



# 2014 STATE OF CONSERVATION REPORT FOR BWINDI IMPENETRABLE NATIONAL PARK WORLD HERITAGE SITE IN UGANDA

STATES PARTY: **UGANDA**



NAME OF THE PROPERTY: **BWINDI IMPENETRABLE NATIONAL PARK**

GEOGRAPHICAL COORDINATES TO THE NEAREST SECOND: **S1 4 50 E29 39 41**

DATE OF INSCRIPTION ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST: **17<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 1994**

ORGANIZATION RESPONSIBLE: **UGANDA WILDLIFE AUTHORITY**

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## **Bwindi Impenetrable National Park (BINP) World Heritage Site (WHS)**

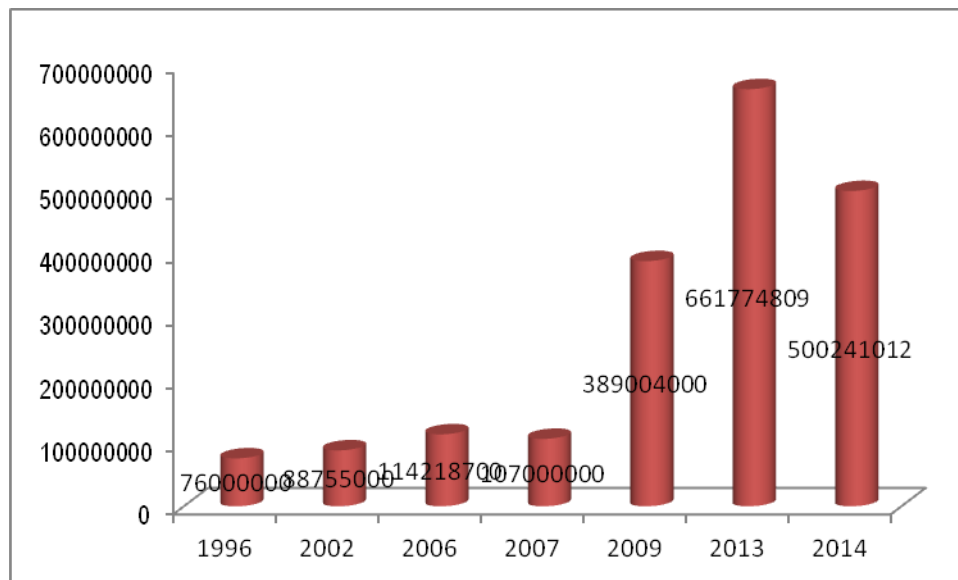
Located in south-western Uganda, BINP covers 32,092 ha and is known for its exceptional biodiversity, with more than half of the population of the Mountain Gorillas (400 individuals) in the world, 160 species of trees and over 100 species of ferns. The park also hosts a number of bird species and butterflies, as well as many endangered species. It is the only site on the globe where the Chimpanzee and Mountain Gorillas live in one ecosystem. The OuVs for Bwindi are clearly outlined in its inscription statement and the reviewed statement of OuVs.

## **Protection and management**

Managed by Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) on behalf of the people of Uganda, Bwindi is governed domestically under the provisions of various national laws including the Constitution of the republic of Uganda (1995), Uganda Wildlife Act Cap 200 of 2000, National Environment Act (2000), Local Government Act (1997), The Land Act (1998), the Forest and Tree Planting Act 2003, to mention but a few. Internationally, there are a number of other laws that apply to its protection including, but not

limited to, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Ramsar convention and the World Heritage Convention. The site has an approved management plan (latest plan is the 2013 – 2023) and is highly regarded and supported by local communities and other stakeholders for the role it has played in improving the livelihood of its neighbours and contributing to national development through tourism. The property attracts substantial support from a number of local and international NGOs. The Park has a permanent research institute located within the site which is engaged in research and continued monitoring of the site's integrity. These factors as well as strong political support provide an assurance for the property's long-term protection and conservation.

With its developed ecotourism programmes that support community livelihoods, the Park is a model for integration of community sustainable resource management in the country and possibly in the East African Region. Since 1996 to date the park management has continued to implement the revenue sharing program with the surrounding communities taking 20% of the gate collections. Figure 1 below is a graphical representation of the funds which have been disbursed to communities from the 20% gate collections (figures are in Uganda shillings: \$1 = 1,000 in 1996, 1,500 in 2006, and 2500 in 2014). An additional US \$5 per gorilla tracking permit was later approved and implemented since 2003. Last year, to further enhance the benefits going directly from the park management, the UWA Board of Trustees approved another US \$5 (beginning July 2015) from every permit to make a total of US \$10 contribution as community permit levy. The focus is to enhance benefits to the communities surrounding the property. Because of this, the relationship between the park management, the district leaderships and the community has continued to improve every other day.



**Fig. 1: Revenue sharing funds disbursed to the communities over the years**

In order to ensure ownership and integrity of the property, the management developed and signed 12 memoranda of understanding with the communities for joint management of the property boundary. So far 66km of the park boundary has been enhanced with live tree markers. This followed the maturity, drying and rotting of the old markers that were planted over 30 years ago by the forestry department.

The remaining (about 103km) will be planted this year. 20,000 seedlings have already been secured and are being prepared for this purpose.

Human wildlife conflict over the years has been an area that brings animosity between management



and the local communities as crop raiding reduces food security, the children are forced into crop guards against baboons. Crop raiding mainly occurs in the months of May – July and October – November. The management in the last 2 years has prioritized this aspect and jointly introduced several interventions to reduce this conflict. One such intervention is the establishment of a belt of tea (see picture left) in the UWA-community owned buffer zone to deter wildlife to cross to community land. A belt of 12km along the boundary with a width of 150m

has just been completed in the Nteko and Rubuguri parishes (southern part of the park) and it is thought that once established, the tea plants will stop baboons, wild pigs and the gorillas from accessing the palatable crops as it is known to be unpalatable to all herbivore wildlife. The tea will also be used as source of revenue to the communities once the leaf is mature enough to be harvested in the next 5 years. The establishment of this tea strip is likely to reduce incidences of cross-transmitted diseases as the interface between gorillas and livestock/ people will have been reduced. Elsewhere in the Northwest, communities in the parish that hosts the Park headquarters have been engaged in planting a 7 km strip of tea along the park boundary to stop gorilla from accessing their crops.

Other problem animal interventions include the strengthening of the boundary with the Mauritius thorn (*Caesalpenia decapitala*) hedge. So far, 86km of the boundary has been planted. This thorny shrub when well maintained prevents all wildlife (the main crop raiders in the region like bush pigs, baboons, Gorillas and elephants) from accessing community gardens. Red pepper cakes have also been developed and used to repulse elephants especially in the southern areas that are prone to elephant incursions. The cakes are burnt expelling repugnant smell that elephants cannot withstand. This intervention has a limitation in that it is dependent on the wind direction.

Community members have also been mobilized to form a problem animal scouts groups commonly referred to as HuPa (Human Problem animal Conflict resolution team). So far 9groups of 108 members have been established in 8 parishes. These are a volunteer group participating in problem animal control through scaring; drum and tin beating, use of bells to deter animals from crop raiding. They are trained in animal behavior and are being facilitated with food and rain gear among others. Last year they responded 19 incidences of gorilla incursions in Nteko Parish (south), 7 in Bujengwe parish (north), 10 in Mukono parish (northwest), and 25 in Kashasha, 18 in Kaara and 11 in Rubuguri (south) to elephants and wild gorillas. On the other hand Kitojo and Kiyebe parishes responded to elephants once and trice respectively. We have also engaged other stakeholders in problem animal monitoring, information sharing and problem solving. The engagement of stakeholders has increased the level of understanding

and appreciation of the challenge, a factor that has enhanced participation and interest in getting the solutions to it. In this regard two tripartite MoUs on problem animal management were signed between UWA, Nkuringo Community Conservation Development Foundation (NCCDF) and Kirundo and Nyabweshenya sub-county local governments with clearly outlined roles and responsibilities for each party. This has facilitated the reported of sighted problem animals with 24 cases reported in July, 16 in August, 14 in September, 16 in October, 13 in November and 11 in December 2014. This monitoring is important for us for effective planning and response. The traditional scare-shooting by the ranger forces is also employed.

The NTP resource access program is one of the main approaches management adopted right from property gazettement. Communities are allowed to harvest certain plants on regulated basis. Memoranda of understanding have been signed with the resource users. The items include craft making materials, placement of bee hives in the park and removal of certain medicinal herbs from the forest. For instance last year ( 2014), the communities harvested 408 bundles of *Smirax auceps* and made 1220 baskets valued at UG X 10,872,000/= (US \$4,027). It is important that indigenous Batwa people have also been incorporated in this program.

To improve awareness and further enhance community attitudes, the community conservation unit has constantly conducted awareness and education meetings in the villages neighboring the park. The key area of focus has been addressing gorilla health considering the current prevalence of exit of gorillas to the community gardens. The parishes where such incidences are common include Mukono, Bujengwe (West/ northwest), Mpungu (northeast), Ruhija (east), Rubuguri and Nteko (south). “Clean-up” exercises were conducted monthly to collect waste in the mentioned areas to ensure the health of the flagship species. In addition we also organized the Great Ape athletics competition among primary schools neighboring the park in Ruhija sub-county with Ruhija, Bitanua, Mburameizi, Ruhija model primary schools. Conservation messages were delivered to the people and gorilla rules communicated for improved community hygiene and sanitation. to the above, 111 other awareness meetings around the property explaining the importance as a national and a world heritage. Other areas



In addition were held of the park included fire sensitization meetings, with 3 conservation films shown in Ndego, Kiriba and Kanyasogi trading centers next to the property. We also facilitated a cross visit of a group of poachers who denounced the vice ( see photos of Park Manager receiving poaching equipments from community leaders) as they were now

realizing conservation benefits through revenue sharing and other ecotourism services. The poachers (49) are now engaged in tourism activities like offering porter services (carrying of bags) to tourists tracking gorilla. On average, each porter has been going home with US \$100 a month, a factor that has enticed the departure from poaching to tourism participation. The group of 49 reformed poachers was also facilitated with a seed fund of US \$10,000 from Clouds Lodge (high-end community lodge in the south owned by the Nteko community that was established through the efforts of UWA and AWF). The group has engaged in grow vegetables to the hotels/ lodges where tourists stay in the southern part of Bwindi.

Other awareness strategies included a radio talk show that was aired to reach the wider community and conservation education in 45 schools. Six (6) Local government Council meetings were also attended in the last six months in the surrounding sub-counties to deliver conservation messages.

In addition, the tourist briefing package has been improved to incorporate the sensitization of tourist about Bwindi as a WHS and host site of endemism. This is done daily by the tourist guides before tourism activities are undertaken. The main purpose for this briefing is to create responsible clients during tracking to enhance gorilla health. All the 20,129 tourists that tracked gorillas in 2014 received the brief on Bwindi's outstanding universal values including and the ecosystem services the site offers.

With the 33 visitor facilities around the park, Bwindi has remained a big job opportunity creator. About 1,500 direct jobs have been taken up by the local people at the lodges and kiosks. Community members are also engaged in porter work which generates about US \$100 per month per person. On average, about 200 porters around the park take home US \$20,000 per month. The Park's management is also comprised of 64% of the surrounding communities. This translates into a monthly figure of US \$21,200 directly injected into the Bwindi community for livelihood improvement. This was a deliberate effort for the communities to actualize ownership.

### Research and Ecological Monitoring

Research and monitoring has continued to generate information to guide our decision making process within the property. Monitoring of the gorilla population has been one key result areas for management. This exercise is undertaken every five years and the table below shows the trends.

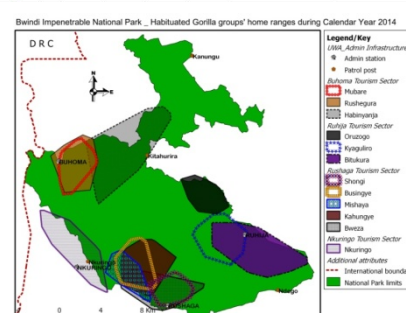
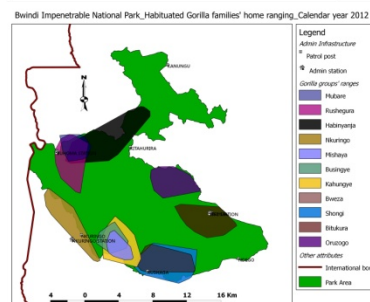
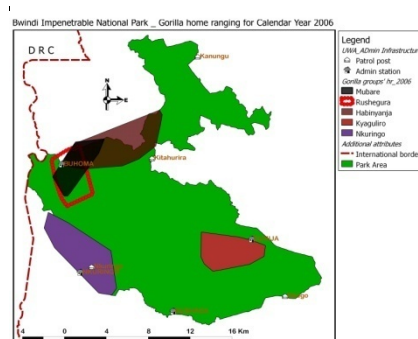
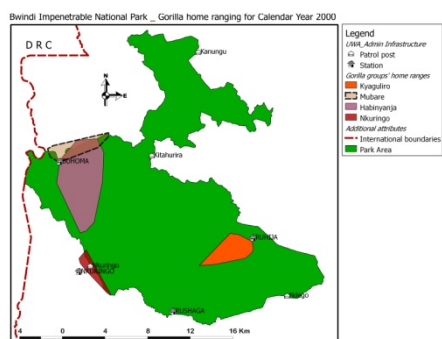
Year of Census	Estimate	%age increase	%annual growth rate	Census method used
1997	300	baseline	baseline	Indirect complete sweep (Nest count)
2002	320	6.7	1	Indirect Complete Sweep (Nest count)
2006	Nest Count; 336 Genetic: 302	5(using nest counts *336) and DNA 320 to 302 showed decrease	1	Indirect complete sweep (Nest count) and concurrent genetic



		but set as baseline for Genetic count.		count using fecal samples for DNA
2011	400	19 Nest and genetic count results harmonized	3.8	Indirect complete Sweep (nest count) and Concurrent genetic count using DNA obtained from fecal samples collected during the survey

These results show that the population is increasing and that the interventions being put in place actually are responding positively to the population growth. Another census is expected in 2016. We have gone further to identify all the individuals in each of the habituated groups. This enables us to critically monitor each individual's health status.

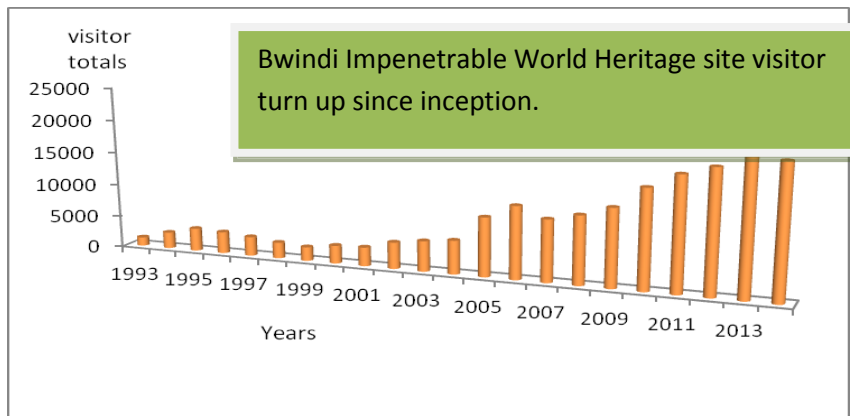
Continuous monitoring of the gorilla is being done. The home ranges have been established and trackers are in position to locate them on a daily basis. The maps below show individual gorilla family home range over time.



## Tourism within the Property

Ecotourism was considered as the most appropriate form of tourism for the property since the park was gazette. Gorilla tourism was started in 1993 to generate funds for park operations and community benefits. To date Bwindi is the “cow-park” for UWA generating about 50% (US \$8.6 million) of UWA’s internally generated revenue. The level of visitation has also continued to rise with a slight drop in 2014 due to the Ebola scare which was reported in West Africa. Figure 2 below is a depiction of the tourism trends for Bwindi over the years.

To enhance visitor experience, management has planned to constrict a visitor centre at the park headquarters. The contract for the designs will soon be signed before construction work starts. We hope to see the visitor centre fully completed by end of 2016. It should be noted that this development is outside the protected area.

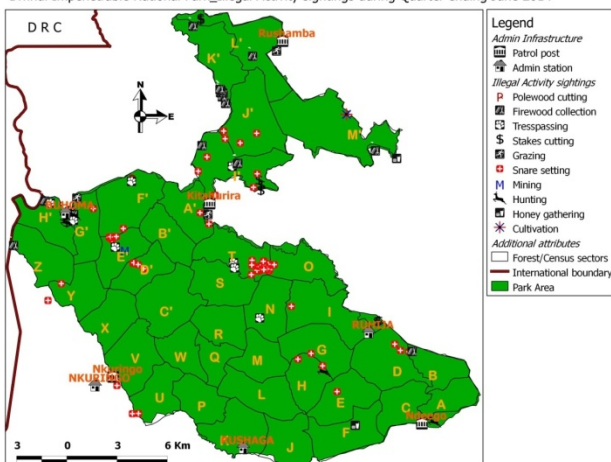


Tourism numbers have grown with minimal impacts as tourism activities are undertaken on foot and no motorized equipments are used within. This keeps impact on the resource very low. For example 8 tourists per group per day for one hour stay with the habituated gorilla families are followed on daily basis. The occupancy has increased as the number of groups habituated indeed increased from the 2 early in 1993 to the 12 groups at this moment 2015.

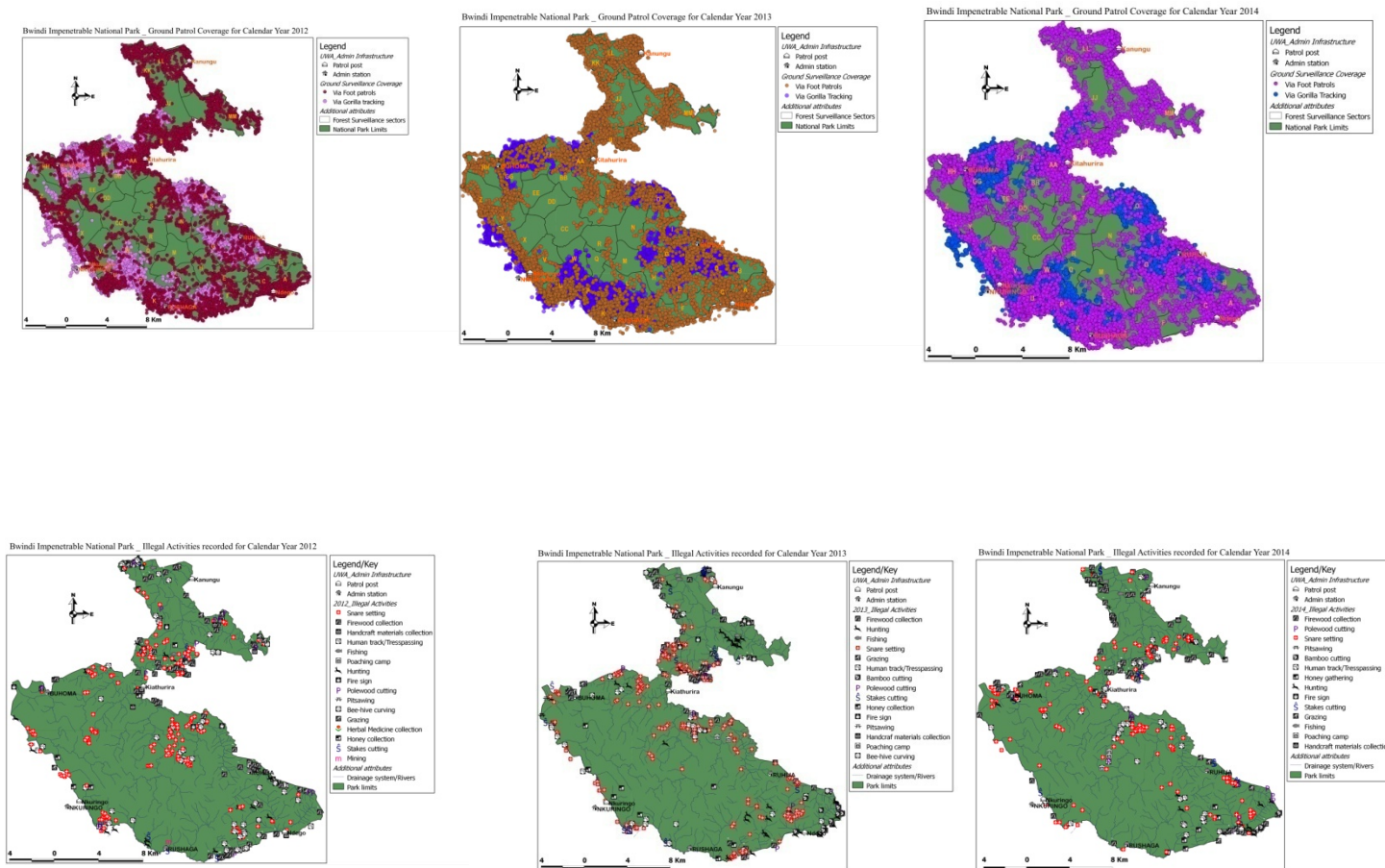
## *Monitoring of the property resources*

Monitoring of the site through the ranger based data collection has enabled the State Party to understand the illegal resource off-take better. Monthly patrol maps are generated to guide planning for the subsequent deployments. As has always been the case, poaching in Bwindi is done by wire snaring. The skill and ability to remove these snares serves as one of the key components in the resource management. The targeted

Bwindi Impenetrable National Park\_Illegal Activity sightings during Quarter ending June 2014



animals are duikers but accidentally other animals can be caught up in such traps including the mountain gorilla. The map (on the left side) shows illegal activities for the quarter April – June 2014. A clear observation here is the fact that snares are less in the southern sector as compared to the north. This is attributed to the tourism benefits associated with the southern where gorillas live. The northern sector doesn't have a resident gorilla group and communities therefore have no alternative tourism activities to occupy them. However, through community conservation awareness programs, the park management managed to convince some of the poachers in those areas to denounce poaching and surrendered their poaching equipment. We have now engaged them into a lucrative vegetable growing venture after giving them seed money as mentioned earlier.



The maps above indicate the overall patrol results over the three consecutive years 2012, 2013 and 2014. In 2014 the patrol coverage is much better than the previous years due to focused deployments. Out of the planned total of 204 extended (5-7days), 960 day (base) and 24 joint (with Uganda Peoples Defense Force along the border) patrols, the park management managed to implement 194 extended 804 day and 23 joint patrols (86% performance). A number of arrests were made with 17 individuals for various offences including 5 for poaching, 10 for firewood collection and 3 for grazing in the property. They were charged in the courts of law while a few were cautioned and released by the community resource users committees in the presence of the park staff. Overall, the level of poaching through

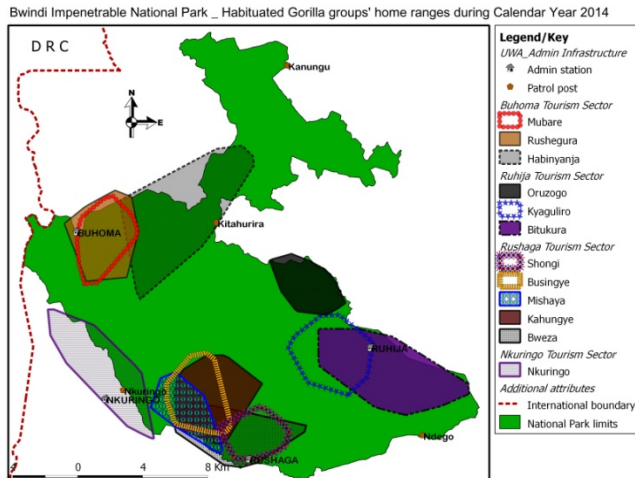


snaring is reducing. With increased staffing and better facilitation, more snares are being removed as the staff can now cover more areas

### Gorilla monitoring

The map below is a depiction of the work done in monitoring habituated gorillas. Their home ranges

have been established and individuals in the various families have been identified. The subsequent table shows the family composition. It should be noted that there are a number of dynamics within the families that have seen some of the members lost to unhabituated strong males that snatch them away from the weaker habituated males and vice versa.



### BWINDI -SUMMARY OF HABITUATED GORILLAS AS AT 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014

S/N	Gorilla group	SB	BB	AdF	SAd	Juv	Inf	Group Size
1	Mubare	01	00	04	03	02	02	12
2	Habinyanja	01	01	05	03	03	04	17
3	Rushegura	00	03	03	01	03	02	12
4	Kyaguliuro	02	02	07	01	01	07	20
5	Bitukura	04	02	03	01	02	02	14
6	Oruzogo	02	02	05	00	02	05	16
7	Nshongi	01	00	03	00	01	01	06
8	Bweza	01	05	02	01	01	01	11
9	Kahungye	02	04	05	04	05	04	24
10	Busingye	01	00	03	00	01	03	08
11	Bikyingyi/Mishaya	01	01	05	02	02	05	16*
12	Nkuringo	02	00	02	02	04	01	11
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>18</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>161</b>

SB – Silver back  
 BB – Black back  
 Adf – Adult female  
 Sad – Sub-adult  
 Juv – Juvenile  
 Inf - Infant

### ***Staffing***

The table below shows the level of staff in Bwindi over the years. It should be noted that the staffing levels have continued to improve contributing to better monitoring and protection of the site.

Source of data	Variable	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>Law enforcement</b>	No of law enforcement wardens	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2
	No of law enforcement rangers /swift/Police	30	30	30	42	59	59	58	96	88	123	123
	No of law enforcement patrol posts	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
<b>Monitoring</b>	No of monitoring wardens	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	No of monitoring rangers	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3
<b>MIST Data</b>	No of arrests	1	-	-	5	-	4	2	0	18	39	17
	No of patrol days	313	ND	ND	ND	ND	369	189	388	584	876	1021

All the above staff have been trained in various fields of park management including but not limited to law enforcement, guiding, community conservation, monitoring and data collection plus problem animal management. UWA will continue to equip its staff with the necessary knowledge for appropriate site management.

### **CURRENT THREATS AND SOLUTIONS**

#### ***Haphazard infrastructure developments at the WHS gateways***

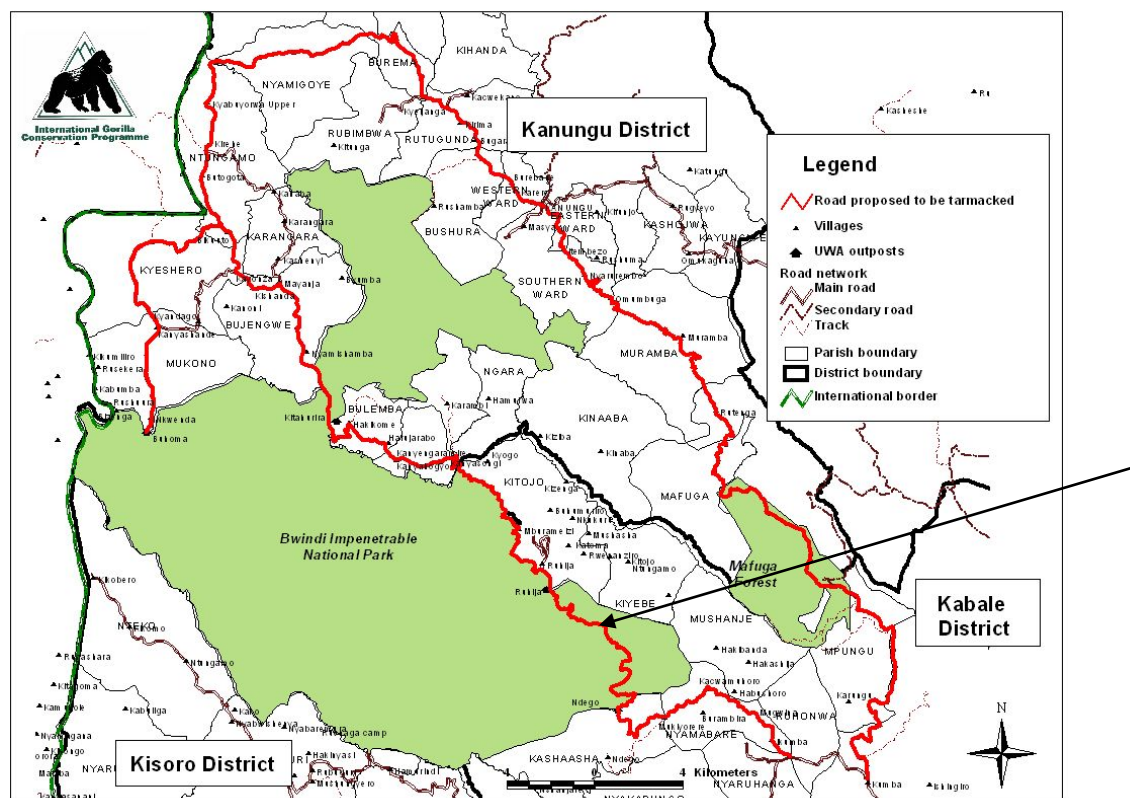
There are a total of 33 visitor facilities around the park with only one concession in the development area in Buhoma outside the gazetted area of the park. This is an eco-lodge that has minimal impact in the area. These facilities range from budget to high end targeting tourists. Four physical plans have been developed by the neighboring districts to enhance adequate placement of infrastructure in the area. It is important to note that this came at a time when most of the facilities had been established, a factor that describes tourism areas of Bwindi as villages of tourism facilities. The implementation of the fiscal plans seem to be slow due to lack of capacity by the respective local governments seems to be very slow as such developments at these entry points are still haphazard. Continuous discussions with the implementing stakeholders continue.

#### ***Threats from road proposed construction***

Communities at the southern part of the park have been pushing for a road through the park from Nteko to Buhoma park headquarters. So far this pressure has been contained following the earlier EIA report that indicated presence of substantial impact if the road is constructed. Much as the communities have continued to present this through their area Member of Parliament, the President of the republic of Uganda has continuously advised the communities to discard this idea and offered an alternative

along the international border outside Bwindi. This option is being explored. The park management has continued to sensitize the local politicians on this matter with particular reference to the impacts the road would create on the outstanding universal values if opened.

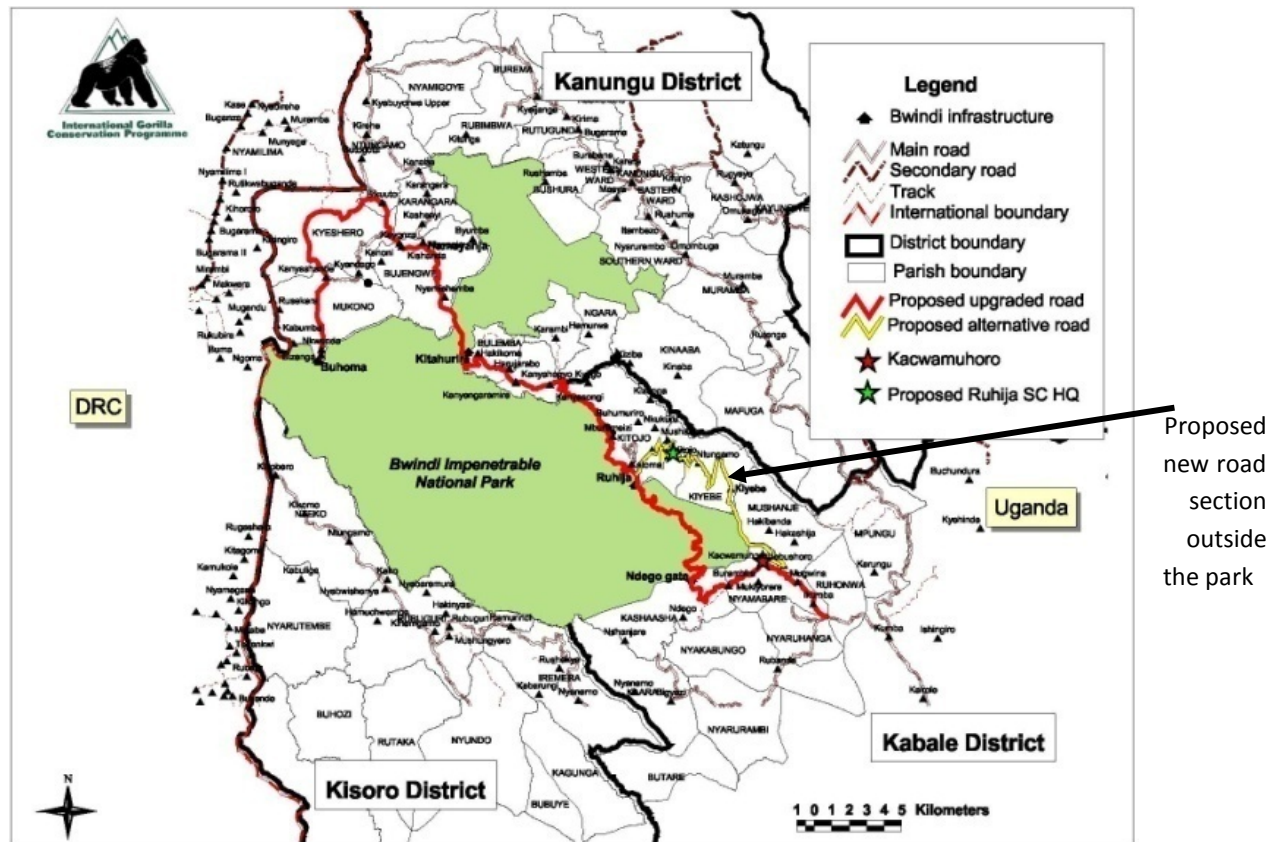
As one way of enhancing tourism accessibility to the Southern Uganda region, the government of Uganda is in the process of improving her road infrastructure throughout the country. One of such roads proposed for improvement is the Ruhija road through part of the park (marked with an arrow in the map below) This road currently exists and road surface is all murram and loam soil at moment. During rainy season, the road becomes impassible and tourists find it difficult to reach the site. The proposal by government of Uganda is to make it all weather to enhance tourism and avoid the impact of delays and constant grading of the same with heavy machinery every three months.



It must be noted here that the said road's designs are not yet done and government is still in the process of identifying funding for it.

UWA and its partner (the International Gorilla Conservation Program – IGCP) has commissioned a study on alternative routing for the same and have already come up with an option outside the park (see map below with yellow marked section) for the section marked with the arrow. This section will be discussed with the road authority before the designs are undertaken. It must be noted that the road section at the “neck” of the park has not been possible to divert considering the terrain and the location of Bwindi park Headquarters to the tourism sites. It should also be noted that apart from the section in Ruhija

(marked with the arrow) and that at the “neck” of the park, the rest of the road sections are outside the park.



The proposed option will have limited impact on the park OuV and will facilitate community development. The option inside the park will have little contribution to community benefit. The district leaderships have already bought in the idea and have written to reaffirm their support for a road outside bwindi. As is always the case, for such a project to be implemented, an EIA will be required. An additional paper will be mailed to give more insight on the proposed new option and the benefits that will accrue

### Poaching

Poaching in Bwindi is mainly by snaring. Despite the fact that the key species in Bwindi are not targeted, snares can accidentally trap an untargeted wildlife. Poaching has led to the snaring of a number of gorillas which have been rescued by our site-based vets. We shall continue with community sensitization, ranger monitoring and snare removal, rescues by veterinary staff and strengthening of the benefits to reduce this threat. It should be noted too that no Mt. Gorilla has ever died out of snaring as interventions have always been faster for those who are snared accidentally.

It is our hope that this brief will enhance understanding of WHC/ IUCN of the current status of BINP.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## **“GORILLA FRIENDLY” TOURISM ECOLABEL CERTIFICATION**



### Feasibility Report & Stakeholder Consultation Summary

Prepared by: Julie Stein



## Acknowledgments

This project was made possible by generous funding from WWF-Sweden. Without WWF-Sweden's financial support neither this report, nor the time-intensive but critical collaborative process of gathering stakeholder input across the Mountain Gorilla range states would have been possible. We are most grateful for WWF-Sweden's support.



The author would also like to extend her gratitude to the International Gorilla Conservation Programme (IGCP) whose vision and enthusiasm for this initiative was critical. Special thanks to Anna Behm Masozera, Stephen Asuma, Eugene Rurangwa, Anne-Marie Weeden, Dr. Liz Macfie, and to our Facilitator Alex Muhweezi, for their intellectual and logistical contributions to this effort, which were both substantial.



### About the International Gorilla Conservation Programme (IGCP)

IGCP is a coalition programme of Fauna & Flora International and WWF with the mission to conserve the critically endangered mountain gorillas and their habitat through partnering with key stakeholders while significantly contributing to sustainable livelihood development. IGCP operates in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, and Uganda.



### About the Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network (WFEN)

WFEN is a global network dedicated to the development and marketing of products, services and full value chains that conserve threatened wildlife while contributing to the economic vitality of rural communities. WFEN includes farmers, ranchers, conservationists, artisans, businesses, producers, harvesters and key decision makers whose mission is to protect wildlife in wild places, and on private lands in between, by certifying enterprises that assure people and nature not only coexist but thrive.

**Disclaimer:** The opinions and concepts expressed in this document are the responsibility of the author and do not necessarily represent the opinion of the sponsoring organizations.

**Published by: IGCP and WFEN**

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**Citation:** Stein, J. 2014. Gorilla Friendly Tourism Certification: Feasibility Report and Stakeholder Consultation Summary. IGCP and WFEN. 70 pp.

**Cover Photos:** “Guhonda,” the Silverback from the Sabyinyo Group, Volcanoes National Park and a young gorilla from that same group, women artisans and their crafts from the Virunga Artisans of Promotion Cooperative (COOPAV), Kinigi, Rwanda, a child living just outside the park edge and the ‘Buffalo Wall’ demarcating the boundary of Volcanoes National Park, Rwanda ©Julie Stein

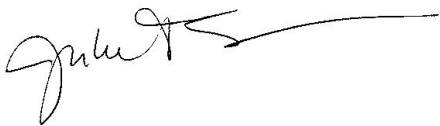
**Funded by:** WWF-Sweden

## Foreward

This effort began with a conversation in November of 2012 between the International Gorilla Conservation Programme and the Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network. The conversation has expanded over the past two years to include representatives from all of the major stakeholder groups involved in mountain gorilla tourism. We expect and hope that the conversation will continue to grow and will benefit from additional expertise and perspectives along the way. This is an initiative in which everyone, including and especially the focal stakeholder, mountain gorillas themselves, can benefit.

This report, a kind of situation analysis, represents a synthesis of the background trends, rationale, collaborative process, and stakeholder input to date, as well as the key challenges, opportunities and recommendations for next steps to advance these ideas. This is a living document and we expect the information contained here to reappear in a variety of formats and be utilized for various purposes in the months ahead. Mostly we hope it will serve as the foundation for more ideas, learning, and collaboration to preserve the iconic mountain gorilla, from whom we have much to learn, for the next generation and into the future. We truly believe in the power of consumers to change the world.

Nota Bene: While at the time of this work we were not able to include a roundtable or conduct stakeholder consultations within the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), this conspicuous absence is not by design but is rather dictated by the current conditions on the ground. Inclusion of DRC and a transboundary approach is implied throughout this document and our work there will take place at the first available opportunity.



Julie Stein  
Executive Director  
Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network

## Executive Summary

Mountain gorillas represent a culturally, ecologically and economically important resource to the three range countries where they occur, as well as holding significant value for tourists globally. Yet while tourism has provided an economic incentive to preserve mountain gorillas and their habitat to date, they remain critically endangered and are extremely vulnerable to disease transmission, armed conflict, poaching, illegal trade in live infants, and habitat degradation. In addition, tourists have high expectations about their 'bucket list' gorilla trekking experience due to a variety of circumstances ranging from social media depictions to the cost of travel. The incentive structure currently in place for all stakeholders in the mountain gorilla tourism industry, an industry which is based on providing exceptional customer service, rewards tour operators<sup>1</sup> who meet tourists' expectations and demands. This proposed "Gorilla Friendly" tourism certification label would be designed to meet the needs of all key stakeholders by recalibrating the incentive structure, and helping to 'reset' tourist expectations through an educational program that empowers tourists (and Rangers and the tourism sector) to become more integrated *partners* in conservation. The initiative will build on an existing foundation of enabling policies and legislation and will incorporate related tourism opportunities to provide tangible benefits to all stakeholders including encouraging longer visitor stays, lower impact tourism, and by offering increased opportunities to support local communities all through authentic experiences that increasingly sophisticated tourists seek. Further the certification will create the incentives necessary to meet best practice guidelines through self-regulation, in place of or as a compliment to, government regulation, in order to assure that we preserve mountain gorillas for future generations. There are many 'points of impact' where a certification program could help to set realistic tourist expectations through multi-media and participatory education while simultaneously working to grow the tourism market share in the range countries and to reduce impact on mountain gorillas.

### A Symptom of a Problem: An Opportunity Presented

In the experience of IGCP, gorilla conservation organizations are routinely contacted by both potential tourists and tour operators. Incoming tourists ask for recommendations on tour operators that do "the right thing," and tour operators ask conservation organizations for endorsement through the use of the organization's logo or links from or to websites, for example.

This signals that if there were an appropriate ecolabel grounded in established best practice and recognized in the marketplace, it would serve to reassure the responsible tourist as well as provide a credible way to recognize and endorse the responsible service provider.

The ecolabel presents an opportunity by not only rewarding those that already engage in best practice, but also by incentivizing continued improvement of standards and practice all though self-regulation which is often more efficient and effective than government regulation and enforcement. Sometimes a carrot works better than a stick.

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<sup>1</sup> With 'operators' in this case including Park Rangers, drivers, guides, and the full mountain gorilla tourism value chain.

“Gorilla Friendly” tourism certification offers the possibility to distinguish companies that provide direct benefits to mountain gorillas, an umbrella species whose protection, by definition, also protects many other species of plants and animals, and who support the park edge communities as part of their business model. The potential benefits to the governments of the gorilla range states, the private sector, communities and the environment are detailed in this report. The vision for a “Gorilla Friendly” tourism certification is that it would provide the opportunity for continuous improvement of best practices creating change on the ground so that even existing excellent tour operations can be improved and recognized. In addition, this “Gorilla Friendly” certification will serve as a benchmark for best practices that non-certified operations can measure themselves against and ideally work towards to gain certification themselves, thus providing the possibility of improving standards for all tour and hospitality operations raising the bar and initiating an important conversation in the range states. “Gorilla Friendly” tourism certification will empower consumers to create change on the ground by putting in place incentives for the protection of one of the world’s most critically endangered species; providing increased economic opportunities for some of the least economically advantaged park edge communities; and contributing to the conservation of one of the most spectacular and bio-diverse landscapes in the world.

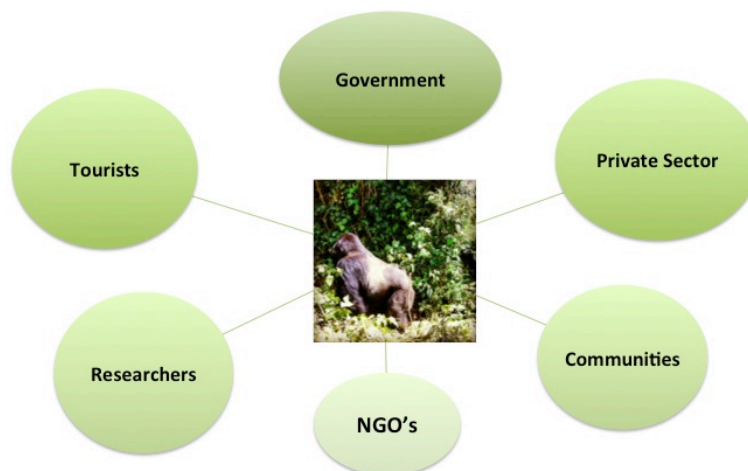
Based on the explorations detailed in this feasibility study, “Gorilla Friendly” tourism certification should:

- ✓ **Be guided by the principles of:**
  - Affordability
  - Equity
  - Sustainability
  - Creating a competitive advantage
  - Harmonization
  - Professionalism
- ✓ **Define and secure sustainable long-term funding mechanisms**
- ✓ **Be voluntary so that it encourages innovation and willing adherence to certification standards through self regulation**
- ✓ **The certification body will have an international reputation with global expertise and a network focused on wildlife, specifically endangered species and communities, with the credibility and capacity to market the brand**
- ✓ **Standards must include criteria that apply to all private sector and government participants that impact mountain gorillas**



- ✓ **The initiative must be transboundary and harmonized across range states (DRC to be included when possible)**
- ✓ **Standards must reflect best practices for mountain gorilla tourism**
- ✓ **Lodges and operators *outside* of mountain gorilla range or those who want to incorporate other aspects of sustainable tourism can adopt the established Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) criteria and build on those**
- ✓ **Perspectives of all stakeholder groups need to be considered in decision making and representative governance structures**
- ✓ **Must include both small and large private sector companies equally**
- ✓ **Ensure monitoring and evaluation protocols in place**
- ✓ **Ensure nondiscrimination, fairness and objectivity**
- ✓ **Avoid conflicts of interest**
- ✓ **Ensure neutrality and transparency**

### Stakeholders for “Gorilla Friendly” Certification



# **“GORILLA FRIENDLY” TOURISM ECOLABEL CERTIFICATION**



## **Feasibility Report & Stakeholder Consultation Summary**

Prepared by: Julie Stein



## Acknowledgments

This project was made possible by generous funding from WWF-Sweden. Without WWF-Sweden's financial support neither this report, nor the time-intensive but critical collaborative process of gathering stakeholder input across the Mountain Gorilla range states would have been possible. We are most grateful for WWF-Sweden's support.



The author would also like to extend her gratitude to the International Gorilla Conservation Programme (IGCP) whose vision and enthusiasm for this initiative was critical. Special thanks to Anna Behm Masozera, Stephen Asuma, Eugene Rurangwa, Anne-Marie Weeden, Dr. Liz Macfie, and to our Facilitator Alex Muhweezi, for their intellectual and logistical contributions to this effort, which were both substantial.



### About the International Gorilla Conservation Programme (IGCP)

IGCP is a coalition programme of Fauna & Flora International and WWF with the mission to conserve the critically endangered mountain gorillas and their habitat through partnering with key stakeholders while significantly contributing to sustainable livelihood development. IGCP operates in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, and Uganda.



### About the Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network (WFEN)

WFEN is a global network dedicated to the development and marketing of products, services and full value chains that conserve threatened wildlife while contributing to the economic vitality of rural communities. WFEN includes farmers, ranchers, conservationists, artisans, businesses, producers, harvesters and key decision makers whose mission is to protect wildlife in wild places, and on private lands in between, by certifying enterprises that assure people and nature not only coexist but thrive.

**Disclaimer:** The opinions and concepts expressed in this document are the responsibility of the author and do not necessarily represent the opinion of the sponsoring organizations.

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**Cover Photos:** “Guhonda,” the Silverback from the Sabyinyo Group, Volcanoes National Park and a young gorilla from that same group, women artisans and their crafts from the Virunga Artisans of Promotion Cooperative (COOPAV), Kinigi, Rwanda, a child living just outside the park edge and the ‘Buffalo Wall’ demarcating the boundary of Volcanoes National Park, Rwanda ©Julie Stein

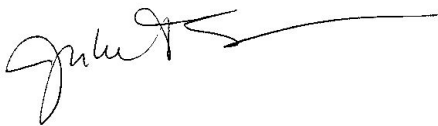
**Funded by:** WWF-Sweden

## Foreward

This effort began with a conversation in November of 2012 between the International Gorilla Conservation Programme and the Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network. The conversation has expanded over the past two years to include representatives from all of the major stakeholder groups involved in mountain gorilla tourism. We expect and hope that the conversation will continue to grow and will benefit from additional expertise and perspectives along the way. This is an initiative in which everyone, including and especially the focal stakeholder, mountain gorillas themselves, can benefit.

This report, a kind of situation analysis, represents a synthesis of the background trends, rationale, collaborative process, and stakeholder input to date, as well as the key challenges, opportunities and recommendations for next steps to advance these ideas. This is a living document and we expect the information contained here to reappear in a variety of formats and be utilized for various purposes in the months ahead. Mostly we hope it will serve as the foundation for more ideas, learning, and collaboration to preserve the iconic mountain gorilla, from whom we have much to learn, for the next generation and into the future. We truly believe in the power of consumers to change the world.

Nota Bene: While at the time of this work we were not able to include a roundtable or conduct stakeholder consultations within the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), this conspicuous absence is not by design but is rather dictated by the current conditions on the ground. Inclusion of DRC and a transboundary approach is implied throughout this document and our work there will take place at the first available opportunity.



Julie Stein  
Executive Director  
Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network



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## Acronyms

ACNR	Association for Conservation of Natural Resources
AUTO	Association of Uganda Tour Operators
AWF	African Wildlife Foundation
CBO	Community Based Organization
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DFGFI	Diana Fossey Gorilla Fund International
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
FFI	Flora and Fauna International
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GRASP	Great Apes Survival Partnership
GSTC	Global Sustainable Tourism Council
GVTC	Great Virunga Transboundary Collaboration
ICCN	Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature (DRC)
IGCP	International Gorilla Conservation Programme
ISEAL	International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labeling
ITFC	Institute of Tropical Forest Conservation
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
MGVP	Mountain Gorilla Veterinary Project (aka Gorilla Doctors)
MINICOM	Ministry of Commerce (Rwanda)
MTWA	Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities (Uganda)
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
PSG	Primate Specialist Group
RDB	Rwanda Development Board
RHA	Rwanda Hospitality Association
RTC	Rwanda Tourism College
RTTA	Rwanda Tourism and Travel Association
SSC	Species Survival Commission
TGO	The Gorilla Organization
TIES	The International Ecotourism Society
UTA	Uganda Tourist Association
UWA	Uganda Wildlife Authority
WCS	Wildlife Conservation Society
WFEN	Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature
WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council

## Executive Summary

Mountain gorillas represent a culturally, ecologically and economically important resource to the three range countries where they occur, as well as holding significant value for tourists globally. Yet while tourism has provided an economic incentive to preserve mountain gorillas and their habitat to date, they remain critically endangered and are extremely vulnerable to disease transmission, armed conflict, poaching, illegal trade in live infants, and habitat degradation. In addition, tourists have high expectations about their ‘bucket list’ gorilla trekking experience due to a variety of circumstances ranging from social media depictions to the cost of travel. The incentive structure currently in place for all stakeholders in the mountain gorilla tourism industry, an industry which is based on providing exceptional customer service, rewards tour operators<sup>1</sup> who meet tourists’ expectations and demands. This proposed “Gorilla Friendly” tourism certification label would be designed to meet the needs of all key stakeholders by recalibrating the incentive structure, and helping to ‘reset’ tourist expectations through an educational program that empowers tourists (and Rangers and the tourism sector) to become more integrated *partners* in conservation. The initiative will build on an existing foundation of enabling policies and legislation and will incorporate related tourism opportunities to provide tangible benefits to all stakeholders including encouraging longer visitor stays, lower impact tourism, and by offering increased opportunities to support local communities all through authentic experiences that increasingly sophisticated tourists seek. Further the certification will create the incentives necessary to meet best practice guidelines through self-regulation, in place of or as a compliment to, government regulation, in order to assure that we preserve mountain gorillas for future generations. There are many ‘points of impact’ where a certification program could help to set realistic tourist expectations through multi-media and participatory education while simultaneously working to grow the tourism market share in the range countries and to reduce impact on mountain

### **A Symptom of a Problem: An Opportunity Presented**

In the experience of IGCP, gorilla conservation organizations are routinely contacted by both potential tourists and tour operators. Incoming tourists ask for recommendations on tour operators that do “the right thing,” and tour operators ask conservation organizations for endorsement through the use of the organization’s logo or links from or to websites, for example.

This signals that if there were an appropriate ecolabel grounded in established best practice and recognized in the marketplace, it would serve to reassure the responsible tourist as well as provide a credible way to recognize and endorse the responsible service provider.

The ecolabel presents an opportunity by not only rewarding those that already engage in best practice, but also by incentivizing continued improvement of standards and practice all though self-regulation which is often more efficient and effective than government regulation and enforcement. Sometimes a carrot works better than a stick.

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<sup>1</sup> With ‘operators’ in this case including Park Rangers, drivers, guides, and the full mountain gorilla tourism value chain.

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## **Introduction**

A major component to the 'success story' of mountain gorilla conservation has been the development of gorilla-based tourism in Uganda, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo over the last 30 years. Tourism has provided an economic incentive to both national and local governments, and to communities living near the parks, to protect and conserve mountain gorillas and their habitat.

Mountain gorilla tourism, has been so successful in fact, it is often cited as a model example of ecotourism globally and is offered as a case study for how wildlife centered tourism can incentivize communities and governments to protect and preserve both wildlife and habitat by giving threatened and endangered species more value alive than dead, making them an engine of prosperity rather than an obstacle to livelihoods and food security.

But in this case the economic growth is based on a vulnerable and critically endangered subspecies. The IUCN Red List entry for Mountain Gorillas states

that there is a distinct possibility that this gorilla subspecies (*Gorilla beringei beringei*) could experience a 25% reduction in the next generation of ~20 years due to the continued threats posed by poaching and illegal killings, the continuing political instability of the DRC region of the Virunga Volcanoes, and the risk of disease transmission by humans or unregulated incursions into the gorillas' habitat (Robbins et al. 2008).

A unique aspect of gorilla behavior has contributed to making gorilla trekking so successful and a 'bucket list' item for many global citizens, and that is that gorillas are relatively easy to 'habituate' to the presence of people, enabling tourists to spend extended time in their immediate presence without causing the flight response typical of wild animals. Habituation is not without its costs however. Once gorillas have been habituated they are more vulnerable to poaching and must be protected in perpetuity. Each group of habituated mountain gorillas is now continuously guarded by a separate team of field staff during daylight hours and receives veterinary treatment in cases when entrapped in snares or traps, respiratory disease, and other life-threatening conditions. Yet these extreme efforts have yielded a conservation pay off. While still designated as critically endangered, mountain gorillas are the only great ape subspecies whose numbers in the wild are growing, in large part according to experts, precisely because of the extreme measures afforded to habituated gorillas. Past research examining the entire gorilla population in the Virunga Volcanoes Massif shows that over a 22-year period the number of habituated gorillas, which constitute approximately 70% of the overall population, *increased* by 4.1% annually while the number of unhabituated gorillas *decreased* by 0.7% annually. The most recent census<sup>2</sup> showed an increase in non-habituated mountain gorillas in this population but it was significantly lower than the habituated groups. The difference in these growth rates was attributed to the fact that habituated gorillas benefit from what is being called "extreme conservation" interventions which include this regime of close daily monitoring and veterinary care.<sup>3</sup> These results suggest that conventional conservation efforts prevented a severe decline of the overall population, but additional extreme measures were needed to achieve positive growth. The authors point out the enormous and ongoing cost of saving critically endangered mountain gorillas (Robbins et al. 2011). Fortunately, habituated mountain gorillas, as a flagship species, attract large numbers of international tourists and as a result are making significant contributions to the prosperity of Uganda and Rwanda as well as drawing

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<sup>2</sup> From the period 2003 to 2010, habituated mountain gorillas experienced a 4.7% annual growth rate compared to 0.9% for the unhabituated gorillas in the population of mountain gorillas in the Virunga Massif (Grey et al. 2011, Virunga Massif Mountain Gorilla Census – 2010 Summary Report).

<sup>3</sup> Groups engaged in regular gorilla monitoring and administering veterinary care include conservation organizations like Gorilla Doctors, Dianne Fossey Gorilla Fund International and US, IGCP and others.

attention to the afro-montane habitat upon which many other species and human communities depend for their survival.

For example, according to the most recent figures from the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), the total contribution of all travel and tourism (which includes 'indirect and induced' tourism spending<sup>4</sup>) was 8.8% of the GDP of Uganda and 7.5% of Rwanda in 2012 with both figures expected to grow in 2013 by 3.2% and 5.7% respectively (WTTC 2013). In Rwanda tourism export receipts routinely exceed revenues from the country's primary exports of coffee, tea and minerals (Nielsen & Spenceley 2010; Government of Rwanda 2011). In addition tourism is Rwanda's largest foreign exchange earner with \$282 million earned in 2012.<sup>5</sup> According to the Rwanda Development Board (RDB) 90% of the receipts RDB receives from park entrance fees are a direct result of mountain gorilla tourism.<sup>6</sup>

Rwanda has built on this success by instituting the annual Gorilla Naming Ceremony, or *Kwita Izina*, during which all baby gorillas born in the previous year are named. Equal parts cultural tradition and marketing opportunity, the Kwita Izina attracts luminaries such as the President of Rwanda, Ted Turner and Bill Gates, all of whom have participated in the naming of baby gorillas in past years (Nielsen & Spenceley 2010).

In neighboring Uganda, Bwindi Impenetrable National Park is home to nearly one-half of the world's remaining mountain gorillas. Gorilla tracking is the highest revenue generating tourism activity in Uganda and takes place in both Bwindi and Mgahinga Gorilla National Parks. World Wildlife Fund (WWF) estimates that each habituated mountain gorilla generates approximately \$1 million per year in tourist dollars for the Ugandan economy.<sup>7</sup> According to figures from the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities, the sector fetched Uganda between \$800 million to \$1 billion in 2012 and over 70% of the revenue from tourism in Uganda comes from gorilla tracking.<sup>8</sup> Based on World Bank research on Ugandan

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<sup>4</sup> The *total* contribution of travel and tourism to the economy includes *indirect* and *induced* tourism spending which supports Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and jobs. Purchases of aircraft, hotels tourism marketing and promotion, aviation, administration, security services, resort area security services, resort area sanitation services, food and cleaning services by hotels, of fuel and catering services by airlines, and IT services by travel agents fall into these categories.

<sup>5</sup> See "Rwanda's Parks See Increased Visits and Tourism Receipts Grow, Rwanda Development Board Press Release, 4 Sept 2013, <http://www.rdb.rw/news-pages/news-details/article/rwandas-parks-see-increased-visits-and-tourism-receipts-grow.html>

<sup>6</sup> Rica Rwigamba, Head of Tourism and Conservation, Department of Rwanda Development Board (RDB), *Rwanda Mountain Gorillas - We Name Them Because They Are Important*. See <http://allafrica.com/stories/201306181215.html?page=2>,

<sup>7</sup> Arrests made in Uganda Mountain Gorilla Death, WWF, 22 June 2011 <http://wwf.panda.org/?200728/Arrests-made-in-Uganda-mountain-gorilla-death>

<sup>8</sup> See Uganda: Gorilla War, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201308190115.html?page=2>

tourism in 2012 wildlife safaris (37%) and gorilla viewing (27%) were the most popular activities for leisure tourists visiting the country. In addition for every \$1 of expenditure by a foreign tourist, on average, another \$2.5 of GDP is generated through indirect value added along the supply chain plus the induced effects of household spending of wages generated from tourism (Hamilton & Schmidt 2013). During the high tourism seasons of June to September and December to February, the occupancy rate ranges between 70% and 100%, but this falls to about 20% during the low tourism seasons. This seasonality in booking rate in Uganda presents an opportunity for increasing low season booking rates. On average UWA sells about 75% of its available permits (Ministry of Trade, Wildlife & Heritage 2012).

Gorilla tourism significantly contributes to local and national economies throughout the mountain gorilla range states, and continues to grow. An average tourist to Bwindi Impenetrable National Park in Uganda, of which there were 20,479 in 2013 (Uganda Wildlife Authority 2013) spends, on average, 172 USD per day in addition to park permits (The World Bank 2013). Further the multiplier effect from each tourist to the national GDP is estimated at 2.5 (The World Bank 2013).

Compared to neighboring countries such as Kenya and Tanzania, in Uganda and Rwanda tourism is still a developing sector and both countries have expressed a desire to increase their respective market shares in the tourism sector, to diversify their portfolios for nature tourism, and to extend visitor stays in order to reach their full potential as tourism destinations. Both countries acknowledge the importance of tourism to economic stability and growth, revenue and foreign exchange generation, job creation and employment. Recommended approaches to reach these goals in both countries have included greater protection of wildlife and habitat against poaching and other threats, increased collaboration and public/private partnerships, targeted marketing and branding and the development of 'distinctive' wildlife and ecotourism products, and better training opportunities for those working in the tourism and hospitality sectors (Republic of Rwanda Ministry of Trade and Industry 2009, Weiss & Messerli 2012, and Hamilton & Schmidt 2013).

In the context of mountain gorillas, conservation and tourism profits (both for communities and the private sector) are inextricably linked. Without the monetary incentives for gorilla conservation, gorilla populations would not likely be increasing, and achieving even stable populations would be a challenge. Arguably, neither mountain gorillas nor tourism in this region have a future without the other. But tourism, even when well managed, undoubtedly poses a certain health risk to the gorillas. Reconciling the demand for tourist dollars with the needs and health of the gorillas is a delicate balancing act. The key is to minimize the risk of disease transmission and to avoid disrupting the gorillas' natural behaviour. Accordingly, tourists must abide by very strict rules. Gradual

harmonization of such rules and regulations across all four parks (Bwindi, Mgahinga, Volcanoes and Park National des Virungas) is paving the way for the development of a regional tourism programme.

**Figure 1 Transboundary Mountain Gorilla Habitat**



Source: IGCP

So while tourism is one of the priority conservation strategies to save mountain gorillas, not to mention its importance to both regional and national economies, it is widely acknowledged that tourism could contribute to the decline of the species if a tragedy struck due to poor management, or if other aspects of the species and habitat protection (law enforcement, for example) were not maintained. How and where can safeguards be put in place to protect this rare, fragile and valuable resource?

There are a wide range of stakeholders as well as tourist entry points along the mountain gorilla tourism value chain and as a result many possible 'points of impact.' At each of these nodes there are also currently untapped opportunities for environmental education and best practices to be implemented by the full range of stakeholders which will support both park edge communities and mountain gorilla conservation. In many cases tourist expectations are set before they even book their trip based on word-of-mouth communications from friends, family, social and other media, and the Internet. Yet to know how to reach these tourists or to put standards in place one needs to understand more about the tourism sector itself.

## The Ecosystem of Ecotourism

Various sub-types of tourism are currently being defined and promoted by private sector associations and NGO entities such as 'Responsible,' 'Philanthropic,' 'Cultural,' Conservation,' 'Community-based' and 'Adventure' tourism to name a

few. Where does an idea like “Gorilla Friendly” tourism fit into this spectrum? Sustainable Tourism, and Ecotourism, with the latter now considered to be a subset of the former, emerged as concepts in the 1970’s and 1980’s, helped spawn these more recent tourism offshoots, and so are a good place to begin.

*Ecotourism* is defined by The World Ecotourism Society (TIES) as “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people” (TIES 1990). The TIES adds the following principles to their definition:

Ecotourism is about *uniting conservation, communities, and sustainable travel*. This means that those who implement and participate in ecotourism activities should incorporate the following ecotourism principles:

- ✓ Minimize impact;
- ✓ Build environmental and cultural awareness and respect;
- ✓ Provide positive experiences for both visitors and hosts;
- ✓ Provide direct financial benefits for conservation;
- ✓ Provide financial benefits and empowerment for local people;
- ✓ Raise sensitivity to host countries' political, environmental, and social climate.<sup>9</sup>

These are all laudable goals worth pursuing. However ‘direct financial benefits for conservation,’ while important, are often not enough. In the case of a critically endangered, endemic and slow to mature/late to reproduce species with a regional economy built around it, any related tourism program must put guidelines in place to mitigate all potentially harmful impacts from tourism. These guidelines should define best practices and promote an overall precautionary approach with input from the world’s experts on mountain gorilla health, biology, behavior and ecology. This is what is being proposed through a “Gorilla Friendly” certification program which will incorporate elements of the above definition for ecotourism but go beyond.

Moving from ecotourism to sustainable tourism, many of the existing criteria and standard setting programs are focused on sustainability and social responsibility writ large such as low impact ‘green’ lodging, energy efficiency, recycling, water conservation, and waste disposal, or have a focus on preservation of cultural heritage, providing education and fostering respect of other cultures, as well as economic empowerment. If there are criteria governing interactions with wildlife they are often kept broad to enable them to be globally applicable. For example the Global Sustainable Tourism Council’s (GSTC) newly released criteria

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<sup>9</sup>See <http://www.ecotourism.org/what-is-ecotourism> but there are many other extant variations on this definition as well.

(Version 2 released Feb 2012) provide an excellent baseline for both destinations<sup>10</sup> and hotels and tour operators.<sup>11</sup> These criteria are a response of the tourism community to the global challenges of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals which focus on poverty alleviation and environmental sustainability – including climate change – as the primary cross-cutting issues addressed throughout the criteria. The GSTC criteria were developed with the following uses in mind:

- Serve as basic guidelines for businesses of all sizes to become more sustainable, and help businesses choose sustainable tourism programs that fulfill these global criteria;
- Serve as guidance for travel agencies in choosing suppliers and sustainable tourism programs;
- Help consumers identify sound sustainable tourism programs and businesses;
- Serve as a common denominator for information media to recognize sustainable tourism providers;
- Help certification and other voluntary programs ensure that their standards meet a broadly-accepted baseline;
- Offer governmental, non-governmental, and private sector programs a starting point for developing sustainable tourism requirements; and
- Serve as basic guidelines for education and training bodies, such as hotel schools and universities.

As GSTC points out:

The criteria indicate what should be done, not how to do it or whether the goal has been achieved. This role is fulfilled by performance indicators, associated educational materials, and access to tools for implementation, all of which are an indispensable complement to the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria.<sup>12</sup>

The criteria in section D3 of the GSTC standards for Hotels and Tour Operators relate specifically to “Conserving biodiversity, ecosystems, and landscapes” as follows:

D3.1 Wildlife species are not harvested, consumed, displayed, sold, or traded, except as part of a regulated activity that ensures that

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<sup>10</sup>See <http://www.gstcouncil.org/sustainable-tourism-gstc-criteria/criteria-for-destinations.html>

<sup>11</sup> See <http://www.gstcouncil.org/sustainable-tourism-gstc-criteria/criteria-for-hotels-and-tour-operators.html>

<sup>12</sup> See <http://www.gstcouncil.org/sustainable-tourism-gstc-criteria/criteria-for-hotels-and-tour-operators.html>



their utilization is sustainable, and in compliance with local to international laws.

D3.2 No captive wildlife is held, except for properly regulated activities, in compliance with local to international law. Living specimens of protected and wildlife species are only kept by those authorized and suitably equipped to house and care for them humanely.

D3.3 The organization takes measures to avoid the introduction of invasive alien species. Native species are used for landscaping and restoration wherever feasible, particularly in natural landscapes.

D3.4 The organization supports and contributes to biodiversity conservation, including natural protected areas and areas of high biodiversity value.

D3.5 Interactions with wildlife, taking into account cumulative impacts, do not produce adverse effects on the viability and behavior of populations in the wild. Any disturbance of natural ecosystems is minimized, rehabilitated, and there is a compensatory contribution to conservation management.<sup>13</sup>

As GSTC points out this is a baseline from which to build and provides a starting point for tourism best practices with respect to wildlife that is widely applicable across species, regions, and ecosystems. Our goal is to build on these with species-specific expert recommendations from the IUCN/SSC PSG Best Practice Guidelines for Great Ape Tourism (Macfie & Williamson 2010) for critically endangered mountain gorillas.<sup>14</sup>

While definitions and standards above point to important components of an ecotourism or sustainable tourism certification that address some of the negative unintended consequences of the industry there is no extant tourism certification label that focuses specifically on critically endangered wildlife while also incorporating many of the above principles. In addition, there are considerations that are unique to mountain gorillas and their transboundary management that is not 'one size fits all' and which require a custom approach. This is a rare 'resource' which requires a highly specific standard. Our goal is that "Gorilla Friendly" tourism certification would encompass the key principles of ecotourism as well as building on the wildlife principles from GSTC's sustainable tourism

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<sup>13</sup> See <http://www.gstcouncil.org/sustainable-tourism-gstc-criteria/criteria-for-hotels-and-tour-operators.html>

<sup>14</sup> Available from: [http://www.iucn.org/knowledge/publications\\_doc/publications/?6052/Best-practice-guidelines-for-great-ape-tourism](http://www.iucn.org/knowledge/publications_doc/publications/?6052/Best-practice-guidelines-for-great-ape-tourism)

criteria listed above but *go beyond* those by also delivering conservation results for a species in peril around whom economies are based. We would propose adding the following bullet to the ecotourism definition to bring it closer to a new model for what could be called “Wildlife Friendly Tourism:”

D3.6 Work with experts to draft and implement best practice tourism guidelines, standards and criteria to protect any endangered or threatened species potentially impacted by tourists and the tourism industry.

This approach would need to be context specific in response to the wildlife present at specific sites and around protected areas or critical habitat.

Global markets for tourism, however, depend on global consumers. It is important to understand both historical and current trends and worldviews of the target consumer for ecotourism, nature tourism and “Wildlife Friendly” tourism.

## **Current Consumer Trends**

The concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) arose in the late 1960’s through 70’s and is a form of self-regulation by companies to hold themselves to a higher standard through self defined ethical norms with the idea that doing so is not only good for people and the planet but may in fact lead to greater long term profits. This new business model of ‘doing well by doing good’ and attending to the Triple Bottom Line (people, planet and profit) together with a world where access to information has tipped the balance of power towards global consumers is still evolving and has lead to the following trends:

1. Increasing demand from educated consumers for globally available information about the goods and services (like tourism) that they purchase with limited disposable income;
2. A growing desire by companies and governments to demonstrate environmental and social responsibility in an easy-to-understand, shorthand form;
3. A need by the private sector to differentiate themselves & promote their products and services in a crowded consumer marketplace.

In their recent book “The Responsible Company,” Patagonia founder Yvon Chouinard and his nephew, Vincent Stanley explain:

In this light, a responsible company owes a return not only to stockholders but to something that has come to be called stakeholders, entities dependent on or beholden to the company, but also on which the

company depends. In addition to stockholders, there are four key stakeholders: Employees, customers, communities, and nature.

This approach is increasingly part of the new business model, and of the cost of doing business, for good companies. These trends have led to the popularity of certification labels because they add an additional layer of transparency and credibility as well as an easy way for companies to quickly showcase their CSR efforts to consumers with an already short attention span who are sifting through the marketing noise in order to make informed purchasing decisions.

Who is this new consumer and how do we reach him/her? A new global consumer study called “The 2013 Aspirational Consumer Index” drawing from a telephone and in-person survey of 21,492 consumers across 21 international markets conducted in April 2013 confirms the rise of nearly 2.5 billion consumers globally who are uniting style, social status and sustainability values to redefine their consumption. Dubbed *Aspirationals*, Raphael Bemporad of BBMG, a brand innovation firm and a partner in the research, explains that this consumer segment is “driven by young, optimistic consumers in emerging markets ... amplified by technology and social media’s influence, Aspirationals represent a powerful shift in sustainable consumption from obligation to desire.”<sup>15</sup>

Comprising 36.4% of the global population, Aspirationals offer an important opportunity to redefine sustainable consumption. Companies can engage them to “pioneer new models and practices that can deliver economic growth while reducing negative impacts on the environment.”<sup>16</sup>

Aspirationals can be defined as:

- Empowered consumers who believe they can change how a company behaves through their purchasing decisions (78%);
- Trusting of global companies to act in the best interests of society (58%);
- Positive Influencers encouraging others to buy from socially and environmentally responsible companies (88%);
- Believing they need to consume less to preserve the environment for future generations (92%) and are willing to pay more for products produced in socially and environmentally responsible way (91%);
- Strong in emerging markets including China (46%), Nigeria (45%), Pakistan (44%), India (42%), Australia (41%), Canada (40%), Indonesia

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<sup>15</sup> See <http://bbmg.com/news/obligation-desire-2-5-billion-aspirational-consumers-mark-shift-sustainable-consumption/>

<sup>16</sup> Mark Lee, Executive Director at SustainAbility, another partner in the research study, in *From Obligation to Desire: 2.5 Billion Aspirational Consumers Mark Shift in Sustainable Consumption*, <http://bbmg.com/news/obligation-desire-2-5-billion-aspirational-consumers-mark-shift-sustainable-consumption/>

(38%), Greece (37%), France (36%), USA (36%), Turkey (35%) and the UK (34%).<sup>17</sup>

For a glimpse into the worldview of 21<sup>st</sup> century consumers some wisdom from John Marshall Roberts, a behavioral scientist and expert on worldview thinking, who believes people are increasingly looking to purchase products and services from brands who care about them, about their impact on the world, and about anything, other than simply the bottom line. For companies that care, says Roberts, people will pay extra:

“The secret is understanding the worldview structure of target audiences. People are not behaviorally driven by demographics. They are driven by resonant values, metaphors and the emotions these bring. Worldviews show us exactly what these deeper triggers are for a person or group. Without this sort of understanding, we are left using left-brain logic that may or may not resonate at a heart level...As the economy continues it's strange ways in the 21st century, people are increasingly valuing experience over materialism. Money is important, but money isn't everything. It's a tool for living life fully and enjoying one's experience as much as possible. An extra dollar spent on a brand that resonates at that deeper level can often bring people a sense of peace, comfort and hope with value that far exceeds a dollar.”<sup>18</sup>

Interestingly, these ideas were echoed when our planning team<sup>19</sup> spoke with gorilla trekkers about their experience. Informal interviews were conducted with 16 self-selected tourists in October of 2013 just before heading into Volcanoes National Park, Rwanda, for a morning of gorilla trekking. While not a scientific study nor a randomized sample, the responses do support the sentiments expressed above about who these wildlife viewing or nature tourists are and what is important to them. When asked “*If you had a choice between a “Gorilla Friendly” tour company or lodge and one that was not certified would that influence your booking decision and why?*” almost all of the gorilla trekkers interviewed (15 responded ‘yes,’ 1 responded ‘not sure’) indicated that they would support a “Gorilla Friendly” certified company based solely on the name

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<sup>17</sup> List adapted from: *From Obligation to Desire: 2.5 Billion Aspirational Consumers Mark Shift in Sustainable Consumption*, <http://bbmg.com/news/obligation-desire-2-5-billion-aspirational-consumers-mark-shift-sustainable-consumption/>

<sup>18</sup> To read the full interview see [http://www.sustainablebrands.com/news\\_and\\_views/leadership/marc-stoiber/build-futureproof-brand-build-your-global-expert-network?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=businessweekly&utm\\_campaign=nov18](http://www.sustainablebrands.com/news_and_views/leadership/marc-stoiber/build-futureproof-brand-build-your-global-expert-network?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=businessweekly&utm_campaign=nov18) and for more on John Marshall Roberts World View Thinking see <http://worldviewthinking.com>

<sup>19</sup> The Planning Team for this project included IGCP and WFEN staff, partners and our facilitator Mr. Alex Muhweezi.

with no additional information provided about what “Gorilla Friendly” might mean in this context, presumably based on the assumption that the company was adhering to best practices for and contributing to mountain gorilla conservation. Tourists also expressed the desire for a deeper and more meaningful experience whether through related volunteer work or supporting conservation efforts and local communities. While the resources were not available to do this survey on a larger scale or to replicate it in Uganda it would be an interesting study to undertake in future.

Corroborating much of the information above, recent research on the tourism sector in Uganda reveals that many tourists to the country obtain information regarding their trip to Uganda through personal networks; with leisure tourists relying as much on travel agents, guidebooks, and the Internet as they rely on their own personal networks. Only 5% of all tourists use the Uganda Tourism Board’s website as their main source of information (Hamilton & Schmidt 2013).

Given all of the above how do we reach this global Aspirational consumer with products and services that have meaning to them? One way is through ecolabel certification.

## **What is Ecolabel Certification?**

Ecolabel certifications are labeling systems for products and services driven by a consumer desire to have their purchases contribute to environmental sustainability, social equity and/or health. They are market-based tools which speak to the consumer described above who seeks a deeper connection through their purchases, one that is linked to their identity and worldview.

Often voluntary, these labels use market forces to create economic incentives for companies, rewarding those who institute best practices by giving them a market advantage. In addition they provide ‘green’ consumers with a quick way to make educated purchasing decisions based on their values. A certification label is the promise and commitment that a trustworthy brand makes to the marketplace and to its consumers and speaks to its target consumers’ identity and values. The impetus for environmental certification began with the 1992 “Earth Summit,” in Rio de Janeiro and “Agenda 21” which called for environmental and social responsibility of all sectors of society in the world, including governments, NGO’s, and businesses thus creating an environment for various certification schemes to flourish.

The Ecolabel Index, which bills itself as the largest global directory of ecolabels, currently lists 441 ecolabels in 197 countries, and in 25 industry sectors.<sup>20</sup> The

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<sup>20</sup> See <http://www.ecolabelindex.com>

total number of ecolabels listed for tourism on the Index is 48 with many of these being regionally or topically focused (carbon, restaurants, hotels, beaches, etc) and interestingly, there are no labels listed on the Index to date focused on wildlife or on a single species.

### ***Potential Benefits of Tourism Certification***

Creating a new certification scheme takes time, expertise, and resources. What are some of the benefits resulting from tourism certification around the world?

#### **Benefits for the Private Sector**

The most often touted benefit of certification is that it can create a market advantage for businesses as consumers learn to recognize credible certification brands. This has happened in other industries, such as organic foods, wood products, clothing and wine for example (Bien 2008). This kind of entrepreneurial approach appeals to the private sector and it is also of course a great way for a business to demonstrate it's Corporate Social Responsibility as outlined already in sections above, which assists with both *stockholder* and *stakeholder* relations. But experts in tourism certification around the world suggest there are additional certification benefits to governments, consumers, communities and the environment.

Certification can be especially useful to national governments because it provides an independent third party assessment in the form of an outside seal of approval for tourism businesses so that governments are not put in the uncomfortable position of having to endorse one business in favor of another. It also lowers the regulatory costs for governments through what is a voluntary self regulated incentive scheme thereby absorbing a portion of the cost of ensuring compliance with laws and regulations. Related to this a number of governments have helped finance the creation of certification programs because they view certification as a way of building and protecting a destination's reputation for responsible tourism as well as reducing costs. For example The European Commission has provided significant support to national sustainable tourism certification programs in Switzerland, Germany, Latvia, and Sweden. The governments of Costa Rica, Sweden, Germany, Austria and Australia have all supported the creation of 'green' certification programs (Rome, Bien, Crabtree, Russillo, & Honey, 2008).

Experts on tourism certification have identified the possible additional benefits below to governments, consumers, local communities, and the environment.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> List of benefits for consumers, governments, environment and communities adapted from A Simple Users Guide to Certification for Sustainable Tourism and Ecotourism Center for Ecotourism and Sustainable Development (CESD), Handbook #1, 3rd edition, available from: [http://www.responsibletravel.org/resources/documents/reports/Ecotourism\\_Handbook\\_1.pdf](http://www.responsibletravel.org/resources/documents/reports/Ecotourism_Handbook_1.pdf)

### **Benefits for Governments**

- Certification helps governments protect their credibility and their market niche as ecotourism or sustainable tourism destinations;
- Certification can raise industry standards in health, safety, environment, and social stability;
- Certification lowers the regulatory costs for governments of environmental protection;
- By requiring economic benefits to communities, certification can help reduce poverty, especially in rural areas.

### **Benefits for Consumers**

- Certification provides tourists with environmentally and socially responsible choices helping consumers to know which businesses are truly responsible and to make choices on this basis. As certification programs become better known, this may produce tangible benefits in a business's reputation and popularity;
- Certification increases public awareness of responsible business practices generally;
- Certification can sensitize tourists to the environmental and social issues in an area, allowing them to act more respectfully or contribute to solutions;
- Certification tends to raise standards generally and certified businesses tend to offer better quality service.

### **Benefits for the Environment and Local Communities**

- Certification of sustainable tourism and ecotourism protect both the environment and the economy of local communities near the certified businesses reducing costs and increasing health and quality of life;
- Certification requires businesses to respect local culture and provide real economic and social benefits. In Park edge communities near mountain gorillas for example, in addition to revenue-sharing schemes, tourism has brought employment, training opportunities, new schools, water tanks and other social projects, and new business opportunities.

## **Towards Developing A New Model for “Gorilla Friendly” Tourism**

To sum up the cultural, ecological and economic backdrop for this discussion, mountain gorillas represent a globally important and globally unique natural and economic resource to the three range countries where they occur as well as to tourists around the world. While tourism has provided an economic incentive to preserve gorillas and their habitat to date, they remain critically endangered and are extremely vulnerable to disease transmission, armed conflict, poaching, illegal trade in live infants, and habitat degradation. In addition, tourists have



expectations about their gorilla trekking experience related to 1) what they see shared on social media by other gorilla trekkers; 2) having paid a significant amount of money both for permits and associated travel; 3) having spent several days in transit coupled with a short fly in/fly out time frame in which to have their once-in-a-lifetime ecotourism opportunity. The incentive structure currently in place for all stakeholders in the mountain gorilla tourism industry, an industry which is based on providing excellent customer service, rewards operators who meet tourists' expectations and demands. A "Gorilla Friendly" certification system would be designed to meet the needs of all key stakeholders by recalibrating the incentive structure, and helping to 'reset' tourist expectations through an education program that empowers tourists (and Rangers and the private tourism sector) to become more engaged *partners* in conservation. The initiative will build on an existing foundation of enabling policies and legislation and will incorporate related tourism opportunities to promote longer visitor stays, lower impact tourism, and offer increased opportunities to support local communities all through authentic experiences that increasingly sophisticated tourists seek. Further, the certification will create the incentives necessary to meet or exceed best practice guidelines in order to assure that we preserve mountain gorillas for future generations. There are many 'points of impact' where a certification program could help to set realistic tourist expectations through multi-media and participatory education while simultaneously working to grow the tourism market share in the range countries and to reduce impact on mountain gorillas.

A "Gorilla Friendly" tourism ecolabel certification offers the possibility to distinguish companies that provide direct benefits to mountain gorillas, an umbrella species whose protection, by definition, also protects biodiversity, and who support the park edge communities through their business operations. One of the goals of such a certification program is that it would provide education for all operators and incentives for continuous improvement of best practices creating change on the ground so that even existing excellent tour operations can be improved and recognized. In addition, this "Gorilla Friendly" certification would serve as a benchmark for best practices that non-certified operations can measure themselves against and ideally work towards to gain certification themselves, thus providing the possibility of improving standards for all tour and hospitality operations by raising the bar and initiating an important conversation in the range states.

Table 1 outlines private sector and government stakeholders, their current mission or mandate and incentive structure, as well as some suggestions for how their 'points of impact' with tourists, tourist expectations, and the incentive structure could be recalibrated through putting a certification in place.

Stakeholders who interact with tourists	Mandate/Mission	Current Incentive Structure	Possible 'points of impact' to reset tourist expectations & lessen impact on gorillas
<b>Outbound Tour Operators &amp; Travel Agents</b>	Provide assurances of & connections for a safe, exciting & authentic trouble free travel experience.	Provide an experience that garners repeat customers, recommendations, good online reviews	Pre-arrival education online through suggesting a "Gorilla Friendly" trip. Youtube video link emailed upon Trekking Permit purchase
<b>Inbound Tour Operators, Airlines, Airports, Guides, Drivers</b>	In-country expertise to provide a safe, exciting, convenient & authentic trouble free travel experience.	Provide an experience that garners repeat customers, recommendations, good online reviews	In-transit & in-country education on flight, at baggage claim, on the drive to Lodge
<b>City Hotels</b>	Provide a comfortable resting spot upon landing & before heading to the Parks	Provide an experience that garners repeat customers	In room/front desk materials for gorilla trekkers
<b>Park Edge Lodges</b>	Provide excellent service, convenience, safety & proximity to mountain gorilla experience	Provide an experience that garners recommendations, good online reviews	Video presentation over breakfast the morning before trekking, other materials available at Lodge/Hotel
<b>Park Staff (guides and trackers)</b>	Provide tourists with once-in-a-lifetime gorilla learning experience, including photograph & video opportunities, which results in better tips, or perceived better tips.	Get tourists as close as possible for as long as possible so that they leave with great photos/memories	The 'Gorilla Rules' Rule! Video kiosk, mural, additional info provided at meeting site to reinforce understanding of rules & role tourists play, volunteer opportunities, deeper behind-the-scenes activities which makes the tourist themselves part of conservation activities (ie. picking up garbage in the community, removing exotic plants during the trek, or interacting with people in leaving the park)
<b>Wildlife Authorities</b>	With variations in mandate in each country, but generally focused on conservation of biodiversity and natural resources within Protected Areas, and to develop, manage, and promote tourism based on wildlife and biodiversity	Increase tourism revenues for park management, and local and national economies  Stimulate investment in the tourism sector	Set the policy frameworks and agendas for wildlife tourism  Provide trainings and incentives for enforcement of existing regulations (and punishments for non-enforcement)  Airport (baggage carousel & billboard signage), airline (on-flight videos or in-flight magazines), information sent when permit is booked
<b>Private Sector Federations and Associations</b>	To support and encourage private sector engagement and investment in tourism sector.  To effectively lobby for regulations that support investment.	Increase investment and profit for members	Work with government agencies to inform and engage the private sector in policy issues (standards, regulations, promotion, etc)  Reinforce the messaging, raising awareness of and importance of principles of responsible tourism and best practice
<b>Conservation NGOs</b>	To support government and civil society partners in efforts to conserve biodiversity for future generations.	Increase positive conservation impacts and funding for conservation activities	Reinforce the importance of the regulations as a source of what is thought to be credible information to 'aspirational' tourists.

**Table 1 Private Sector and Government Stakeholders and Points of Impact**

The private sector actors have an important role to play in educating tourists ahead of their time in the field with mountain gorillas. Tourists often arrive with expectations that include getting very close to or to or being touched by mountain gorillas. These expectations are often set before they land in country due to social media and other depictions of close contact between gorillas and humans.

The governmental bodies have dual missions of promoting tourism while protecting the natural resources upon which tourism is based. Inherent in this dual mission is a delicate balance between maximizing tourism revenues and ensuring that mountain gorillas and their habitat are protected and thrive into the future. If maximizing profit drives tourism the mission becomes a conflicting one as impacts on mountain gorillas may reach a tipping point. Each stakeholder group above has a role to play in providing educational information, setting safe and realistic expectations, and promoting adherence to “Gorilla Friendly” best practices.

It should be noted that mandatory “Gorilla Rules” are already in place (see Appendix 1) but in most cases there is no real incentive to adhere to these rules especially in the face of tourist expectations to the contrary. A “Gorilla Friendly” tourism certification would build on the Gorilla Rules but add economic and other incentives to encourage and reward voluntary best practices that go beyond these mandatory rules.

#### **Objectives of Gorilla Friendly Tourism include:**

- Promote the globally unique aspects of Mountain Gorilla tourism as a niche tourism product in the three range states with a cutting edge and innovative initiative;
- Create a mechanism through regional tourism policies, pricing, branding and marketing, education, and adherence to standards that can be harmonized across the mountain gorilla range states;
- By clearly demonstrating that certified companies will gain a competitive advantage with Aspirational consumers in a crowded ecotourism marketplace and capture new consumers (tourists) by aligning with emerging trends;
- Protect income from tourism and the sustainability of growth in the tourism sector by protecting the environment and wildlife on which it depends;

“In the end it’s all about protecting our product. If the product—our destinations—aren’t protected in environmental and social terms then people won’t want to visit them, it is as simple as that.”

John de Vial, Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA)

- Develop and promote associated “Gorilla Friendly” certified products (honey, tea, baskets, crafts, etc.) and ‘insider’ experiences as part of the regional tourism package to encourage tourists to extend their stay in the region, support local communities, as well as reduce impacts on mountain gorillas;
- Use education and awareness campaigns to set realistic tourist expectations even before they arrive in range states and recalibrate the current incentive structure so that it rewards those who follow the Gorilla Rules and go beyond by contributing to the conservation of mountain gorillas in particular, and nature and culture in general;
- Further the general appreciation and understanding that mountain gorillas are critically-endangered and tourism activities should be done with care;
- Create ripple out effects on the rest of the sector potentially raising the standards of general nature-based tourism and ecotourism practices throughout the region.

Creating a certification program is a step-wise process and experts in the standard setting field have outlined the categories below for consideration throughout to ensure success.

## **Key Steps to Creating a Certification Program**

Voluntary standards and certification are an effective market-based mechanism for bringing about positive social and environmental change. Using a multi-stakeholder approach to developing a new voluntary standard is the first step on a journey to affecting positive change. Below is a suggested sequence (Mallet 2007) for beginning this journey together with some notes on how each stage relates to a “Gorilla Friendly” tourism certification process.<sup>22</sup>

Recommendations related to many of these points follow in later sections of the report:

### **1. Identify Stakeholders**

The concept of ‘stakeholder’ has been defined in a variety of ways but perhaps the simplest definition is “any group or individual who is affected by or can affect the achievement of an organization’s objectives.”<sup>23</sup> “Gorilla Friendly” stakeholders include the full value chain from outbound travel

<sup>22</sup> These suggested steps for creating voluntary standards have been adapted from ISEAL Alliance’s Emerging Initiatives Modules 1-5 and are used with their kind permission. For more on ISEAL Alliance see <http://www.isealalliance.org>

<sup>23</sup> As defined by R. Edward Freeman, known for his work on Stakeholder Theory, <http://www.darden.virginia.edu/web/Faculty-Research/Directories/Full-time/R-Edward-Freeman/>

agents, to Park Rangers, to airlines to communities and include mountain gorillas as well (see Figures 2-5 below).

## **2. Define the Problem and the Program Objectives**

The planning team worked over two years to introduce this idea with key stakeholders in order to both understand the ‘problem’ and refine what a “Gorilla Friendly” tourism certification ‘solution’ would look like, as well as learning about the objectives for all stakeholder groups, and is still actively engaged in this work. The purpose of this report is to help define the problem with stakeholder input and to jointly, together with global experts in the field, define a vision for the future.

## **3. Justify the Need for the New Standard**

The two years of stakeholder consultations, the opportunity and funding towards two “Gorilla Friendly” Roundtables,<sup>24</sup> and this report are due diligence towards justifying the need for a new “Gorilla Friendly” standard. To date the majority of stakeholders consulted have expressed strong support for the idea, and an interest in learning and contributing on an ongoing basis, and in actively participating to move the process forward.

## **4. Develop the Certification Standard and Accreditation**

When sufficient stakeholder support and funding is in place the program would move towards developing and field-testing the certification standard. Will the standard be pass/fail or tiered? Will it be a consumer-facing label? Will it be a minimum standard or promote best practice? These are all questions which need deliberation. In addition, accreditation provides a second level of assurance and is usually against ISO (International Organization for Standardization) which accredits the certification body itself.<sup>25</sup> Accreditation is done by ISO to attest that a certification body has demonstrated competence to carry out specific conformity assessment tasks. The decision is based on the demonstrated competence to evaluate compliance with a standard. Should “Gorilla Friendly” standards be developed through WFEN and Certified Wildlife Friendly® they would be verified by an independent, 3rd-party organization following ISO / IEC Guide 65 Product Certification which covers products and services.<sup>26</sup>

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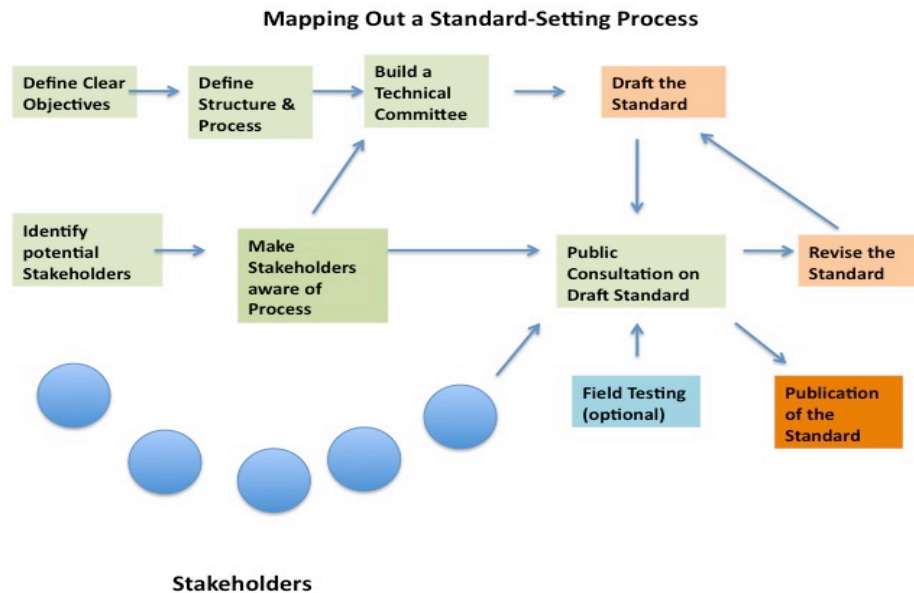
<sup>24</sup> The Kigali Roundtable was held on 10 October 2013 and the Kampala Roundtable was held on 14 May 2014

<sup>25</sup> International Standards give state of the art specifications for products, services and good practice, helping to make industry more efficient and effective. Developed through global consensus, they help to break down barriers to international trade. See <http://www.iso.org/iso/home.htm>

<sup>26</sup> WFEN standards have ISO accreditation through a partnership with Animal Welfare Approved. See <http://www.animalwelfareapproved.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/06/ISO-Release-REVISED.pdf>

Figure 2 below illustrates the basic recommended steps in developing a standard.

**Figure 2 Mapping Out a Standard Setting Process**



\*Adapted and used by permission from ISEAL Emerging Initiatives, Module 2, "Setting Standards," May 2007, Patrick Mallet, ISEAL Alliance, London

## **5. Ensure Compliance and Establish 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Auditing**

It is critical to determine how compliance will be ensured and identify a neutral third party to conduct audits. Will there be major and minor non-compliances or a scoring system? It is recommended that for consumer labels and market claims there should be an audited 3<sup>rd</sup> party certification in place.

## **6. Decision-making and Governance Systems in Place**

Decide on ground-rules for decision-making and ensure stakeholders are aware of and accept the process. An elected transboundary representative steering committee comprised of stakeholder groups is one possible form of governance and decision-making for a label like "Gorilla Friendly."

## **7. Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms in Place**

It is important to track the social/environmental improvements that may have resulted from the application of a standard/certification over time and to have

a way to measure these in place. These outcomes can be difficult to measure and need to be built into the process from the beginning. Stakeholders from the non-profit world or from academia and research can assist with this.

## **8. Building Demand for the Label**

The target market for the certification label must be defined and uptake of the label promoted. A few key questions:

- Is compliance with the standard required in order to sell along a supply chain? (e.g. a travel agent demands that all of its downstream suppliers comply with the standard).
- What is the role of government and regulation in promoting uptake?
- Is there a role for socially responsible investors to support the standard?
- What is the desired level of market uptake? Should the label be aimed more broadly or towards the top 10%?

## **9. Branding & Marketing**

It is important to identify who will be strong advocates for a new label. A label can assist in differentiating a brand (which in this case could be a country, company, or a protected area) in an increasingly complex marketplace. A certification label should add value to the retailer's own brand rather than replacing it and in fact some companies are building value for their own brands by linking them with certification labels.

## **10. Protection of the Trademark**

If a market is successfully created instances of trademark fraud may arise. While copyright and trademark laws have limited effectiveness the first step is to associate any logo or trademark with a "TM" which is a basic level of protection and does not require any formal registration. Stronger legal protection requires the trademark to be registered "R" on an individual country basis. This can be expensive. Most standards limit their certification to major market countries such as Europe and North America while most fraud happens in less developed countries. However there are ways to steer consumers to certified entities and to highlight fraud such as having all listed certified entities on one verified website.

## **11. Identify and Avoid Conflict of Interest**

Transparency is important as well as identifying situations which may lead to a conflict of interest within the label, the certification and auditing process, and governance structures.

## **12. Financial Sustainability**

While initially most certification efforts are supported by funders, over the long term certification should be operated as a business and the financial model



should reflect this. There are many examples of governments providing additional support since ecotourism certification in particular can help governments reach their tourism sector, development, and poverty alleviation goals more efficiently. There are a number of mechanisms for creating financial returns to help pay for the cost of the program. By far the most common is to link some fee structure to label use in the market.<sup>27</sup> There are many other models discussed later in this report from other parts of the world, ranging from a tourist exit tax, to a per head fee, to an ‘opt out’ box for tourists on invoices, which can be explored.

## **Methodology: A Collaborative Stakeholder Process**

An important part of the process is stakeholder consultation in order to justify the need for a new standard and to begin to define the standard’s objectives. Once the planning team was able to gauge interest in a “Gorilla Friendly” tourism certification program (steps outlined in bullets 1 - 3 above) the next step was to identify what factors would make the program successful and implementable, as well as the challenges that would need to be addressed. IGCP and WFEN have used the information gathered to date as the basis for this Feasibility Report using feedback from the one-on-one or small group consultations, and focus groups/roundtable meetings to refine the idea for the overall program.

Consultations completed to date with representatives from the tourism industry as well as key decision maker’s in range state governments took place between November of 2012 and through May of 2014 and are listed in Appendix 2 of this document. The purpose of this report is to summarize regional stakeholder input as a synthesized set of opportunities and challenges along with some concrete recommendations for next steps. This information will be used as a basis to build upon, including outreach for additional input from those not yet at the table, for the next phase of the project. It should be noted that the consultations and Kigali and Kampala roundtables, while including representatives from government, non-governmental organizations, and academia, initially focused primarily on the private sector. Future similar efforts and outreach are planned for Park personnel, communities and conservation organizations.

Experts on multi-stakeholder collaboration believe that collaborative partnerships and policy making can be used not only to resolve conflicts but also to develop and advance shared visions for the future. Collaboration for a shared vision can be successful when interdependent stakeholders cooperate to produce mutually beneficial solutions that none could achieve working independently (Gray 1989).

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<sup>27</sup> This checklist was adapted with permission from the ISEAL Alliance Emerging Initiatives Program, [www.isealalliance.org](http://www.isealalliance.org)

## ***Principles of Collaboration for “Gorilla Friendly” Tourism Stakeholder Process***

Below is a checklist of some guiding principles, lessons learned and key questions regarding stakeholder collaboration and good process that the “Gorilla Friendly” planning team defined and will continue to revisit throughout this process.

- ✓ Make an effort to identify and meet with all who have a ‘stake’ in the project, include them and make them aware of the discussion
- ✓ Be sensitive to scheduling meetings at a time or place so that everyone can attend (i.e. the private sector cannot devote a full day to meetings and it is important not to schedule meetings on the same day as another important tourism sector or wildlife meeting, provide per diem assistance for communities or those traveling from the field for meetings, etc)
- ✓ Participants need a clear understanding of their roles, responsibilities and the overall goals of the process as well as how their input will be considered and included
- ✓ Ask stakeholders what organization, coalition or individual they think should lead this effort
- ✓ Explore whether it would be effective to form a steering committee made up of a cross section of representatives from various stakeholder groups to facilitate and coordinate decision-making and implementation
- ✓ Consider whether the process would be more effective with a neutral, third-party mediator
- ✓ Should the media be involved, in what capacity and when? Who should be the official spokesperson for the group?
- ✓ Does the project have enough resources in the form of time, money, and staff support to be implemented?
- ✓ Be sure to plan for one-on-one or small group consultations to elicit potentially sensitive information which may not be voiced in a larger group or to reach under-represented groups
- ✓ Ensure access to outside policy and technical expertise to inform the process whenever necessary
- ✓ Undertake joint problem definition exercises (i.e. defining impacts on mountain gorillas), fact-finding projects and visioning for the future
- ✓ Stakeholders do not need to be the ultimate decision makers but they do need to understand the process before deciding whether this will be a worthwhile investment of their time
- ✓ Work to earn respect and trust through a transparent process in which the final product accurately reflects the views expressed

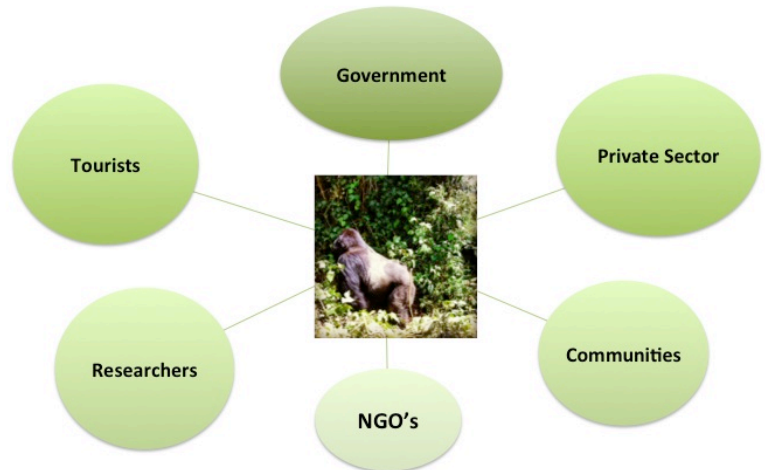
## Stakeholder Mapping

The planning team undertook a stakeholder mapping and analysis exercise at the beginning of this project to identify all stakeholders who might be interested in or affected by the project for consultation. Figure 3 shows the general major stakeholder categories. Under each of these six major headings there are many stakeholder subcategories each with a different impact on and interest in “Gorilla Friendly” certification based on their identity and place within the larger stakeholder map. A more detailed list of stakeholders is provided in Appendix 3.

The planning team felt it was important that all key stakeholders were involved in the collaborative process if the objectives of “Gorilla Friendly” tourism and conservation were to be achieved at eco-regional scales. As we consulted with stakeholders we also asked them who else it would be important that we speak to which resulted in a ‘snowball’ sampling outreach and interview technique which is still in process. Members of the planning team discussed ideas with stakeholders in Uganda and Rwanda over the course of 2012-2014, and at the Great Apes Summit<sup>28</sup> in Jackson Hole, Wyoming in September of 2013. While the planning team agreed to focus on the private sector initially, we spoke to members of all stakeholder groups and extended invitations to representatives from all groups for the roundtable discussions.

With respect to the private sector it was important to understand how it both impacts and is impacted by gorilla tourism and to gauge initial interest from business leaders in this concept. The tourism supply chain is quite a complex ‘constellation’ of stakeholders. The two figures below illustrate the relevant

### Stakeholders for “Gorilla Friendly” Certification



**Figure 3 Stakeholders for "Gorilla Friendly" Tourism Certification**

<sup>28</sup> The Great Apes Summit was held in conjunction with the Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival in 2013 and included researchers, private sector tour operators, academics, government officials, media representatives, students and private citizens involved or interested in the conservation of the world's great apes. See <http://www.jhfestival.org/greatape/>

private sector stakeholders to this process and the tourism supply chain actors.<sup>29</sup>

**Some of the possible interactions between wildlife-viewing tourists & the tourism industry**



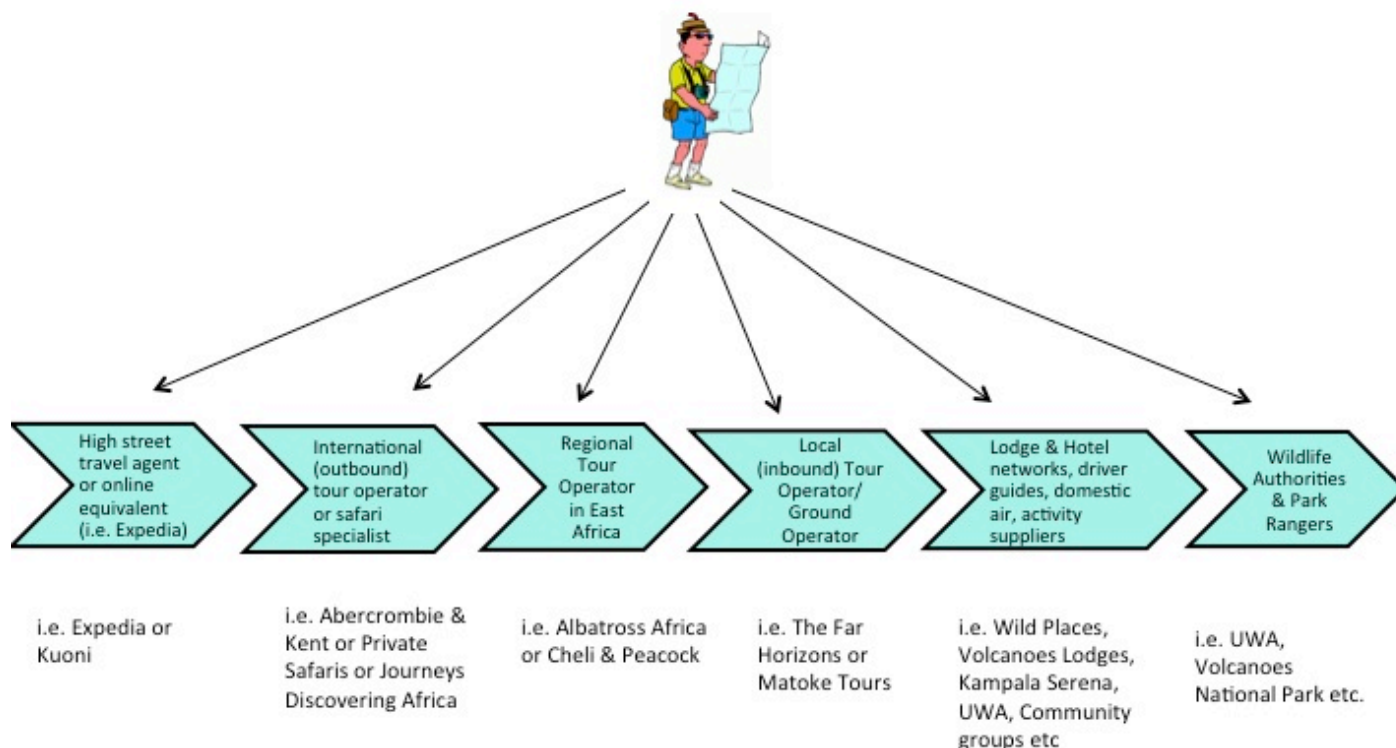
**Figure 4 Constellation of Tourism Sector Stakeholders**

To capture all of the potential points of impact that a mountain gorilla tourist encounters from the initial booking to gorilla trekking, the planning team consulted with a number of tour operators to map the supply chain as well as the sub-headings of private sector stakeholders, each of which presents an opportunity for both education, setting realistic and safe (for mountain gorillas as well as tourists) expectations, and branding.

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<sup>29</sup> Many thanks to Anne-Marie Weeden, Group Marketing Manager, Journeys Discovering Africa, for helping the planning team think through the actors in the complex tourism supply chain and for sketching out these two figures which we adapted for this report.

## Possible Tourism Supply Chain Scenarios



Nota Bene: With access to the internet it is now possible for tourists to book directly with any part of the tourism supply chain. As a result, vertical integration in the tourism industry has grown. Outbound operators now own inbound tour operators, inbound tour operators now own lodges, transport and activity providers. And in the case of a public-private partnership (PPP) for park management, tourism activities within a park and with gorillas may be outsourced to another agency potentially further integrating the chain. This is the case of Virunga National Park, DRC, which is managed by Africa Conservation Fund in partnership with the Institute Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature and includes the development and management of lodges and transportation as well as permitting gorilla visits.

### Figure 5 Tourism Supply Chain

The ultimate goal of fully mapping out the various stakeholder groups was to create an inclusive collaborative process.

The goals for the roundtable discussions<sup>30</sup> were:

- a. Share the concept of a possible 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Gorilla Friendly Certification;
- b. Articulate and build a collective stakeholder vision of a successful and beneficial (to all - gorillas, tourist, tour operator, government agencies) 3<sup>rd</sup>

<sup>30</sup> A full list of stakeholder groups and participants of the Kigali and Kampala Roundtables can be found in Appendices 4a and b

- party Gorilla Friendly certification model;
- c. Through collaborative visioning generate stakeholder ownership and enthusiasm for 3rd Party Gorilla Friendly certification.

Further, these consultations helped achieve the activities of 1) Identifying stakeholders; 2) Defining the problem and program objectives; and 3) Justifying the need for a new standard; outlined in the Key Stages to Developing a Certification Program section above.

## **Consultations and Roundtable Discussions**

Two roundtables were held as part of the feasibility study for ecolabel certification. One roundtable was held in Kigali, Rwanda, called by the Rwanda Development Board's Tourism and Conservation Department, on October 10, 2013. Twenty-eight people participated in the dialog (see Appendix 4). Another roundtable was held in Kampala, Uganda, called by the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities, on May 14, 2014. Forty-nine people participated in the dialog (see Appendix 5).

During consultations with stakeholders and in the two roundtable discussions almost without exception the response was “this is a good, or at least interesting, idea” followed by a few important process and content questions related to the idea of “Gorilla Friendly” tourism ecolabel certification and its implementation. Many of those interviewed also expressed a desire for the planning team to present a more fully fleshed out proposal. This was noted but the need to balance this kind of approach with gathering stakeholder input in a comprehensive way before presenting a proposal for consideration was also crucial. It was therefore reiterated to those in attendance that the roundtables were being conducted as part of the *inception* stage of this process. This report begins the process of fleshing out many of these issues, challenges and opportunities, and summarizing stakeholder input and suggestions to date, as well as making some concrete recommendations based on this input.

Note that the two roundtables were structured slightly different from one another and therefore the presentation of the input is not always entirely compatible between the two countries. The change in roundtable process was due to incorporation of lessons learned in the effectiveness in the approach for good participation from the first roundtable to the second, and input from the government agencies chairing the discussions. Detailed notes of the discussion are included in Appendix 6 and 7.



Overall, consultations conducted (both pre- and during roundtables) recommended the proposal to develop a 3<sup>rd</sup> party eco-label certification for mountain gorilla tourism.

**Major points of synergy between the two roundtable discussions include:**

- Identify the value addition
- Ensure equitable benefits and cost-sharing
- Should be a voluntary regional initiative
- The certification should primarily focus on mountain gorillas
- There should be effective enforcement measures and compliance incentives and disincentives (punitive measures for non-compliance)
- The certification should be grounded in national as well as regional policy/legal and institutional frameworks
- A 3<sup>rd</sup> party auditor and a certifier with an international reputation and respect for local communities should be selected
- Criteria for assessing compliance should be clearly defined
- Clearly defined procedures or mechanisms for stakeholder participation and ownership put in place

## **Key Challenges and Opportunities**

Ongoing research by the governments of Rwanda and Uganda has highlighted some shared opportunities and challenges for the tourism sector overall in both countries which are listed below (Republic of Rwanda Ministry of Trade and Industry 2009, Weiss & Messerli 2012, and Hamilton & Schmidt, 2013). Not surprisingly many of these same issues were raised during consultations with stakeholders. “Gorilla Friendly” tourism certification can make a substantial contribution towards reaching each of these larger objectives:

- **Increasing Visitor Length of Stay**

The informal Gorilla Trekker survey conducted by the planning team in October 2013 showed that respondents had an average length of stay in the country of 4.2 days which correlates with recent statistics for the country of Rwanda which shows that 4 days is the most frequent length of stay for visitors (Republic of Rwanda Ministry of Trade and Industry 2009). According to a 2011 exit survey average visitor stay in Uganda was 6.5 days (ITC survey cited in The World Bank, 2012) perhaps due in part to the longer travel time from the airport in Entebbe and Kampala to the country’s ten National Parks, compared to Rwanda’s three. By creating a circuit of “Wildlife Friendly” options and add-on’s for tourists which could include visits to a park edge “Chimp Friendly” certified tea



factory, anti-poaching educational visits, talks from field researchers and NGO staff, communities engaged in “Gorilla Friendly” activities the multiple goals of increasing visitor stay (and thus expenditure), benefits to communities, and a deeper experience for tourists who want their holiday dollars to work towards the triple bottom line can be achieved.

- **Diversification to safeguard against overdependence on the Gorilla Tourism Product is necessary**

As outlined above the diversified menu of low impact on wildlife but high tourist value certified Ape or Primate Friendly options including ‘insider’ educational opportunities to highlight why gorillas are a flagship and umbrella species, what that means in ecosystem terms, as well as exclusive volunteer opportunities to accompany an anti-poaching squad or help a park edge community can add value (and length of stay), as well as safeguard against a total economic reliance on gorilla trekking alone, to a tourist experience creating a win-win-win scenario. Other opportunities such as developing a market for “Wildlife Friendly” carbon credits for tourists to offset their travel while paying small-holder farmers to preserve intact forest can further add to both the diversification, ecosystem services, revenue generation for communities and to the distinctive marketing and branding category below.

- **Targeted Marketing and Branding of ‘distinctive’ Wildlife and Ecotourism Products**

A combination of ‘push’ (social media, trade shows) and ‘pull’ (creating consumer demand and uptake through word-of-mouth) marketing strategies will be used to promote the label. Dedicated websites (and cross-linking by all stakeholders) can showcase all of the associated products, tourist trails, and ‘insider’ opportunities available to those who book with certified operators and lodges. Outreach to travel guides such as Bradt, Lonely Planet, Trip Advisor, and others will be done to provide information on the “Gorilla Friendly” certification for inclusion in their publications and online guides would help to spread the word. A strategic branding exercise and marketing plan will be developed with stakeholders to reach global consumers.

- **Better Training Opportunities**

A sensibilization program for park edge communities, the tourism sector and hospitality employees, and guides and Rangers could be developed both to assist them in delivering a “Gorilla Friendly” message to tourists and in raising sustainable tourism standards in general. There is potential in branding training opportunities under the same umbrella.

- **Increased Collaboration and Public/Private Partnerships**

By definition “Gorilla Friendly” certification will provide a platform for increased collaboration and public/private partnerships leveraging the strengths of both key decision makers and the entrepreneurial private sector to improve standards and performance for the tourism sector.

- **Greater Protection of Wildlife Habitat and Reduced Poaching**

The “Gorilla Friendly” standards will raise existing overall awareness of the economic and natural value of mountain gorillas as a selling point for tourism and sustainability in the region. Increased sensibilization and awareness as well as training around these issues should also be helpful. Adherence to best practice and diversification beyond gorilla trekking alone will lesson impacts on habitat and all wildlife.

- **Increased Focus on Environment and Sustainability**

By introducing a new ecolabel tourism standards across the board will be examined more closely with the hope of a new awareness about sustainability and its appeal for ecotourists as well as the savings in cost and the use of natural resources it can provide. If lodges, hotels and destinations want to adopt even wider best practices relating to sustainable tourism the GSTC peer reviewed standards can be used as an excellent foundation to build upon for operators.

- **Adherence to Best Practice Guidelines for Mountain Gorilla Tourism to Mitigate Negative Impacts**

The IUCN/SSC PSG Best Practice Guidelines for Great Ape Tourism have collected input from the world’s experts on mountain gorillas. These recommendations represent the ‘gold standard’ for ensuring the long term survival of these iconic animals. The “Gorilla Friendly” certification would build upon those standards and create an incentive based program to reward those who not only follow the current Gorilla Rules but then go beyond. Without a creative incentive based program these well researched recommendations may never become reality on the ground.

## **Enabling Environment**

Rwanda has committed herself to providing an enabling environment for a pro-poor approach to sustainable tourism to flourish. Tourism is identified as a priority strategy to help Rwanda reach the development goals set out in Vision

2020, a national consultative process undertaken from 2008-2009.<sup>31</sup> Further the country's revised Tourism Strategy identifies primates as the country's unique selling proposition for tourism and has certainly proven that a post-conflict country can use high-end tourism to achieve both conservation and poverty alleviation goals (Nielsen & Spenceley 2010). In addition Rwanda's Tourism Policy lays out policy guidelines for environmental NGO's which are expected to play a vital role in the development and spread of responsible tourism practices including "*assisting the government in developing a standard for responsible tourism*" (Republic of Rwanda Ministry of Trade and Industry 2009).

Similarly Uganda, once a top African tourism destination in the 1960's, has had to overcome obstacles including dictatorships and civil conflict, to reclaim its image as a safe tourist destination. Uganda has also designated tourism as a primary growth sector in the National Development Plan (NDP) and subsequently a standalone Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Heritage was created. The tourism and wildlife policies have undergone a review and UNDP is funding preparation of a forthcoming Tourism Master Plan and marketing strategy (The World Bank 2012) with an emphasis on eco-tourism rather than mass tourism. Objective 3.2 of the Uganda Tourism Policy specifies the development of ecotourism aiming for the sustainable use of natural resources and the involvement and support of the community (Uganda Ministry of Tourism 2013). In addition the newly revised Ugandan Wildlife Policy (2014) Principle 2.1.1 calls for sustainable development of wildlife resources to meet the needs of future generations and Objective 3a calls for the promotion of ecotourism in wildlife conservation areas (Ministry of Tourism 2014).

Uganda sees herself at a tourism crossroads, and the focus on the sector is paying off as Lonely Planet named Uganda its top destination for 2012 coinciding with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ugandan Independence.<sup>32</sup> With 18 species of primates, 38 carnivores, and 29 antelope species living in 10 National Parks, as well as being recognized as perhaps the top birding destination in Africa, Uganda understands the value of her wildlife resource (Weiss & Messerli 2012). The policy foundations in both Rwanda and Uganda are firmly in place to support such an ecotourism certification effort.

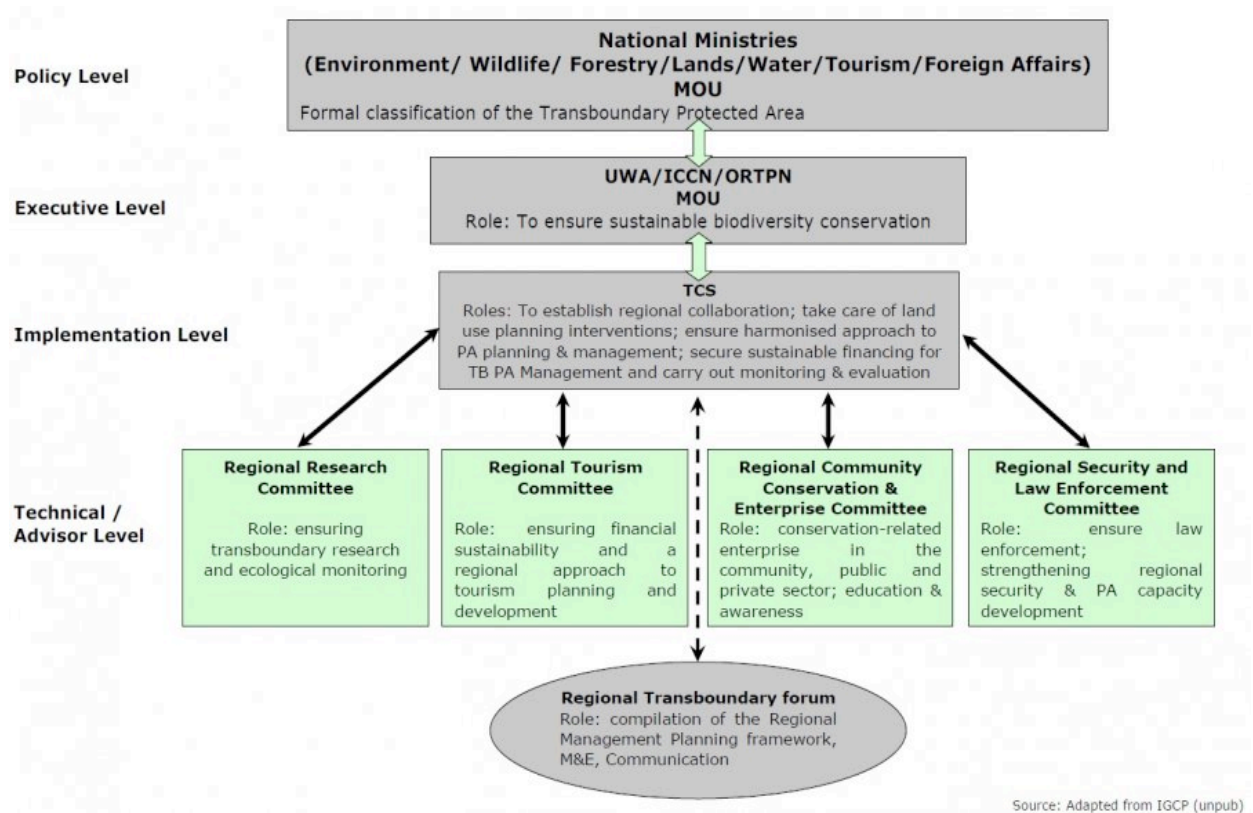
On a regional level there is an existing institutional framework for collaboration around mountain gorilla tourism (Macfie E. Forthcoming). The Greater Virunga Transboundary Collaboration (GVTC) and its Executive Secretariat, formed through legislation, treaties and memoranda of understanding beginning in 2004, exists to manage mountain gorillas across the three range states and protected areas. GVTC was formed to be a mechanism for strategic, transboundary,

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<sup>31</sup> Vision 2020 is a visioning process initiated four years after the 1994 Genocide to define the future going forward for the country. See <http://www.minecofin.gov.rw/index.php?id=81>

<sup>32</sup> See <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/europe/travel-tips-and-articles/76856>

collaborative management of the Greater Virunga Landscape. Set up by ICCN, RDB and UWA with their partners in the region, it started with field-level collaboration between rangers and wardens to protect mountain gorillas in Mgahinga, Bwindi, Virunga and Volcanoes National Parks in 1991. The Executive Secretariat is based in Kigali to coordinate and link stakeholders on behalf of the Protected Area Authorities.<sup>33</sup> The governing structure of GVTC includes a Regional Tourism Committee as shown in Figure 6 below. One governance option would be for a “Gorilla Friendly” Steering Committee comprised of representative stakeholders to utilize the GVTC Regional Tourism Committee as a forum for issues related to “Gorilla Friendly” tourism certification.



**Figure 6 Organizational Structure of GVTC**

### Sustainable Funding

Ecotourism certification can attract the interest of new donors, both public and private, for start up operational costs. But a business plan should be formulated to ensure a long-term sustainable funding source through the early stages of implementation and onwards. Because many tourism certification programs are

<sup>33</sup> See <http://www.greatervirunga.org/spip.php?rubrique1>

national in scope and strengthen the tourism industry, certification programs often seek ongoing funding from national governments. This can come through existing program budgets (within offices of environment, wildlife, tourism, etc.) and through taxes collected at airports, hotels or through other relevant sales. These funding instruments provide a steady flow of funds to certification programs to allow them to function on a long-term basis. In Costa Rica, for example, the Sustainable Tourism Certificate, or CST, has been funded by the national tourism ministry, the Instituto Costarricense de Turismo (ICT). Similar government funding is provided by the European Commission for tourism certification programs in Sweden and Germany (Rome, Bien, Crabtree, Russillo, & Honey 2008).

The following are examples of innovative funding strategies and economic incentives to assist certification programs and certified businesses:

- **Tourism taxes or levies** including airport departure and airline ticket taxes, tourism sales taxes, hotel tax, and land transfer taxes;
- **Opt-in or Opt-Out programs** an unchecked (opt-in) or pre-checked (opt-out) box that tourists can 'opt in' or 'opt out' of if they want to donate a pre-set amount (1% of their bill for example or \$1 per transaction) to support an initiative. Can be used at associated retailers, hotels, restaurants to raise funds;
- **Tax concessions** (e.g. credits, deductions) for certified businesses and programs;
- **In-kind contributions** from NGO's, government-funded academic institutions and technical or consulting staff or agencies;
- **Extended tenure**: Longer term permissions, preferential access, reduced fees, or discounts on concessions in government protected areas;
- **Reduced interest rates** on government loans, government taxes on credit cards, and improved credit ratings;
- **Access to funding** from international donors, especially in developing countries. Many multinational development banks and aid agencies support "green" certification programs, including tourism, because they are interested in poverty alleviation, community development, small enterprise development, environmental challenges and indigenous rights, all of which can be ameliorated by sustainable tourism;
- **Promotions and endorsements** of certification programs at travel shows and fairs, in government-issued tourism booklets, on websites, aboard the national airline, etc.;
- **Training programs** on environmental technologies, environmental management, human resources, socio-cultural practices, community relations, marketing, etc.;
- **Eco-label purchasing policies** requiring staff and contractors to use certified

businesses.<sup>34</sup>

## Recommendations

These recommendations are based both on current suggested best practices for certification as well as in response to the questions raised by stakeholders during consultation and roundtable discussions. This checklist will help to ensure that the “Gorilla Friendly” certification achieves its desired social, environmental, and economic goals across the spectrum of stakeholders.

### “Gorilla Friendly” tourism certification should:

- ✓ **Be guided by the principles of:**
  - Affordability
  - Equity
  - Sustainability
  - Creating competitive advantage
  - Harmonization
  - Professionalism
- ✓ **Define and secure sustainable long-term funding mechanisms**
  - Suggested approaches have been outlined as an introduction to this topic in this report. Outreach and discussion with potential funders of the piloting and implementation will continue as will research and input from experts in this field.
- ✓ **Be voluntary so that it encourages innovation and willing adherence to certification standards through self regulation<sup>35</sup>**
- ✓ **The certification body must have an international reputation with global expertise and a network focused on wildlife, specifically endangered species and communities, with the credibility and capacity to market the brand**
- ✓ **Standards must include criteria that apply to all private sector and government participants that impact mountain gorillas**

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<sup>34</sup> List adapted from Financing Tourism Certification Programs, Center for Ecotourism and Sustainable Development (CESD), Handbook #4, available from: <http://www.ecotourism.org/sites/ecotourism.org/files/document/Certification/Ecotourism%20Handbook%20IV%20-%20Practical%20Steps%20for%20Financing%20Tourism%20CertificationPrograms.pdf>

<sup>35</sup> Some stakeholders consulted offered the idea that the lowest tier of certification could be mandatory for membership in different associations or tied to other incentives or access opportunities.

- Phase 1 has included representatives of all stakeholder groups but the primary focus has been on the private sector and key decisions makers to gauge interest in the concept. Work going forward will be designed to also gather input and ideas from Park Rangers, community leaders, NGO's and others.
- ✓ **The initiative must be transboundary and harmonized across range states (DRC to be included when possible)**
  - Can work through existing structures and enabling legislation such as GVTC
- ✓ **Standards must reflect best practices for mountain gorilla tourism**
  - The IUCN/SSC PSG Best Practice Guidelines for Great Ape Tourism is a peer-reviewed document by the world's experts on mountain gorillas and should be used as the basis for the standards
- ✓ **Lodges and operators *outside* of mountain gorilla range or those who want to incorporate other aspects of sustainable tourism can adopt the established GSTC criteria and build on those**
  - The GSTC standards have already undergone several years of peer review and address a wider range of sustainability issues which could help to improve standards and reduce costs for businesses. If operators are outside of gorilla range but want to participate this could be part of a tiered system or a slightly different but related label that could be developed which would have immediate global credibility through GSTC.
- ✓ **Perspectives of all stakeholder groups need to be considered in decision making and representative governance structures**
  - The planning team will continue a multi-stakeholder approach to defining the initiative including all major defined stakeholders groups.
- ✓ **Must include both small and large private sector companies equally**
  - It is important to ensure that community-owned businesses can afford certification and have equitable access to certification systems. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways including using a sliding scale fee, where businesses pay fees for membership, application, audit and training based on gross sales, and company revenue. Also fees may be waived if circumstances warrant or other barter arrangements for in kind services put in place.
- ✓ **Ensure monitoring and evaluation protocols in place**



- NGO and academic researchers can assist with design and implementation.
- ✓ **Ensure nondiscrimination, fairness and objectivity:**
  - Certification should be available to all applicants who meet the standards.
  - Certification should be void of undue financial considerations and independent of size.<sup>36</sup>
- ✓ **Avoid conflicts of interest**
  - The certification body should be free from commercial or financial pressures that might influence decisions.
- ✓ **Ensure neutrality and transparency**
  - The certification should be endorsed by all key decision makers but administered by an outside globally recognized body.
  - Can be strengthened through 3<sup>rd</sup> party auditing with ISO accreditation.

## Next Steps

Suggested next steps to move the certification towards implementation and piloting are outlined below as well as in Figure 2 above.

### Continued Consultation:

1. With additional private sector stakeholders and experts
2. Dissemination of the Executive Summary of this Feasibility Report to roundtable participants, potential funders, other stakeholders and experts for further cultivation of input
3. Use the results of Feasibility Report to further engage with DRC stakeholders and the regional bodies
4. Constituting of national-level and regional-level working groups led by appropriate government agency (inter-governmental agency in the case of the regional-level), representative of the diverse stakeholders

### Secure Funding for Phase 2 of “Gorilla Friendly”:

1. Determine budget and secure funding to complete the next phase of certification design and implementation

## PHASE 2

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<sup>36</sup> Access to certification should be open to all and not based on financial considerations or size and if tied to membership in groups or organizations conflict of interest issues must be carefully considered.

**Formulate and Negotiate the Certification Instrument:**

1. Stakeholder groups map and identify their own impacts – through workshops in the field or via questionnaire's based on funding available
2. Design certification components (standards) based on the impacts identified above as well as established Best Practice Guidelines that will mitigate impacts and create incentives for implementing and promoting best practices

**Ongoing Consensus Building and Joint Vision for Gorilla Friendly:**

1. National-level and Regional-level working groups agree to a common vision for "Gorilla Friendly"
2. Stakeholders agree to draft standards
3. Build in monitoring and evaluation framework

**PHASE 3****Implementation – from Good Idea to Action:**

1. Secure funding for piloting the "Gorilla Friendly" certification while the program builds towards sustainability
2. Identify the appropriate governing mechanism
3. Hire a coordinator to spearhead this next phase on the ground in the range states
4. Write a Business Plan to ensure sustainability of funding mechanisms to pay for audits and marketing of the certification program
5. Conduct branding exercise and develop marketing plan
6. Join Global Sustainable Tourism Council and The International Ecotourism Society
7. Draft standards piloted with sub-set of private sector
8. Revise and adapt standards and process as necessary for full implementation

**Conclusion**

It is important to note that this idea of "Gorilla Friendly" tourism certification would be breaking new ground as currently nowhere in the world does such a cutting edge synthesis exist bringing together the state of the field in both conservation and tourism, the strengths of both the public and private sector, and the transboundary management across three countries of a critically endangered species, much less one that shares 98% of our DNA. By bringing the current Gorilla Rules closer to achieving true best practice perhaps this effort represents what could be called 'extreme ecotourism,' an approach that is warranted in an era of climate change and against the backdrop of an ongoing global extinction

crisis.<sup>37</sup> So while this is not a simple undertaking it is an important one. Our generation cannot afford to become complacent about the fate of mountain gorillas despite the tourism industry blooming around them and the relative ease with which one can spend an hour in their magnificent midst. As it has been said during past Kwita Izina ceremonies, “we name them because they are important.”

By building on work that has already been done in the IUCN/SSC PSG Best Practice Guidelines for Great Ape Tourism as well as the forthcoming Regional Tourism Guidelines for Mountain Gorillas (Macfie E. Forthcoming) this effort can enable the recommendations from both documents to move from the realm of research to reality by re-setting tourism expectations for a new kind of low impact but high reward ‘Wildlife Friendly’ tourism. Further the policy foundations for sustainable development and the promotion and growth of ecotourism and a green economy in the range countries can be operationalized through self-regulation powered by economic incentives for the private sector.

We hope that this will become a model for conservation and tourism around the globe and that it will be replicated in other landscapes and for other imperiled species. And in fact this has already begun. Orangutan conservationists working in Indonesia and Malaysia, upon hearing about the idea at the recent Great Apes Summit, have expressed interest in expanding and adapting the idea to their own context.

Our vision, in summary, is that “Gorilla Friendly” tourism will empower consumers to create change on the ground by putting in place incentives for the protection of the one of world’s most critically endangered species; providing increased economic opportunities for some of the least economically advantaged park edge communities; and contributing to the conservation of one of the most spectacular and bio-diverse landscapes in the world.


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<sup>37</sup> The latest update to the IUCN Red List added 4,807 species bringing the total of assessed species to 70,294, of which 20,934 are threatened with extinction.

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## Appendix 1a Gorilla Rules for Rwanda




# GORILLA RULES

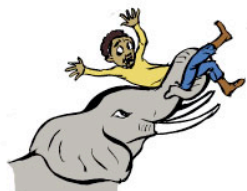
THEY ARE FOR YOUR SAFETY AS WELL AS OURS!

**BEFORE SETTING OUT...**

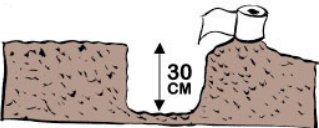
**COUGHS AND SNEEZES SPREAD DISEASES AND CAN KILL GORILLAS. IF YOU HAVE A COLD OR FLU OR OTHER INFECTIOUS ILLNESS, DO NOT VISIT GORILLAS! GET A DOCTOR'S NOTE AND YOUR PERMIT FEE WILL BE REFUNDED.**



**WHEN IN THE PARK...**




**NEVER WALK ALONE, ALWAYS TAKE A GUIDE AND LISTEN TO HIM/HER! KEEP YOUR VOICE LOW SO THAT YOU DON'T FRIGHTEN THE WILDLIFE**




**IN CASE OF EMERGENCY DIG A HOLE AND BURY IT! PROTECT OUR HEALTH.**

**WHEN YOU ARE WITH GORILLAS...**


KEEP YOUR DISTANCE




**NO SMOKING**




**NO EATING OR DRINKING**




**AND IF YOU MUST SNEEZE OR COUGH, COVER YOUR FACE AND TURN AWAY FROM GORILLAS.**



**NO CELL PHONES**




**TIME LIMIT 1hr.**




**VISITS ARE LIMITED TO ONE HOUR PER GORILLA GROUP PER DAY.**

**DON'T DROP LITTER-TAKE IT HOME.**





**IT IS PROHIBITED TO PICK OR REMOVE ANY PLANTS OR OTHER WILDLIFE.**




**THANK YOU!**

These gorilla rules were developed by RDB in collaboration with the International Gorilla Conservation Programme, a coalition programme of the African Wildlife Foundation, Fauna & Flora International, and WWF, with specific funding for these posters from WWF in Sweden. Tele: +250 252 580465 Web: [www.igcp.org](http://www.igcp.org)

## Appendix 1b Gorilla Rules for Uganda




# GORILLA RULES

THEY ARE FOR YOUR SAFETY AS WELL AS OURS!


**BEFORE SETTING OUT...**

**COUGHS AND SNEEZES SPREAD DISEASES AND CAN KILL GORILLAS. IF YOU HAVE A COLD OR FLU OR OTHER INFECTIOUS ILLNESS, DO NOT VISIT GORILLAS! INFORM YOUR TOUR OPERATOR OR AN UWA EMPLOYEE OF YOUR ILLNESS.**




**WHEN YOU ARE WITH GORILLAS...**

KEEP YOUR DISTANCE




MINIMUM 7m (23ft)


**NO SMOKING**




**NO EATING OR DRINKING**




**AND IF YOU MUST SNEEZE OR COUGH, COVER YOUR FACE AND TURN AWAY FROM GORILLAS.**



**NO CELL PHONES**




**TIME LIMIT 1hr.**



**VISITS ARE LIMITED TO ONE HOUR PER GORILLA GROUP PER DAY.**

**WHEN IN THE PARK...**




**NEVER WALK ALONE, ALWAYS TAKE A GUIDE AND LISTEN TO HIM/HER!**




**IN CASE OF EMERGENCY DIG A HOLE AND BURY IT! PROTECT OUR HEALTH.**

**DON'T DROP LITTER-TAKE IT HOME.**






**AND PLEASE DON'T PICK OR REMOVE ANY PLANTS OR OTHER WILDLIFE.**



**THANK YOU!**

These gorilla rules posters were developed by UWA in collaboration with the International Gorilla Conservation Programme, a coalition programme of the African Wildlife Foundation, Fauna & Flora International, and WWF, with specific funding for these posters from WWF in Sweden. Tele: +250 252 580465 Web: [www.igcp.org](http://www.igcp.org)

## Appendix 2 Consultations Completed to Date

### Uganda pre-Roundtables (September 2013 and May 2014)

Name	Title	Institution
<b>September 2013</b>		
<b>Dr. Andrew Seguya*</b>	Director	UWA
<b>Dr. John Makombo</b>	Director, Field Operations	UWA
<b>Chemonges Sabilla</b>	Deputy Director, Legal & Corporate Affairs	UWA
<b>Felex Musinguzi</b>	Managing Director	Kazinga Tours
<b>Geoffrey Baluku</b>	Secretary to the Board	AUTO
<b>Gary Segal</b>	Group General Manager	Wild Places
<b>Praveen Moman*</b>	Owner	Volcanoes Safaris
<b>Boniface Byamukama</b>	Chairman	AUTO
<b>Herbert Byaruhanga</b>	President Chairman	Uganda Tourism Association Uganda Birders Association
<b>Anne-Marie Weeden</b>	Group Marketing Manager	Journeys Discovering Africa
<b>May 2014</b>		
<b>Joseph Ssempebwa</b>	Deputy CEO	Uganda Tourism Board
<b>Akankwasa Barirega</b>	Assistant Commissioner (Wildlife)	MTWA
<b>Joward Baluku</b>	Wildlife Officer	MTWA

### Rwanda pre-Roundtables (October 2013)

Name	Title	Institution
<b>Rica Rwigamba</b>	Head Tourism and Conservation	RDB
<b>Faustin Karasira</b>	Division Manager	RDB
<b>Claudine Rubagumya</b>	Tourism Manager	RDB
<b>Jean De Dieu Mukeshimana</b>	Product Development and Facilities Officer	RDB
<b>Tony Mudakikwa</b>	Head Veterinary Unit	RDB
<b>Manzi Kayihura</b>	Chairman Owner	RTTA 10,000 Hills
<b>Rosette Chantal Rugamba</b>	Managing Director	Songa Africa
<b>James Duder</b>	Manager (rotating)	Governor's Camp Sabyinyo Silverback Lodge
<b>Virunga Artisans of Promotion Cooperative (COOPAV)</b>		
<b>Jaques Furaha</b>	Journalist	

\* Dr. Andrew Seguya and Praveen Moman were in attendance at the Great Apes Summit in September of 2013 in Jackson Hole, WY and were informally consulted about the idea of "Gorilla Friendly" Tourism Certification at that event.



## **Appendix 3 Stakeholders for “Gorilla Friendly” Tourism Ecolabel**

### **Government:**

- Rwanda Development Board
- Rwandan Ministry of Natural Resources
- Rwandan Ministry of Trade and Industry
- Rwanda Environment Management Authority
- Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature
- Uganda Ministry of Tourism Wildlife & Antiquities
- Uganda Wildlife Authority
- Uganda Bureau of Standards
- Park Wardens & Rangers
- Other government agencies

### **Private Sector:**

- Large Tour Operators
- Small Tour Operators
- Community based Tour Operators
- Travel Agents
- Inbound Travel Agents and Operators
- Outbound Travel Agents and Operators
- Tourism Associations
- Guides
- Drivers
- City Hotels
- Lodges outside Parks
- Lodges inside Parks
- Airlines
- Travel insurance companies
- Tourism Supply Chain (Farmers, Restaurants, Retailers, Crafts Producers)
- Trade Associations

### **Tourists:**

- Tourists (international and domestic)
- Consumers

### **Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's):**

- Conservation NGO's (including Gorilla focused organizations)
- Social NGO's
- Other certification programs

### **Researchers**

- Academics
- Conservation NGO's

### **Communities**

- Park Edge communities and all those who utilize forest resources
- Community leaders
- Local governments and local authorities

## Appendix 4a Participating Stakeholder Groups, Kigali Rwanda Roundtable, 10 October 2013

Category	Institutions	Number of participants
<b>Tourism Regulators/Coordinators</b>	Rwanda Development Board	3
<b>Gorilla Habitat Managers</b>	Volcanoes National Park	1
<b>Private Sector Federation (Tourism Actors)</b>	Rwanda Tourism and Travel Association (RTTA), Rwanda Tourism Chamber (RTC), Rwanda Hospitality Association (RHA), Tour Operators,	9
<b>Conservation and Development Agencies</b>	Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund International (DFGFI), Mountain Gorilla Veterinary Project (MGVP), Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), Gorilla Organization (GO), GVTC, IGCP, WFEN and Rwanda Association for Conservation on Natural Resources (ACNR)	13
<b>Research/Academia</b>	Rwanda Tourism University College (RTUC)	1
<b>Local Governments &amp; Community</b>	Districts, Community Association	1

## Appendix 4b Participants at Kigali Roundtable

### Rwanda Roundtable Dialogue, 10 October 2013

	<b>Name of Participant</b>	<b>Company</b>	<b>Office location</b>
<b>1</b>	Alex B. Muhweezi (Facilitator)	FDI	Kampala
<b>3</b>	Altor MUSEMA	IGCP	DRC
<b>3</b>	Anna Behm MASOZERA	IGCP	Kigali
<b>4</b>	Anny BATAMURIZA	NBA	Kigali
<b>5</b>	Charles RUZINDANA	District	Musanze
<b>6</b>	Davidson M. MUGISHA	WILDLIFE Tours	Kigali
<b>7</b>	Dawn ZIMMERMAN	MGVP	Musanze
<b>8</b>	Emmanuel BUGINGO	GO	Musanze
<b>9</b>	Emmanuel NTIVUGURUZA	IGCP	Gasabo
<b>10</b>	Eugene RURANGWA	IGCP	Musanze
<b>11</b>	Greg BAKUNZI	AMAHORO Tour	Musanze
<b>12</b>	Henry J MUSOKE	Volcanoes Safaris	Kigali
<b>13</b>	Jacques FURAHA		Kigali
<b>14</b>	James DUDER	Sabyinyo SL	Musanze
<b>15</b>	Jean Aime SIBOMANA	RAB	Kigali
<b>16</b>	Jean De Dieu MUKESHIMANA	RDB	Kigali
<b>17</b>	Jean Félix KINANI	MGVP	Musanze
<b>18</b>	Jim BEYLEM	DAT	Kigali
<b>19</b>	Julie STEIN	WFEN	USA
<b>20</b>	Marie Claire UMUBYEYI	Volcanoes Safaris	Kigali
<b>21</b>	Michel MASOZERA	WCS	Kigali
<b>22</b>	Nsengiyumva P.C	SACOLA	Musanze
<b>23</b>	Prosper UWINGELI	RDB	Musanze
<b>24</b>	Serge NSENGIMANA	ACNR	Kigali
<b>25</b>	Stylien ASIAN	IGCP	Kabale
<b>26</b>	Tombola M. GUSTAVE	RTUC	Kicukiro
<b>27</b>	Tony MUDAKIKWA	RDB	Kigali
<b>28</b>	Yves NKUNDABANGENZI	ITT	Nyarugenge

## Appendix 5a Participating Stakeholder Groups, Kampala, Uganda Roundtable, 14 May 2014

Category	Institutions	Number of Participants
<b>Ministry responsible for Wildlife and Tourism</b>	MTWA	4
<b>Government Agencies</b>	UWA (Hqtrs + BINP, MGNP), UTB, UWEC,	9
<b>Tourism actors</b>	Associations of tourism operators, guides, hotel owners, etc	12
<b>Conservation and Development agencies</b>	IGCP, UWS, CTPH, BMCT, JGI, WWF, UOBDU, NCCDF, <i>NatureUganda</i> , UCOTA, UWEC, Chimpanzee Trust, etc	10
<b>Research/Academia</b>	ITFC, MUK, Kabale University	6
<b>Local Governments &amp; Community</b>	Kabale, Kisoro, Kanungu Districts, CBOs	3
<b>Facilitators</b>	IGCP, WFEN, FDI	5

## Appendix 5b Participants at Kampala Roundtable

### Uganda Roundtable Dialogue, 14 May 2014

NO.	NAME	ORGANISATION
1	Kamalla FELEX	UCOTA
2	Julie STEIN	Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network
3	Anna Behm MASOZERA	IGCP
4	Alex MUHWEZI	FDI / Facilitator
5	Robert MWEBAZE	FDI
6	Dorothy NAKIWALA	CTPH
7	KASIGWA J.K	UWEC 200
8	Robert BITARIHO	ITFC
9	Raymond ENGONA	UWA
10	Moses TURINAWA	UWA Mgahinga
11	Godfrey KAGAAYI	VILLS Media LTD
12	Akankwasa BARIREGA	MTWA
13	Chemonges AMUSA	UWA
14	Christopher MASABA	UWA-BMCA
15	Henry NEZA	UOBDU
16	Innocent ASIIMWE	UTB
17	Paul HATANGA	Chimpanzee Trust
18	Richard MUNEZERO	KDLG (Kisoro)
19	Jennipher BAIREEZE	Nature Uganda
20	Dan AGABA	UWS
21	Francis MUGIZI	Makere University
22	Dr. Wilber AHEBWA	MUK/UTA
23	Gloria TUMWESIGYE	AUTO
24	James LUTALO	MTWA
25	Christopher GAKIBAYO	Kabale District
26	Marion NANKYA WASAJJA	USAID
27	Martin ASIIMWE	WWF
28	George AGABA	KANUNGU LG
29	Pinto MAMELLA	Pearl of Africa Tourist Travel
30	Steven MONDE	J.K Tout & Travel
31	John BOSCONIGEYI	COVAB/WAM
32	Dr. Peter APELL	JGI
33	Christine AMPUMUZA	Kabale University
34	Mamerito SENFUMA	Pearl of Africa
35	James SEMAKULA	NEMA
36	Richard DRAME	COUAB/WARM Makerere
37	Victoria MBABAZI	Wijema Tours & Travel
38	Fidells KANYAMUNYU	NCCDF
39	Patrick OPAADE	Toros Pride Tours
40	Eric NTARO	UTPA/AUTO
41	Benon KWIZERA	Kisoro District
42	Adrine NAMANDA	USAGA
43	Daniel MUNTU	MTS/EPRC
44	Geoffrey BALUKU	AUTO

<b>45</b>	George LUGOLOOBI	UWS
<b>46</b>	Ronald TUMWINE	Safari Centre
<b>47</b>	Patrick MUHIRE	UTB
<b>48</b>	Boaz TUMUSIIME	MTWA
<b>49</b>	Joward BALUKU	MTWA

## Appendix 6 Record of Roundtable held in Kigali

The Rwanda roundtable was called by the Rwanda Development Board on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2013 at Lemigo Hotel in Kigali. The following record of the roundtable was kindly prepared by Mr. Alex Muhweezi who also facilitated the meeting.

The objectives of the roundtable included:

1. Publicize the 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Mountain Gorilla Friendly Certification.
2. Articulate and build a collective stakeholder vision of a successful and beneficial (to all - gorillas, tourist, tour operator, government agencies) 3<sup>rd</sup> party Gorilla Friendly certification model.
3. Generate stakeholder ownership and enthusiasm for 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Mountain Gorilla Friendly certification.

The Roundtable dialogue comprised of plenary and roundtable dialogues. Two plenary sessions: a) Opening session (welcome and roundtable opening remarks, participant's introduction, introduction to the roundtable, introduction to 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Mountain Gorilla Friendly certification concept); b) Feedback session from Roundtable groups dialogue.

Three roundtables group dialogues were set up each hosting on average 9 participants. Participants in each roundtable group were selected randomly. Each roundtable group discussed the following issues (Table 1).

Table 1: Issues discussed during Rwanda Roundtable

Issues for discussion during roundtables
<p>a) <b>Character of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Certification: what should it be called-name? What should be its scope e.g., should it focus on Mountain Gorilla only or include others?</b></p> <p>b) <b>Policy or legal requirements for developing and implementing 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Certification?</b></p> <p>c) <b>Target audiences...who are the targets for the certification ....tour operators, hospitality, airlines, park management, etc?</b></p> <p>d) <b>Hosting arrangements ...who certifies and what are the required credentials for the most suitable institution to issue the certification?.</b></p> <p>e) <b>Institutional roles for RDB and Stakeholder roles ...during development, enforcement/implementation, compliance monitoring of the Certification.</b></p> <p>f) <b>Mechanisms for stakeholder's participation in formulation and implementation ... to achieve equity and fairness.</b></p> <p>g) <b>Measures for ensuring compliance with Certification Standards.</b></p> <p>h) <b>Mechanisms for "Audits" or monitoring compliance...e.g., 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Versus other mechanisms?</b></p> <p>i) <b>Measures or requirements for integrating 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Certification into current licensing and other tour operations regulatory frameworks (if</b></p>



- necessary?)*
- j) **Measures for enhancing certification benefits to park, businesses, consumers/tourists and community?**
  - k) **Mechanisms for monitoring benefits and effects to tourism business, tourists, community and habitat/national park?**
  - l) **Experiences/lessons on challenges/shortcomings/problems and opportunities for current enforcement/compliance to current Mountain Gorilla tourism standards and regulations. This information is needed in order to informing the Certification or to be addressed by the Certification.**
  - m) **Mechanisms for disseminating information about the certified operations and practices to all actors?**

### **Remarks and Presentations from the Opening Session**

In the RDB opening remarks delivered by Faustin Karasira (Division Manager, Product Development and Planning, Department of Tourism and Conservation RDB) informed the Roundtable that RDB finds the idea of certification holding a lot of potential. He emphasized that planners must always be thinking ahead to improve the tourism industry in the country and at regional levels. He wished participants fruitful discussions.

Anna Behm Masozera (Director, IGCP) and Julie Stein (Director, WFEN) presented the Concept of 3<sup>rd</sup> party Mountain Gorilla Tourism Certification and provided responses and clarifications to the audience. The key messages provided included:

- a. Definition of Ecolabel certification being a labeling system for products and services driven by consumer desire to have their purchase contribute to environmental sustainability, social equity and health.
- b. Certification has worked in other places.
- c. “Gorilla Friendly” tourism certification builds on existing gorilla rules and rewards those who go beyond the gorilla rules.
- d. Certification helps to gain the market advantage with global eco-tourists.

### **Feedback from Roundtable dialogues**

The following section presents the combined outcome of threeroundtable group discussion:

- a) Character of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Certification:** *What should it be called-name? What should be its scope e.g., should it focus on Mountain Gorilla only or include others?*

Roundtables proposed that the following titles: i) Rwanda Responsible Tourism Certification Program; ii) Responsible Tourism Certification initiative or Mt Gorilla Conservation Certification Programme; iii) Wildlife certification, iv) Great Apes Certification (*considering the trans-border aspect of the certification*); v) Gorilla certification (*using “Gorilla” should help to promote the species*); vi) Mountain Gorilla Conservation Certification program; vii) Ecosystem certification (because it will

include the community, the environment and the economy), and, viii) Primate Certification.

**b) Policy or legal requirements for developing and implementing 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Certification?**

Roundtables proposed that the certification should be a regional initiative within the context of the on-going regional framework of trans-boundary collaboration. It should recognize national development tourism and environmental policy and legal frameworks and work with Rwanda Bureau of Standards. The Roundtables recommend that the initiative should involve appropriate government institutors, tourism associations (TITA, RHA, RTTA, etc.) and conservation agencies.

**c) Target audiences...who are the targets for the certification ....tour operators, hospitality, airlines, park management, etc?**

The Roundtables recommended that following audiences to be targeted by the Certification: Tour operators, Hotels, CBOs, Airlines, Tourism Associations, Conservation organization (NGOs), Media, Hospitality industry, Community enterprises and Protected areas

**d) Hosting arrangements ...who certifies and what are the required credentials for the most suitable institution to issue the certification?**

Roundtable recommended that the certification should be issued by an internationally recognized independent institution or agency with ISO Standard. It was further recommended that such entity should demonstrate its respect for the community, environment and business (local and international). It was also recommended that the planning for the Certification should be done in conjunction with RDB and stakeholders aiming at ensuring that there is ownership by all stakeholders. Roundtables recommended more research to identify most suitable institutions using credible criterion in order to avoid biases

**e) Institutional roles for RDB and Stakeholder ...during development, enforcement/implementation, compliance monitoring of the Certification.**

Roundtables recommended the following roles for RDB and Stakeholders (Table 5):

Table 2: Recommended institutional roles in Certification scheme.

Institution	Proposed role
RDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Own the process and assist in the implementation</li> <li>Design or participate in monitoring and evaluation framework</li> <li>Facilitate creation of Certification criteria</li> <li>Promote the initiative within Rwanda and the Region</li> <li>Disseminate information about the Certification initiative</li> </ul>

<b>Local Government</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Law enforcement</li> </ul>
<b>NGOs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Monitoring</li> </ul>
<b>Privates sector</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Awareness</li> <li>▪ Compliance</li> </ul>
<b>Stakeholders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Get involvement and participate in the debates</li> <li>▪ Comply with the criteria</li> <li>▪ Help promoting and marketing the brand</li> <li>▪ Disseminate information</li> <li>▪ Should be aware of the brand</li> <li>▪ Contribute to the funding</li> </ul>

**f) Mechanisms for stakeholder's participation in formulation and implementation ... to achieve equity and fairness.**

Roundtables recommended the following measures for stakeholder participation:

- Identify and map out stakeholders.
- Establish a regional task force or steering committee to spearhead the certification process.
- Set up a multi-stakeholder national committee with clearly defined mandate.
- RBS (Rwanda Bureau of Standards) should be involved.
- Ensure a fair and equitable revenue-sharing mechanism

**g) Measures for ensuring compliance with Certification standards.**

Roundtables recommended the following compliance measures.

- Develop a monitoring and evaluation framework.
- Develop standards and communicate them to the stakeholders.
- Conduct compliance audits with the approval of an international organization.
- It should be mandatory to comply with all standards.
- There should be penalties for those who do not comply.
- Participation should be open to only those businesses which are members of a recognized association.

**h) Mechanisms for "Audits" or monitoring compliance...e.g., 3<sup>rd</sup> party vs other mechanisms?**

The following mechanisms were recommended:

- Ensure that points number measures recommended in part (g) above are respected.
- An international certification organization should be in charge of audits
- There should be a stakeholder's task force to conduct audits.

**i) Measures or requirements for integrating 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Certification into current licensing and other tour operations regulatory frameworks (if necessary?)**

The following measures or requirements were recommended:

- i. Ensure that there are elaborate accountability responsibilities
- ii. Rules and regulations of stakeholders should be harmonized.
- iii. Linking with existing associations.

**j) Measures for enhancing certification benefits to park, businesses, consumers/tourists and community?**

The following measures were recommended:

- i. There should be annual reports showing who is benefiting from the certification.
- ii. Supporting the conservation community should be part of the criteria.
- iii. There should be recognition for those who comply with the criteria.
- iv. There should be reports showing who has done well.
- v. Those who have done well should be appreciated.
- vi. Publicize/promote the initiative

**k) Mechanisms for monitoring benefits and effects to tourism business, tourists, community and habitat/National Park?**

The following mechanisms were recommended:

- i. Monitor tangible community achievements in order to ensure that communities benefit.
- ii. Monitor financial growth (volumes and revenues)
- iii. Develop and apply sound financial management and resource utilization procedures.
- iv. Monitor impacts.
- v. Establish baseline information.
- vi. Provide for Self-audit/Self-regulation.
- vii. Reporting...the committee should provide reports from the meeting.

**l) Experiences/lessons on challenges/shortcomings/problems and opportunities for current enforcement/compliance to current Mountain Gorilla tourism standards and regulations.**

Roundtable dialogue identified the following two lessons:

- i. Economic value and conservation values compete.
- ii. Benefits sharing arrangements are useful tools of conservation.

Roundtable dialogue identified the following challenges:

- i. How to make sure there is the fair sharing of the benefits?
- ii. The free will of tourism operators to comply.
- iii. Should it be mandatory for the tour operators to participate?
- iv. The high demand of tourism.
- v. Inadequate pre-trip preparations by tourists.
- vi. Existing opportunities within conservation organizations.
- vii. Sustainability of community projects.
- viii. Owner ship and implementation of the certification...that carries the cost?

**m) Mechanisms for disseminating information about the certified operations and practices to all actors?**

The following mechanisms were recommended:

- i. The idea of creating a website is brilliant and the website should be independent.
- ii. International media.
- iii. Exhibitions.

**General recommendations:**

Roundtables made the following general recommendations:

- a. Standards have to be harmonized. There shouldn't be different standards in different countries.
- b. RDB wishes it to be an international.
- c. The name that will be chosen may shape the standards (e.g. if the name is "Mountain Gorilla", the standards may be regional; if the name is "Great Apes", standards will be global).

**Synthesis of Key Messages from the Roundtable**

The following were captured and presented as the key messages from the roundtable dialogue. These messages should be taken into account in the design of the Certification.

- a. Publicizing the 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Mountain Gorilla Friendly Certification.
- b. Generating stakeholder ownership and enthusiasm for 3rd Party Mountain Gorilla Friendly certification.
- c. Articulating and building a collective stakeholder vision of a successful and beneficial (to all - gorillas, people in adjacent communities, tourist, tour operator, government agencies) 3rd party Gorilla Friendly certification model.
- d. Design the certification scheme nicely to become clear and easy to apply/comply with.
- e. Focus on "Mountain Gorilla" noting that other important attractions benefit indirectly?
- f. Measures for ensuring commitment and mechanisms that enable range states+ stakeholders participate effectively.

- g. Target a certifier with global reputation.
- h. Ensure integration into existing (or anticipated) policy, legal and institutional frameworks.
- i. Equitable sharing of benefits and costs.
- j. Effective enforcement and compliance measures.

## Appendix 7 Record of Roundtable held in Kampala

The Uganda roundtable was called by the Ugandan Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities and held on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2014 at Hotel Africana in Kampala. The following record of the roundtable was kindly prepared by Mr. Alex Muhweezi who also facilitated the meeting.

The objectives of the roundtable included:

- a. Articulate and build a collective stakeholder vision of a successful and beneficial (to all - gorillas, tourist, tour operator, government agencies) 3rd party Gorilla Friendly certification model - from identifying the niche and need for it, establishing standards, compliance mechanisms, decision making and governance, branding and marketing, labels and trademarks and copyright protection issues, potential conflict of interest.
- b. Generate stakeholder ownership and enthusiasm for 3rd Party Gorilla Friendly certification.

### Key Messages from Opening Session

The following key messages were derived from the statements made during the Opening Session.

- a) **Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities (MTWA)-By Mr. James Lutalo, Commissioner for Wildlife, MTWA**

The Message emphasized that:

- i. Great Apes tourism ought to be based on sound technical considerations and therefore the certification will be expected to consider the technicalities of ape tourism.
- ii. Economic and business interests tend to ignore the technical aspects, and therefore, the certification should provide measures for ensuring the interests comply with the certification standards on self-regulation basis.
- iii. Uganda's Wildlife Policy emphasizes conservation in context of sustainable development principles and as such promotes ecotourism; while, the tourism policy provides for nature friendly tourism.
- iv. Certification is expected to be adopted at regional level by Mountain Gorilla range countries.

- b) **International Gorilla Conservation Programme (IGCP), Mrs. Anna Masozera, Executive Director, IGCP**

The following key messages were derived from the statements made by IGCP during the opening session:



- i. The Mt Gorillas are critically endangered. Their conservation status depicts a successful conservation and tourism effort and as such, Mt Gorillas have attracting “higher” alert and attention at local, national and international levels.
- ii. The certification should identify and promote best tourism practices and build on existing ones such as Best practices for the Great Ape Tourism by the IUCN.
- iii. Enhancing best tourism practices through SELF-regulation has potential to serve as a effective a voluntary tool for conservation managers for win-win solutions.
- iv. The certification process is process-LED and not a product-LED process.

**c) Wildlife Friendly Enterprises Network (WFEN), Julie Stein, Executive Director, WFEN**

The following key messages were derived from the statements made during the opening session:

- i. Tourism consumers desire to contribute to environmental sustainability, social equity and health.
- ii. Tourism companies and governments desire to demonstrate commitment to environmental sustainability and social responsibility.
- iii. Private sector identity and competitiveness is a driving force for ensuring best tourism practices.
- iv. Voluntary approach to the certification process creates economic incentives for rewarding best performers in reference to best practices and compliance.
- v. There are benefits from certification to conservation, economics and people.

**Feedback from Roundtable Dialogues**

*Ensuring participation and ownership*

The Roundtable discussed the following questions and made recommendation or suggestions as follows:

**a) Who certifies?**

- i. The meeting suggested forming a national level Committee or Independent Certifier to work in collaboration with Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS) to handle the certification. It was further recommended that the composition of the Committee should include the following: Researchers, conservation NGOs and state bodies, tour operators and guides, Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities, community entities neighboring the parks.
- ii. They roundtable suggested forming a Regional Committee or Taskforce to harmonize gorilla tourism certification issues in the three states. Further, it was recommended that the composition of the regional taskforce should include both technical and business representatives.

**b) Who is to be certified?**

The meeting recommended that all the product/services offered along the Gorilla tourism value chain should be certified.

**c) What is to be certified?**

The roundtable recommended entire Gorilla tourism value chain from entry point (border/airport), players along the tourism chain, state conservation bodies, community tourism enterprises, air lines, web managers.

**d) How do we move on together in next steps?**

MTWA should form a multi stakeholder taskforce with its Secretariat at MTWA and provide feedback to larger stakeholders.

*Ensuring equity*

**a) What measures to ensure equity and avoid monopoly?**

The following measures were recommended:

- i. Develop and apply standards for best practice.
- ii. Institute 3rd party audit and appeal system.
- iii. Ensure equal opportunities for all lead players in the design, sensitization and publicity of the certification. Ensure leveled ground for all players, including equitable incentives for all to participate.
- iv. Ensure that the following tourism players are involved; UWA, MTWA, UTB, Local Communities, NGOs, Tourists, Researchers, Tour Operators, Local Government, Airline Companies and Hoteliers.
- v. All the players should be brought on board and their interests harmonized
- vi. Community members should realize the benefits since they are the primary players.
- vii. Certification should be categorized in a model so as not to exclude anybody.

**b) Measures for monitoring and assessing compliance & adherence.**

The following measures were recommended:

- i. Establish platforms for information sharing and management among the tourism players.
- ii. Establish a neutral body to conduct independent monitoring and assessment.
- iii. Develop and publicize an assessment criteria/checklist.

*Value addition and benefits*

**a) How effective can the certification be achieved? What should be the scope of certification?**

It was recommended to:

- i. Engage all stakeholders.
- ii. Sensitize Certification to all stakeholders + training where necessary.
- iii. Certify both commitment and practices.
- iv. Integrate into policies, institutional mandates, etc.

**b) What is the problem/issue the Certification seeks to address? What is the value addition?**

The following problems or issues were identified:

- i. Habitat degradation.
- ii. Weak compliance to policies, regulations and standards.
- iii. Low capacity of operators and low ethical standards/practices.
- iv. Illegal tracking of Mt Gorillas.
- v. Insecurity in /around the parks.
- vi. Selective participation and benefits...e.g., Community Vs Local government in the Benefit Sharing Schemes.
- vii. Need to sustain institutional commitment and or good practices.
- viii. Guiding principles for the process and certification models.
- ix. Integration with all principle players (ministry, UWA, UTB, UTA, AUTO, UCOTA and UNBS) and operational guidelines.
- x. Capacity of business tour operators

**c) Value addition**

The following were identified as components that will benefit from the certification scheme:

- i. Hospitality facilities and services.
- ii. Code of conduct.
- iii. Visitor security.
- iv. Creating awareness relating to good tourism operation practices.
- v. Monitoring and evaluation for tourism industry practices like tour operators/agencies, hotels for tourists, airlines etc.
- vi. Enhance visitor experience and customer care.
- vii. Improve the image of the country.
- viii. Develop high ethical (code of conduct) by the operators in tourism business.
- ix. Capacity building for tour operators and guides.
- x. Competitiveness of a country in the region.
- xi. Enhances the conservation of mountain gorilla inhabitants.

**d) Complimentarity**

The following measures for ensuring that the Certification compliments existing efforts were proposed:

- i. Ensure there is relationship with:
  - Policy and legal and institutional mandates....wildlife policy and legislation, tourism policy and legislation, park management plans, tourism guidelines, permits, etc.; institutional mandates – MTWA, UTB, UWA, UNBS, Districts, Local governments, range states, etc ,etc.
  - Other certifications.
- ii. Ensure compliance with national laws, regulations and policies.
- iii. Harmonize the existing documents and have one document for implementation purposes.
- iv. Involve stakeholders in developing the best standards.
- v. Scale down the principles easy implementation.
- vi. Multi- Stakeholders and multi-level platforms should be involved
- vii. Certification should contribute to implementation of policies.
- viii. Enhance awareness and knowledge of certification requirements to all stakeholders.
- ix. Adopt relevant principles and practices from the existing certification services providers e.g. Forestry certification.

## **Conclusion and Way Forward**

Overall, the Kampala roundtable recommended the proposal to develop a 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Mountain Gorilla Tourism Certification.

The following ingredients of the certification were proposed.

1. Description of the value addition.
2. Equitable benefits and cost sharing.
3. Target Mountain Gorilla.
4. Certification should a voluntary regional initiative.
5. There should be effective enforcement measures and compliance incentives and disincentives (punitive measures for non compliance).
6. Certification should be grounded in national as well as regional policy/legal and institutional frameworks.
7. Identify a 3<sup>rd</sup> part Auditor/Certifier with internal reputation and respect for communities.
8. Develop and apply a clearly defined criteria for assessing compliance
9. Develop and apply a clearly defined procedures or mechanisms for stakeholder participation and ownership.

## **Appendix 8 List of NGO Stakeholders**

1. African Wildlife Foundation
2. Berggorilla & Regenwald Direkthilfe e.V.
3. Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund International
4. Flora and Fauna International
5. Institute of Tropical Forest Conservation
6. International Gorilla Conservation Programme
7. Jane Goodall Institute
8. Mountain Gorilla Veterinary Project
9. The Gorilla Organization
10. Wildlife Conservation Society
11. World Wide Fund for Nature/ World Wildlife Fund
12. Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology

### **Other Relevant Institutional Stakeholders**

13. International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
14. Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP)
15. Greater Virunga Transboundary Collaboration (GVTC)