



Three beneficiaries :



Co-financiers :



Biodiversity

This is the entire range of living species, of communities formed by these species, of the habitats in which they live, without forgetting all the genes. It is life in every form and its interactions. Biodiversity is a victim of erosion at a much faster speed than its natural rhythm.

Natura 2000

This is a network of natural sites across Europe, on land and at sea, identified by the rareness or the fragility of wild species and their habitats. It is based on European guidelines aiming to preserve the natural habitats and the endangered species, through a network of terrestrial and marine sites. It is also a device which enables the European Union to support the definite protection of European diversity, considering that 1/3 of the military grounds are registered in Natura 2000.

Life

This is the financial instrument that the European Union dedicates to its environmental projects by financing programmes of planned actions.

Life nature and biodiversity is a component which serves to co-finance the projects related to effective actions and/or is useful for demonstration and contribution to the implementation of Birds and Habitats guidelines.

Life NaturArmy

Is a project undertaken at the present time by the MinArm and the CEN Federation in order to develop strategy on a national and european scale. This project aims to improve the state of preservation of species and habitats which have justified the Natura 2000 classification of these military sites.

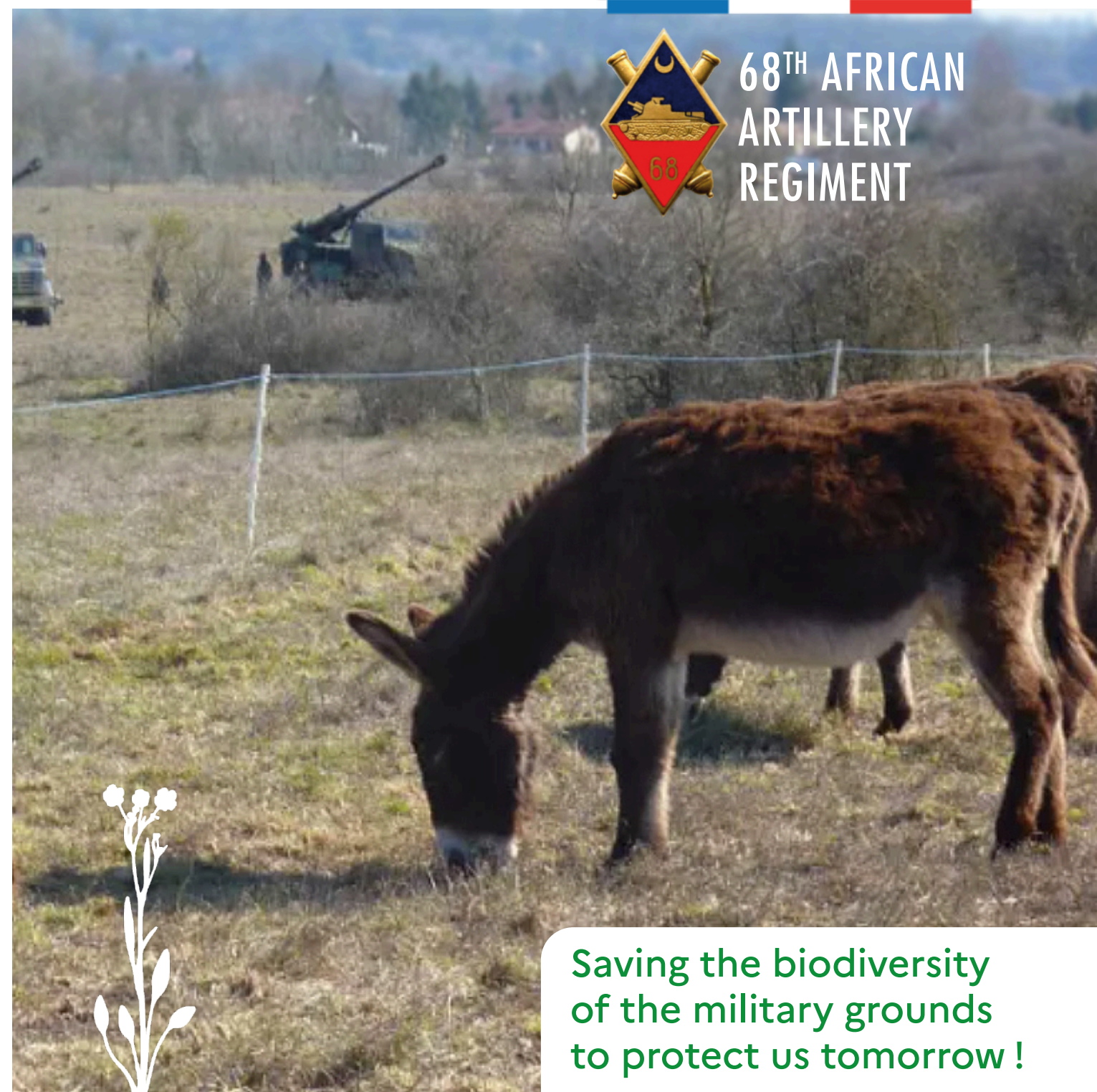


MINISTÈRE
DES ARMÉES

Liberté
Égalité
Fraternité



68TH AFRICAN
ARTILLERY
REGIMENT



Saving the biodiversity
of the military grounds
to protect us tomorrow !

<http://lifeterrainsmilitaires.fr>





A Life project on The Valbonne military camp

A protected area...

With 2965 acres of dry grassland and forest area, this military camp possesses the biggest grassy steppe in one single area north of the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region, unique in France and the European Union. Rare species threatened with extinction inhabit this remarkable environment, which is extremely dry in summer. Held by the army since 1872, the site is protected from agricultural, urban and industrial pressures. So here is the only trace of the former alluvial banks of the Rhône which were once characteristic of the Plaine de l'Ain.

...but a vulnerable area

The creation of artificial surroundings has made it the sole refuge for a multitude of migratory birds and those nesting on the ground. Today, the site is threatened with brushwood and the proliferation of exotic species. Its classification in the European network Natura 2000 is not enough to prevent its destruction or to perpetuate this exceptional heritage. The LIFE nature project aims to restore the natural environment with effective results.

Ambitious targets

1 Restauration of 1730 acres of grass land

The aim is to widen the range of plants and to contribute to the protection of endangered plant species such as several wild orchids, the **red pulsatilla**¹, the **grassy-leaved buttercup** or the **european feather grass**². It is also to allow the settlement and the breeding of **little bustards**³ in this spot and to encourage the nesting of other meadow birds.



1
Red pulsatilla
(Pulsatilla rubra)
© CEN Rhône-Alpes



2
European feather grass
(Stipa pennata)
© CEN Rhône-Alpes



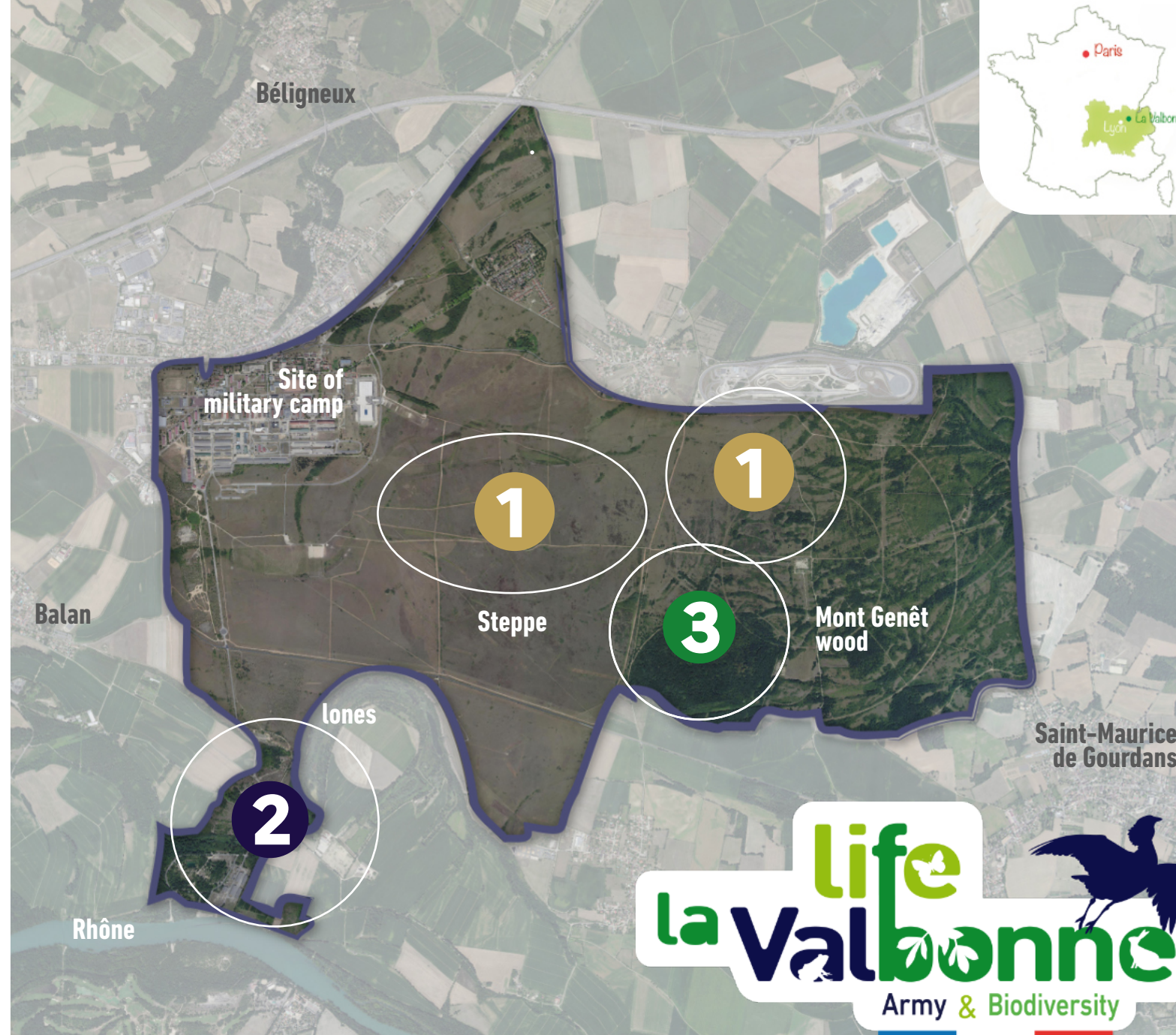
3
Little bustard
(Tetrax tetrax)
© J.P. Trouillas



4
Southern damselfly
(Coenagrion mercuriale)
© V. Pierron



5
Bechstein's bat
(Myotis bechsteinii)
© Yoann Peyrard



Decoding the project

KEY FIGURES :

- > **Total surface area of the military camp : 3954 acres**
which is almost 20 times the surface area of two Disneyland's adventure parks in Paris
- > **Duration of the programme : 7 years**
(1st September 2019 to 31st August 2026)
- > **Budget : 4 577 483 €**
(including 75 % of European funding)

Major actions

On the dry grasslands :

- > Grazing reinforcement: several herds will be introduced, which is an economical, local and traditional custom,
- > Timbering, uprooting, wood grinding and controlled burning,
- > Increase of the wild rabbit population.

For the little bustard,

A feasibility study will confirm or not the advantage of its reintroduction into a natural environment which will be preceded by aviary breeding, acclimatization and GPS tracking. Restoration of the grasslands and crop adaptation will be crucial for the success of its reintroduction.

For the oxbows of the Rhône,

- > Cleaning of the silted zones in order to improve the hydraulic conductivity and to re-oxygenize the habitats,
- > Restoration of a poplar plantation into wet grasslands.

For the military operations,

- > They will be adapted to the ecological issues.

Educational programme

-> The idea is to make the military personnel of the camp and the local inhabitants aware of the biodiversity issues with the aim to make changes in their behaviour : educational activities in schools, outings for the general public, production of short films on various themes.

A naturalist expertise

-> The aim is to improve knowledge, to use modern technology, to develop a recognized method of scientific monitoring. This concerns the particular features of the habitats, the ecological continuity, the maintenance of the ecosystems and the monitoring of the effectiveness of this work.