at the last meeting presided by Guido Gryseels, during which interim director-general Karel Velle was officially introduced.*

## Basic Consultative Committee

The Basic Consultative Committee is an advisory body that monitors working conditions and well-being in the workplace. Its members are representatives of personnel and labour unions.

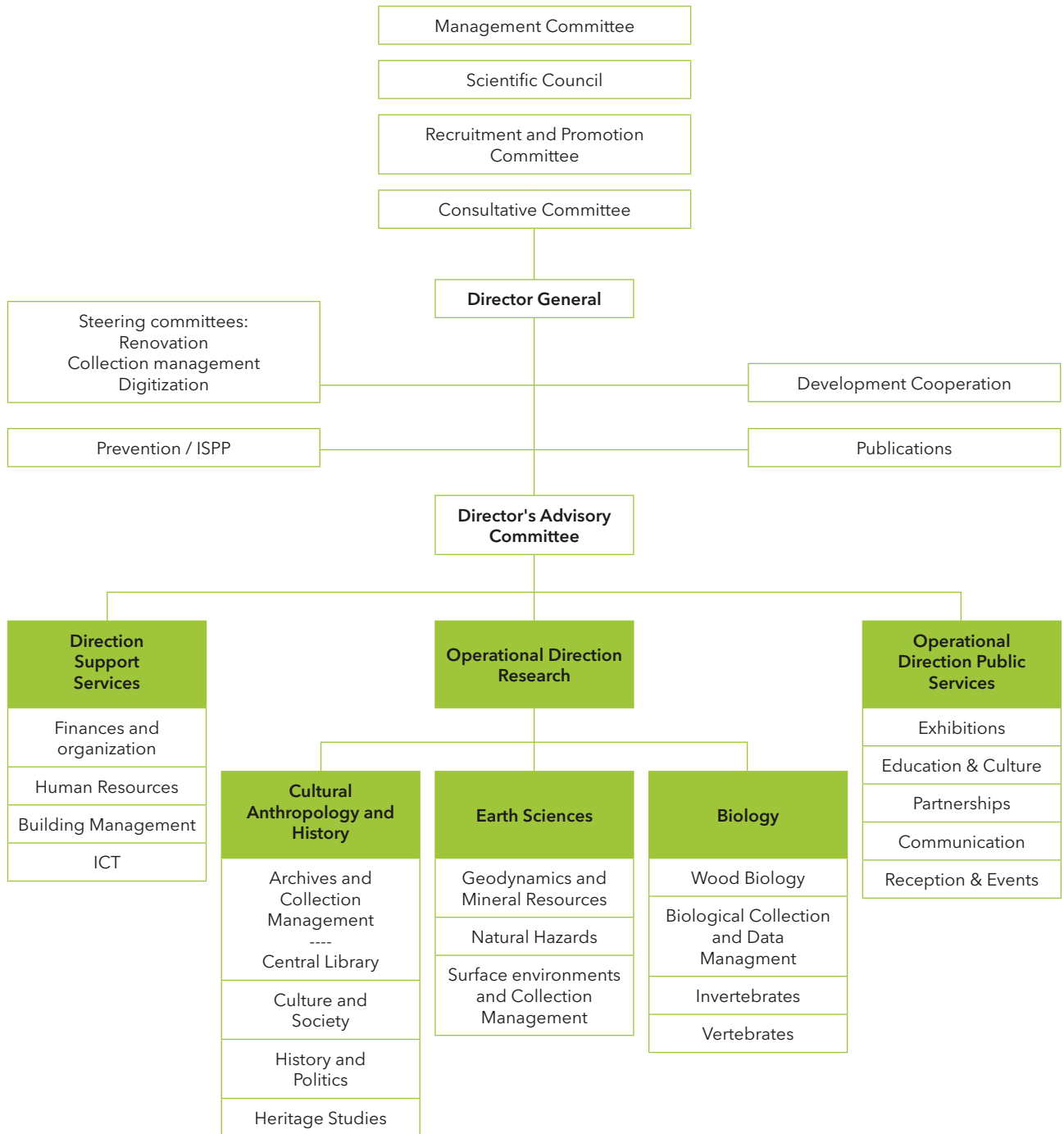
### Management representatives:

- Guido Gryseels, Director General, Chair (until 31/08/2022)
- Karel Velle, Director General a.i., RMCA, Chair (from 01/09/2022)
- Bruno Verbergt, Operational Director for Public-oriented Services (until February 2021)
- Els Cornelissen, Head of Service and Head of Department a.i.
- Marc De Meyer, Head of Service and Head of Department a.i.
- Isabelle Gérard, Head of Service
- François Kervyn de Meerendré, Head of Service and Head of Department a.i.
- Kristien Opstaele, Head of Service
- An Spegelaere, HR Head of Service
- Mario Thoilants, Prevention advisor
- Eric Van Herreweghe, Prevention advisor (until June 2021)
- Johan Van Impe, Prevention advisor RBINS/RMCA
- Dirk Verbist, Building Management Head of Service

### Union representatives:

- Thierry De Putter, Head of Service (ACOD/CGSP)
- Valérie Demeulemeester (ACOD/CGSP)
- Geert Dewulf (ACV/CSC) (until May 2021)
- Dr. Fabienne Nsanze, Empreva occupational physician
- Kai Saillart (ACV/CSC) (starting May 2021)
- Patricia Van Schuylenbergh (ACV/CSC)
- Jean-Christophe Vancoppenolle (ACV/CSC)
- Jimmy Verlez (VSOA/SLFP) (starting May 2021)

# Organization Chart



## COLOPHON

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