

ANNUAL REPORT 2024



AFRICA
museum

ANNUAL REPORT **2024**





Our partners

Angola-Instituto de Línguas Nacionais, Instituto Superior de Ciências da Educação-**Benin**-École du Patrimoine africain, International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, Université d'Abomey-Calavi-**Burkina Faso**-Université Joseph Ki-Zerbo-**Burundi**-Office Burundais pour la Protection de l'Environnement, Université du Burundi-**Cameroon**-Université de Douala, Université de Maroua, Université de Yaoundé I-**Central African Republic**-Centre Universitaire de Recherche et de Documentation en Histoire et Archéologie Centrafricaines, Université de Bangui-**Chad**-Centre National de Recherche pour le Développement, Institut de Recherche en Élevage pour le Développement, Universités de N'Djaména-**Democratic Republic of the Congo**-Académie des Beaux-Arts de Kinshasa, Centre de Recherche en Hydrobiologie, Centre de Recherche en Sciences Naturelles, Centre de Recherches Géologiques et Minières, Centre de Surveillance de la Biodiversité, Centre d'Information et de Recherche sur les Risques Naturels, École Régionale Postuniversitaire d'Aménagement et de Gestion Intégrés des Forêts et Territoires Tropicaux, Globe Business Consulting Sarl, Institut des Musées Nationaux du Congo, Institut Géographique du Congo, Institut National de Recherche Biomédicale, Institut Nationale pour l'Étude et la Recherche Agronomiques, Institut Supérieur Pédagogique de Bukavu, Institut Supérieur Pédagogique de la Gombe, Musée National de Lubumbashi, Office National du Tourisme, Protection Civile, Service Géologique National du Congo, Texaf Bilemba, Université Catholique de Bukavu, Université de Kinshasa, Université de Kisangani, Université de Lubumbashi, Université Officielle de Bukavu, Université Président Joseph Kasa-Vubu-**Equatorial Guinea**-National University of Equatorial Guinea-**Ethiopia**-Mekelle University-**Gabon**-Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique et Technologique, Musée National des Arts, Rites et Traditions du Gabon, Université Omar Bongo-**Ghana**-University of Ghana-**Ivory Coast**-Université Nangui Abrogoua-**Kenya**-International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology, Kenyatta University-**Lesotho**-National University of Lesotho-**Madagascar**-University of Antananarivo-**Mali**-Musée National du Mali-**Mayotte**-Oxydis-Expertises-**Morocco**-Université Mohammed V de Rabat-**Mozambique**-Eduardo Mondlane University-**Namibia**-University of Namibia-**Republic of the Congo**-Université de Marien Ngouabi-**Reunion Island**-Association pour la Recherche et la Conservation des Arthropodes et des Mollusques, Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement, Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle-**Rwanda**-Centre of Excellence in Biodiversity and Natural Resource Management, College of Science and Technology, Institut d'Enseignement Supérieur de Ruhengeri, Rwanda Cultural Heritage Academy, Rwanda Polytechnic, University of Rwanda-**Senegal**-Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noire, Institut Pasteur de Dakar, Musée des Civilisations Noires, Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar-**South Africa**-Agricultural Research Council, Citrus Research International, KwaZulu-Natal Museum, National Museum of Bloemfontein, South African Institute for Aquatic Biodiversity, Stellenbosch University, The Black Power Station, University of KwaZulu-Natal, University of Pretoria, University of the Free State, University of the Western Cape, University of the Witwatersrand, University of Venda-**Tanzania**-Mkwawa University College of Education, Sokoine University of Agriculture, University of Dar es Salaam-**The Comoros**-Centre National de Documentation et de Recherche Scientifique-**Tunisia**-Université de Gabès-**Uganda**-Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Mountains of the Moon University, National Fisheries Resources Research Institute, Nyege Nyege Festival, Uganda Museum, Vector Control Division-**Zimbabwe**-Bindura University of Science Education, University of Zimbabwe



Bart Ouvry, Director-General of the RMCA.

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

Bart Ouvry
Director-General
of the RMCA

Let me say how proud I am of our scientists who have shown resilience and an ability to innovate in an often difficult environment. SmartWoodID has developed a database of wood samples, opening the way for a collaborative effort in developing artificial intelligence models for wood recognition. This will strengthen the abilities of customs officers in fighting the illegal trade in exotic wood. BANTURIVERS has called on citizen science in identifying archeological material documenting Africa's long history, well before the colonial era. GEORES4DEV with their local partners has mapped the longest cave of Africa and is opening a reflection on the promotion of tourism. The RECORDED project takes a multidisciplinary approach, integrating ecology, epidemiology, climate science, modeling, and historical analysis to track changes in disease vectors, pathogens, and animal reservoirs.

These are just a few examples showing our commitment to open science, artificial intelligence, citizen science, promotion of local economic systems, and multidisciplinary approaches. This entails a major effort in terms of training with our African partners and our scientists but also a commitment by our ICT colleagues who participated in a number of international scientific projects, with for example a 5-day training course on databasing and inventory of anthropological and art collections at the Institut des Musées natio-

naux du Congo (IMNC) in Kinshasa for historians, curators, and IT managers.

The federal government has committed to the renewal of our five-year international cooperation cycle. This remains a fundamental pillar of our activities: as the report shows, we have scientific partnerships in at least 28 African countries. In 9 of them, these partnerships are supported by international cooperation funds allowing us to enhance our partner's capacities and agency as scientists.

An important structural change was the formal creation of the Collection Management department on the 1st of April 2024 with a goal of merging the many sub-collections into a unified and accessible single collection, to create unity in diversity by bridging the natural history, geological, and cultural collections and their care. It also seeks to improve digital and physical accessibility to promote more interdisciplinary research and coherence both internally and with collection users and stakeholders. These are steps which may not be obvious to our public, but which will dramatically improve accessibility of our collections and archives to a broad public in Europe, Africa and all over the globe.

The Public Outreach services presented a crucial exhibition with 'ReThinking Collections'. This was a moment of critical consideration of our own past and on the contested provenance of part of

|| ... responding to legitimate expectations in society and taking the lead in reinventing what a world museum should be. ||

our collections. Feedback from visitors shows that 3 out of 4 had a shift in opinion following their visit, demonstrating how the AfricaMuseum can have a significant impact and fully engages in its role as a forum where conflicting opinions can be expressed, to arrive at a better understanding of our past and present.

We all feel encouraged by the results of three different surveys¹ on our permanent exhibition, showing that visitors to the Museum give us a high score of 8.57 in 10. While 28% of the respondents still find the Museum a neo-colonial place, 41% judge the permanent exhibition to be decolonized. Let us be clear, building a more participative and inclusive museum is a long-term undertaking. Structural change of an institution takes time, because it is a matter inter alia of people's minds, of regulations, and of infrastructure. Our commitment to change is unwavering, and my still relatively short experience in the AfricaMuseum has shown me that our staff are perfectly willing and able to engage in the changes which society rightly expects from a 21st-century world museum with a focus on Africa. Over the coming years you will see gradual change, both responding to legitimate expectations in society and taking the lead in reinventing what a world museum should be.



Bart Ouvry and artist Steve Bandoma at the vernissage of the exhibition **ReThinking Collections**.

¹ Surveys conducted by the FSI Visitors Observatory (BELSPO) in 2024. Survey results are available on www.africamuseum.be



Field mission in Mayombe (Republic of the Congo) with RMCA researchers and partners.



'Dans la peau de Papa Wemba' summer concert.

01

MUSEUM LIFE

THE ACTIVITIES: AN OVERVIEW

In addition to the permanent exhibition on display in the historic main building, the AfricaMuseum also offers its stakeholders a wide range of activities: temporary exhibitions, workshops for families and school groups, group tours, scientific training courses for specialists, conferences, concerts, themed days, film screenings and more.

Here are some highlights from the AfricaMuseum's activities in 2024.

JANUARY

09-Jan

- * Visit by Peter Van Acker, Belgian Ambassador to Malaysia. Meetings regarding a potential collaboration between the AfricaMuseum and the Borneo Cultures Museum. in Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia.

14-Jan

- * Visit of H. E. Mr. Fu Cong (Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Head of Mission of the People's Republic of China to the European Union) and Minister Zhu Jing (former Chinese Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of the Congo) and a delegation.

18-Jan

- * Vernissage of *ReThinking Collections*, a temporary exhibition on provenance research, under the auspices of the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.



In the exhibition space for ReThinking Collections.

M.-P. Le Grelle © RMCA



- ★ Most of the collections in the AfricaMuseum were acquired during the colonial era, in what is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Provenance research and the related theme of restitution are increasingly the subject of current social and political debate. But how can we trace the origins of collections? What new insights does this knowledge provide? And what should become of these collections, within and beyond museum walls.



- ★ Curated by Sarah Van Beurden, Agnès Lacaille and Didier Gondola, the exhibition was inspired by their co-edited scholarly work *(RE)MAKING COLLECTIONS. Origins, Trajectories & Reconnections* published by the AfricaMuseum in October 2023.
- ★ A press conference was held at the museum earlier in the day.



How can we trace the origins of collections?
What new insights does this knowledge provide?
And what should become of these collections?



FEBRUARY

13-Feb

- * Visit by Surinamese ambassador to Belgium Gilbert Van Lierop, in preparation for the Ketu Koti event commemorating the abolition of slavery in June and the link with the African continent.

14-Feb

- * The Malawian traditional leader Theresa Kachindamoto was awarded a joint *honoris causa* doctorate by KU Leuven and UCLouvain in recognition of her work against child marriage and longtime advocacy for access to education for women and children. In addition to attending the ceremony, she also paid a visit to the museum.

24-Feb

- * With the concert-conference *Mutuashi Style Tenday*, Kasai-born Congolese singer-guitarist Monik Tenday and her band paid homage to the queen of *mutuashi* Tshala Muana, who brought the musical style and dance to a global audience.



28-Feb

- * As part of a bilingual exchange of expertise on institutional functioning in the fields of peace & security, organized by the Egmont Institute at the request of the FPS Foreign Affairs, the director receives 12 diplomats from 12 African Union member-state embassies in Brussels.

MARCH

09-Mar

- * Visit of a delegation from the Republic of the Congo with the aim of expanding the scope of cultural exchanges between the two countries. Presentation of the Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza Memorial, a museum and cultural centre built in the heart of Brazzaville, on the banks of the Congo River, and retracing the history of the friendship treaty of 10 September 1880 between the Franco-Italian explorer Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza and then King Makoko of the Kongo Kingdom.



10-Mar

- * The 'Huit Femmes' decolonial guided tour led by Bamko asbl featured the lives of eight African and European women who made history, on the occasion of International Women's Day.

13-Mar

- * The director discussed the AfricaMuseum strategic plan at a hearing organized by the Committee for Mobility, Public Enterprises and Federal Institutions of the Belgian Chamber of Representatives.



14-Mar

- ★ Visit by Barbara Trachte, Minister-President of the CoCoF and Secretary of State of the Brussels-Capital Region, responsible for Economic Transition and Scientific Research, accompanied by Calvin Soiresse, President of the Brussels French-speaking Parliament.

22-Mar

- ★ Nicole Matanga Sapato, Director of the Musée national de Lubumbashi, visited the museum and shared her experiences and reflections with colleagues.



27-Mar

- ★ An online MuseumTalk and book launch for 'The Empty Showcase Syndrome' by Dutch researcher Jos van Beurden was organized as part of the *ReThinking Collections* programme.



APRIL

21-Apr

- ★ For this year's edition of Erfgoeddag (Heritage Day), the AfricaMuseum invited families to join in a range of activities around the theme of 'home'. Throughout the day, young and old alike could discuss what home meant to them, and work together to create a 'dream city', among other activities. In the afternoon, AfricaMuseum musicians gave a concert that took the audience on a musical journey of hits from different parts of the continent that went all around the world. Erfgoeddag is an annual event held in Brussels and Flanders on the first Sunday after the spring holidays. Coordinated by FARO, the Flemish Interface for Cultural Heritage, it offers a rich and diverse selection of activities to the public.



24-26 Apr

- ★ From 24 to 26 April 2024, nearly a hundred participants including 18 representatives from the AfricaMuseum joined the workshop launching the AfricaMuseum's 2024-2029 cooperation programme with its partners in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The programme, funded by the Directorate-general for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid (DGD), seeks to establish lasting scientific partnerships between Congolese institutions and researchers and the AfricaMuseum. The event was a step towards a more participatory approach in our cooperation.



P. Malenga Mwanga © RMCA



P. Malenga Mwanga © RMCA



P. Malenga Mwanga © RMCA



P. Malenga Mwanga © RMCA



P. Malenga Mwanga © RMCA



P. Malenga Mwanga © RMCA



P. Malenga Mwanga © RMCA



P. Malenga Mwanga © RMCA



P. Malenga Mwanga © RMCA



P. Malenga Mwanga © RMCA

28-Apr

- * Choreographer and dancer Lydia Mboko presented the second phase of her project 'IMA-O', an opera in the making. The title means 'blessing-protection' among the Mbuzas of Equateur province (DR Congo). The performance took place in the museum's long gallery, next to the pirogue.



MAY

05-May

- * Musician Shak Shakito gave an acoustic concert at the museum during the spring break. Sung in Kitetela and Lingala, his songs mix traditional Congolese rhythms from Kasai and Equateur with rock, reggae and funk.

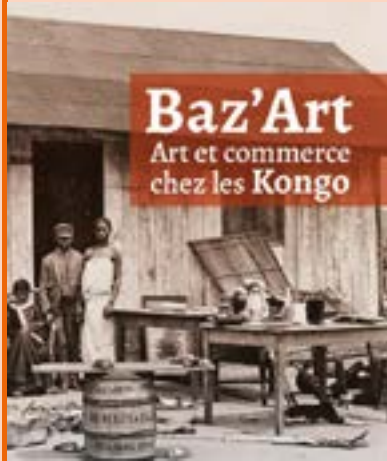


08-May

- * Research forum on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Angola. The forum aimed to provide a place for the exchange of knowledge and experiences between researchers on Angola and the DR Congo and establish a collaborative pool of researchers dedicated to both countries.

18-May

- ★ In partnership with the AfricaMuseum, the Musée du Nouveau Monde in La Rochelle (France) opened the temporary exhibition *Baz'Art ! Art et commerce chez les Kongo*. The exhibit, which ran until 18/11/2024, showed how people and objects from afar influenced daily life as well as the production of arts and crafts among the Kongo.



25-May

- ★ To commemorate the foundation of the Africa Union on 25 May 1963, an annual Africa Day celebrates African successes and diversity, shining a spotlight on the continent's cultural and economic potential. In 2024, the Antwerp-based non-profit Nana Benz held this day-long event at De Roma, with conversations, stories, food, and music featuring guest country Ghana and the great pan-Africanist and first president of independent Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah.



28-May

- ★ Mission in Belgium of a Congolese delegation of the director general of the Institut congolais de Conservation de la Nature and the director of external relations of the Parc national des Virunga, to consult historical archives of the park and the possible selection and digital reproduction of documents that may prove crucial in resolving cross-border conflicts.

30-May

- ★ AfricaMuseum, BELSPO, and the Royal Meteorological Institute held an inspiration and networking day for researchers, curators, public engagement officers and communicators who want to strengthen the link between science and local communities.



JUNE

10-Jun

- ★ Fundraising event for the association 'Les enfants de Panzi et d'ailleurs' with the participation of Dr. Denis Mukwege.



15-Jun

- ★ The Belgian premiere of *The Story of Ne Kuko*, a documentary film directed by Festus Toll, was held at the museum auditorium in collaboration with DOXY FIXY, as part of the *ReThinking Collections* programme. The screening was followed by a discussion on provenance research and restitution and a Q&A session with the audience.



15-Jun

- ★ Meeting with participants of the African Union Media Fellows Programme, one of the African Union's flagship programmes aimed at transforming African media by empowering journalists and content creators to challenge prevailing narratives about Africa.

22-Jun

- ★ Ketikoti ('broken chains') is increasingly celebrated by the Dutch on the 1st of July to commemorate the abolition of slavery in Suriname and the former Netherlands Antilles. In 2024, vzw Wimakandra organized the first Ketikoti day at the AfricaMuseum to strengthen the bond between the Dutch and Belgian Surinamese communities, with journalist and author Janice Deul as special guest. Food, talks, theatre performances and music made it a day to remember.



A. Maketa ©RMCA



A. Maketa ©RMCA

29-Jun

- ★ Part of Look@Matonge in the Brussels commune of Ixelles, 'Porte de Namur, Porte de l'Amour/ Matonge Eza Ya Biso' was a festive participatory tribute to the iconic neighbourhood painting by Congolese artist Cheri Samba, led by sapeurs and musicians orchestrated by Freddy Mutombo, and with the collaboration of the AfricaMuseum.

The Contrechamps Film Festival, Viva Matonge – also part of Look@Matonge – closed with a screening of the award-winning Mati Diop documentary *Dahomey*, which was followed by a panel discussion that included researchers from the AfricaMuseum.



JULY

01-Jul

- ★ For the 2024 edition of Schatten van Vlieg ('Fly's Treasures'), a yearly treasure hunt for kids organized by publiek vzw in cultural attractions in Brussels and Flanders, kids could find out about colourful Toby jugs, learn the names of some beans in Burundi, or go on a food trip in the busy streets of Kinshasa, as part of the theme 'Do you eat what I eat?' The free summer activity ran from 01/07 to 01/09.



03-Jul

- ★ Visit of Père Christophe Mogha, Rector of the Université de l'Uélé (UNIUELE).

21-Jul

- ★ In a summer concert, Chibida, Chabrown Lysha, Costa Pinto, Jordan, Toms Ntale, HBass, Merdie, Hewa Bora and Sandy Bakomi presented the musical project 'Dans la peau de Papa Wemba' in honour of the great Congolese singer, songwriter and actor whose career spanned nearly half a century. Although he was involved in the early days of soukous and explored rock, ndombolo and other world music styles, Papa Wemba was a pillar of Congolese rumba who helped propel it to the international scene.



AUGUST

25-Aug

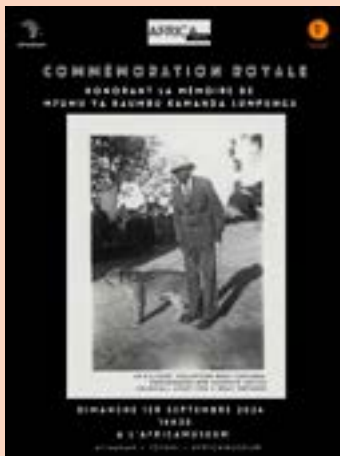


- * museumPASSmusées, the biggest museum subscription in the country, officially awarded a kid-friendly label to AfricaMuseum. This label is only given to museums that have family-oriented activities on permanent offer and also receive high marks for visitor satisfaction from children and families.

The blue label, an initiative of museumPASSmusées, Marmaille&Co, and Vlieg, says it all: approved by and for kids!

SEPTEMBER

01-Sep



- * An event in commemoration of Songye traditional chief Yakaumbu Kamanda Lumpungu, held exactly 88 years after his execution, was organized at the AfricaMuseum in partnership with aFreeKam asbl, as part of the *ReThinking Collections* programme.



A. Maketa ©RMCA

12-Sep



- * Developed during a S+T+ARTS4AFRICA residency, part of the EU-funded S+T+ARTS (Science + Technology + Arts) programme, *NDEUP: Les passeurs de l'invisible* by the Dakar-based connective Kenu Lab'oratoire was performed in the De Kroon community center in Brussels.

12-Sep

- ★ Scivil organized the 2024 Citizen Science Inspiration and Networking Day in collaboration with FARO, Histories, and the AfricaMuseum. This edition put a spotlight on the heritage sector. The role of artistic co-creation in resonating the museum's xylophone collection, collecting food stories with African diasporas, and the experience of citizen scientists were among the featured topics.



E. Divinagràcia ©RMCA



E. Divinagràcia ©RMCA



E. Divinagràcia ©RMCA



E. Divinagràcia ©RMCA



E. Divinagràcia ©RMCA



E. Divinagràcia ©RMCA

21-Sep

- * *Kimpa Vita & ses héritières* was a unique event organized in Charleroi by I SEE YOU, Belgian Entrepreneurs and aFreeKam, with the museum as one of several partners, as part of an international project around the prophetess and anticolonial resistance figure.

23-Sep

- * Meeting between the Director and traditional chief Shimunakanga K.M., of Gungu territory in Kwilu province, DRC.

OCTOBER

04-Oct

- * An audiovisual backdrop to *Les Rumba Divas, ma mère et moi* by Monique Mbeka Phoba, featuring Nyha Ewale and Trezor Lokwa, brought the immortal songs of these great female singers to life in a show exploring their legacy in Congolese rumba.



08-Oct

- * Visit of a delegation from the Embassy of the Republic of Burundi in Brussels composed of Mr Alain Ndikumana, ambassador-at-large Princess Kamatari and Mme. Espérance Uwimana.

11-Oct

- * The director joined a panel discussion reflecting on cultural heritage at the Jubilee Symposium co-organized by KU Leuven and UCLouvain as part of the celebration of Lovanium's 70th anniversary. Founded by KU Leuven in 1954, Lovanium was the first university in DR Congo and is the precursor of the University of Kinshasa (UNIKIN) and the Catholic University of Congo (UCC).

12-Oct

- * In the framework of *ReThinking Collections*, AfricaMuseum, in partnership with the TV programme Vranckx & de Nomaden (VRT Canvas), held the premiere of the documentary film *Kakungu*, directed by Don Moussa Pandzou, Job van Nieuwenhove, and Adriaan De Loore. The screening was followed by a discussion on how Belgium and Congo approach the colonial past.



26-Oct

- * The inspiring lives of Congolese women in Belgium, and the challenges faced by the younger generations that followed, were the focus of 'Le rôle des mères dans la réussite de leurs filles: Études et transmission', held at the Centre Culturel Congolais in Brussels.



NOVEMBER

05-Nov

- * Meeting with Dr. Katrin Vohland, Director-General of the Natural History Museum Vienna, and her colleagues for a mutual exchange on museum practices and decolonisation with the AfricaMuseum director-general and staff members.

12-Nov

- * An online MuseumTalk was programmed in commemoration of the 130th anniversary of the 1894 World Exhibition in Antwerp, during which 144 Congolese people were put on public display at a 'Congolese village' on the KMSKA museum square. Seven of them died.

DECEMBER

01-Dec

- * Nearly a year after it opened to the public, the *ReThinking Collections* exhibition drew to a close. Over its run, it shone a new light on the collections and on provenance research not just through its displays, but also through discussions, film screenings, and other special events. Initially scheduled to end on 29 September, the exhibition was extended for another two months. *ReThinking Collections* received thousands of visitors and wide national and international media coverage.



M.-P. Le Grelle © RMCA



M.-P. Le Grelle © RMCA

04-Dec

- ★ Meeting with the heads of the German political foundations in Brussels (CDU, CSU, SPD, FDP, and Grüne/Bündnis90) and German Ambassador Martin Kotthaus. Topics discussed were Belgium's historical reappraisal of its colonial past, and insights into restitution issues and challenges through a dialogue on an equal footing with African States.

07-Dec

- ★ To mark the close of the second year of the Congo-lines project's investigation, the Royal Library of Belgium (KBR) organized a second public meeting with the project's researchers, coordinated by the Royal Museum for Central Africa, in partnership with KBR, UNIKIN (Kinshasa, DRC), and Ghent University.



Watercolour on paper. Albert Lubaki. Bas-Congo. ca. 1930. HO.0.1.519. Collection RMCA Tervuren

14-15 Dec

- ★ For the third anniversary of Congolese rumba's addition to the UNESCO list of Intangible Cultural Heritage, the AfricaMuseum and cultural entrepreneur Klay Mahungu organized 'Super Rumba!', a two-day celebration of the genre, featuring artist and composer Pépé Felly Manuaku.



16-Dec

- * Signature of a protocol for the collaboration agreement between the Service Géologique National du Congo (SGN-C) and the AfricaMuseum and Belgian State Archives, for optimizing the use and access to geological archives.

21-Dec

- * For the holidays, a special 'Winter Bingo!' activity was designed especially for kids. Together with friends and family, they could go in search of nine fun, interesting and special objects in the AfricaMuseum galleries.



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 recognized 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 emphasizes the exchange of knowledge with its African partners, as well as capacity- and institutionbuilding of our African count. 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 >>



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 colonial past, 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 enhancing the favorable 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 2024 is highlighted.

SmartWoodID: A database for AI-based wood identification

Over a quarter of all tropical roundwood and sawn wood that enters the European Union is imported via Belgium, mainly through the port of Antwerp. But about a third of the global timber trade is conducted illegally, and that figure is as high as 90% for tropical wood products. While wood is a renewable, climate-friendly and versatile product, strict regulations are needed to ensure that wood production remains sustainable without future deforestation.

The SmartWoodID database of Congolese tree species was completed in 2024. It is a key part of an ongoing research project focused on improving wood identification, an indispensable part of determining the origin of wood and wood products. All wood specimens were digitized by scanning the polished endgrain surfaces. All features, observable with the naked eye or a hand lens, were described according to the international standards in wood anatomy, making the database a valuable tool for identifying tree species based on accessible diagnostic information, assessed through a rapid and scalable methodology. In creating the database, researchers found that Computer Vision (a subfield of AI involving image data for pattern recognition) offers the most promising pathway for extracting diagnostic features to discern look-a-like timbers, using areas of less than 5 x 5 mm. Convolutional Neural networks in particular demonstrate the highest proficiency in authenticating wood with the finest taxonomic specificity, regardless of frequently encountered anomalies in the field like cracks due to drying, fungi deterioration, or insect-related damage. The database is now available for collaborative use with other research institutes through the RMCA and Ghent University.

In addition to working with colleagues at the INERA Yangambi Research Centre (DR Congo) and the University of São Paulo (Brazil) in developing AI models for automatic wood recognition, the RMCA also engaged the public through citizen science initiatives. Using fast and user-friendly tools, volunteer citizen scientists helped digitize over 1,900 images of Congolese tree species, including 324 tree species not previously available in public records.

SmartWoodID is funded by a Brain 2.0 grant from the Belgian Federal Science Policy Office for 2021-2025.

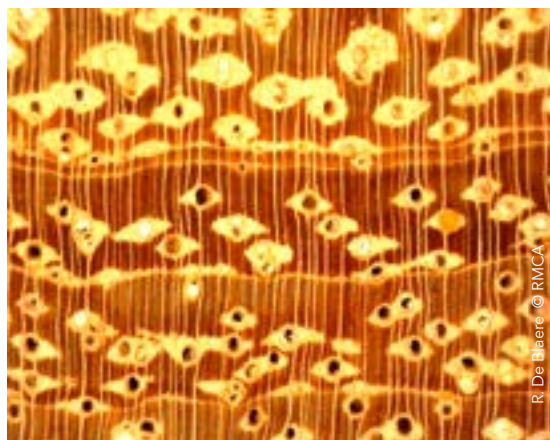


Image of the macroscopic end grain anatomy of a polished wood sample, 0.5 x 0.7 mm viewed using a hand lens (zoom x 55). This is a sample (Tw62) of African Afzelia wood, an internationally protected species (CITES Annex II), from the Tervuren wood collection.



Researchers from the Wood Biology service demonstrate the use of a handheld microscope to capture macroscopic end grain wood anatomy.

BANTURIVERS: At a crossroads of Bantu Expansions

The phenomenon known as Bantu Expansion is a key topic in the history of Central Africa, originally studied through historical linguistics but now approached from multiple disciplines, including archaeology and genetics.

While earlier research focused on the early movements of Bantu-speaking farmers who sought new lands while avoiding rainforests, the BANTURIVERS project takes a different approach. It investigates later Bantu expansions within the eastern part of the Congo Basin, particularly the Congo river and its tributaries. This region is home to diverse language groups, complex ethnic identities, and various subsistence strategies, as rivers provide transportation routes and are an abundant source of food.

The project combines linguistic, anthropological, and archaeological methods to explore past and present riverside communities. Linguists examine historical connections between speech groups through language classification and the study of specialized vocabulary related to river-related techniques, tools and knowledge. Anthropologists conduct fieldwork on trade networks, social life, and environmental knowledge, while archaeologists study contemporary pottery traditions, mobility patterns, and material culture, and compare these with oral histories and the archaeological record. Excavations and surveys help establish a chronology for human occupation in the region.

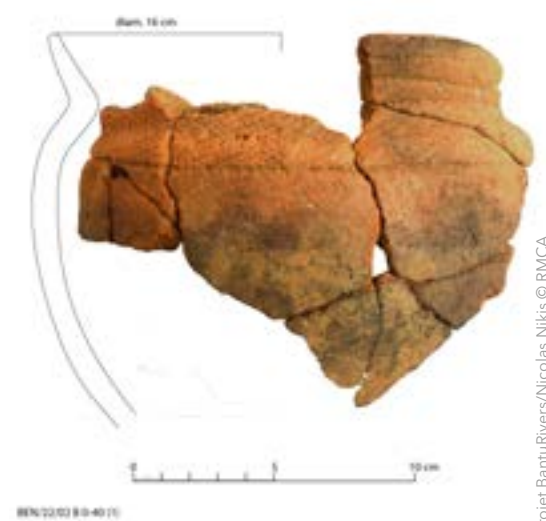
Museum researchers went on a 2024 field mission in the Basoko region (Tshopo province) to build on research from the two previous years in Isangi and Ubundu region (Tshopo province). With the support of citizen scientists, they are also analyzing material from the missions to better understand two key historical periods: the early centuries CE, when 'pioneer' pottery-making communities settled along the Congo river and its tributaries, and the first half of the second millennium CE, which saw the appearance of new ceramic techniques linked to the Sahel. This unexpected connection suggests previously unknown, yet very important, cultural interactions.

Current work also focuses on identifying variations in ceramic traditions, through time and space, which may reflect distinct cultural identities. These findings challenge traditional views and highlight the complexity of Central Africa's history, revealing long-standing networks of exchange and innovation.

BANTURIVERS was funded through an European Research Council Starting Grant (804261), granted to Birgit Ricquier (ULB) for the 2019-2024 period. The project was coordinated by ULB, in close collaboration with the RMCA and Université de Kisangani.



Arrowhead found at a dig in Bamanga in 2022, Ubundu region, Tshopo province (DRC).



Ancient ceramic style (ca. 0-100 CE), Bakebena, Ubundu region, Tshopo province, DRC.

Sustainable management of Central African mineral resources

Geology in Central Africa has revealed the presence of a wide variety of mineral deposits, some of which are crucial to the energy transition. Yet, the use of these essential resources has not sufficiently contributed to the region's development. The GeoRes4Dev project aims to improve expertise and academic research on the geodynamic setting of mineral resources and their environmental and societal impacts on Central Africa. To do so, it engages in capacity-building activities and knowledge transfer, working to improve expertise as well as academic and technical research relating to mineral georesources.

The project has now entered its second phase. During 2024, two scholarship holders from the first phase obtained their PhD, while nine new fellowships were awarded for post-doctorates, five for doctorates and three for DEAs. Investments have been made to strengthen the analytical capabilities of three geological laboratories for the benefit of local scientists. In autumn 2024, three of the new fellowships will have already been able to spend a first period in Belgium to complete their studies on mineralised zones using new analysis techniques.

At the same time, the research team working on the karstic region of Kongo Central (DRC) and the Republic of Congo has mapped the longest cave of Central Africa. They are studying the caves in order to understand the processes behind their formation and to reconstruct the paleoclimate of the region. An exhibition on the karstic zone of Central Kongo is currently

being prepared, which should help to raise awareness of this little-known natural resource among the local population.



<https://www.georessourcesdurables.org/>

Funded by the Belgian Development Cooperation for the period 2024-2029, GeoRes4Dev is a project involving the AfricaMuseum and the University of Kinshasa, the DRC's Centre de Recherches Géologiques et Minières (CRGM), the University of Marien Ngouabi, the University of Burundi, the Official University of Bukavu, and the University of Lubumbashi.



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



PhD defense of Hardy Nkodia, Université Marien Ngouabi, Republic of the Congo.

Towards ecosystem-based fisheries management in the Lake Edward system

In many parts of Africa, inland water systems face serious threats, especially from overfishing. But fish are a crucial source of food and income for many people, leading to a 'quiet crisis' – one that remains largely unnoticed because it happens under-water and is not well-documented.

A recent PhD study focused on assessing the status of fish stocks in lakes Edward, George, and the Kazinga Channel, which support thousands of fishers in Uganda and the DR Congo. The study found that a lack of reliable data limits proper fisheries management, to counteract overexploitation. Unlike well-studied marine fisheries, African inland fisheries suffer from major data gaps, making it difficult to determine the health of fish stocks.

To address this, researchers applied new methods developed for fisheries with limited data. A review of existing data found that while some information was available, crucial gaps remained, particularly in fish population levels, growth patterns, and fishing impacts. A lack of fisheries management reference points (FMRP) made it especially challenging to assess fish stock status.

Another study estimated key biological data for 16 fish stocks in the Ugandan part of Lake Edward and Lake George and found signs of overfishing. Analysis of 11 stocks of five exploited species in Uganda revealed poor conditions, with stocks classified as collapsed, struggling to replenish, or overfished. Additional assessments in nearby lakes showed similar worrying trends. To better understand these ecosystems, scientists developed models that highlighted a need for an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management. They also emphasized the importance of reducing pollution and enforcing sustainable fishing practices.

One major challenge remains the lack of data from the DR Congo side of Lake Edward, where persistent insecurity hinders research. The study calls for better monitoring, stricter enforcement against illegal fishing, seasonal closures, and alternative livelihoods to ease fishing pressure. The new methods applied, and these findings, provide a foundation for improving African inland fisheries management on a larger scale. These studies were undertaken as part of PhD research by Laban Musinguzi under the FishBase for Africa project.



Fishers at a landing site on Lake Edward in Uganda.

Newly minted PhDs in natural hazard risk assessment in Central Africa

A large part of the research activities carried out by the Natural Hazards service is done through PhD research work. 2024 was a key year which saw the completion of seven PhDs co-supervised by the service, with co-supervisors from VUB, UNamur, KU Leuven, ULiège, UCLouvain and ECGS-Luxembourg.

- John Sekajugo defended his PhD in January 2024. Funded by the VUB-VLIR project D-SiRE (<https://www.vliruos.be/en/projects/project/22?pid=4116>), his work aimed at quantifying the vulnerability and risk associated with geo-hydrological hazards in SW Uganda; citizen sciences being at the core of his research methodology.

Three doctorates were also successfully completed with the support of the HARISSA project (<https://georiska.africamuseum.be/en/activities/harissa>):

- In March 2024, Jean Nsabimana presented his research entitled 'De la vulnérabilité des infrastructures essentielles à la vulnérabilité territoriale face aux aléas géo-hydrologiques en milieu tropical : le cas de la ville de Bujumbura (Burundi)', a study of geo-hydrological hazards in a tropical context.
- The research of Josué Subira investigated the seismicity of the Virunga Volcanic Province and Kivu Rift in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He completed his research in September 2024.
- In October, Mercy Gloria Ashepet defended her research entitled 'Citizen science in the global south: motivational frameworks and policymaker perspectives. Case study on citizen science for natural hazard management and vector-borne disease reduction in Uganda.' Her work was carried out under both the HARISSA and ATRAP projects.

The ARES PREMITURG project saw the awarding of doctorates to two researchers last year (https://georiska.africamuseum.be/en/activities/other_current_projects):

- Investigating the effectiveness of measures aiming to stabilize urban gullies in cities in the DR Congo was the thesis topic of Eric Lutete Landu. He obtained his PhD in October 2024
- Guy Ilombe Mawe looked at the susceptibility, expansion rates and impacts of urban gullies in the DR Congo. He also defended his research in October of last year.

Finally, the GEOTROP project funded by BELSPO allowed the completion of one doctorate in 2024.

- Axel Deijns used satellite remote sensing to study the compounding nature of landslides and flash floods in tropical East Africa. He obtained his PhD in December. (<https://georiska.africamuseum.be/en/activities/geotrop>)



The 5 PhD students working on the HARISSA project supported by the DGD framework programme.

Vyakulani: Celebrating and elevating African cuisine in Belgium

What do you eat? How do you prepare it? Who taught you how to cook these recipes? Where is your food from? What traditions do you observe around your meals?

Vyakulani, Swahili for 'in the foods' or 'which foods', is a project that explores the complex foodways and heritage of African diasporas in Europe, which are relatively unknown to a wider public despite the enormous potential of African food systems. While interest in plant-based diets is rising, African foods remain underrepresented in European markets despite historical connections between the two continents. Yet African diaspora communities want to cook traditional dishes using indigenous ingredients, and food is a strong marker of cultural identity. Preserving these recipes and sharing their benefits with wider society requires further study.

Western lifestyle influences and Eurocentric biases that reinforce outdated (neo-colonial) notions contribute to the limited acceptance of African foods. Furthermore, the role of African agrifood entrepreneurship in biodiversity conservation is quite underappreciated.

Vyakulani aims to highlight the significance of African food systems, encourage Africans in Europe to reclaim their culinary heritage, and promote the consumption of healthy African foods to the broader public. Citizen scientists from the African diaspora in Belgium have been actively involved from the start, designing research questions and organizing activities in the effort to document their foodways, reconnect with their heritage, affirm their cultural identities, and transmit their knowledge across generations through a three-step process: reflect, collect, and celebrate.

Over the past year, key achievements included training citizen scientists, data collection, and preliminary data analysis. *Vyakulani* is funded by the European Union Impetus Accelerator programme.



Citizen scientists brainstorming on the challenges of preserving African foodways in diaspora during a research design session of the Vyakulani project.

Using museum collections and colonial archives to trace disease patterns

Over the past century, human activities have significantly altered natural habitats, particularly in Africa, affecting the spread and dynamics of infectious diseases. Factors such as human population growth and environmental changes, including health care interventions, have strongly influenced infectious disease patterns. Understanding these influences can show us how diseases might spread under future environmental changes and human activity.

To explore these relationships, researchers are now analyzing dusty museum collections and colonial archives, medical records, and aerial photographs. Despite their unique value, such historical resources remain underused in epidemiological research. The RECORDED project takes a multidisciplinary approach, integrating ecology, epidemiology, climate science, modeling, and historical analysis to track changes in disease vectors, pathogens, and animal reservoirs.

As a starting point, the project focuses on three vector-borne diseases that are strongly influenced by environmental changes and human activity, and which also fall within the expertise or historical documentation of the institutes involved: schistosomiasis, malaria, and sleeping sickness.

The first research findings were published in 2024. The publication demonstrated that a century's worth of medical and climate records stored in Belgian archives reveal earlier onset of the malaria season in southern Congo due to global warming. In areas with seasonal malaria, warmer temperatures now arrive earlier and last longer – a boon for the mosquito-borne parasite that thrives best at a temperature range of 20-25°C.

RECORDED is a FEDtWIN project funded by the Belgian Science Policy Office.



Relais à établir au 4 novembre, dont 3 à établir au Service Météorologique à Léopoldville

Observations climatologiques effectuées à 5 h. (temps civil)

DATE	Précipitations (mm)			Température (°C)		Humidité (g/m³)		Vitesse du vent (km/h)		Direction du vent		Pression (mm Hg)	État du ciel	Visibilité (km)	Remarques
	Max	Min	Moy	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min				
1															
2															
3															
4															
5															
6															
7															
8															
9															
10															
11															
12															
13															
14															
15															
16															
17															
18															
19															
20															

Climate records from the colonial period hold a trove of information about historical disease patterns.

Colonial graverobbing: scientific racism in Belgian Congo and its aftermath

This research project explores the history and lasting impact of colonial-era graverobbing activities in the then Belgian Congo, in Kwango and Kwilu provinces. In the late 1940s, influenced by 'scientific' racial theories from physical anthropology, a territorial administrator named Van de Ginste ordered the excavation of numerous graves in Feshi and surrounding areas and sent 189 skulls for research to the Museum of Tervuren in 1947. Belgian and Congolese discussions on decolonization have brought renewed attention to the history of this traumatic event. Rather than merely facilitating a unilateral pathway of repatriation of these human remains, the project takes a different approach by seeking to understand how communities impacted by these excavations remember and interpret the event today. It also undertakes critical ethnographic research to examine how the erasure of colonial histories continues to shape present-day inequalities on the (inter) national level.

It highlights the ethical and political challenges in contemporary decolonization and repatriation debates by amplifying the voices of the source communities. The aim is to foster more inclusive and equitable collaborations between researchers, institutions, and affected groups. Ultimately, it seeks to move beyond traditional European-centered debates and create space for genuine dialogue and shared decision-making, for a more just and balanced approach to addressing colonial legacies.

The project is funded by a grant from the Fonds Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek- Vlaanderen



1938 passport photo of territorial administrator Ferdinand Van de Ginste, from the personal archives of the family.



Former colonial-era clerk Bruno Kembo Kombo, who turned 104 in 2022.

ICT

The contribution of the AfricaMuseum ICT service is crucial to the institution's operations. Not only does it maintain and manage the AfricaMuseum's technological systems and resources – including hardware, software, networks, and data – and ensure that they function together effectively; it also provides support to the many scientific projects led by AfricaMuseum researchers in the form of training courses, software development, website creation, virtual museum tours, and digitization, among others.

In 2024, the ICT service participated in a number of scientific projects, including PROCHE, for which it conducted a 5-day training course on databasing and inventory of anthropological and art collections at the Institut des Musées nationaux du Congo (IMNC) and the Musée national de la RD Congo (MNRDC) in Kinshasa for historians, curators, and IT managers. It also reworked the Gazelle/OKAPI databases and search engines to make them more powerful. For the BELSPO-funded CANAHIST project, the service participated in a mission at the University of Huye (Rwanda) at the Center of Excellence for Biodiversity and also developed and installed tools at various partner institutions. Tools, webservice and technical guidance was provided to the European consortium CETAF/DISCO.

ICT also contributed to technical analyses, module and tool development, website development and updates, or maintenance of the IT resources for the ATRAP, Darwin, MBISA II, FAUNAFRI, ReSoXy, AFRISURGE, GeoRiskA, Congo Basin Carbon, Fruitflies, GeoRes4Dev, Colonial Sources, and Koha Library projects.



Training course conducted by an AfricaMuseum ICT expert for the PROCHE project.



Mirror sites for the GeoRes4Dev project can be hosted at the CRGM thanks to equipment installed by the ICT service.

Launch of the 2024-2029 cooperation programme with partners in DR Congo

From 24 to 26 April 2024, a workshop was held to launch the AfricaMuseum's 2024-2029 cooperation programme with its partners in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This programme, funded by the Directorate-general for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid (DGD), seeks to establish lasting scientific partnerships between Congolese institutions and researchers and the AfricaMuseum. The event aimed to foster exchanges between project teams, as well as with stakeholders from official partners and civil society. Having a forum for discussion increased mutual understanding of needs and anticipated changes between programme partners and stakeholders in the DRC.

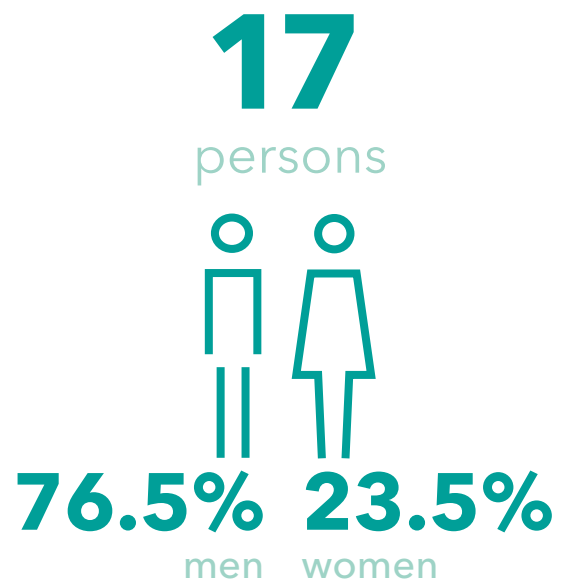
The main themes were climate change, biodiversity, disaster risk reduction, and raising public awareness to reinforce and disseminate new knowledge. Panel discussions on South-South networking, institutional capacity-building, citizen science, and the role of societal actors in the programme and on cultural and museum cooperation, provided the opportunity for lively debate.

The main scientific partner institutions of the 2024-2029 multi-year programme are:

- Académie des Beaux-Arts de Kinshasa
- Centre de Recherche en Sciences Naturelles, Lwiro
- Centre de Recherches Géologiques et Minières
- Centre de Surveillance de la Biodiversité
- École Régionale Postuniversitaire d'Aménagement et de Gestion intégrés des Forêts et Territoires tropicaux
- Institut des Musées Nationaux du Congo
- Institut Géographique du Congo
- Institut National de Recherche Biomédicale
- Institut Supérieur Pédagogique de Bukavu
- Institut Supérieur Pédagogique de Goma
- Institut National pour l'Etude et la Recherche Agronomiques
- Musée Géologique de Bukavu
- Protection Civile
- Texaf Bilembo
- Université de Goma
- Université de Kinshasa
- Université de Kisangani
- Université de Lubumbashi
- Université Officielle de Bukavu
- Université Président Kasa-Vubu

Other key stakeholders include WWF, TropenBos, Musées Sud, the EU, CIFOR, Louvain Cooperation, and Colruyt. Representatives of DGD as well as the Belgian embassy in Kinshasa also took part in the event. In all, about a hundred participants, including 18 AfricaMuseum staffers, contributed to lively discussions that were fostered by the workshop's atmosphere of collegiality and solidarity. The launch was widely covered by print media and national television.

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



From **5**
African
countries,
59% from
the DRC

In 2024, AfricaMuseum released new volumes in its ongoing print and open-access series. It also continued to offer print-on-demand services to customers wishing to obtain hard copies of digital publications until September, when the leasing agreement for the digital printing presses ended. The institution is currently analysing the feasibility of purchasing a machine that can provide the same services.

While museum publications can be purchased directly from the Publications service, their main sales channels are commercial distributors in Belgium and abroad. The museum's AfricaShop offers these books to visitors in Tervuren as well.



The head of the Publication and Language services served as a panelist at the EOSC (European Open Science Cloud) National Tripartite Event. This encounter on European, national, and regional policies on open science was held in April 2024 at the Palais des Académies during the Belgian presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The service also pursues its capacity-building initiatives aimed primarily at early-career researchers from Africa, to assist them in preparing and submitting their publications: RMCA trainees in Belgium or students, PhD candidates, or early-career teachers in Kinshasa. In addition, internal presentations are offered to colleagues, mainly on Open Access to publications.

Finally, RMCA is involved in FedOSC, a federal initiative to promote Open Science and FAIR data practices within the Belgian federal scientific community. Launched on 1 April 2024, the FedOSC project aims to transform the landscape of scientific research at the federal level and align Belgian federal research infrastructure with the broader European Open Science ecosystem. Readiness for future EOSC integration will enable seamless data exchange and collaboration with European partners.



https://www.belspo.be/belspo/coordination/resDev_open-Science_en.stm

Results for two scientific journals

Africana Linguistica's impact factor 2023 (published June 2024) is 0.2. While this IF is



slightly lower compared to the previous year, the 5-year impact factor went from 0.2 to 0.4, demonstrating that the length of time has a far greater weight for the human sciences compared with other disciplines.

European Journal of Taxonomy's impact factor 2023 (published June 2024) is 1.10 (1.2 last year). For comparison its direct competitor, *Zootaxa*, has an IF of 0.8. Both are a little bit lower, but the *EJT* Scopus ClteScore is 2.3 (2.1 last year). In 2024, the total number of published pages was 7,976 and there were 58 published volumes (representing 174 papers), thanks to the work of the Scientific Board (including 3 topical editors from RMCA) and the production team (composed of 10 desk editors from 7 European countries, and managed by the head of the RMCA Publications service).

Four papers were written by RMCA researchers (see the list below). Out of 221 authors published in *EJT*, 7 were African.



Several *EJT* desk editors joined a technical workshop in RMCA Tervuren on the implementation of a new XML workflow.

Consultations of the AfricaMuseum institutional repository

To meet requirements for green open access, RMCA has its own repository to archive the publications of its scientists. In 2024, the platform received 69 one-to-one requests for a full text: 37 in Social Sciences, 18 in Biology, 10 in Geology, and 4 from other services.

The museum's reference data are migrated twice a year to the ORFEO repository of the Belgian Science Policy Office. Belnet reports that the most consulted references are those of the RMCA.



<https://orfeo.belnet.be/handle/internal/10>



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

Monographies des Provinces de la RDC

The last – but certainly not the least – of the 'Monographies des provinces de la République démocratique du Congo' was released in December 2024 as an online publication available on the AfricaMuseum website. Covering more than 1200 pages in two volumes, *Sud-Kivu* is the 16th of a series that sought to cover all 26 Congolese provinces when the vast undertaking



was initiated in 2008 with funding from Belgian Development Cooperation and in collaboration with several Congolese institutions: the Centre d'Études politiques (CEP) and Centre de

recherches géologiques et minières (CRGM) in Kinshasa, and the Centre d'études et de recherches documentaires sur l'Afrique centrale (CERDAC) in Lubumbashi. The first monograph, on *Maniema*, was released in 2011 under the supervision of project promoter Jean Omasombo Tshonda. With his retirement and the end of the framework agreement project, the series comes to a close.

Print versions of all the published volumes were distributed for free in DR Congo, mainly in the provinces in question. They are also freely available on the AfricaMuseum website. The 2024 figures for the consultation of the digital versions are given below:



Users from the DRC made up the largest block (55.33%), and the most downloaded monograph was volume 5, *Kasai-Oriental*, with 8,589 downloads.



<https://www.africamuseum.be/en/research/discover/publications/open-access/monographies-rdc>

Participation in Réseau Médec

The Publication and Language services head was elected to a four-year term as a member of the steering committee of the Réseau Médec, a French-language network of public scientific publishing professionals. The assigned role within the committee is to implement an expansion strategy to recruit new members from unrepresented French-speaking regions and increase the number of participants per country. Potential new members will also be offered advantageous collaborations that take into account disparities in resources and operations.

 <https://medici.cnrs.fr/reseau/>



The Publications service is also a member of the Motovum International Group of Publishers and the CETAF E.publishing Working Group.

 <https://cetaf.org/>



I. Gerard © RMCA

In the month of June, Réseau Médec organizes an annual gathering of some 200 members. The 2024 edition was held in Lyon.



P. Mergen © RMCA

Achievements of the E.publishing WG are presented at the CETAF General Assembly in Oslo (May 2024) by WG co-head I. Gerard.

LIST OF RMCA PUBLICATIONS 2024*

Social Sciences and Humanities



Trefon, Th. Nyama : *la crise de la viande de brousse*. Series 'Cahiers africains', no. 102. Paris/Tervuren: L'Harmattan/RMCA, 165 p. (PR)



Bashizi, A., Jamar, A., Samnick, D.A. & Cituli Alinirhu, V. (eds). *Conjonctures de l'Afrique centrale 2024*. Series 'Cahiers Africains', no. 103. Paris/Tervuren/Antwerpen: L'Harmattan/RMCA/CRE-AC, 334 p. (PR)



Omasombo Tshonda, J. (ed.), *Sud-Kivu. Enjeux de territoire*. Series 'Monographies des Provinces de la République démocratique du Congo', no. 16. Tervuren : RMCA, 2 parts.

Various



Jaarverslag/Rapport annuel/Annual Report 2023, 68 p.

Co-publications



Goddeeris, I., Laura, A. & Vanthemsche, G. (eds). 2024. *Colonial Congo. A history in questions*. Preface B. Ouvry, texts by **J. Omasombo Tshonda & M. Zana Etambala**. Turnhout: Brepols, partnership RMCA, 379 p.

Online publications



Van Beurden, S., Gondola, D. & Lacaille, A. (eds). 2024. *(Re)Making Collections: Origins, Trajectories & Reconnections*. Series 'Studies in Social Sciences and Humanities', no. 182. Tervuren: RMCA, 273 p. (PR)



Van Beurden, S., Gondola, D. & Lacaille, A. (eds). 2024. *La Fabrique des collections : Origines, trajectoires & reconnections*. Series 'Studies in Social Sciences and Humanities', no. 183. Tervuren: RMCA, 278 p. (PR)

Open Access



Devos, M. & Maniacky, J. (eds) *Africana Linguistica*, vol. XXX, 208 p. (IF 0.2)



European Journal of Taxonomy (published by a European consortium including the RMCA), vol. 917 to 975 (IF 1.20). Four paper by RMCA authors: **De Meyer, M.**, Goergen, G., Midgley, J. & **Jordaens, K.** 'On the identity of the Afrotropical species of *Mallota* Meigen (Diptera: Syrphidae)'. *European Journal of Taxonomy* 958 (1): 242-290. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5852/ejt.2024.958.2675>

Sherwood, D. **Henrard, A.**, Peters, M., Price, B.W., Hall, A.C., White, O.W., Grignet, V. & Wilkins, V. 'Two new sympatric species of the pirate spider genus *Ero* C.L. Koch, 1836 from the cloud forest of Saint Helena Island, South Atlantic Ocean (Araneae: Mimetidae)'. *European Journal of Taxonomy* 921: 76-97. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5852/ejt.2024.921.2417>

Henrard, A., Griswold, C. & **Jocqué, R.** 'On new genera and species of crack-leg spiders (Araneae, Udobidae) from Madagascar'. *European Journal of Taxonomy* 966 (1): 1-80. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5852/ejt.2024.966.2697>

Midgley, J. M., Goergen, G. & **Jordaens, K.** 2024. 'A revision of the Afrotropical hover fly genus *Afroxanthandrus* Kassebeer, 2000 (Diptera, Syrphidae), with the description of two new species and one new synonymy'. *European Journal of Taxonomy* 968 (1): 60-85. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5852/ejt.2024.968.2717>



Nikis, N. & Gijanto, L. (eds), *Nyame Akuma* 101: 76 p.

Nikis, N. & Gijanto, L. (eds), *Nyame Akuma* 102: 84 p.

* NB. Impact factors are dated June 2024.

COMPLETED DOCTORATES

The following researchers completed their doctoral studies in 2024 with the scientific and logistic support of the RMCA:

Earth Sciences

John Sekajugo

'Quantitative vulnerability and risk assessment of geo-hydrological hazards in a data-scarce environment with a contribution of citizen science'
Supervisors: M. Kervyn (promotor, Vrije Universiteit Brussel); G. Kagoro-Rugunda (MUST), O. Dewitte (RMCA)
Defended on 18 January 2024

Christian Kalikone Buzera

'Contrôle lithostructural de la circulation des fluides minéralisateurs et piégeages des composants métalliques transportés dans l'espace transfrontalier du Kivu (Kalehe, Idjwi, Nya-Ngezie et Kamanyola)-Rwanda-Burundi'
Supervisors: Louis Nahimana (UB), Damien Delvaux (RMCA)
Defended on 22 March 2024

Jean Nsabimana

'De la vulnérabilité des infrastructures essentielles à la vulnérabilité territoriale face aux aléas géo-hydrologiques en milieu tropical : le cas de la ville de Bujumbura (Burundi)'
Supervisors: Aloys NDAYISENGA (Université du Burundi, Bujumbura), Sabine HENRY (promotor, UNamur), Caroline Michellier (co-promotor, RMCA)
Defended on 28 March 2024

Hardy Medry Dieu-Veill Nkodia

'Evolution tectono-structurale et déformation cassante comparée dans le Supergroupe Ouest Congolien (avant-pays de la chaîne) et le Groupe de l'Inkisi de part et d'autre du fleuve Congo, République du Congo et République Démocratique du Congo'
Supervisors: Florent Boudzoumou (UMNG), Damien Delvaux (RMCA)
Defended on: 16 May 2024

Josué Subira Muhindo

'Seismicity and Seismological Models of the Virunga Volcanic Province and Kivu Rift, Democratic Republic of Congo'
Supervisors: François Kervyn (RMCA), Aurélia Hubert-Ferrari (promotor, ULiège), Julien Barrière (co-promotor, ECGS)
Defended on 09 September 2024

Guy Ilombe Mawa

'Urban gullies in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Susceptibility expansion rates and impact.'
Supervisors: Matthias Vanmaercke (promotor, ULiège), Olivier Dewitte (RMCA)
Defended on 29 October 2024

Axel Deijns

'Compounding landslides and flash floods in tropical East Africa: A remote sensing perspective'
Supervisors: Olivier Dewitte (RMCA), François Kervyn (RMCA), Wim Thiery (VUB)
Defended on 03 December 2024

BIOLOGY

Tim Maes

'Snails in a changing world - Potential for local adaptation and distribution changes in an intermediate host of schistosomiasis'
Supervisors: Hugo Gante (promotor, RMCA), Tine Huyse (co-promotor, RMCA), Filip Volckaert (co-promotor, KU Leuven)
Defended on 01 February 2024

Maxson Kenneth Anyolitho

'Community-led approaches to the prevention and control of schistosomiasis: a sociological analysis of the citizen science model among selected communities of western Uganda'
Supervisors: Viola Nilah Nyakato (MUST), Tine Huyse (RMCA), Karolien Poels (UAntwerpen), Caroline Masquillier (UAntwerpen)
Defended on 20 February 2024

Laban Musinguzi

'Towards ecosystem-based fisheries management in the Lake Edward system: A reappraisal of the fisheries and aquatic ecosystem status.'
Supervisors: Willaim Okello (co-promotor, NaFIRRI, Uganda), Jos Snoeks (promotor, RMCA/KU Leuven), Maarten Van Steenberge (co-promotor, RBINS)
Defended on 17 April 2024

Nathan Vranken

'Patterns of phenotypic similarity in the haplochromine cichlids of the Lake Victoria Region Superflock: an eco-morphological and genomic approach'
Supervisors: Jos Snoeks (promotor, RMCA/KU Leuven), Maarten Van Steenberge (co-promotor, RBINS), Hannes Svoldal (co-promotor, UAntwerpen)
Defended on 19 April 2024

Julius Tumusiime

'Dynamics of host snail species and associated Schistosoma/Fasciola infections: testing the Citizen Science model in Lake Albert Region, Uganda'
Supervisors: Casim Umba Tolo (MUST), Grace Kagoro (MUST), Tine Huyse (RMCA)
Defended on 28 August 2024

Mercy Gloria Ashepet (Biology/Earth Sciences)

'Citizen science in the global south: motivational frameworks and policymaker perspectives. Case-study on citizen science for natural hazard management and vector-borne disease reduction in Uganda'
Supervisors: Grace Kagoro Rugunda (co-promotor, MUST), Liesbet Vranken (promotor, KU Leuven), Caroline Michellier (co-promotor, RMCA), Tine Husye (co-promotor, RMCA)
Defended on 07 October 2024.

Ruben Schols

'The influence of snail host microbiome in trematode parasite resistance'
Supervisors: Ellen Decaestecker (promotor, KU Leuven), Tine Huyse (co-promotor, RMCA)
Defended on 25 November 2024

CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY AND HISTORY**Alzenir Mendes Martins de Menezes**

'Instrumentos musicais nas línguas bantu e a herança no português do Brasil'
Supervisors: Maarten Mous (Universiteit Leiden), Jacky Maniacky (RMCA)
Defended on 25 September 2024

03

COLLECTIONS & LIBRARIES

The AfricaMuseum's international reputation is based on its vast expertise and unique collections in the humanities and natural sciences, from the Central African region, under its care. 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 and digitize them. It makes its collections available to the public in various ways, increasingly through digital avenues. 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 consult documents or analyze 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 library covering various disciplines within the humanities and natural sciences. The complete collection contains more than 130,000 books and several thousand of journals, as well as valuable historical works. Digitalization of this collection is ongoing.

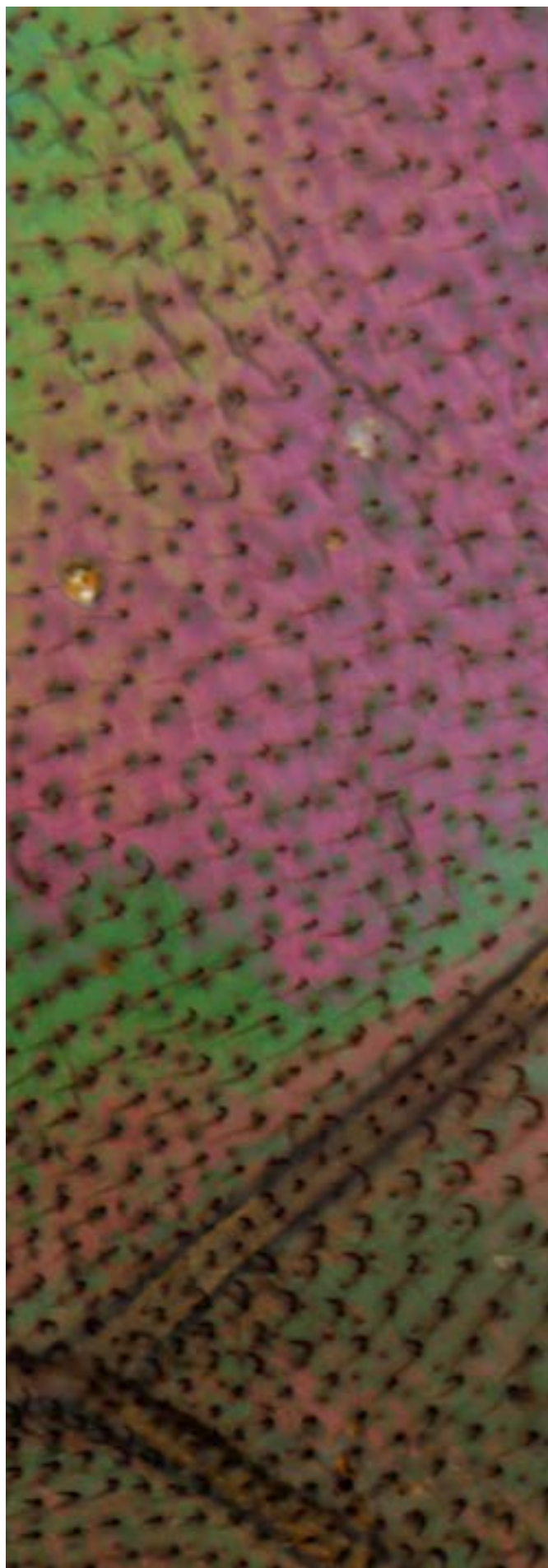
Creation of a collection management department

For most of the museum's history, these vast collections were managed independently, with distinct technical and administrative processing systems and fragmented collection management plans and policies.

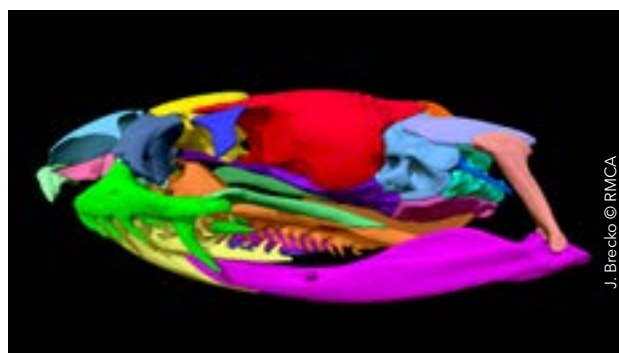
The Collection Management department was formally created on 1st April 2024 with a goal of merging the many sub-collections into a unified and accessible single collection, in hopes of creating a unity in diversity by bridging the natural history, geological, and cultural collections and their care. It also seeks to improve digital and physical accessibility to promote more interdisciplinary research and coherence internally and with collection users and stakeholders.

Essential tasks handled by the department include acquisitions, loans, reproductions, care and conservation, cataloguing and inventory, digitization, object and document restoration, damage management, technical analysis and research, visitor reception and supervision, archives and library management, and collection management outreach in Belgium, Europe, and Central Africa.

By centralizing and reorganizing collections management activities, and including modern-day stewardship practices that respect the environment and cultural diversity – more specifically the cultures and cultural care practices represented in the collection – dedicated staffers can pool their efforts and resources to achieve a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.



Digitizing natural science collections



Micro-CT scan of *Macrelaps microlepidotus*.



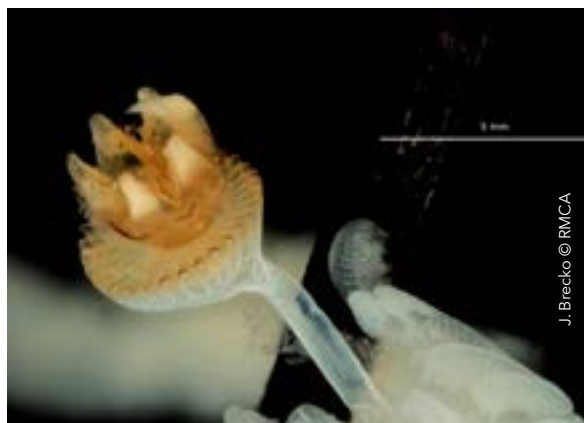
Prosymna ambigua urundiensis holotype by micro-CT scan.



Cylindromyia pictipennis



Hermya ditissima



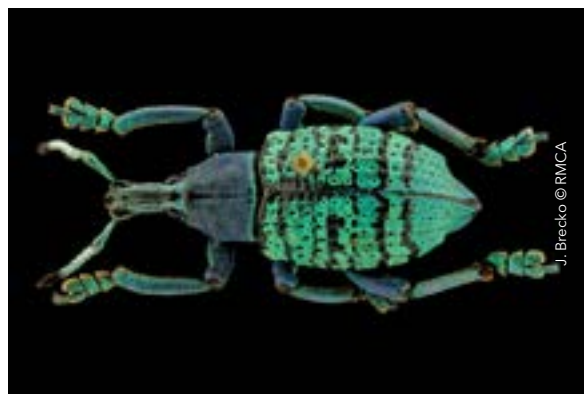
Hydroides monroi



Vitrina gomesiana



Papilio zalmoxis



Geonemus geoffroyi

DIGIT - Automated 2D+ and 3D imaging for natural history collections

The huge diversity and size of federal natural history collections involve real challenges in terms of 2D and 3D documentation, whether it be for conservation, heritage or scientific purposes. Today, no imaging tool is sufficiently versatile to accommodate the high variability of textures and shapes and to process large quantities of specimens efficiently and autonomously.

The BELSPO-funded DIGIT project (Developing a new milestone in automated 2D+/3D imaging methodologies for natural history collections) jointly involves the AfricaMuseum, the Institute of Natural Sciences, and the Haute École d'Ingénierie et de Gestion du Canton de Vaud (HEIG-VD), and aims to provide new adaptive and automated solutions - including the provision of an open source solution that captures and processes specimens in real time using a robotic arm, the development of a 3D viewer designed for easy navigation of high-resolution images and the extraction of precise data morphometric measurements; the development of an autonomous

multi-specimen acquisition tool for entomology; the 3D digitization of fluid-preserved specimens without removing them from their containers, and the contribution of multi-spectral data (infrared, ultraviolet) to complete data from the visible spectrum.

New equipment was acquired and installed in 2024. The team also developed protocols in collaboration with the HEIG-VD.



Sternotomis bohemani.

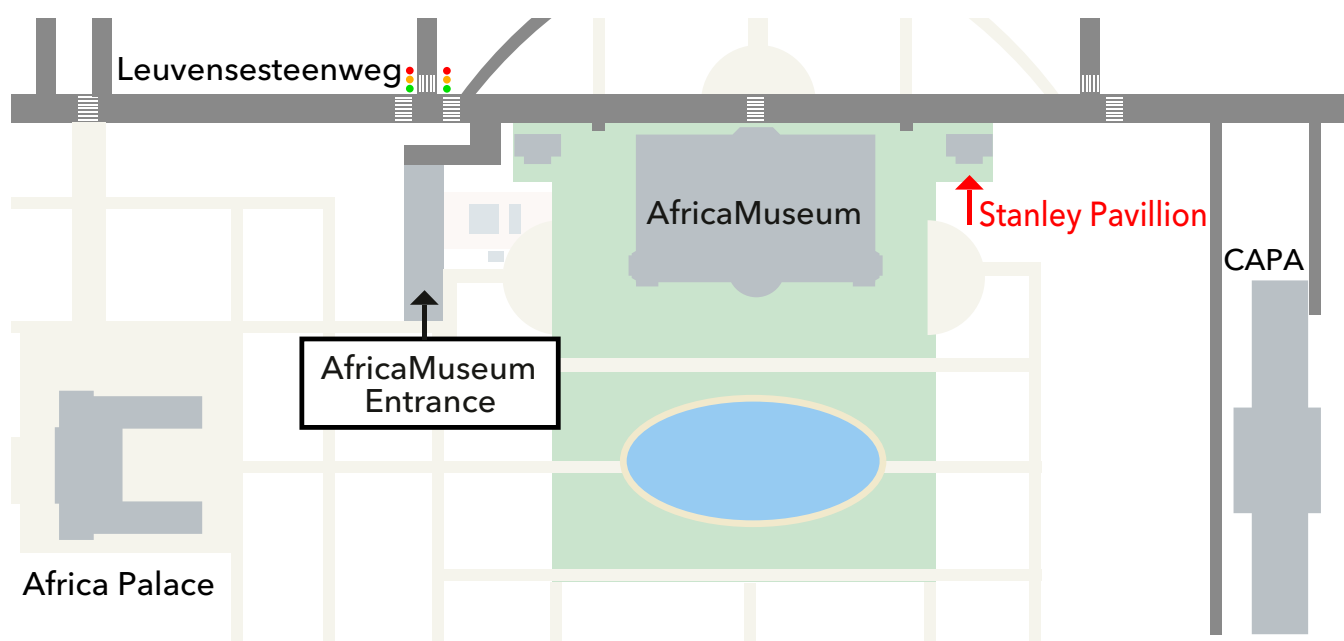


MicroCT of *Paracrociodura schoutedeni*.

Ongoing relocation of the collections and library of the Stanley pavilion to the CAPA building

For many years, the Stanley Pavilion was the working environment of the former Colonial History research section. This building housed a large number of collections, including historical weapons, popular paintings, watercolours and maps, colonial objects, the Stanley archives, and several larger busts and furniture. It also housed the library of the Colonial History section. As the Stanley Pavilion needs extensive renovation, volunteers joined the AfricaMuseum Building Management, Collection Management, Colonial History, and Exhibition services to begin the arduous task of moving the collections to the CAPA, a building within the AfricaMuseum complex, in 2023.

This work continued in 2024. Throughout the year, staff worked to update registration and inventory records. Audio recordings, periodicals, and books were prepared for transfer in April. The following month, paintings were also moved to the CAPA. The archives that gave the building its name, as well as other precious books, went to their new home in September, as did a number of objects in the collection. Finally, the textiles in the Stanley Pavilion were also transferred by the end of the year.



04

THE MUSEUM IN FIGURES

THE SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTE IN FIGURES

Who?



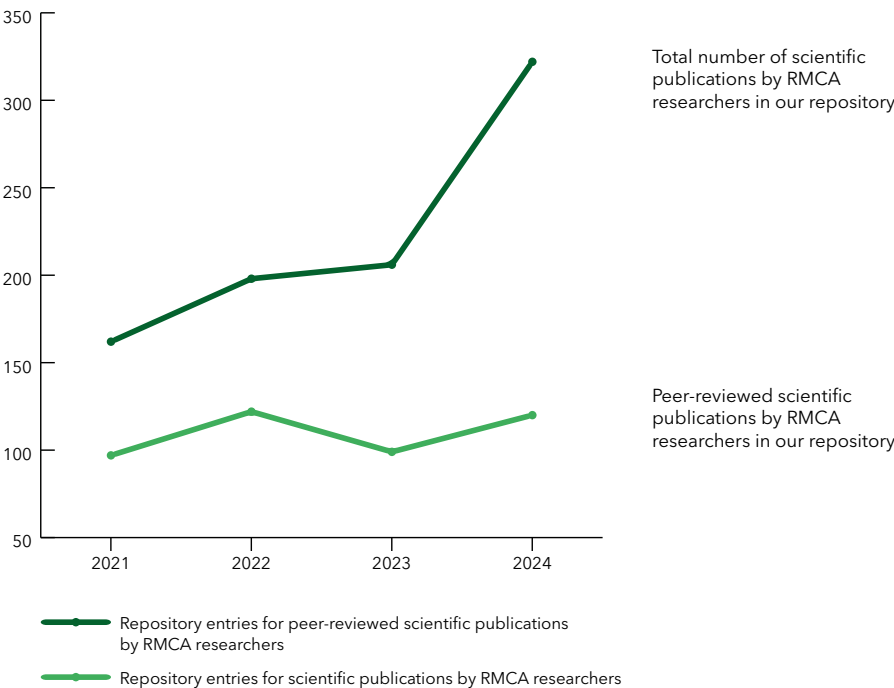
What?

- In 2024
- **Around a hundred ongoing projects**
including 11 begun in 2024
 - **240 presentations**
in scientific conferences
 - **322 publications**,
of which 120 were peer-reviewed *

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 2024, they published 322 texts, of which 120 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>



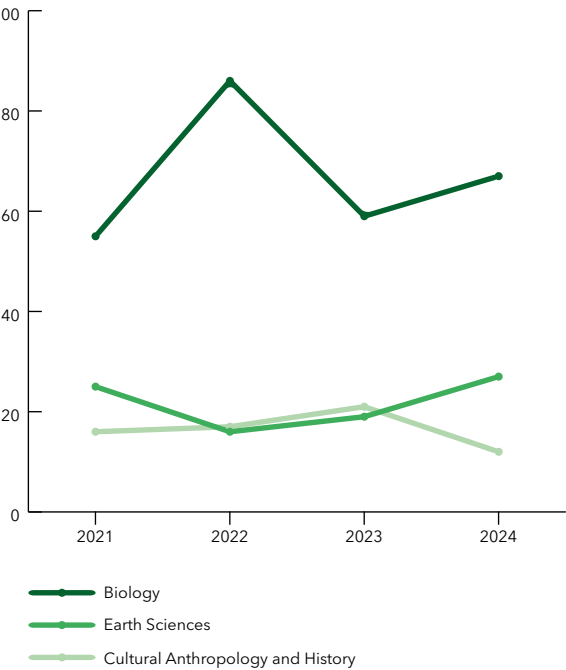
Statistics per discipline and per type in 2024

	Earth Sciences	Biology	Cultural Anthropology and History	TOTAL
Total number of peer-reviewed scientific publications*	27	67	12	106
Articles in scientific journals	26	67	2	95
Chapters in (edited) book	0	0	8	8
Books and catalogues (as author or editor)	1	0	2	3
Total number of non-peer-reviewed publications*	63	134	3	200
Journal articles	3	7	2	12
Maps	53	0	0	53
(edited) books/catalogues	1	0	0	1
Chapters in (edited) book	0	0	0	0
Chapters in (edited) catalogue	0	0	1	1

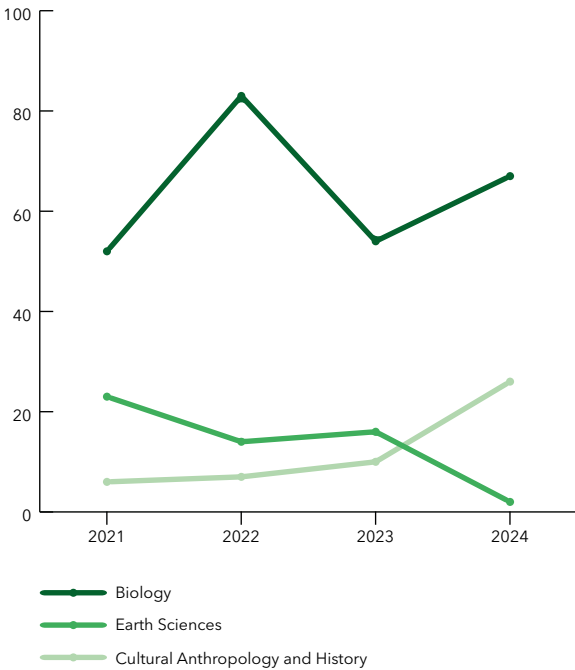
* discrepancy in figure 1 total due to publications by authors in non-scientific departments

- > [PLUS detail 1: trend from 2021 to 2024](#)
- > [PLUS detail 2: trend from 2021 to 2024](#)

Peer-reviewed scientific publications by department



Articles in scientific journals by department



Doctoral theses

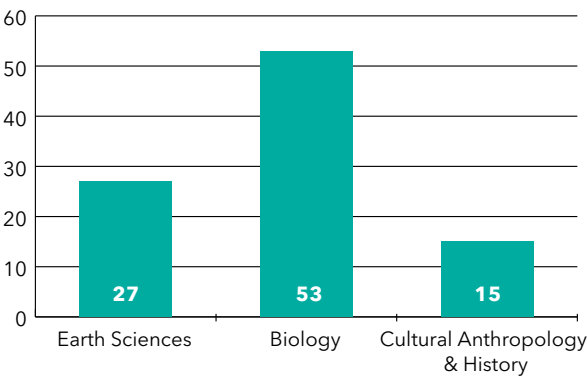
- **15 doctoral degrees completed** in 2024
- **95 ongoing doctoral research projects** in 2024
 - including 18 begun in 2024
- 68% of doctoral students are from 13 countries in Africa
- 37% of doctoral students are Congolese
- 25% are Belgian

- Supervision of **53 master's or DEA students**

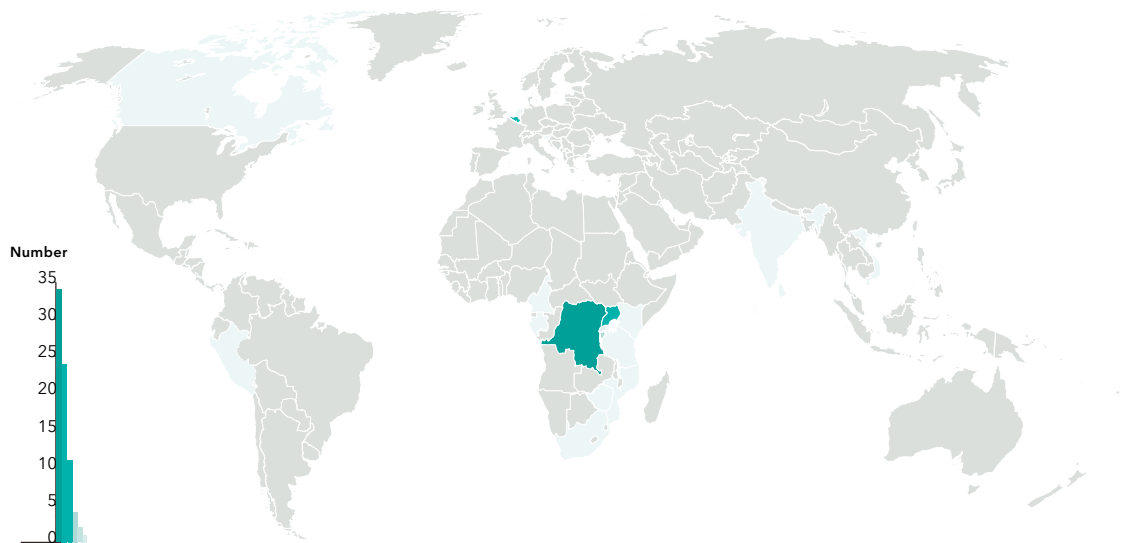
486 researchers came to the RMCA

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

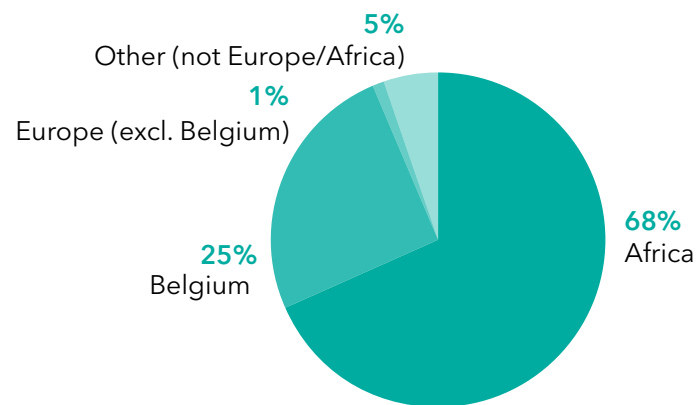
Number of doctoral students per department



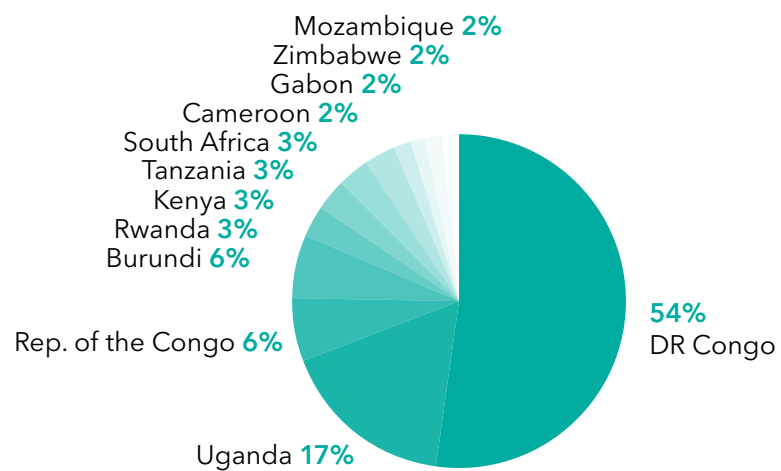
Doctoral students by nationality



Origin of doctoral students



Country of origin of African doctoral students



COLLECTION FIGURES

Cultural Anthropology & History

122 000
ethnographic artefacts

75 000
archaeological artefacts

9000
musical instruments

4000
ancient maps

500 000
historical photographs

20 000
historical objects
and Western artworks

3 km
historical
archives

70
historical films on the
Belgian Congo, Rwanda
and Burundi (1940-1960)

Biology

10 000 000
specimens among which:

6 000 000
insects

1 200 000
fishes

500 000
butterflies

300 000
spiders

195 000
amphibians

150 000
birds

135 000
mammals

80 000
wood samples

62 000
reptiles

17 000
snakes

Earth Sciences

264 000
aerial photographs

160 000
rock samples

25 000
maps

22 000
palaeontological
specimens

19 000
minerals

1 km
geological
archives

FIGURES FOR THE COLLECTIONS, ARCHIVES, AND LIBRARIES

Loans

282
persons visited the RMCA
for research purposes
and/or to consult
the collections, archives,
or libraries

1590
ethnographic and
historical objects
consulted by
external visitors

More than **5400**
zoological
specimens on
research loan

244
objects on loan,
in particular
for exhibitions
in Belgium,
La Rochelle (France),
and
Washington, D.C. (USA)

Expertise and services

6
metal restorations
and treatments

Identification of **45**
wood samples

60,943
metadata entries
completed

46,146
images

4,706
focus stacked
images

5
3D models created

4
μCT scans performed

Acquisitions

More than **415**
zoological specimens,

including **54**
new insect species

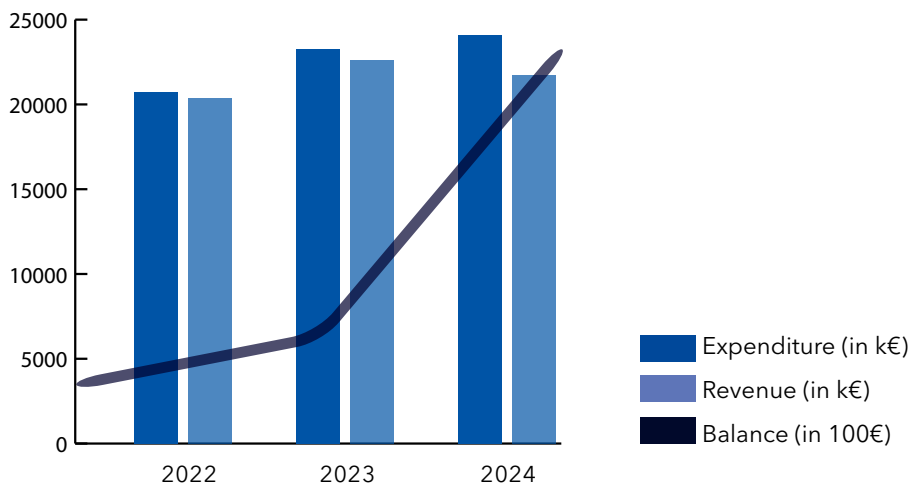
871
wood samples

More than **500**
archive documents,
photo albums,
postcard collections,
paintings,
etc.

FINANCIAL REPORT

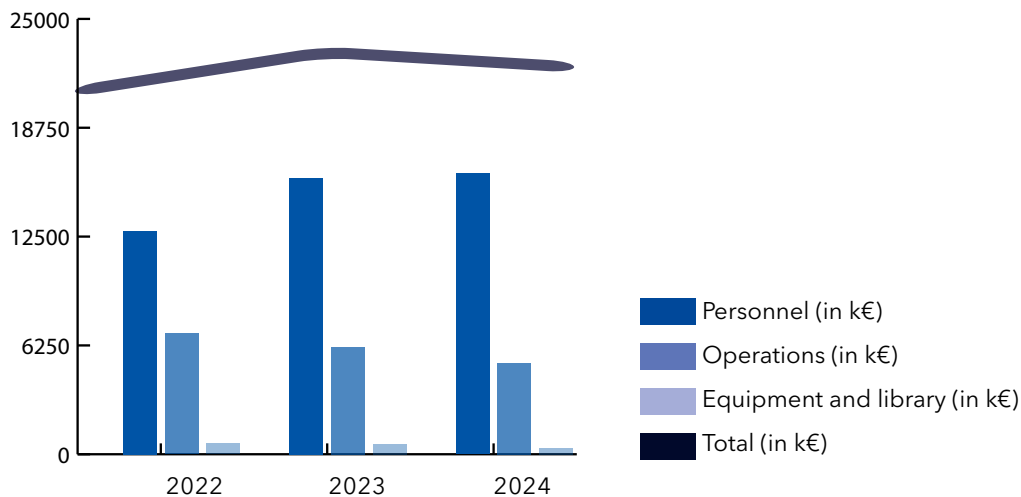
Expenditure and revenue 2022-2024

Expenditure and revenue (in k€)	2022	2023	2024
Revenue	20.718	23.250	24.086
Expenditure	20.354	22.607	21.746
Balance	363	643	2.339



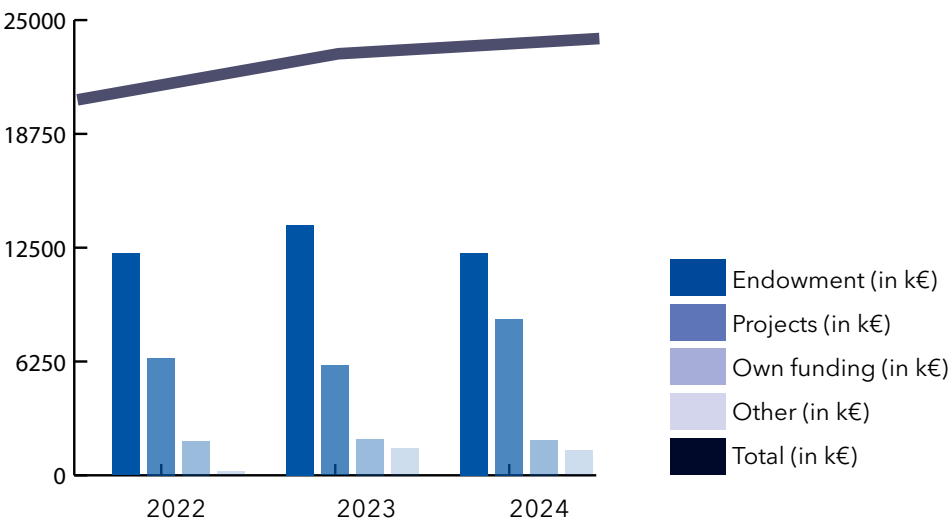
Sources of expenditure 2022-2024

Sources of expenditure (in k€)	2022	2023	2024
Personnel	12.823	15.864	16.122
Operations	6.924	6.157	5.251
Equipment and library	607	585	373
Total	20.354	22.607	21.746



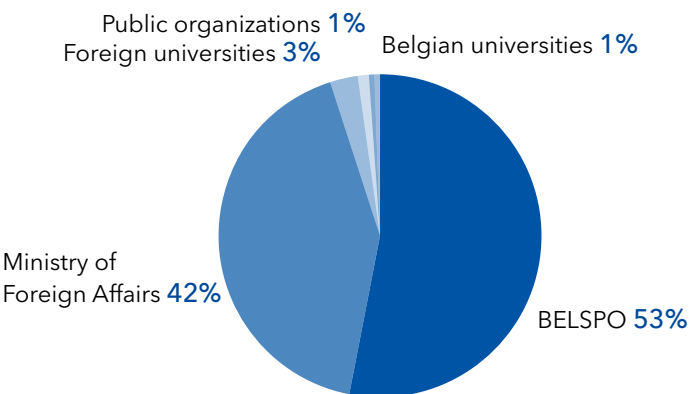
Sources of funding 2022-2024

Sources of funding (in k€)	2022	2023	2024
Endowment	12176	13737	12197
Projects	6451	6027	8578
Own funding	1883	1978	1948
Other	206	1506	1361
Total	20718	23250	24086



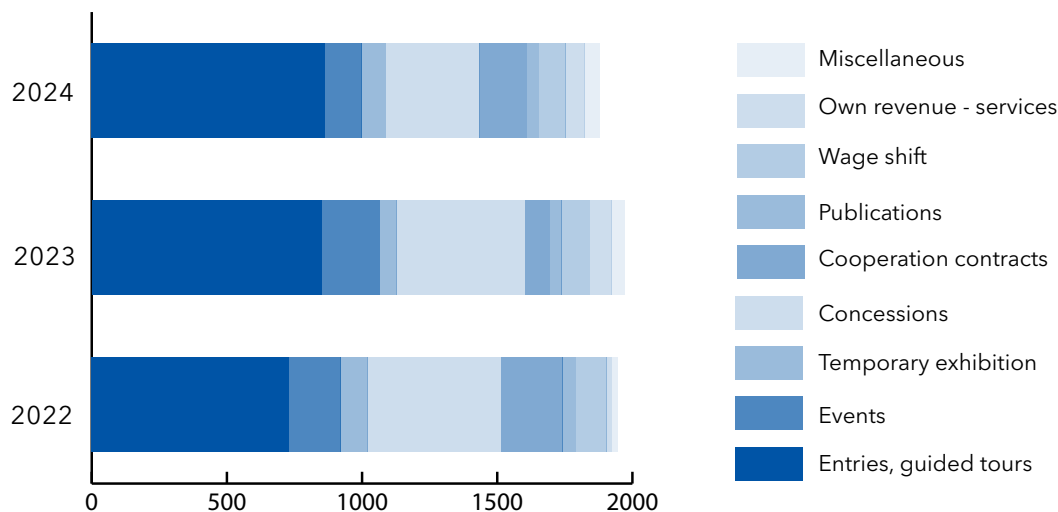
Sources of research funding in 2024

Sources of research funding (in k€)	2024
Belspo	4.580
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	3.600
Foreign universities	242
Public organizations	86
Private organizations	41
Belgian universities	41
Total	8.593



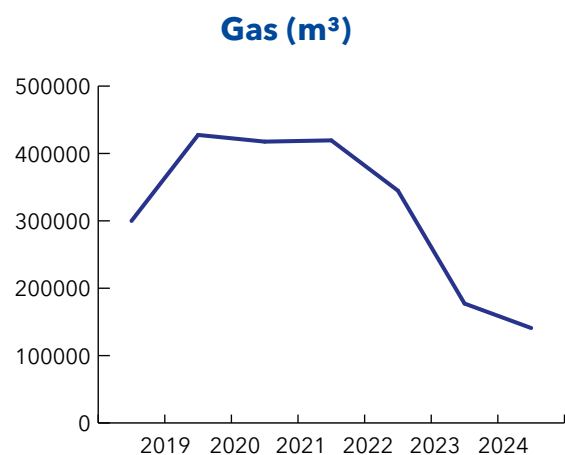
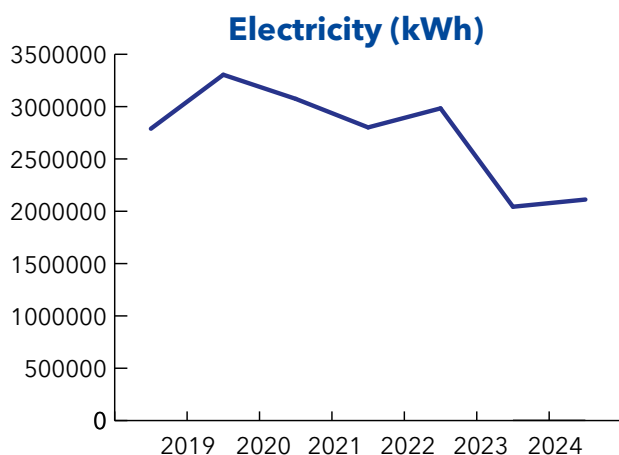
Sources of own funding 2022-2024

Sources of own funding (in k€)	2022	2023	2024
Entries, guided tours	862	850	730
Events	135	217	189
Temporary exhibition	92	60	100
Concessions	346	475	494
Cooperation contracts	176	92	228
Publications	44	44	50
Wage shift	98	106	113
Own revenue - services	71	79	21
Miscellaneous	56	51	19
Total	1.883	1.978	1.948



Energy consumption

Since it reopened in December 2018, the AfricaMuseum has reduced its electricity consumption by 36% and cut its use of gas and fuel oil by 67%. This reduction reflects the Museum's commitment to limiting its environmental impact by optimizing the use and management of its buildings, and is also in line with the institution's financial restructuring plan.



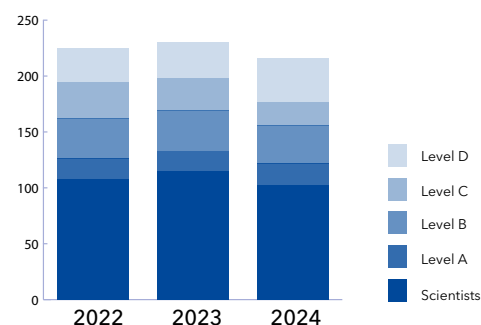
STAFF FIGURES

Distribution of statutory and contractual staff by level

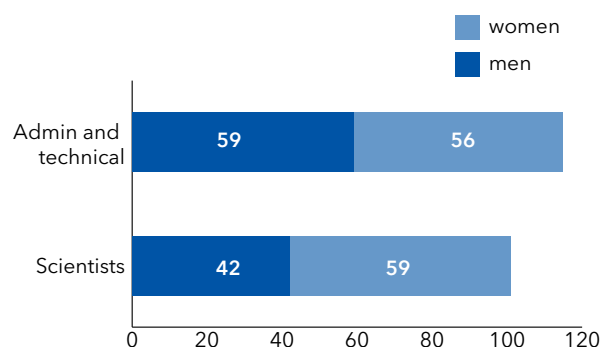
	2022	2023	2024	FTE*
Scientists	108	115	102	86,58
Statutory	30	30	27	22,8
Contractual	78	85	75	63,78
Level A	18	18	20	15,8
Statutory	11	11	13	9,5
Contractual	7	7	7	6,3
Level B	36	36	34	27,6
Statutory	29	28	26	20,8
Contractual	7	8	8	6,8
Level C	33	29	21	19,9
Statutory	19	17	14	13,6
Contractual	14	12	7	6,3
Level D	30	32	39	36,9
Statutory	0	0	0	0
Contractual	30	32	39	36,9
Total	225	230	216	186,78

* Full-time equivalent

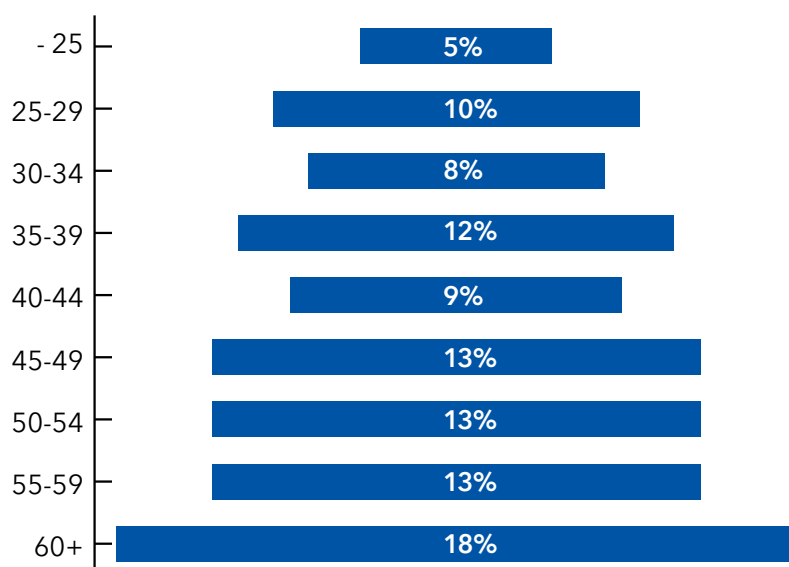
Distribution by level



Distribution M/F

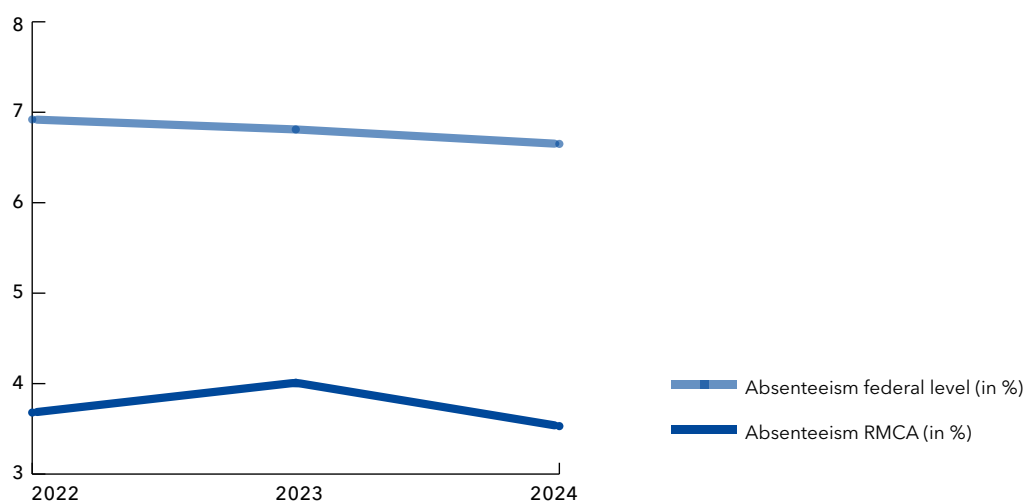


Age pyramid



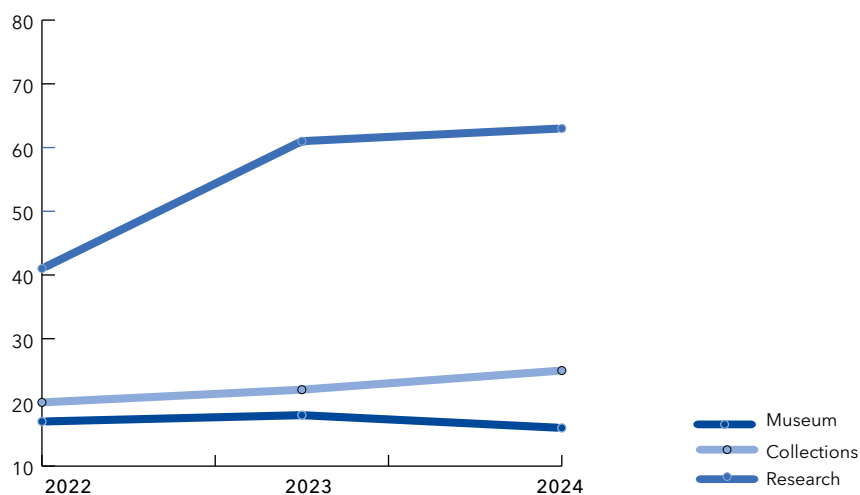
Absenteeism and occupational accidents

	2022	2023	2024
Number of occupational accidents	5	8	2
" to/from the workplace	2	4	0
Absenteeism RMCA (in %)	3,68	4,01	3,53
Absenteeism federal level (in %)	6,92	6,81	6,65



Number of volunteers

	2022	2023	2024
Research	41	61	63
Collections	20	22	25
Museum	17	18	16
Total	78	101	104

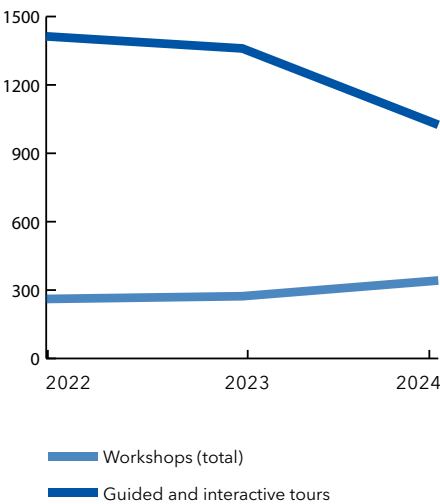


PUBLIC SERVICES

Educational activities

There were **1,025 guided tours** and **342 workshops** in 2024.

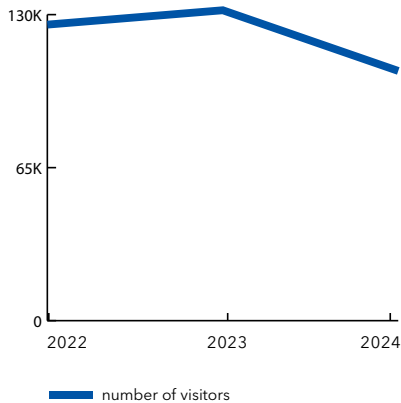
Guided and interactive tours and workshops



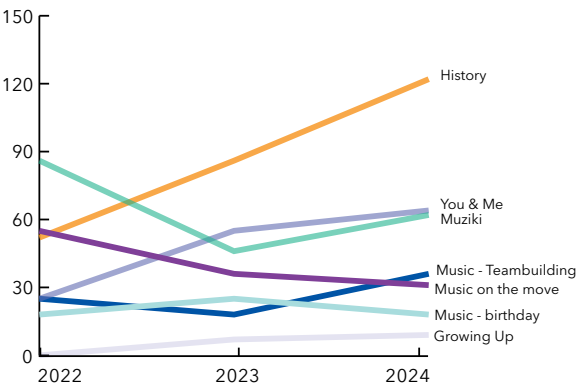
Visitors

AfricaMuseum welcomed **106,077 visitors** in 2024.

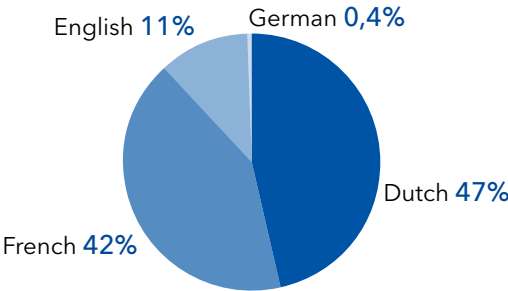
Visitors



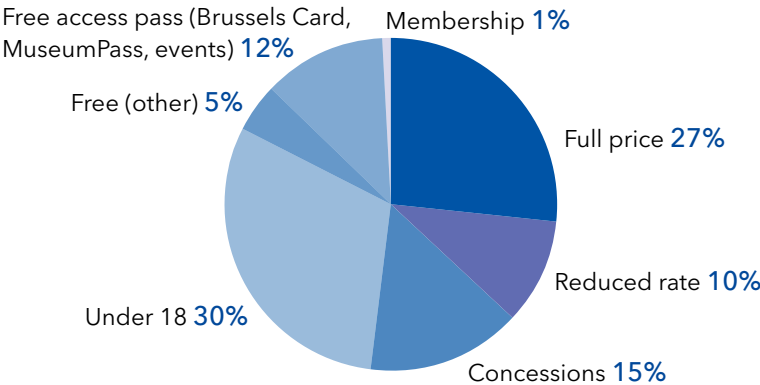
Workshops



Educational activities by language



Distribution of visitor fees in %

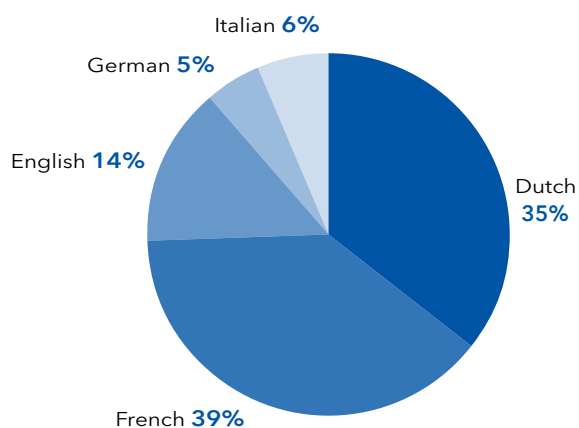


Media coverage

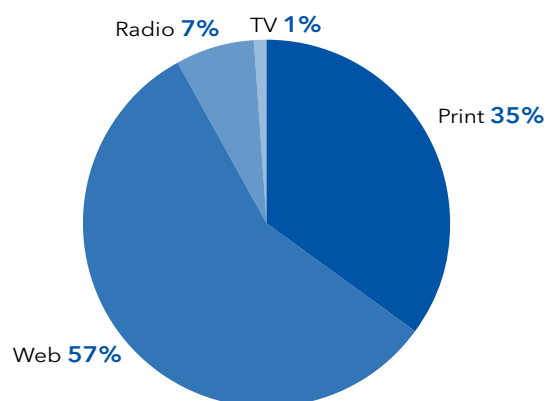
Total number of articles published: 1020

Number of authors: 543

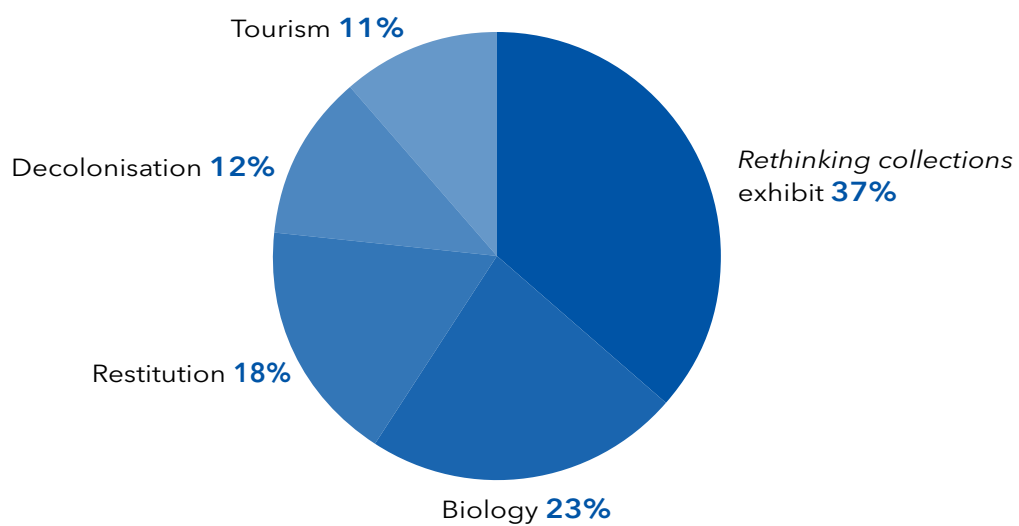
Articles by language



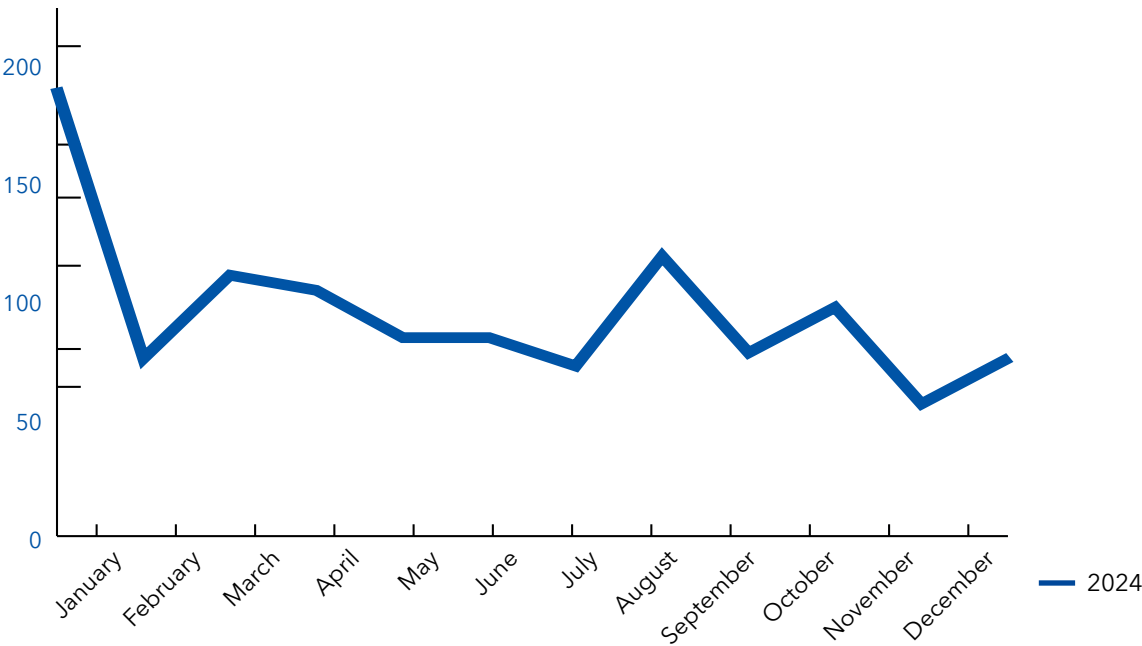
Articles by media type



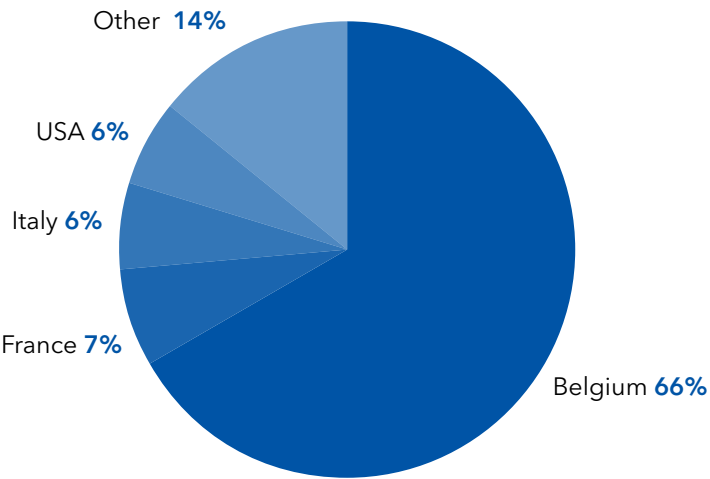
Topics covered



Performance over time



Media origin



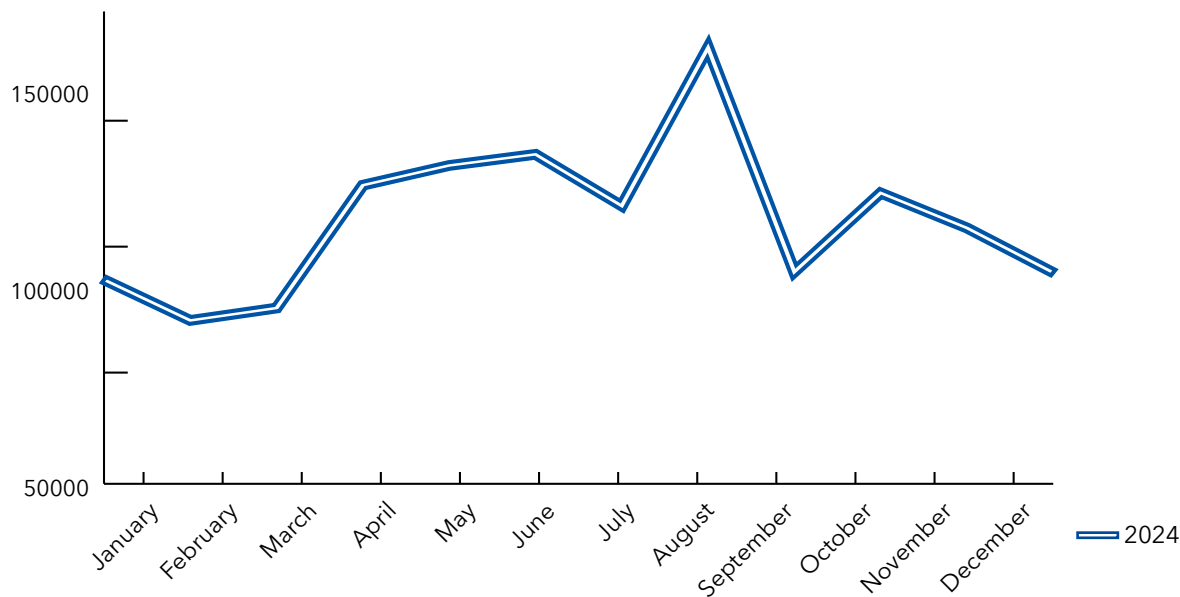
Website

- In 2024, we had a total of 1,364,041 visitors.
- A total of 212,103 unique visitors (IP addresses) visited the website, with an average of 3726 visitors per day.
 - A total of 10,229,804 pages were viewed, representing an average of 28,881 pages per day and 10 per visitor.

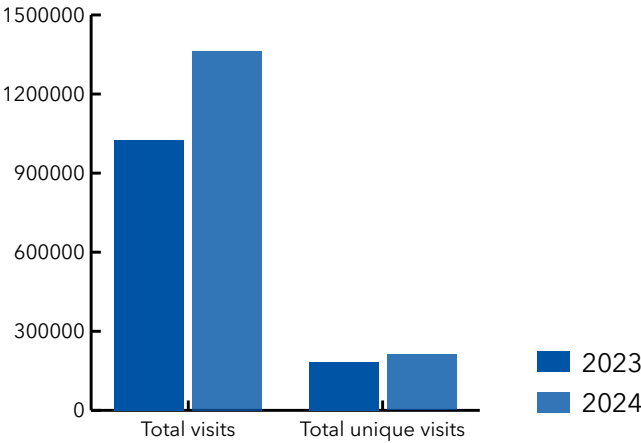
- The month of August saw the highest number of visitors to the website: 168,144.
- A visit session lasted 8:20 minutes on average.
 - More people visited the website from a desktop (71%) than from a mobile device (27%).

- The three most popular articles on our website were *Rethinking Collections* Exhibit (57,242 visits), *The Kongo Kingdom* (43,792 visits), and *The Human Zoo of Tervuren* (35,656 visits).
- 25% of visitors viewed the website from Belgium.
 - The second largest group were visitors from the United States (16%), followed by China(10%) and France (6%).
- An other 6% of visitors surfed from the DRC.

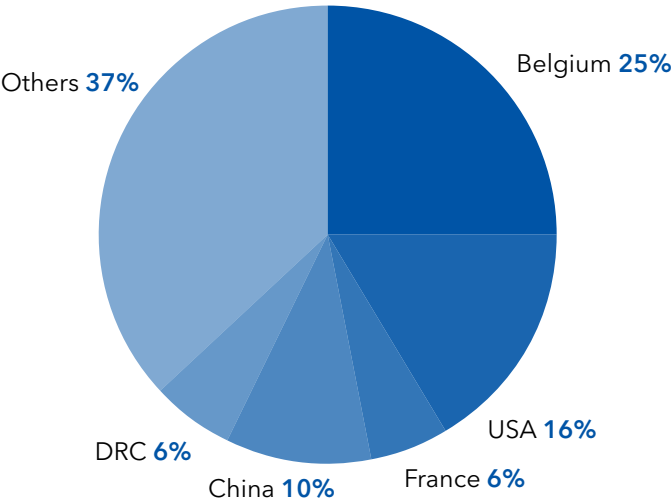
Website visitors



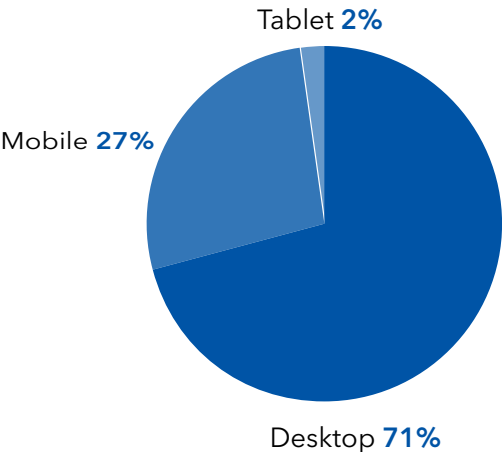
Website total visits



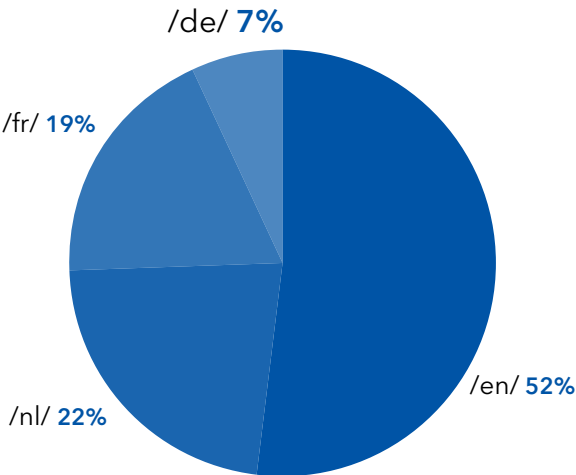
Origin of website visitors



Website visitors by device type



Most visited pages by language



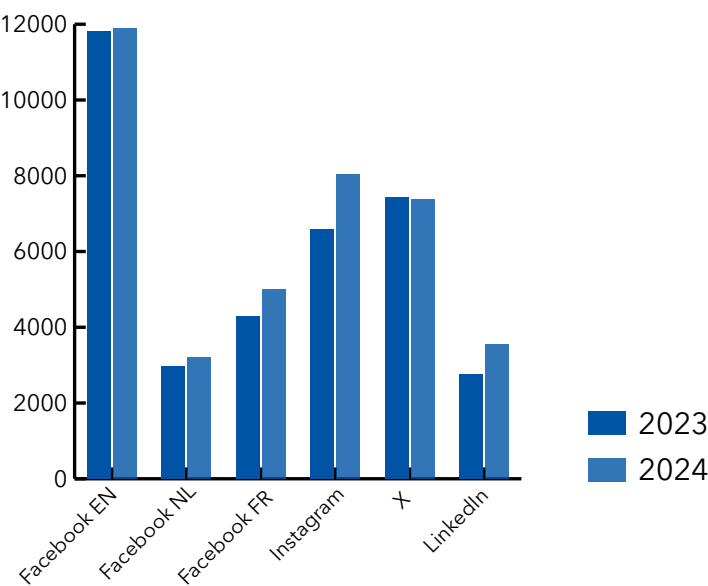
Social media

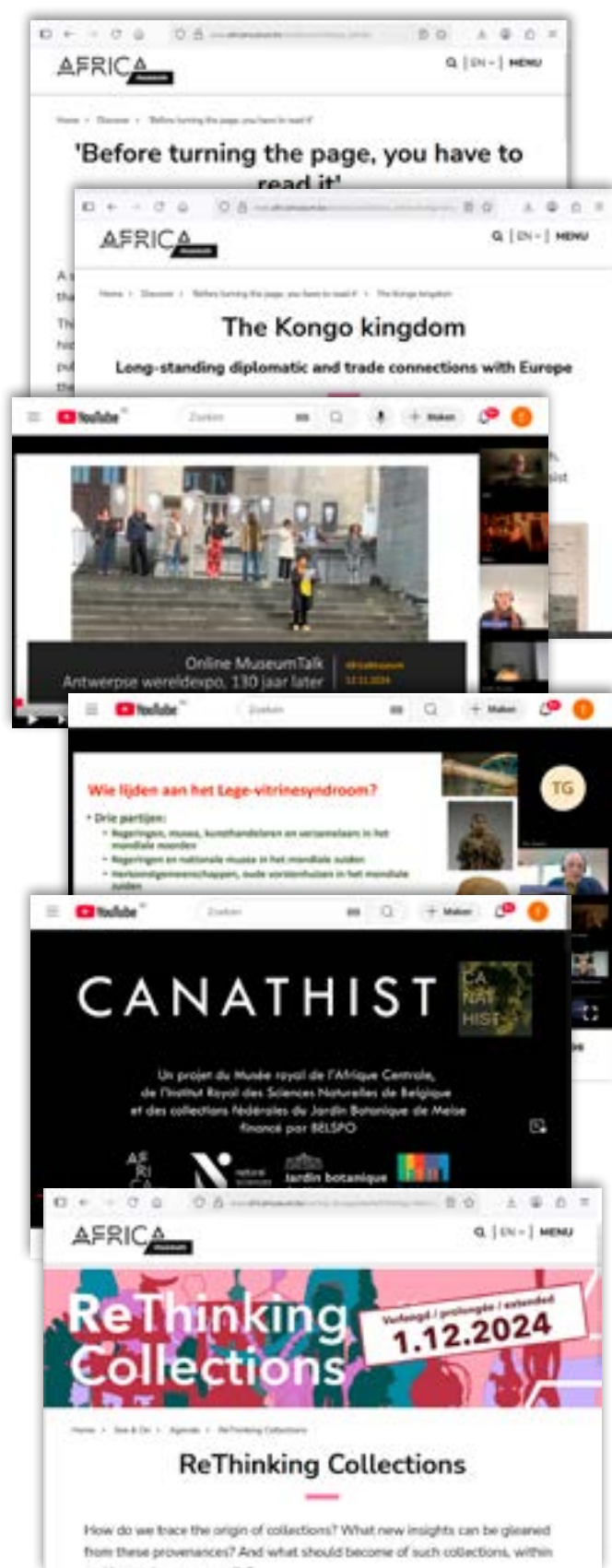
In 2024, the museum’s social media accounts posted the following figures:

- The Facebook page AfricaMuseum EN went from 11,821 to 11,890 followers, a 0.6% increase.
- The Facebook page AfricaMuseum België went from 2,970 to 3215 followers, a 8% increase.
- The Facebook page AfricaMuseum Belgique went from 4,302 to 4995 followers, a 16% increase.
- The Instagram account went from 6,590 to 8035 followers, a 22% increase.
- The X (formerly Twitter) account went from 7,432 to 7,368 followers, a 1% decrease.
- The LinkedIn account went from 2,763 to 3,554 followers, a 29% increase.

We recorded 895,784 views on YouTube.

Social media followers





Most visit website and online-conferences.



Popular shorts on YouTube.



Popular posts on Social Media.

05



WHO WE ARE

Vision

As a museum and research centre, the AfricaMuseum is a forum for study and dialogue on societies and the natural environment in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The AfricaMuseum is a place of memory and tells the history of the colonial past but also works with and on the Africa of today and tomorrow.

The AfricaMuseum is committed to generating interest and promoting social involvement in the challenges of today and tomorrow.

The staff of the AfricaMuseum do not walk that path alone: the AfricaMuseum builds sustainable partnerships, in Belgium, in Europe and especially in Africa.

Mission

The vision of the AfricaMuseum is realised through attentive management of the collections in our care. Through our research, our collaborations and partnerships and with the organisation of exhibitions, events and education we widely share these collections and the knowledge and values they bring.

In its relationships with the public, and with youth and the African diaspora in particular, the AfricaMuseum aims to be accessible and inclusive. As a forum for study, education and dialogue, the AfricaMuseum adopts a participatory approach, striving for co-creation.

Director's Council

Chair: Bart Ouvry, Director-General

Members with voting rights:

- Bart Ouvry, Director-General
- François Kervyn de Meerendré, Head of Department a.i. Earth Sciences
- Bambi Ceuppens, Scientific collaborator Culture and Society Service
- Marc De Meyer, Head of Department a.i., Biology
- Jacky Maniacky, Head of Department a.i., Cultural Anthropology and History
- Patricia Van Schuylenbergh, Head of Service, History and Politics
- Didier Van den Spiegel, Head of Department, Collection Management

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.

Financial 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, Director-General Research and Space, BELSPO (Chair)
- Bart Ouvry, Director-General RMCA (Vice-Chair)
- Michel Van Camp, Director-General RBINS (Vice-Chair)
- Claude Bragard, Université de Louvain-La-Neuve
- Alain Heynen, Advisor General, Belgian Federal Science Policy Office
- Jacques de Gerlache, Communications Manager, SOLVAY S.A.
- Ingrid Vanden Berghe, Director General, National Geographic Institute of Belgium
- Koen Verhoest, Professor, University of Antwerp- Department of Political Sciences

Members with advisory rights:

- Lieven Dejaegher, Inspector General of Finance
- Yves Geens, Accountant, RMCA
- Brigitte Lauwaert, Head of Scientific Section, MUMM and RBINS
- Jacques Lust, Secretary - Attaché, Belgian Federal Scientific Policy Office
- Marie-Solange Mukarwema, Accountant, RBINS
- Françoise Stassart, Financial expert, Belgian Federal Science Policy Office
- Didier Van den Spiegel, Head of Department, RMCA

Scientific Council (from 25/04/2024)

Internal members:

- Bart Ouvry, Director-General
- François Kervyn de Meerendré, Head of Department a.i., Earth Sciences
- Bambi Ceuppens, Scientific collaborator, Culture and Society Service
- Marc De Meyer, Head of Department a.i., Biology
- Jacky Maniacky, Head of Department a.i., Cultural Anthropology and History
- Patricia van Schuylenbergh, Head of Service, History and Politics
- Didier Van den Spiegel, Head of Department, Collection Management

External members:

- Inge Brinkman, UGent
- Véronique Clette-Gabuka, ULB
- Sandrine Collard, Rutgers University
- Marie-Sophie de Clippele, UCL
- Stijn Dewaele, UGent
- Kirezi Kanobana, Flanders Innovation and Entrepreneurship (VLAIO)
- Amandine Lauro, ULB
- Herwig Leirs, UAntwerpen

Recruitment and Promotion Committee

The board 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 Director General.

Members:

- Robert Van De Walle, BELSPO (Chair)
- Bart Ouvry, Director-General, RMCA
- Prof. Sara Geenen, University of Antwerp
- Prof. Caroline Nieberding, Université catholique de Louvain

Staff Consultative Committee

The Staff 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:

- Bart Ouvry (Chair)
- Els Cornelissen
- Marc De Meyer
- François Kervyn de Meerendré
- Valérie Herzet
- Mario Thoilants (Prevention advisor)
- Johan Van Impe (Prevention advisor)
- Dirk Verbist

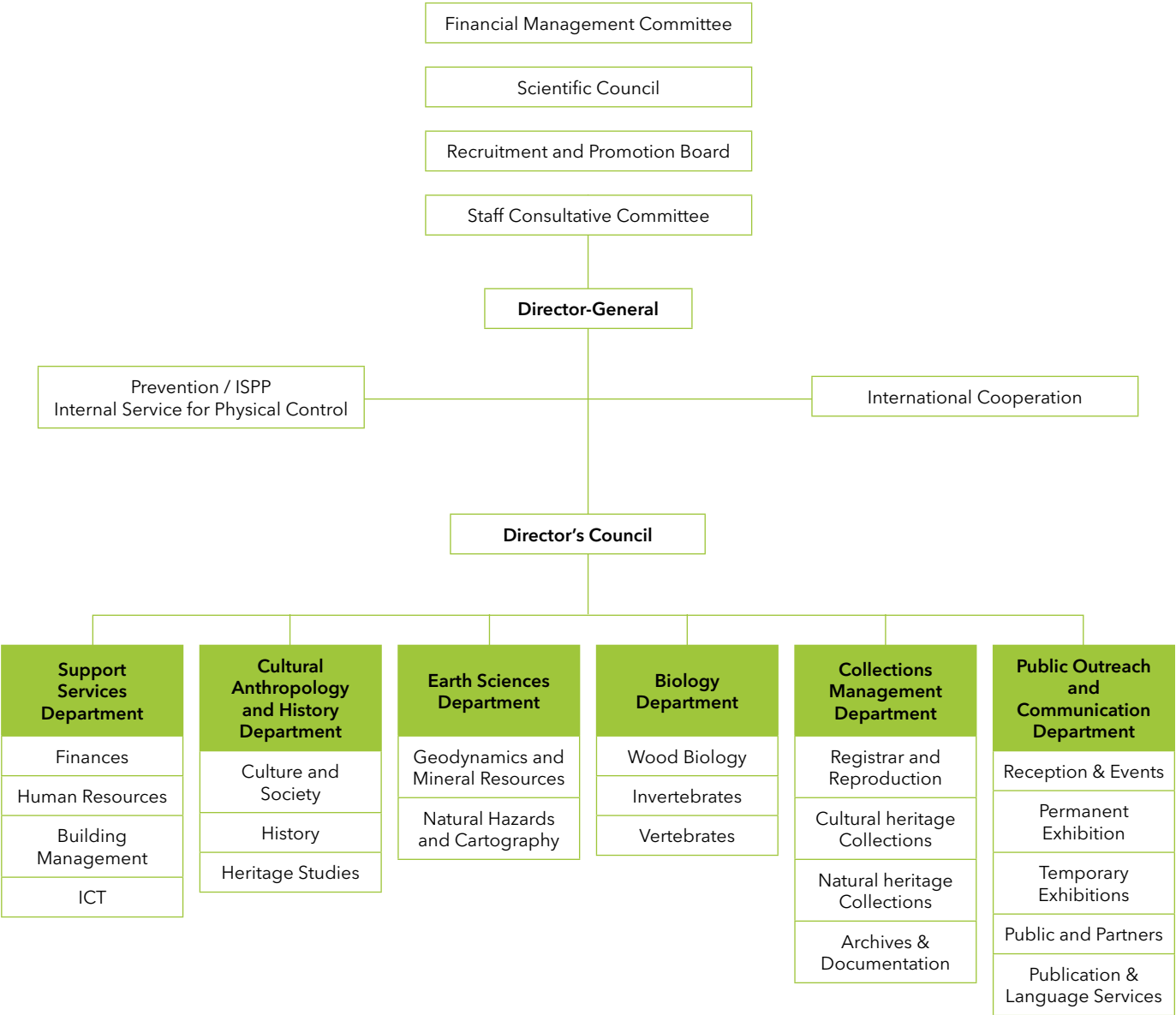
Union representatives:

- Valérie Demeulemeester (CGSP/ACOD)
- Kai Saillart (CSC/ACV Public Services)
- Patricia Van Schuylenbergh, RMCA representative (CSC/ACV Public Services)
- Jean-Christophe Vancoppenolle (CSC/ACV Public Services)
- Jimmy Verlez (VSOA/SLFP-Groep 2)



D. Plas © ENGIE

Organization Chart*



* from April 2024

COLOPHON

Texts: Emily Divinagracia and Victor Licata, based on activity reports of the RMCA services and departments

Coordination: Isabelle Gérard (RMCA)
Layout: Friederike Kratky (RMCA)

Cover: Background image of the *ReThinking Collections* exhibition poster., 2023 © RMCA

Printed on FSC paper at RMCA, Tervuren.

Responsible publisher: Bart Ouvry, Director General
© Royal Museum for Central Africa, 2025
13, Leuvensesteenweg
3080 Tervuren (Belgium)

www.africamuseum.be
Legal deposit: D/2025/0254/02
ISBN :978-9-4934-1444-0

All reproduction and translation rights reserved for all countries. No part of this publication may be reproduced for purposes other than non-commercial educational use without prior written permission from the Publications Service, Royal Museum for Central Africa, 13 Leuvensesteenweg, 3080 Tervuren (Belgium).



Belgium
partner in development



