



REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

**Vulnerable and Marginalized Groups Plan (VMGP)
for the Batwa around the Mgahinga Gorilla National Park**

**UNDER THE PROJECT “Investing in Forests and Protected Areas for Climate-Smart Development Project
(IFPA-CD)” (P170466)**

Prepared by the Ministry of Water and Environment and Uganda Wildlife Authority

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ACRONYMS

BMCT	Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Trust
CFM	Collaborative Forest Management
CFR	Central Forest Reserve
CRM	Collaborative Resource Management
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ESF	Environmental and Social Framework
ESS	Environmental and Social Standard
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FPIC	Free, Prior, Informed Consent
KII	Key Informant Interview
MGNP	Mgahinga Gorilla National Park
MTWA	Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities
MWE	Ministry of Water and Environment
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NFA	National Forestry Authority
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NP	National Park
PA	Protected Area
PROBICOUG	Pro-biodiversity Conservationists in Uganda
PRIME	Productive Resources Investment for Managing the Environment
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
STAR	Sustainable Tourism in Albertine Rift
TSP	Technical Service Provider
UOBDU	United Organisation for Batwa Development in Uganda
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UWA	Uganda Wildlife Authority
VMGs	Vulnerable and Marginalized Groups
VMGF	Vulnerable and Marginalized Groups Framework
VMGP	Vulnerable and Marginalized Groups Plan
WB	World Bank

1.0 Introduction

The Government of Uganda (GoU) is implementing the “Investing in Forests and Protected Areas for Climate-Smart Development (IFPA-CD) Project”. The project is financed by the International Development Association (IDA) of the World Bank and GoU. The implementation of the project is led by the Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE), Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), and the National Forestry Authority (NFA). The development objective of the project is "to improve sustainable management of forests and protected areas and increase benefits to communities from forests in target landscapes". One of the targeted landscapes is the Albertine rift of which the MGNP forms a significant part.

During project preparation, the MWE, jointly with UWA and NFA, prepared and disclosed the project specific Vulnerable and Marginalized Groups Framework (VMGF)¹ and the Process Framework (PF).² The VMGF and PF were prepared to meet the requirements of the World Bank Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) under the Environmental and Social Standard 7 (ESS7) on Indigenous Peoples / Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities and ESS5 on Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement respectively.

The PF was prepared to guide project implementation in case it caused restrictions of access to resources in Protected Areas. It established a participatory process for determining appropriate use restrictions and measures to address adverse impacts on livelihoods that may result from such restrictions.

The VMGF provides guidance to the implementing agency on addressing the needs of **distinct, vulnerable, social and cultural groups** which possess the following characteristics, as defined by ESS7: (i) *self-identification as members of a distinct cultural group*; (ii) *collective attachment to geographically distinct - habitats or ancestral territories*; (iii) *customary cultural, economic or social institutions that are separate from those of the rest of the society*; and (iv) *an indigenous language, often different from the official language of the country or region*. The Batwa is such a group around Mgahinga that meets these criteria in the IFPA-CD Project area. The purpose of the VMGF is to guide the preparation and implementation of Project interventions that may affect VMGs in the proposed project areas.

The VMGF and PF recognize the importance of rights and interests of the Vulnerable and Marginalized Groups (VMGs) / the Batwa and call for their effective engagement in the design, determination and implementation of the project. It is further advised that the level of engagement of the VMGs should be proportionate to the scope and scale of potential project risks and impacts that may affect them.

Both VMGF and PF draw on use of existing participatory forest management mechanisms used by the NFA and UWA. Community participatory management models for managing protected areas, which are being promoted by the NFA and UWA, include all categories of community members.

¹ <https://www.mwe.go.ug/sites/default/files/Vulnerable%20and%20Marginalized%20Groups%20Framework%20-VMGF%20for%20Uganda.pdf>

²

<https://www.mwe.go.ug/sites/default/files/library/UG%20P170466%20Process%20Framework%20for%20disclosure.pdf>

Existing community forest co-management models

- (i) *Collaborative Forest Management (CFM)* - This is an arrangement that is provided for in the National Forestry and Tree Planting Act 2003. By definition, “It is a mutually beneficial arrangement in which a forest user group and a responsible body share role, responsibilities, rights and returns (benefits) in a forest reserve or part of it.” To date, there are over 320 CFM groups in CFRs that are formally established or are in the process of being established.
- (ii) *Collaborative Resources Management (CRM)* - This is an arrangement of management in protected areas managed by UWA. It is based on the result of a negotiated process, whereby protected area management shares benefits, costs, decision-making authority and responsibilities, rights and roles in the management of wildlife resources with local communities and other stakeholders. UWA started establishing CRMs in the 1990s with an objective of increasing support for conservation.

The VMGF highlights the need to develop separate VMGP for each Target Protected Area that is located in areas inhabited by groups identified as possessing the above characteristics, namely the Mgahinga Gorilla National Park (MGNP), Echuya Central Forest Reserve (CFR), the Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, and the Semuliki National Park. This is, therefore, a specific VMGP for the MGNP.

The project has four components with subcomponents as summarised in Table 1 below. Components 1 and 2 include activities in Target Protected Areas which are the focus of the VMGF and this VMGP.

Table 1. Project Components and Activities applicable to Target Protected Areas

Components/sub-components	Activities	Project Targeted Areas
Component 1: Investments to improve the management of forest protected areas.	Focus on improving the management of government-owned forest and wildlife protected areas to ensure they can continue to generate revenues and provide important environmental services. Provide support to seven National Parks, four Wildlife Reserves, and up to 28 Central Forest Reserves (CFRs). Implementation led by the NFA and UWA.	
	Summary of activities: Improve management of high biodiversity values of forests and for generating jobs and revenues that can help sustain their conservation and increase benefits to local communities.	
Sub-component 1.1: Improvement of infrastructure and equipment for the management of forest protected areas	Implemented by UWA and NFA	
	Activities include: (i) Provide investments in: (a) grading and maintenance of tracks and trails within protected areas to improve access for park management; (b) boundary planning (including community consultations) and demarcation (using boundary markers);(c) infrastructure (such as gates and fences); (d) equipment and community-oriented activities to manage human-wildlife (e.g. trenches, fences); (e) investments in staff ranger housing; (f) communications; (g) vehicles and equipment and; (h) management plan revisions and updates.	BINP, MGNP, SNP, Echuya CFR

Sub-component 1.2: <i>Increasing the involvement of local communities in the management of forest and wildlife areas by increasing their access and benefits from these areas.</i>	Implemented by UWA and NFA	
	Activities include:	
	technical assistance packages and training aimed at developing the skills at community level to actively participate and benefit from the management of forest and wildlife resources. The technical assistance packages will include targeted support for women to empower them to participate and take leadership roles in natural resources management. At field level, support will be provided for community engagement in the management of forest resources within protected areas. This will include establishment of collaborative resource management groups, collaborative forest management groups and support of livelihood activities with existing groups.	BINP, MGNP, SNP, Echuya CFR
Sub-component 1.3: <i>Restoration of degraded natural forests and habitats in wildlife and forest protected areas.</i>	Implemented by UWA and NFA	
	Activities include:	
	Restoration through natural regeneration (based on enclosure of areas) and, where needed, enrichment planting, including through engaging and employing local communities.	Not Applicable to BINP, MGNP, SNP & Echuya CFR.
Sub-component 1.4: <i>Increased forest protection in CFRs and Wildlife Reserves (WRs) in close proximity to refugee settlements</i>	Implemented by UWA and NFA	
	Activities include:	
	At a small number of locations (e.g. at Bugoma Central Forest Reserve and Katonga Wildlife Reserve), deployment of additional resources to improve protected area management where there are site-specific threats to high value forest assets, either as a direct result of refugee incursion or indirectly by the added commercial demand for forest products arising from their presence.	Not Applicable to BINP, MGNP, SNP & Echuya CFR.
	UWA and NFA to engage local communities in resource management efforts, including forest restoration, and strengthen enforcement efforts to better-protect remaining natural forests in these protected areas. Project supported activities include: (a) community livelihood activities (such as beekeeping and wild mushroom growing); (b) removal of invasive species; (c) forest restoration; (d) improvements for basic protected area management (communication and other equipment, vehicles, ranger posts, essential infrastructure); (e) improvements for wildfire management (fire observation towers and equipment); and (f) boundary demarcation.	BINP, MGNP, SNP, Echuya CFR
Component 2: Investments to increase revenues and jobs from forests and wildlife protected areas		
Increase revenues and jobs from these forest and wildlife protected areas through targeted investments in tourism and productive forestry		
Summary of activities: Increase the economic contribution of forests through boosting revenue generation and job creation and strengthen incentives for improved forest management. Investment in tourism infrastructure to achieve continued development of nature-based tourism, and in addition, investments to increase forest industry-based jobs and incomes. Targeted information campaign to narrow the gender gap in the forestry sector, support to women entrepreneurs and women-led producer organizations.		

Subcomponent 2.1: Investments in tourism	Implemented by UWA and NFA	
	Activities include:	
	tourist reception, information and interpretive facilities in identified protected areas	BINP, MGNP, SNP, Echuya CFR
Infrastructure for new (or improving existing) tourist products and activities.		
Subcomponent 2.2: Investments in productive forestry	Implemented by the MWE.	
	Activities include:	
	Investments to further increase plantation area to reach a critical mass that can meet the demands of the local and regional market	Not applicable in BINP, MGNP, SNP, Echuya Central Forest Reserve
Investments to support processing and utilization of forest products to produce higher value wood products.		
Component 3: Improved tree cover, forest management and landscape resilience on private and customary land, including refugee hosting areas.		
Encourage establishment of greater tree cover in refugee-hosting landscapes outside protected areas, supporting sustainable forest management and landscape resilience on private and customary land.		
Summary of activities: Activities to be led by the MWE. This is to enhance the productivity of the landscape through improved tree cover, forest management and landscape resilience on private and customary land, including in refugee hosting areas. Support channeled through specialist service providers to work closely with District Local Governments (DLGs) to build capacity and facilitate implementation of agroforestry, small-holder plantation investments, and community forestry. The project will also support an on-farm wood fuels production scheme that will supply wood fuel to target refugee settlements. Activities to be carried out in host communities in refugee hosting districts.		
Districts selected are: in Albert Rift (Hoima, Kagadi, Kakumiro, Kamwenge, Kibaale, Kikuube, Kiryandongo, Kyegegwa) and West Nile (Adjumani, Amuru, Arua, Koboko, Lamwo, Madi Okollo, Moyo, Obongi, and Yumbe).		
Subcomponent 3.1: Increased tree cover on community land in refugee-hosting areas	Activities include:	
	Development of intensive, mixed-use agroforestry systems on household plots, with a strong orientation towards multi-purpose woody species that can provide fruit, fodder, fencing, fuel, shade, and also fix nitrogen, in intensive, multi-layered systems suitable for small areas.	Not applicable in BINP, MGNP, SNP, Echuya Central Forest Reserve
	Support for woodlots on private land. These will enhance the supply of timber, poles, fuel, and other plantation products with seedlings supply from the private nursery network to provide context-appropriate planting material and an extension support mechanism.	
	Enhanced management and protection of natural forests on customary, leasehold and freehold land, through support to establishment of community forests and implementation of activities within them	
	Development and promulgation of Community Forest Regulations, through a consultative process that builds on existing guidelines and experiences, working with legal experts and GoU to secure assent and ensure dissemination and awareness-raising	

	Support for district local governments through capacity building, provision of basic support packages of office equipment, for mobility and operational costs.	
Subcomponent 3.2: Supporting farm forestry for refugee fuel supply	The project will, therefore, set up a program to purchase fuel wood from communities and supply it to refugees. This will simultaneously stimulate farm forestry, provide an energy lifeline to the refugees, and reduce pressure on natural woodlands.	Not applicable in BINP, MGNP, SNP, Echuya Central Forest Reserve
Component 4: Project management support		
Support to overall project management and forest monitoring.		MWE
Summary of activities: Support project management support activities to ensure cost-efficient, timely, and quality delivery of project activities and results.		
Support for fiduciary management aspects, including procurement and financial management safeguards, social inclusion and gender competency development including a project gender strategy/action, and monitoring, evaluation and reporting.		

1.1 Purpose of the VMGP

This VMGP specific to the Batwa around the MGNP was prepared in compliance with the project's VMGF and PF.

This VMGP has been prepared as a practical tool to guide the implementation of IFPA-CD project interventions that may affect the Batwa around MGNP. The purpose of this VMGP is to document specific actions that have been identified and agreed with the affected Batwa, as well as measures for avoiding, minimizing or compensating for potential negative social economic impacts on them. This includes appropriate ways of engaging the Batwa to benefit from the project. The measures are described in this plan with defined specific responsibilities and timelines to ensure that implementation can be monitored throughout the project life cycle. The VMGP therefore highlights actions and strategies that will ensure that the Batwa³ living around MGNP participate in and equitably benefit from the project.

The Plan recognizes the cultural heritage of VMGs / Batwa as one of the key conservation values. This VMGP is also aligned with strategies and actions prioritized in the MGNP General Management Plan 2014– 2024^{4,5} that seek to address specific concerns of the Batwa. These include the following:

- Working with the Batwa, take an inventory of all medicinal plants for further research and mapping
- Involve the Batwa in establishing herbal demonstration sites outside the park
- Together with the Batwa, identify and map out earlier spiritual Batwa sites in the park
- Negotiate/collaborate with stakeholders to access Batwa cultural priority sites
- Identify and establish a centre in the park for Batwa forest experience demonstration as a tourism product
- Use forest experienced Batwa in tourism guiding
- Support Batwa elders to train young ones with the intention of passing on their forest experience
- Organize and train Batwa groups on identification and management of livelihood improvement projects
- Establish Conservation Batwa education dramas

³ The Batwa are one of the recognised VMGs in Uganda that meet the criteria of the World Bank's ESS7 description of Indigenous Peoples / Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities. Some of them live on the fringes of and derive their livelihoods from MGNP.

⁴ https://ugandawildlife.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Mgahinga_Gorilla_National_Park_GMP_2014-2023.pdf.

⁵ Section 7.7 On Cultural Values.

- Work with other institutions to fundraise for the Batwa dance improvement

The Specific activities for Batwa proposed in this VMGP for MGNP will, therefore, supplement the management prescriptions already included in the General Management Plan for the MGNP.

1.2 Description of the MGNP

MGNP is located in the extreme south-western corner of Uganda between latitude -1.33 to -1.38 South and longitude 29.6° to 29.7° East. The area was originally established as a Forest Reserve. A Sanctuary to protect gorillas was established by Legal Notice 21 of 1930, the area being upgraded to Game Reserve Status by SI No. 216 of 1964 (substituted by SI No. 136 of 1965). The National Park was established by SI No. 27 of 1991, amended by SI No. 3 of 1992. At 33.7 km², MGNP is Uganda's smallest national park. By the late 1980s the area was severely encroached. After the area was upgraded to a National Park in 1991 the encroaching families were persuaded to leave.

MGNP is a home to the Nyakagezi group of the rare Mountain Gorilla. It shares its gorilla population and is contiguous with the adjoining Parc National des Virunga (240 km²) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Parc National des Volcans (160 km²) in Rwanda, all forming the proposed transboundary protected area known as the Virunga Conservation Area, covering an area of 434 km². The area also has a significant large mammal population, including elephants, buffaloes, and giant forest hog. This is the only Park in Uganda in which the rare golden monkey is found. The park includes three of the Virunga volcanoes - Mt Muhabura (4,127 m), Mt Gahinga (3,474 m) from which the park derives its name, and Mt. Sabyinyo (3,645 m). It lies in Bufumbira county, Nyarusiza and Muramba sub-counties and is adjacent to the three parishes of Gisozi, Rukongi and Gitenderi.

The park is zoned into four zones: the tourism zone, wilderness zone (strict conservation zone), administration zone, and the collaborative management zone (where community members are allowed access under permission from UWA, as per below).

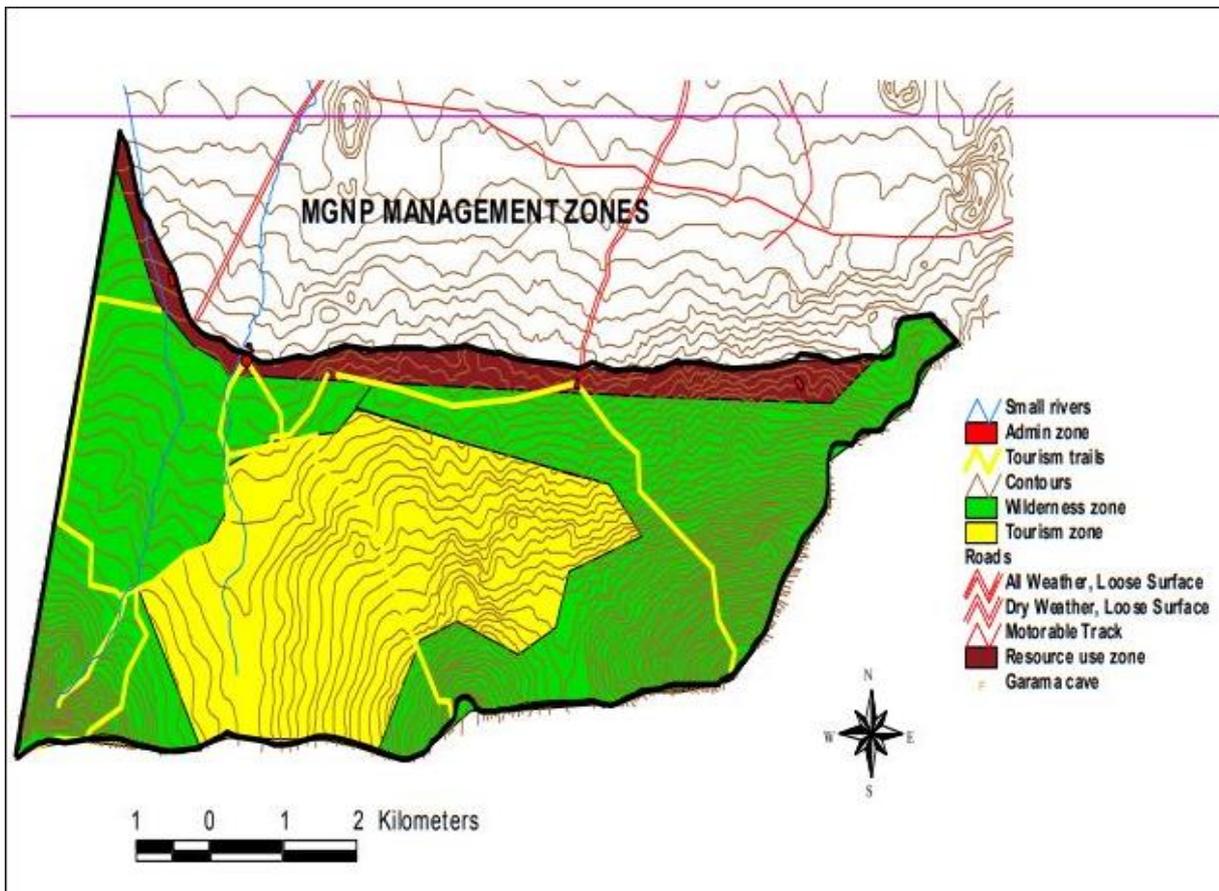


Figure 1. Map of MGNP with Zoning

1.3 Existing community engagement / benefits

Collaborative Resource Management

In the **collaborative management zone** the management priority is to conserve the Park values through an integrated approach encompassing protection, education, restoration and community conservation approaches. Regulated harvesting of biophysical resources in a sustainable manner by community residents is allowed in agreed resource-use areas but only through negotiated collaborative management agreements. Collaborative management agreements clearly define the resources to be used, the resource user community for each agreement and the agreed resource-use area for that community, together with the agreed control and monitoring mechanisms. The zone is confined within 1km distance from the park boundary where there are no tourism activities.

Permitted Activities include:

- Resource harvesting where appropriate as per collaborative management agreements
- Research, monitoring, and Park operations
- Accompanied visitor use
- Visitor information and interpretative services
- Fire management activities
- Small scale Garbage disposal sites for garbage originating from works permitted in the zone

Currently, the resources being accessed in the collaborative management zone of the park include dry bamboo, bamboo rhizomes, medicinal plants, weaving materials, grass for Batwa communities, and access to areas for bee keeping in the park.

The park management has signed six MoUs with the surrounding communities to enable them to have regulated access of resources in the park. The MOUs provide for joint management of the park and streamline the roles and responsibilities of a community conservation group, on one hand, and the roles of UWA on the other hand. The MoUs provide for successful CRM in the park. For example, during the consultative meeting held with the Batwa in Mgahinga Gorilla National Park Headquarters on September 24th, 2022 one member highlighted that there are three bee keeping community groups who have placed beehives inside the park under the existing multiple resource use program. He, however, noted that there is a risk of fire outbreaks in the park due to inappropriate methods of honey harvesting.

UWA’s Revenue Sharing Scheme

In order to support its community conservation objectives and secure more support from the local communities, UWA has a long-standing revenue-sharing scheme. Under this scheme, 20 percent of all gate fee proceeds and a portion of the revenue from gorilla trekking permits are remitted for implementation of community projects in the sub-counties adjacent to the boundaries of the protected areas. Implementation of the project is done through the district local government; selection of subprojects that would benefit the communities is done by the communities themselves. Some examples of such community subprojects include local health clinics, schools, and so on.

1.4 The Batwa around MGNP

The Batwa are the forest’s ‘first people’ and their ancient knowledge of its secrets remains unrivalled. The creation of Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Area (BMCA) (that encompasses MGNP and the Bwindi Impenetrable National Park) required the Batwa to be removed from their homes in the mountains and be displaced in a modern world unfamiliar to them. The Batwa ended up squatting in nearby farmland. The Batwa that live and derive livelihoods from MGNP are currently settled in Gahinga Batwa Village, Rukyeri Batwa Community and Rugongi Batwa community.

As of 2014, the Uganda Bureau of Statistics estimates that there are approximately 6,700 Batwa people in Uganda, comprising 0.2% of the country's population.

Table 2. Estimates of Batwa population around Mgahinga

Settlement	Parish	Subcounty	Households	Total population
Gahinga	Nyagakyenkye	Muramba	35	128
Rukeri	Gitenderi	Nyarusiza	40	201
Kabale	Gitenderi	Narusiza	5	33
Total			80	362

With limited education among the Batwa, adapting to the modern world has been difficult. The Batwa earn their living through occasional labor or begging. They do not have resources or land and suffer from acute poverty, malnutrition and poor health. They specifically derive their livelihood through engagement in CRM arrangements, working as guides in Batwa Forest trails, as well as through involvement and benefit from UWA revenue sharing.

The Batwa Cultural Trail

In June 2011, UWA, Kisoro District Local Government and the United Organisation for Batwa Development in Uganda (UOBDU) launched the **Batwa Cultural Trail**. The launch was marked by the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the three parties stipulating the roles and responsibilities of each. The Batwa trail is a Batwa led tourism venture. The trail serves as an educational tool for tourists, as well as a source of employment and income for the Batwa. Establishment of the trail was supported by the International Gorilla Conservation Program (ICGP), the Greater Virunga Transboundary Collaboration, USAID/ Sustainable Tourism in Albertine Rift (STAR), and the Royal Netherlands embassy, among others.

Research on Uganda National parks carried out in 2002 discovered that the Batwa were one of the biggest encroachers on the MGNP due to lack of land, employment and any other source of livelihood. Based on this research, the ICGP and UOBDU, with support from USAID Productive Resources Investment for Managing the Environment in Western Uganda (PRIME/West), starting developing a product that would offer an alternative source of livelihood to the Batwa, and a consultant was hired to develop a tourism plan in 2006.

Accordingly, from 2006, studies were carried out and recordings made of the Batwa traditional way of life as well as a study on the economic and social impact of the planned product. In 2007, the process of developing the product began in reality, with the training of the Batwa guides, putting in place the necessary infrastructure. In 2009, the Batwa Trail project received a boost from Greater Virunga Transboundary Collaboration with funding from the Royal Netherlands embassy to complete the product, but it remained not marketed. In 2010, the Tourism Management Committee sought assistance from USAID-STAR program to begin marketing this unique product. The main objectives of the Batwa Trail are to create an avenue where Batwa can earn an income for livelihood, preserving the rich Batwa culture, preserve the traditional relationship between the Batwa and the forest and to diversify tourism activities besides the renowned gorilla trekking. Fifty percent of the revenue generated from this product is income for UWA, and the other 50% is split between Batwa participants, the tour and guides and dancers, and the fund (managed by UWA for the benefit of the Batwa) that supports their community and conservation projects.

In April 2019, UWA purchased, with proceeds from this fund, two pieces of land measuring 7.5 acres worth UGX180 Million for a group of 35 people of the Batwa community neighboring MGNP. One piece of land is situated in Musana, while the other is situated in Nyagacence, both in Kisoro District.

UWA in collaboration with the Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Trust (BMCT) constructed a tourism Centre at Rwerere with specific targeted support to Batwa to use the Centre to display their culturally-based tourism potential. The Batwa were targeted to benefit from this facility and tourism overall through capacity building, product diversification and strengthening group dynamics. BMCT has financed tourism and marketing facilities such as Rwerere Centre and continues to support diversification and quality of tourist products.

1.5 Local social organizations, beliefs, ancestral territory, and resource use patterns

Notwithstanding the numerous problems faced by Batwa, they continue to value their forest based social system, culture, and traditional practices as an important part of their self-identification. The Batwa consider themselves one group with the same history, culture and contemporary socio-economic challenges. The traditional practices which define their ethnic group as a forest people include hunting and gathering forest resources, eating uncooked food, worshipping gods in the forest, sleeping in caves, guiding forest researchers and tourists, dressing in leaves and animal skins, making fire using dry sticks and speaking the Orutwa language.

The cultural values identified from the consultations⁶ show that Batwa deeply value Mgahinga as their cultural heritage. They attach considerable cultural importance to forest resources including caves, hot springs, rivers, hills, plants and animals. To Batwa, the forests are a source of physical, emotional and spiritual well-being. Before the forests were gazetted as national parks, Batwa depended on forest resources for food, medicine, basketry, firewood, marketable items, house construction, tools, rituals, hunting and recreation. Cultural songs, dances, household implements and tools, local names of people, places, water points, caves, gullies, streams, and hills within the park all reflect a long history of human involvement. Indeed, from this consultation and others before, the Batwa frequently requested to be allowed access to their cultural sites and items to save their culture from extinction and for improving their wellbeing.

Through consultations with the Batwa and review of literature and the General Management Plan for MGNP, a number of culturally significant items and locations were identified and their importance in resource conservation discussed. The summary of items of cultural significance are highlighted in the table below:

Table 3. Key plant and animal items and their cultural significance

	Valued item	Cultural significance
1	Honey from stingless bees and honey bees	Important in preparing the beer used in offerings and sacrifices to appease the spirits of their ancestors
2	Animals, including duikers, bushbucks, buffaloes, bush pigs, flying squirrels, cane rats, francolins and mudfish	Meat was a staple food for Batwa and was also used in worship. Animal skins were used as clothes and storage bags. Flying squirrels were used as dowry.
3	Plants, including wild yams, mushrooms, fruits like <i>Myrianthus</i> sp. and vegetables like <i>Solanum nigrum</i>	Important food items
4	<i>Rytigynia kigeziensis</i> , <i>Piper guinensis</i> , <i>Ocotea usambarensis</i> , <i>Toddalia</i> sp. and <i>Prunus Africana</i>	Important medicinal plants
5	<i>Ficus</i> sp. and <i>Erythrina abyssinica</i>	Important in acts of worship

The CRM program implemented by UWA has developed and strengthened community institutions and to some extent, provided real benefits to the resource users. However, the Batwa feel they have been marginalized by the Bafumbira (the dominant ethnic group) in the existing multiple use program.

Due to high population pressure, there is inadequate availability of these resources outside the park, and this has increased the demand and pressure on park resources. Batwa communities have special attachment to these resources for many years as a source of community livelihoods.

2.0 VMGP Development Process and Approach

This VMGP was developed through a series of consultative engagements, and also builds on the information gathered during project preparation, during preparation of the VMGF and the PF, as well as the specific engagements with the indigenous peoples that were undertaken as part of Uganda's REDD+ Readiness process. The consultations that pre-date 2021 are reflected in the VMGF.

⁶ Consultative meeting held with the Batwa in Mgahinga Gorilla National Park Headquarters on September 24th, 2022.

There were two stages of consultations specific to the development of this VMGP.

2.1 Structure of the Consultations

This VMGP has been developed with inclusive and systematic participation of the Batwa and local level stakeholders including UWA, Kisoro District Local Government, representatives from NGOs working around issues of Batwa and conservation of MGNP. The target communities had previously been consulted during the development of Uganda's REDD+ Program and during the development of the VMGF in March 2020. In every engagement (key informant interviews, focus group discussions) the consultations therefore built on the same process and started by providing feedback on the status of the project and outcomes of the previous consultation process. The key aspects of the VMGF were highlighted and the participants were reminded of the key issues and aspects discussed during the previous consultations. Some of these issues include:

- The need to ensure that the Batwa communities in general and their organizations/local leaders are not excluded by any means in activities of planning, selection, design, and implementation processes of IFPA-CD project;
- Developing arrangements to channel benefits directly to Batwa, including initiation of a system whereby IFPA-CD benefits could directly flow to the community level without going through a very bureaucratic process, which does not effectively respond to their unique needs. They proposed that setting up a special fund targeted at the Batwa themselves would increase the benefits directly within their communities.
- Strengthening Collaborative resource access and Forest management arrangements - across all the groups, currently, the main resource access mechanism is collaborative resource management arrangements in Mgahinga Gorilla National Park in co-management with UWA. There was a proposal to initiate investments aiming at strengthening organized Batwa groups and associations through skills development for production of high-quality craft products, bee keeping, and confidence building initiatives for the adult Batwa so as to benefit more from the project.
- Ensuring coordinated interventions to address the needs of the Batwa to achieve conservation and development objectives and to promote culturally sensitive activities that promote/protect Batwa cultures and norms.
- The need for government to effectively communicate and explain its policies and demonstrate how the marginalized Batwa communities would benefit from the legislative and policy provisions. For example, leveraging the revenue sharing and tourism development for the long-term sustainability of indigenous people engagement.
- Designing and implementing activities that take into account the need for integrating conservation friendly cultural values of the Batwa people into Protected Area management planning. Such approach would not only be beneficial for conservation but will also be a good avenue to empower and enforce the affirmative action, which can also spill over into education and employment skills based on indigenous knowledge.
- Creating and providing gender balanced employment opportunities such as tour guides, porters, boundary management, etc.

2.2 Phase 1 of VMGP Specific Consultations (June 2021)

In June 2021, an initial round of talks was held with the Batwa leaders. To stop the Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) from spreading, the government of Uganda had ordered a lockdown and instituted stringent

standard operating procedures (SOP) at the time these meetings were held. The COVID-19 circumstances were consequently taken into account during the consultative discussions. As public gatherings were prohibited, the consultation process relied on a few techniques, including Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), one-on-one physical discussions, within the recommended SOPs, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), of no more than five people organised within the framework of SOPs, and virtual or telephone interviews with the leaders of the Batwa. Rukiga and Kifumbira/Kinyarwanda, the local languages used by the Batwa around Mgahinga, were used for the interviews. These languages were already known to the team preparing the VMGP. Additionally, a conscious effort was made to arrange the FGDs in open areas to prevent crowding and assembling. The meetings took place on June 18, 2021, at MGNP Headquarters.

A total of 16 participants, mostly Batwa leaders, attended the Focus group meetings and the KIIs. A draft of the VMGP was created as a result. However, the evaluation of this draft report revealed some limitations, mostly due to restrictions of the COVID-19 regulations that constrained the breadth and methodology employed in consultations. For instance, given the cultural context of the Batwa, the utilisation of techniques like telephone interviews was not highly appropriate. Due to the small number of Batwa who owned telephones, these tactics not only restricted how the Batwa expressed themselves but were also difficult. As a result, only a few chosen Batwa leaders had a chance to participate in the consultations.

There was the need for more discussions to (a) involve more stakeholders and Batwa people in the project area, (b) reach more Batwa people, and (c) produce more baseline data that is site-specific.

2.3 Phase II of consultations (September 2022)

A second round of consultations was organized once most COVID-19 related restrictions were lifted in Uganda. On September 24th, 2022, a special consultation with the Batwa around MGNP was carried out, at the MGNP Headquarters. The meeting was attended by 67 people in total (30 men and 37 women), with representation from the frontline communities around MGNP. The goal of consulting the Batwa who reside around MGNP and depend on it for their livelihood was to learn about their concerns and preferences regarding the design and proposed implementation of the IFPA-CD project to give them equitable access to project benefits and minimize any unfavorable outcomes for the Batwa. Their opinions and the issues they presented have informed the finalization of this VMGP.

The participants were then guided to prioritise activities and to rank impact through an impact identification exercise. This was arrived at by making summaries of issues from the consultative reports⁷. The Batwa community consultative meeting held on September 24th, 2022 was conducted in Rukiga, Kinyarwanda and Orutwa to enable them get a clear understanding of the project objectives, investments and implementation arrangements as well as to ensure active participation. Prior to holding the community consultative meeting, a communication was made to the Batwa by a telephone call, through their NGO representatives with message highlighting the objectives for the consultations, consultation

⁷ Specific Area issues, needs and aspirations are already presented in specific Protected Area Reports and Annexed to the project VMGF document.

process, venue and intended outcome/outputs from the consultation meetings. During physical meetings the agenda below was followed:

The VMGP is structured under guidance of the key components suggested under Chapter Six of The Vulnerable and Marginalized Groups Framework (VMGF) for IFPA-CD Project, and as such, during the consultative meeting held on September 24th, 2022, the Batwa from communities living around and

Agenda of the consultation meeting held on September 24, 2022

Session 1: Introduction

1. Opening Prayer
2. Communication from a leader of Batwa
3. Remarks from District Local Government Authority

Session 2: Objectives of the meeting and Expectations

4. Presentation about the Project (objectives, investment in the PA/locality, implementation arrangements.
Presentation on likely project impacts of IFPA-CD project on Batwa and measures for mitigating identified impacts; Potential IFPA-CD project benefits to Batwa and implementation and financing arrangements to deliver these benefits; and Opportunities and mechanisms for uplifting Batwa participation in governance of Mgahinga Gorilla National Park
5. Discussion and feedback
6. Closing

obtaining livelihood from MGNP were able to identify area-specific issues and actions to inform not only the development of VMGP but also generated **proposals to strengthen VMGP implementation**, as highlighted in the following sub-sections.

- The Batwa around Mgahinga are still disorganised, and much is needed to organise them into formal groups and organisations
- There are still challenges in distribution of benefits, because women and youth do not benefit as much as men from most development activities
- Land continues to be a problem (There should be special effort to look for windows of acquiring more land for the Batwa)
- Livelihood continues to be a challenge; and, thus, there is a need to strengthen Village loan and saving groups for the Batwa and also build their capacity in crafts making.
- There are social ties that have to be considered e.g. aspects of migration, since the Batwa in Kisoro town have links with Rwanda, some migrate.
- The government of Uganda has never studied the issue of resettling Batwa; there needs to be a detailed study.
- There is still a problem of animals from the park. Buffalos are still a big problem, because they break the wall/boundary. The issue of problem animals come as a result of pressure from Virunga. Some injured animals come from DRC and end up dying on the Ugandan side, in Mgahinga. The other reason for problem animals is that, because of scarcity of land, people plant crops up to the wall/boundary. The animals smell the crops and break the wall to access the gardens. The existing buffalo wall (stone wall) along the boundary is 16Km long. In the ranking the challenges of MGNP problem animals take the 1st position.
- The Batwa also need to be considered in Revenue Sharing; they are usually left out by the District Local Governments.

The Batwa highlighted that the IFPA-CD project should support the following management actions:

- Engage the district local government and other conservation NGOs to encourage and promote domestication of park resources like bamboo, medicinal plants on to community farms
- Train the Batwa in bamboo propagation and management techniques
- In order to effectively implement the MoUs between Community Associations and UWA, awareness program for communities on resource use especially on the terms and conditions of the MoUs should be undertaken.
- Under the Multiple Use Programme, park management should consider allowing and regulating access to cultural sites and other forest resources which are important to Batwa's culture. To this end, there is a need to have separate Memoranda of Understanding for the Batwa, different from the Bafumbira since Batwa feel they have been marginalized by the existing Multiple Use Programme. The Memoranda of Understanding should aim to empower Batwa to apply their former customary rules in managing their cultural sites and the harvesting of forest resources such as wild honey and wild yam.
- To address the potential risks of fire resulting from the traditional honey harvesting methods, support and train communities in honey harvesting techniques and acquire modern honey harvesting tools and gears.
- Strengthening the involvement of resource use executive members in the monitoring of resource offtake would help curb illegal resource offtake. The involvement of communities in the management of the park would create a sense of ownership.
- Adopt a participatory approach while developing resource use monitoring tools and undertaking monitoring and evaluating resource offtake.
- Liaise with the district local government to intensify water harvesting campaigns during the rainy seasons.
- Develop further tourism products based on the Batwa culture. This would not only help in diversifying the existing tourism package in MGNP but would also benefit the Batwa by improving their incomes when they guide tourists to their cultural sites, sell handicrafts and dance for tourists. However, there is need to guard against abuse of the Batwa culture, especially as a result of undue pressure from the demanding tourism industry. This can be achieved by empowering Batwa to participate effectively in formulating the Parks' tourism plan so as to manage and maintain their values in a way they deem culturally appropriate.

2.4 Consultations with key stakeholders supporting the Batwa in MGNP

Further consultations and deliberations were held with the key project anticipated implementing partners and stakeholders including: local level UWA staff, representatives from the Kisoro District Local Government (Chief Administrative officer, District Tourism Officer, District Natural Resources officer), NGO's, and community development groups that represent and assist the Batwa around MGNP. Participants were purposively selected on the basis of their experience and work related to conservation in MGNP and the Batwa. A meeting of stakeholders and Non Governmental organizations working on issues of the Batwa in Mgahinga was organized at the Baram Hotel in Kisoro on the 25TH September 2022, and was attended by a total of 22 stakeholders (14 Men and 8 women). The information generated from this stakeholder consultative meeting included the following:

- The current needs and preferred options for livelihood of the Batwa around MGNP and the current related conservation projects that could be supported.
- Measures to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts likely to affect the Batwa
- Previous experiences with interventions and conservation projects targeting the Batwa around MGNP to determine what works and what does not.
- Measures to ensure project benefits will accrue to the Batwa around MGNP ;

- Measures to strengthen the capacity of local authority especially the district Local Government of Kisoro, and relevant government departments to address vulnerable groups' issues;
- Involvement of community organizations from the project area and the expertise from the local authorities and national level.
- Roles of the key stakeholders in the implementation of the VMGP for Batwa around Mgahinga Gorilla National Park

2.5 Applicability of Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)

The IFPA-CD project team has consulted with the Batwa during the project design with dedicated sessions specific to the Batwa, for example during the preparation of ESMF and preparation of VMGF. The preparation of VMGP has been entirely dedicated to Batwa, and their full engagement has been secured during this process. Informed consultations with Batwa were, therefore, carried out and this led to broad community support of the project. At the current stage, FPIC is deemed not to apply, because most of the project activities will be implemented in the park and, therefore, will have no adverse impacts on land and associated natural resources under customary use or occupation. The project will also not relocate any VMGs and will have no negative impacts on cultural heritage.

3.0 Specific issues for the Batwa around MGNP identified during consultations

3.1 General aspirations, and needs of the Batwa in Mgahinga Gorilla National Park

From a number of consultations, a number of general needs and aspirations were identified by the Batwa.

These include:

- Recruitment of able bodied Batwa to work as guides and porters in the park
- Increase pay for the Batwa that work as guides and porters
- Boundary wall/fence should be always repaired so that animals do not disturb them; UWA should employ the Batwa as casual laborers during construction
- Provide for Batwa access of cultural sites in the park under CRM
- UWA should provide a special package for the Batwa in the revenue sharing scheme for and communities living adjacent to the park.
- Implement livelihoods support program for the Batwa
- Increase the participation of Batwa in CRM – leadership, decision making, planning
- Train the Batwa to educate their children to improve on their literacy levels and benefit from proposals for grants
- Organise, formalize registration and build capacity of the Batwa trail association.
- Support the Batwa to develop tourism products based on Batwa culture, for example, creating music and dance groups and establishing designated
- Purchase and distribute land to the land less Batwa members.

It was explained to the participants of the consultations that a number of issues, like purchase of land, are beyond the project scope; however, cognizance of such issues is useful to other partners formulating their support to the Batwa.

3.2 Potential positive impacts of the project to the Batwa in MGNP

In series of consultative meetings with the Batwa that took place on i) June 18, 2021, at Mgahinga National Park Headquarters, ii) at Mgahinga National Park Headquarters on September 24th, 2022, and iii) meeting of

stakeholders and NGOs working on issues of the Batwa in Mgahinga organized at the Baram Hotel in Kisoro on the 25TH September 2022, the participants observed that the implementation of the project will likely result in a number of positive impacts such as;-

- Increased protection of the VMGs' rights to access the forest natural resources and receive livelihoods support through CRM arrangements such as collection of non-forest products including mushrooms, medicinal plants, wild fruits and bee-keeping to local communities around forest.
- Access to job opportunities provided by the project for removal of invasive plant species, restoration planting of trees, ecotourism opportunities, etc.
- Benefit from the project's focus on participatory planning for forest resources and improved access to decision-making and from activities targeting reduction of human-wildlife conflict.
- Increased income from improved tourism facilities and the resulting increased visitor numbers which will afford more tourism-related employment opportunities, thus improving their incomes and eventual livelihoods.
- Increased capacity arising from training of CRM committees, community committees, women and youth groups, elders' groups and community-based organizations, in sustainable use and monitoring of forests and wildlife resources
- Increased income from the sale of tourism products such as the handicrafts made by the Batwa
- Increased knowledge and awareness to the Batwa and local communities on the importance of sustainable forests and wildlife management
- Documentation of specific cultural values, spiritual beliefs, Batwa dance and drama/

3.3 Specific interventions to enable the participation of the Batwa around Mgahinga that can be supported under the IFPA – CD project

According to consultative meetings⁸ with the Batwa and other key stakeholders such as UWA, the envisaged specific activities that can be supported under the project, in line with the project scope and budget, include the following:-

- Conduct trainings and strengthen the management of CRM groups in MGNP to effectively include Batwa participation through issue specific capacity building and trainings
- Create partnerships with the Batwa on control and removal of invasive species
- With the help of Batwa members, establish a medicinal demonstration plot around MGNP
- Conduct project awareness-raising campaigns to local Batwa communities on the importance of sustainable wildlife management.
- Targeted training to develop Batwa skills to actively participate in and benefit from the management of forest and wildlife resources.
- Carry out a marketing drive for Batwa tourism products – e.g crafts trails, etc.

3. 4 Measures to strengthen the capacity of local authority and relevant government departments to address VMG issues

The District Local Government of Kisoro is a key stakeholder for protection of MGNP. At the Lower Local Government Level, the mandate of the District Local governments is implemented by Sub-counties and parishes through the Local Council System. All the authorities have roles to play to ensure that the Batwa

⁸ (a) Consultative meeting with Batwa that took place on June 18, 2021, at Mgahinga National Park Headquarters; (b) community consultative meeting that took place at MGNP Headquarters on September 24th, 2022; (c) Meeting of stakeholders and NGOs working on issues of Batwa in Mgahinga was organized at the Baram Hotel in Kisoro on the 25TH September, 2022.

are catered for in planning and implementation of projects. The District Local Government has a number of roles. These include:

- Mobilization of Batwa Communities
- Organization and formalization and registration of Batwa Groups and Associations
- Management, planning and use of revenue sharing resources (under the UWA revenue sharing scheme)
- Identification and prioritization of livelihood needs through the district planning and budgeting processes
- Monitoring and evaluation of development and nature conservation activities
- Protection of community forests and common resources through developing district guidelines and bylaws.

To enable them to perform their roles, there will be specific strategies put in place under the project to strengthen district local Government of Kisoro to support the project. These include:-

- Organizing specific awareness programs/meetings for the District Authorities to understand their roles, project issues of importance to the Batwa.
- Extend specialized training on World Bank social standards, the VMGF, as well as the VMGPs and their roles in implementation
- Include the selected District respective offices such as District Community development office, Natural resources office in monitoring missions for the project

3.5 Involvement of community organizations from the project area and the expertise from the local authorities and national level.

VMGP has a number of stakeholders and partners. Stakeholders’ participation in management of wildlife resources should be enhanced through shared roles and responsibilities and ensure equitable distribution and sharing of conservation benefits and/or costs. Wildlife conservation has diverse issues, diversity of stakeholders, and, therefore, needs to increase stakeholders’ participation to enhance benefits from conservation. Protected areas are a source of various benefits to local people who need guidance to sustainably access these resources and manage any arising conflicts.

Networking and co-ordination will be geared towards exchange of information and expertise through meetings, field visits, workshops and online for efficient conservation of wildlife resources, and avoiding duplication. Annual stakeholders’ fora will be re-activated as a way of ensuring information sharing (UWA used to organize annual stakeholder fora prior to COVID-19 at the Conservation Area level for all Conservation Areas; these were resumed in 2022, including in the BMCA (but after completion of the consultations on VMGP).

Table 4: Stakeholders roles and responsibilities

Key stakeholder	Role in the Implementation of the VMGMP
Government agencies	
Ministry of Water and Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide strategic direction and monitor overall implementation of VMGP. • Overall supervision of the preparation and implementation of VMGPs • Participate in the district level meetings • Coordinate with other Government Line Departments for ensuring effective delivery of mitigation. • Make budgetary provisions for implementation of project activities.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide technical support for implementation of the actions in the VMGP • Consolidate project reporting, including on implementation of VMGP
Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife and Antiquities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise on marketing tourism products • Participate and guide the development of Tourism products
UWA (Chief Warden)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of mitigation measures identified for mitigation of adverse effects as per project components: Component 1 activities to be implemented by UWA in and around MGNP and Component 2 activities to be implemented by UWA (for tourism-related investments in Protected Areas). • Supervision of plans and reporting to ministry
Kisoro District Local Governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participating in monitoring activities. • Instrumental in mobilisation of communities, formation of CRM, following up implementation of plans, including livelihoods and income-generating activities, on the ground provision of technical guidance, and in dispute settlement

Selection of implementors for the VGMP activities would be guided by the World Bank procurement framework. However, a number of non-governmental partners has relevant expertise that can be drawn upon. These partners are also important for regular engagement under the project.

Non-governmental partners	
Pro-biodiversity conservationists in Uganda (PROBICO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobilise Batwa through Organized Batwa Organizations, carry out training on indigenous issues and conservation, strengthen the Batwa Forest Trail, work with Batwa in restoration and planting of indigenous trees in pocket forests, advocacy and revenue sharing management, support Batwa livelihood programs.
International Gorilla conservation program (IGCP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support community development enterprises around the PA, support problem animal control, support tourism development, Field equipment support
Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Trust (BMCT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Batwa access to land to facilitate livelihood demonstration projects, resettlement programs, and community development.
Gorilla Organisation (GO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem animal control, energy saving technologies, enterprise development
Institute of tropical forest conservation (ITFC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and documentation, promotion of conservation, forestry, etc
Conservation through public health (CTPH)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community health awareness, disease surveillance (human and wildlife)
United Organisation for Batwa Development in Uganda (UOBDU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy for Batwa development, Mobilization of Batwa in MGNP, and support for livelihoods
Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research on medical herbs, cultural sites and piloting medicinal gardens, supporting Batwa Forest Experience
NGO Forum Kisoro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness and advocacy for conservation benefit sharing
Batwa Development Program (BDP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy and resettlement, awareness on human rights

Other Batwa led NGOs, such as Batwa Indigenous Empowerment Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobilization of the Batwa, training and capacity building, knowledge sharing, and support of livelihood activities etc.
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3.6 Coordination and implementation arrangements

The implementation arrangement will be guided by the plan and collaborating institutions will participate through a competitive process where needed. All activities will be guided by the MGNP General Management Plan, this VMGP, and the approved project work plans; they will be closely monitored and supervised by MGNP management as per the IFPA-CD implementation framework. Ministry of Water and Environment in collaboration with Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities will provide the overall strategic direction, supervision and overall monitoring of implementation of the plan in sync with the overall IFPA-CD project.

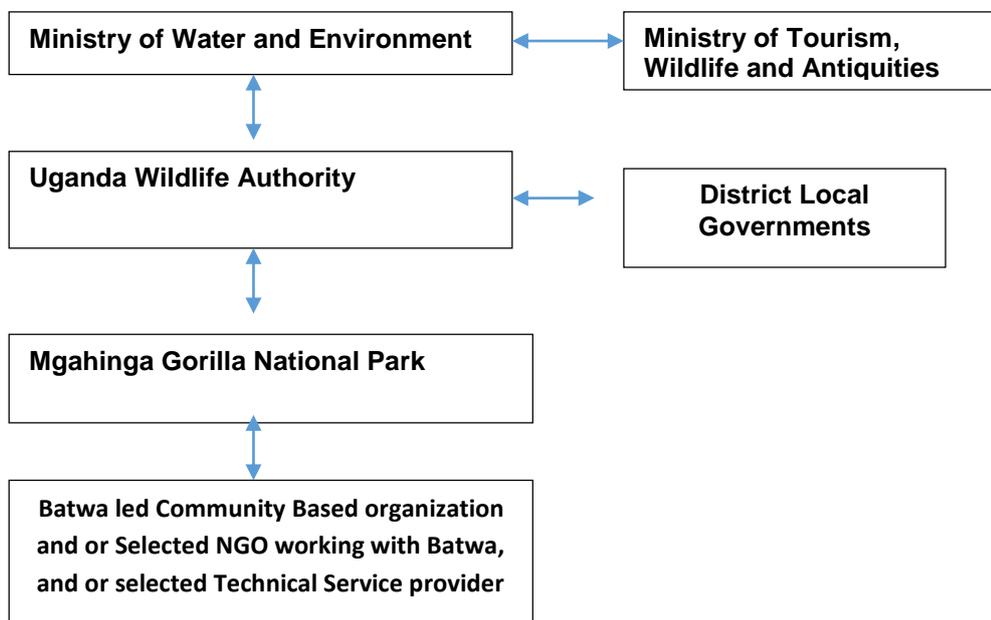


Figure 2.: Coordination and implementation Structure (Arrows: Coordination and communication channel)

3.7 Activity implementation arrangements by the Batwa and participation of collaborating institutions

During the Implementation of activities outlined in this VMGP for MGNP, UWA and partners shall ensure a deliberate effort to include the Batwa-led institutions or institutions working with the Batwa in implementation of specific activities especially those targeting the Batwa, within the limits of requirements permitted under the World Bank Procurement Guidelines.

Specific terms of reference will be issued for specific activities and requests made. The requests shall be evaluated by the technical teams from UWA and MWE before a decision is made. Key considerations will include:

- a. Experience of the applicant working with the Batwa and other Vulnerable groups
- b. Membership and group structures (if any)
- c. Evidence of ownership of the proposed activity by Batwa

- d. Description of the modalities and direct Batwa engagement in the implementation and/management of benefits from the business activity.

The applicants for support to Batwa groups will include all supporting documents.

An appraisal visits consisting of Community conservation Warden or Chief Warden of BINP and District community Development Officer, Natural Resources officer of Kisoro District will be conducted to the applicants to appraise proposed applicants and other information provided in the application form, among others.

3.8 Monitoring and evaluation requirements

The implementation of this VMGP shall be in accordance with the overall M&E Framework for the IFPA-CD project. The MWE has the overall responsibility for coordinating M&E and ensuring that data and information are produced on time and of the necessary quality. Monitoring data will be collected at field and agency level by UWA and DLGs, and User Departments and forwarded to UWA and the Project Coordinating Unit (PCU) for consolidated reporting. The PCU will conduct periodic field monitoring visits, on a case-by-case basis, purposely to verify information received from the monitoring reports.

The MWE is responsible for the overall monitoring and reporting on Project performance and results. The MWE will be supported by the PCU. Implementing Agencies, User departments and Technical Service Provider (TSP) will be responsible for collecting and analyzing monitoring data using an agreed format and availing this information to the PCU for action. Implementing Agencies (MWE and UWA), TSPs and User Departments will host and participate in any field monitoring visits.

Alongside the M&E Framework, project reporting formats and feedback mechanism will be developed for use by UWA, DLGs and the TSPs. In case of the implementing agent for the Batwa or the TSP, the reporting formats will be appended to the Service Contracts. The VMGP already highlights key targets and indicators that shall inform the design of data collection tools for its Implementation.

(a) Day to day Monitoring

Monitoring will be the main mechanism through which the implementers of this VMGP will get the feedback and alerts on any delays and problems. The monitoring framework will help the implementers to measure the pace of implementation of activities. It enables timely responses while providing lessons on implementation strategies. It will also help to ascertain whether the IFPA-CD project activities are complying with this VMGP, the World Bank ESF and National policy and legal procedures that provide for participation of the VMGs (Batwa).

The implementation of this VMGP will rely on a participatory monitoring and evaluation process which will ensure monitoring of the effectiveness of mitigation measures to improve Batwa's standards of living. Monitoring will involve the Batwa leaders, so that they have first-hand understanding and appreciation of the process. Their views on the positive and negative impacts should also be considered.

The project will support Batwa and other affected communities so that they are able to monitor the following:

- (a) The status of adverse social impacts (e.g. restricted access to forest and wildlife resources inside the project-supported forests, forest reserves etc.) and the effectiveness of mitigation measures outlined. The project will have to ensure that communities are aware of the potential adverse impacts to monitor; also, specific indicators to ensure effective monitoring of each impact.
- (b) The implementation of agreed activities.

(c) There will be efforts to ensure participation of Batwa Leaders in monitoring structures and systems. The monitoring activities will result in regular feedback on the implementation of the VMGP. The scope of Monitoring Indicators shall include the following:

- Collaborative resource management
- Livelihoods activities support
- Awareness
- Employment in project funded activities
- Application of the Batwa indigenous knowledge
- Tourism products' development.

(b) Socio-economic Monitoring

This will focus on the following changes to income levels, livelihood changes and standards of living of the Batwa. For areas in the vicinity of MGNP, there is already baseline socio-economic information included in this VMGP and the area management plans. As part of the VMGP implementation, the project implementers will use this detailed baseline information, to monitor the planned activities and changes over time.

Follow-up assessments will update the data for the purpose of monitoring and evaluation of the implementation and impacts of MGNP management plan, community wildlife management and revenue sharing agreements and other project specific Action Plans. The specific monitoring indicators have been outlined in the Action Plan and log frame in Table 5.

3.9 Administrative Reporting

Under this, the standard record of activities undertaken in each reporting period, along with financial information, will be provided. This will cover routine project activities reporting, equipment needs, and other administrative concerns (e.g., additional studies needed). For this VMGP, quarterly and annual project progress reports will include a section that details, for instance, the number and type of local meetings held, the number and types of grievances registered and their resolution, and the nature of measures implemented, as well as the findings on the socio-economic monitoring. This will be benefiting from routine collection of data from activity reports.

4.0 Logical Framework for VMGP activities in MGNP

The table below presents a sequence of activities, targets, assumptions etc. proposed in line with consultations with Batwa on 24th September 2022, at MGNP in Kisoro district.

Table 5. Logical Framework for MGNP VMGP

Output and Targets	Specific activities for Batwa participation in the IFPA –CD project	Objectively verifiable indicators	Means of verification
Reach out to a minimum of 300 Batwa and their leaders to strengthen Collaborative Resource Management	Strengthen the management and inclusion of Batwa in CRM groups in BINP	• Number of Batwa participating in consultations on CRM	• Activity reports • UWA Annual reports • Attendance lists

Output and Targets	Specific activities for Batwa participation in the IFPA –CD project	Objectively verifiable indicators	Means of verification
		(including female and youth ⁹) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of functioning CRM groups where the Batwa are involved 	
At least 20 Batwa youth, men, women are able to participate in removal of and control of invasive species	Create partnerships with the Batwa on control and removal of invasive species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of Batwa participating in the removal of invasive species 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity report
Reach out to up to a total of 100 Batwa with awareness raising information on the importance of sustainable wildlife management and forest conservation	Conduct project awareness-raising campaigns to local Batwa communities on the importance of sustainable wildlife management and forest conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of awareness campaigns conducted Number of Batwa participating in the awareness campaigns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance lists Activity reports
Attract over 200 tourists through a number of marketing drives	Carry out a marketing drive for Batwa tourism products – e.g crafts trails etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of Batwa trained in tourism development Number of tourists visiting the Batwa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity reports Training reports Attendance lists
Establish at least one demonstration garden for medicinal plants	Establish a demonstration garden for medicinal plants	One demonstration garden established and maintained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity reports Inventory of medical plants

5.0 Budget Allocation

Table 6. Project Budget for VMGP

Management Action	Responsible Institution	Estimated Budget (UGX)	Timelines				
			Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Strengthen the management of CRM groups in MGNP to effectively include Batwa participation through issue specific capacity building and trainings	UWA	15,000,000					

⁹ The youth are those persons between the age of 18 years and 35 years.

Create partnerships with the Batwa on control and removal of invasive species	UWA	10,000,000					
With the help of Batwa members, establish a medicinal demonstration plot around MGNP	UWA	8,000,000					
Targeted training to develop Batwa skills to actively participate in and benefit from the management of forest and wildlife resources	UWA	14,000,000					
Conduct project awareness-raising campaigns to local Batwa communities on the importance of sustainable wildlife management	UWA	10,000,000					
Carry out a marketing drive for Batwa tourism products – e.g. crafts trails, etc.	UWA	8,000,000					
Total		65,000,000					

5.1 Financing arrangements for the VMGP

According to the project implementation manual for IFPA-CD project, section 3 (the project description). Sub-component 1.2: is about increasing the involvement of local communities in the management of forest and wildlife by increasing their access and benefits from these areas. The activities proposed in the VMGP could be financed under this subcomponent.

This subcomponent will support technical assistance packages and training aimed at developing skills at the community level to actively participate in and benefit from the management of wildlife resources. This would include enhancing the adaptive capacity of forest dependent communities for climate resilience by strengthening their coping strategies, diversifying forest management-related employment opportunities and livelihoods, and adaptive planning and management. This comprises technical assistance packages with targeted support for women to empower them to participate and take leadership roles in natural resources management. At the field level, support will be provided for community engagement in the management of resources within BINP. This includes the establishment of new CRM groups and support of livelihood activities within existing groups. During the development of Annual work plans, special attention should be paid to the inclusion and development of specific Batwa Institutions to gain the CRM status.

5.2 Preparation of Activity plans, Budgets and Reporting

The budgeting arrangements for implementation of the VMGP shall follow those of the overall budgeting arrangements of the IFPA-CD project and shall be in accordance with GoU budgeting procedures and fiscal year (July-June). UWA in partnership with mandated officials from the DLGs of Kisoro, shall facilitate development of annual work plans and budgets for specific activities targeting the Batwa. These plans and budgets shall be guided by the VMGP and shall be integrated in the overall Annual work plans and budgets to be prepared by UWA by March 31, to be approved by IDA by April 30 of each year. This budget shall also be integrated in UWAs annual budget for the project. This shall be approved by the Project Steering Committee and thereafter by the MWE and the World Bank.

Once funds have been received by UWA, funds for implementation of Batwa activities will be spent in accordance with approved work plans. UWA will work with the TSP competitively selected to execute activities as per agreed terms. TSPs shall report to UWA, and the financial reports shall be integrated into general Annual Reports of UWA.

5.3 Arrangements for Reviewing and updating the VMGP

The MWE and key partners such as UWA, in collaboration with DLGs and a selected Batwa-led institution, agent or technical service provider shall carry out a review of the implementation of this VMGP which will be aligned with the midterm review of the overall IFPA-CD project.

Annex i. Report of consultative meeting with Batwa in Mgahinga Gorilla National Park

Report and Field Notes taken during the meaningful consultation of the Batwa vulnerable and marginalized group who live and derive their livelihoods from in and around Mgahinga National Park

Project Name: Investing in Forests and Protected areas for climate smart project (IFPA-CD)	Location of the Consultation: MGNP Headquarters
Assessment Type: Projects where, Abatwa “vulnerable and marginalized groups” are not the sole beneficiaries	Participants: Members of the Batwa “vulnerable and marginalized groups” of Mgahinga (Men, Women, Young men, Young girls and children)
No. of Target Participants: 67 Male: 30 Female: 37 Infants: Not counted No. of other Participants: 4	List of Facilitators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul Twebaze, Consultant • Gad Shemajere- Batwa Leader • Muyambi Ellady, PROBICOU • Oscar Akatuhurira PROBICOU
Report prepared by: Paul Twebaze, Consultant	Date: 24th September 2022

1. Introduction

The Government of Uganda has designed the Investing in Forests and Protected Areas for Climate-Smart Development (IFPA-CD) Project (the Project) that will be financed by the International Development Association (World Bank) and Government of Uganda (GoU). Preparation of the project was led by the Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE), Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities (MTWA), Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), and the National Forestry Authority (NFA).

The project’s development objective is to improve sustainable management of forests and protected areas and increase benefits to communities from forests in target landscapes. The project’s geographical focus is on selected priority areas in western and north-western Uganda. Project target landscapes include Albertine Rift (within Albert Water Management Zone (WMZ), the refugee-hosting districts of West Nile Region, and Lamwo district (within Upper Nile MWZ) (see annex in the combined report for project area map). The project has four components as follows:

- Component 1 will focus on improving management of government-managed forest and wildlife PAs to ensure they can continue to generate revenues and provide important environmental services.
- Component 2 will increase revenues and jobs from these forest and wildlife PAs through targeted investments in tourism and productive forests
- Component 3 will encourage establishment of greater tree cover in refugee-hosting landscapes outside PAs, supporting sustainable forest management and landscape resilience on private and customary land. The project will work in clusters of districts, based on the boundaries set as of July 1, 2010. This will allow the project to benefit from the technical capacity of DLG staff in the original districts while securing continuity in cases of creation of new districts. These districts either host refugee settlements or are within 5 km of a refugee settlement boundary. This component will be wholly funded by the IDA18 RSW and IDA grant, supporting project activities in 17 districts
- Component 4 will support overall project management and monitoring

The proposed project activities are expected to generate positive environmental and social impacts that will outweigh negative ones. However, investments under Components 1, 2 and 3 are likely to generate negative environmental and social risks and impacts, albeit site-specific and temporary, that could arise mainly from the proposed forest restoration and management activities, infrastructure development in and around protected areas, and livelihoods support activities. Such risks may include potential gender discrimination and marginalization of some vulnerable groups in the region. To

address potential negative risks, the government of Uganda has prepared an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) that contains a set of mitigation measures following Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) mitigation hierarchy for each anticipated impact in order to avoid, minimize or reduce the risks and mitigate effects of the anticipated impacts.

This document contains the record of the meaningful consultations with the Batwa vulnerable and marginalised group who live and derive their livelihoods from in and around Mgahinga Gorilla National Park. The proceedings of the meeting will inform the finalisation of a Vulnerable and Marginalized Groups Plan for Mgahinga. The Batwa were identified early in the design of IFPA-CD project as beneficiaries and as communities who are present in, who have strong collective attachment to the project area and who needed to be fully consulted about, and be given opportunity to actively participate in, project design and the determination of project implementation arrangements. Previous consultations with the Batwa of MGNP was done during the preparation of the national REDD+ Strategy, the ESMF, and the Draft VMGP.

2.Objectives / Purpose of the Consultations with Batwa vulnerable and marginalized group who live and derive their livelihoods from Mgahinga Gorilla National Park

The purpose of consulting the Batwa vulnerable and marginalised group who live and derive their livelihoods from in and around MGNP was to obtain their concerns and preferences with respect to the design and proposed implementation of IFPA-CD project with the view of providing them with equitable access to project benefits and minimising any non-beneficial outcomes to the Batwa. Their Views and Issues raised will inform the finalisation of the VMGP for Mgahinga.

3.Approaches and Methods used during the consultations with Batwa vulnerable and marginalised group who live and derive their livelihoods from in and around Mgahinga Gorilla National Park

Generally, the Batwa in Mgahinga were contacted through their representatives, Civil and community organisations which they are affiliated;-

- A schematic programme for the consultations was prepared and shared with their representatives.

Table 1: Schematic Meeting Programs during Batwa Vulnerable and Marginalized Groups consultations

Time	Agenda Item	Person responsible
9:30 a.m.	Arrival and Registration of participants	Gad Shemajere
	Prayer by Mutwa Leader	Batwa
10:00 a.m.	Welcome Remarks	UWA Representative
10:15 a.m.	Opening Remarks and objectives of the meeting	Twebaze Paul - Consultant
10:30 a.m.	Presentation of the IFPA-CD project	Twebaze Paul – Consultant
11:30 a.m.	Discussions and feedback	All
12:30 a.m.	Way forward	Twebaze Paul
1:00 p.m.	Conclusion and Departure	All

- At the end of the meeting the facilitation team held a short de-briefing on site of the meeting to contextualise the meeting proceedings and to provide additional information on actions other actors are undertaking.

4. Proceedings of the Meeting during the consultations with Batwa vulnerable and marginalised group who live and derive their livelihoods from in and around Mgahinga Gorilla National Park on 24th September 2022 held at Mgahinga Gorilla National Park Headquarters (Kisoro District)

Introduction (Session- moderated by Robert Baganda Tumwesigye)

- Robert Baganda welcomed the Batwa and all the participants in the meeting. Meeting started with a prayer – led by Mr. James Ndayizeye. He thanked God for the day, his protection and guidance in the meeting.

Communication from the leader of the Batwa - James Ndayizeye

- Mr. Ndayizeye Extended appreciation to UWA, BMCT, Government, PROBICOU, and all the stakeholders for supporting the Batwa. He noted that he was happy that such kind of meeting took place.
- He noted that he was a tour guide and had completed senior four. He welcomed the Residents (All the Batwa) and requested them to clap and welcome the visitors. He also requested them to pay attention and participate effectively in the meeting.

Communication from UWA-Mr. Friday

- Mr. Alex welcomed the Batwa and thanked them for coming to the meeting. He noted that the day was special because they had hosted visitors from different institutions, comprising of Government and Civil society.
- He noted that the Batwa are known by our government and this is why many government institutions were represented in the meeting. He added that government knows and is aware that the Batwa were inhabitants of the forests and are therefore pro-conservation. He gave an example of Dogs indicating that dogs are against conservation because they don't relate with animals. He observed that the team was available to answer any questions that would arise and requested members to give their views when time for discussion comes.

Communication from Kisoro District – Ms. Eunice Akankwasa

- Ms. Eunice welcomed all the participants and extended appreciation to government for organizing such a meeting. He noted that Kisoro District Local government and his office will work with all the key stakeholders to protect and conserve environment and Natural resources because we derive many benefits.
- He noted that the district of Kisoro has a number of forests which are not under UWA and NFA. He observed that the conservation of Environment requires a combine effort comprising of Government and other key stakeholders such as the community and the Non-Governmental Organizations.
- He explained that we conserve to get resources such as raw materials for crafts, wood for construction, sticks for our beans, tourism, as well as good air- for breathing. "This is why we are meeting in order to remind ourselves about the importance of environmental conservation.

Communication from PROBICOU- Twebaze Paul- Executive Director

- Mr. Paul Twebaze welcomed all the participants especially the Batwa for coming in good numbers. He extended appreciation to the Ministry of Water and Environment, UWA, BMCT and all the key stakeholders for their support to interventions that promote peaceful co-existence of the Batwa and the Forests.

- He observed that PROBICOU will continue to work with Government and other partners to support the Batwa and ensure that there a balance between development of the Batwa and conservation the forests.
- He reminded the Batwa that the meeting was very important because it provided an opportunity for the Batwa to hear and share an update from government on the plans for interventions aimed addressing most of the conservations challenges they have been raising overtime.
- He also observed that for the last one and a half years PROBICOU was requested by government of Uganda to support activities aimed at building the capacity of the Indigenous people to participate in REDD+ processes. He noted that as part of this process a number of meeting were organized to seek the views of the Batwa. A number of issues both for men and women were generated and these were submitted to Government – and that the meeting provided an opportunity to hear about progress but also interact directly with responsible government ministry.
- He informed the meeting that Government was planning a number of projects aimed at conservation and sustainable management of Forests and National parks. The projects are also expected to benefit the Batwa. Mr. Twebaze requested them to pay attention and participate actively in the meeting.

Session 11. : Presentation from Mr. Paul Twebaze

- Mr.Twebaze –Thanked the Batwa and the members for turning up for the meeting and sitting to discuss important issues. He noted that although the members had already introduced themselves, he needed to introduce them for emphasis.
- He noted that the Government of Uganda has designed the *Investing in Forests and Protected Areas for Climate-Smart Development* Project aimed at improving sustainable management of forests and protected areas and increase benefits from forests in target landscapes.
- Observed that the project will be financed by the International Development Association (World Bank) and Government of Uganda (GoU). Preparation of the project is led by the Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE), Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities (MTWA), Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), and the National Forestry Authority (NFA).
- However, he observed that although the views and issues affecting the Batwa had been earlier collected, there was a special request to consider more views especially in line with the project.
- He noted that as part of the project requirements, government was requested to develop a Vulnerable and Marginalized Groups Framework, (VMGF). He observed that the purpose of the VMGF is to guide the preparation and implementation of Project interventions that may affect VGs in the proposed project areas.
- Noted that the purpose of the meeting therefore was to involve the Batwa in the initial stages and design of the project, Consult them to understand the likely effect of the project activities and whether the planned activities will bring about peaceful co-existence and sustainable management of the Forest Resources and protected areas. He also noted that, the meeting was also to consult the Batwa and know whether they bless and support the planned activities – and or seek input for proposals to improve the project.
- Mr. Twebaze observed that the project will compliment on the already existing effort by UWA and partners to strengthen the management of Forests. He noted that since the project was

completing on what is already being done it was important to understand what interventions have been put in place by UWA – this will also help the members appreciate what we intend to under the project. He then requested UWA to briefly state what interventions they had.

Comments/Observations and views from the Batwa/meeting (Discussion and Feedback)

Mr. Twebaze Paul had listened to what the project intends to do and the planned interventions. He opened discussion by posing the following questions to the participants; -

1. How better can we help and or improve what is being proposed?
2. How and where should we do these activities?
3. Is what we are planning good for you or bad – and how do you think we can make it better?
4. How is the planned project activities likely to affect you (*Both Negative and positive*)?

1. Sustainable management of Mgahinga Gorilla National Park CRM

- **Mr. Hagumimaana.** Thank you for your coming and organising this meeting. As you have said we were in the forests before you evicted us. We later went to the village and were welcomed although it was difficult to get used but with time we have begun to adapt. We were given a Batwa trail which is now generating some money. We will therefore continue to support tourism in order to get more money so that we buy more land.
- We will also support government in this project so that the boundary/wall/fence is always repaired so that the animals do not disturb us.
- **Mr. Kabeni.** Some of the Batwa do not want to work but want to keep loitering. However, there are able bodied Batwa who can work in the Park as guides and potters given an opportunity – is this possible?
- **Nyarangano Jane.** We don't know about the land in Nyakacence and Nyarusiiza and we have also heard that sheep was distributed to some people under revenue sharing scheme, when are we benefiting?
- **Gad- chairman youth.** We work as guides in the Batwa trail. Were paid 8000 and women are paid 5000. We think that this money is little. Can we have an increase? As you can see the people who are able to access work as still few, is there a possibility of recruiting more people as guides and potters?

Allen. I have been working in the trail as a guide and my husband was also working as guide. My husband died but I have never received any compensation. How can I access the benefits?

- **Muzenero Joviah.** I am also part of the trail but I have a husband who is in jail. Can I also get land for guides?

James Ndayize. We get visitors going to the park – as the elders are carrying out the guiding – young people/the youth should be given an opportunity to go with them to ensure learning knowledge transfer and continuity.

- **Mpagaze Gerge Wilson.** We are the guides who started guiding but stopped due to old age. Can we now benefit from land that is bought from the money made by guides?

Response – from UWA (Regarding Land for the guides)

- The money used to buy land is from the Batwa trail. It is unfortunate that everyone wants land. There are guides who make this money and these are the beneficiaries. As long as we get money we will buy more land, but we can't buy land for everyone.
- Some of you were given land by partners such as Volcano- and you again asking for land from government – the only opportunity available is that when funds are available we will buy land starting with those who make the money in the trail.

➤ **Serutokye Stephen;** We need the project to put in place initiatives where we can be able to work. When we work we can get a pay and use it to develop our families. We also need to pray that tourists continue to come.

Key are of intervention	Existing Interventions by UWA (Response from Mr. Alex)	Proposed Activities (Response from Paul Twebaze)
Sustainable management of the Park as well as conservation	We fenced the Park boundary using stones to prevent animals from going to communities	We will contribute to strengthening boundary management including if possible – ensuring routine maintenance and strengthening
	We have also been lobbying government to improve on the roads to ease movement of tourists to and from the park.	The project will compliment what they are already doing by contributing effort to road maintenance
	Working with communities to safeguard and protect the forest. We cannot work alone without the support of communities. For example we have since been allowing access to forest resources such as medicine, firewood etc.	The project intends to make initiatives to strengthen this initiative so that the Batwa can continue to access these forest resources and get motivation for conservation
	On access to water, I know that you have had requests for water from the park. The water from the park is used by animals and therefore may not be safe for human consumption	The project will for example assist in provision and increasing access to water resources
Tourism development	In the whole country, Mgahinga has done a good job to empower Batwa to participate in tourism and generate income. When the Batwa were evicted from the forest, we put in place a Batwa trail. This trail receives tourists and from the money paid by the tourists UWA takes 50% leaving the 50% for the Batwa	The project will support such tourism initiatives, organise and formalise structures for the Batwa to operate, fund tourism initiatives that generate income for the people. Create an opportunity for transfer of knowledge from the elders to the youth to ensure continuity

	<p>For example, when the money generated for the Batwa increased, we bought 2 pieces of land for the Batwa. So we are saving more to buy more land. We have also encouraged the Batwa to Package Tourism products like music dance and drama so that they can earn. We also encourage them to make crafts for sell. Trained Tour guides who earn from tour guiding. Men are paid 8000 Uganda shillings while Women are paid 5,000 for guiding.</p>	
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Summary of key observations from the meeting

- Organise - register and build capacity of this association. The Batwa around Mgahinga are still disorganised and much could be achieved by organising them.
- Pay attention and ensure sustainability by creating avenues for the youth to participate in guiding and allow transfer of knowledge and continuity
- The Batwa around Mgahinga are still disorganised and much is needed to organise them into formal groups and organisations
- There are still challenges in distribution of benefits because women and youth do not benefit the same as Men in most development activities
- Land continues to be a problem (There should be special effort to look for windows of acquiring more land for the Batwa)
- Livelihood continues to be a challenge; - and thus a need strengthens Village loan and saving groups for the Batwa and also build their capacity in crafts making.
- There are social ties that have to be considered e.g. Aspects of Migration since the Batwa in Kisoro town have links with Rwanda, some migrate.
- The government of Uganda has never studied the issue of resettling Batwa there needs to be a detailed study.
- There is still a problem of animals from the park. Buffalos are still a big problem because they break the wall/boundary. Problem animals is as a result of pressure from Virunga. Some injured animals come from DRC and end up dying from Ugandan side-Mgahinga.
- The other reason for problem animals is that- because of scarcity of land people plant crops up to the wall/boundary. The animals smell the crops and break the wall to access the gardens. The wall is 16Km. In the ranking the challenges of Mgahinga NP Problem animals take the 1st position.
- However, there is a need to appreciate that fact that the Batwa like conservation because they only enter the forest from the gazetted gate and also help in strengthening the wall.
- The Batwa also need to be considered in Revenue Sharing- they are usually left out by the District Local Governments

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