

PanAfGeo promotes geoheritage in Botswana

13 April 2024, Lobatse

From 8 to 13 April 2024, a PanAfGeo training session focusing on geoheritage was held in Lobatse, Botswana. This English-speaking session was organised within the framework of the PanAfGeo project, a pan-African capacity-building program in geoscience coordinated by the French Geological Survey (BRGM). The project is a result of collaboration between the African Union and the European Union through their respective organisations, the Organisation of African Geological Surveys (OAGS) and EuroGeoSurveys.

The training combined indoor theoretical lessons with field activities to integrate to fully encompass the concepts of geodiversity, geoheritage, and geoconservation. Co-organised by the Botswana Geoscience Institute (BGI) and geological surveys from Poland (PGI-NRI), France (BRGM), and Spain (IGME-CSIC), the session received strong support from UNESCO, as well as the geological surveys of Italy (ISPRA) and Lithuania (LGT).

Approximately thirty participants from 16 African geological organisations attended the training, representing the following countries: South Africa, Botswana, Burundi, Egypt, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, Uganda, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Tanzania, Zambia. 24 participants have directly benefited from the PanAfGeo project, and 5 participants were funded by UNESCO.

UNESCO presented its actions and objectives for Africa through the International Programme for Geoscience and Geoparks (IGSP), including the Global Geoparks label. The training served as a platform to introduce and discuss concepts such as geodiversity and geoheritage, covering their inventory, assessment, conservation in protected areas, and promotion strategies. Participants were introduced to Botswana's geological context and shared their perspectives on geoheritage from their countries. Furthermore, the session outlined to trainees the relationships between geoheritage, cultural heritage, mining activities, and geohazards.

Three days in the field allowed the participants to apply the theory they obtained in practice. The training session included visiting several geosites around Lobatse, Kanye, Ramotswa and Gaborone: the Kwakgwe manganese deposit, magma mixing in Moshaneng, lapiez in dolostone and stromatolites in Ramotswa, rapakivi-type granite in Oodi and potholes and sandstone rocks in Matsieng. The fieldwork concluded with a visit to the Jwaneng diamond mine, the largest and richest in the world, thanks to the hospitality of Debswana company. The group visited the open pit and the core shed to observe the different kimberlite facies from the three volcanic bodies currently being mined.

Strong support for the training came from the Botswana Geoscience Institute (BGI), whose managers were responsible for both opening and closing the session.

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Participants had the opportunity to express their appreciation to PanAfGeo during the training and discussed planned actions to implement upon their return to their respective organisations. These actions include conducting in-house geoheritage training, initiating geoheritage inventories, and communicating these concepts to relevant authorities.



Figure 1: African and European geoscientists coming from 21 countries during the geoheritage training session organised in Botswana, from 8 to 13 April 2024. Potholes developed within Early-Middle Proterozoic Waterberg Group sandstone in Matsieng, Botswana.

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Figure 2: Discussion and value assessment of the geological elements of a karstic landform developed within the Palaeoproterozoic Transvaal Group dolostone in Ramotswa, Botswana.

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Figure 3: “Mushroom” rock made of Early-Middle Proterozoic Waterberg Group sandstone in Matsieng, Botswana.



Figure 4: PanAfGeo group studying the scientific, educational and touristic values of the geosite showing commingling and mixing of mafic and felsic magmas in the Palaeoproterozoic Moshaneng magmatic complex (2.05 Ga), Botswana.

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About PanAfGeo:

PanAfGeo is an EU co-funded initiative that began in 2016, and is supported by the European Union and the African Union through the Africa-EU Partnership. The project allows trainees to acquire state-of-the-art tools, methods and experienced knowledge in 8 geoscientific skills. The project supports the training of geoscientific staff from African Geological Surveys through a diversity of innovative training methods.

A brochure outlining the aims and plans for PanAfGeo-2 can be found [here](#). For more information, [visit](#).

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