



REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

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

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

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ACRONYMS

ADRA	Seventh-day Adventist Church Development Arm
BINP	Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park
CFM	Collaborative Forest Management
CFR	Central Forest Reserve
CRM	Collaborative Resource Management
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
ESF	Environmental and Social Framework
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
ESS	Environmental and Social Standard
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FPIC	Free Prior and Informed Consent
GoU	Government of Uganda
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
IFPA-CD	Investing in Forests and Protected Areas for Climate Smart Development Project
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MGNP	Mgahinga Gorilla National Park
MTWA	Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities
MUST	Mbarara University of Science and Technology
MWE	Ministry of Water and Environment
NFA	National Forestry Authority
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NP	National Park
PA	Protected Area
PROBICO	Pro-biodiversity Conservationists in Uganda
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
RWIDE	Rural Welfare Improvement for Development
SNP	Semuliki National Park
TSP	Technical Service Provider
UWA	Uganda Wildlife Authority
VG	Vulnerable Groups
VMGF	Vulnerable and Marginalized Groups Framework
VMGPs	Vulnerable and Marginalised Groups Plans
VMGs	Vulnerable and Marginalized Groups
WRs	Wildlife Reserves

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 Semuliki National Park (SNP) 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 SNP 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 the 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 VMGPs 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 (BINP), and the Semuliki National Park (SNP). This is, therefore, a specific VMGP for the SNP.

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 this Vulnerable and Marginalized Groups’ Plan (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	Implemented by UWA and NFA	
	Activities include:	

<p>of infrastructure and equipment for the management of forest protected areas</p>	<p>(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.</p>	<p>BINP, MGNP, SNP, Echuya CFR</p>
<p>Sub-component 1.2:Increasing the involvement of local communities in the management of forest and wildlife areas by increasing their access and benefits from these areas.</p>	<p>Implemented by UWA and NFA</p> <p>Activities include:</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>BINP, MGNP, SNP, Echuya CFR</p>
<p>Sub-component 1.3:Restoration of degraded natural forests and habitats in wildlife and forest protected areas.</p>	<p>Implemented by UWA and NFA</p> <p>Activities include:</p> <p>Restoration through natural regeneration (based on enclosure of areas) and, where needed, enrichment planting, including through engaging and employing local communities.</p>	<p>Not Applicable to BINP, MGNP, SNP & Echuya CFR</p>
<p>Sub-component 1.4:Increased forest protection in CFRs and Wildlife Reserves (WRs) in close proximity to refugee settlements</p>	<p>Implemented by UWA and NFA</p> <p>Activities include:</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Not Applicable to BINP, MGNP, SNP & Echuya CFR</p>

	<p>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.</p>	<p>BINP, MGNP, SNP, Echuya CFR</p>
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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 strengthening 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.

<p>Subcomponent 2.1: Investments in tourism</p>	<p>Implemented by UWA and NFA</p>	
	<p>Activities include:</p>	
	<p>tourist reception, information and interpretive facilities in identified protected areas</p> <p>Infrastructure for new (or improving existing) tourist products and activities.</p>	<p>BINP, MGNP, SNP, Echuya CFR</p>
<p>Subcomponent 2.2: Investments in productive forestry</p>	<p>Implemented by the MWE.</p>	
	<p>Activities include:</p>	
	<p>Investments to further increase plantation area to reach a critical mass that can meet the demands of the local and regional market</p> <p>Investments to support processing and utilization of forest products to produce higher value wood products.</p>	<p>Not applicable in BINP, MGNP, SNP, Echuya CFR</p>

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 agro forestry 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 CFR
	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 CFR
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 SNP 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 SNP. 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 SNP participate in and equitably benefit from the project.

This VMGP plan is aligned with strategies and actions prioritized in SNP General Management Plan 2017/2018- 2026/2027⁴ that seek to address specific concerns of the Batwa. These include the following:

- Design and erect appropriate interpretation panels and shelters at appropriate locations along the Batwa Trail in the Park
- Construct Batwa Cultural Centre for displaying Batwa hand crafts and cultural drama performances at Batwa cultural Boma near Bumaga Trading centre
- Mobilise and support the Batwa to engage in cultural tourism activities along the existing Batwa Trail
- Organize and train Batwa groups on identification and management of livelihood together with the Batwa, identify and map out earlier spiritual Batwa sites in the park
- Use forest experienced Batwa in tourism guiding
- Organize and train Batwa groups on identification and management of livelihood improvement projects
- Work with other institutions to fundraise for the Batwa dance improvement.

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

1.2 Description of the target Area (Semliki National Park)

SNP is located in Bwamba County, a remote part of the Bundibugyo District, in the Western Region of Uganda. The Park lies on Uganda's border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo; it neighbors Rwenzori Mountains in the South-East and Lake Albert in the North⁵. The park lies within the Albertine Rift, the western arm of the East African Rift. The park is located on a flat to gently undulating landform that ranges from 670 to 760 m (2,200 to 2,490 ft) above sea level.

It was made a national park in October 1993 and is one of Uganda's newest national parks.⁶ From 1932 to 1992, the area covered by SNP was managed as a forest reserve, initially by the colonial government and then by the Ugandan government's Forest Department. In 1992, the Forest Department raised the status of the reserve to Forest Park. It was made a national park by the government in October 1993. The National Park comprises East Africa's only lowland tropical rainforest and is one of the richest areas of floral and faunal diversity in Africa, with bird and butterfly species being especially diverse. The park experiences an average rainfall of 1,250 mm (49 in), with peaks in rainfall from March to May and from September to December. Many areas of the park experience

³The 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 Section 7.7 On Cultural Values.

⁵ Uganda Wildlife Authority (2006). "Semliki National Park". Entebbe: Uganda Wildlife Authority.

⁶ Uganda Wildlife Authority (2006). "Semliki National Park". Entebbe: Uganda Wildlife Authority.

flooding during the wet season. The temperature at the park varies from 18 to 30 °C (64 to 86 °F), with relatively small daily variations.

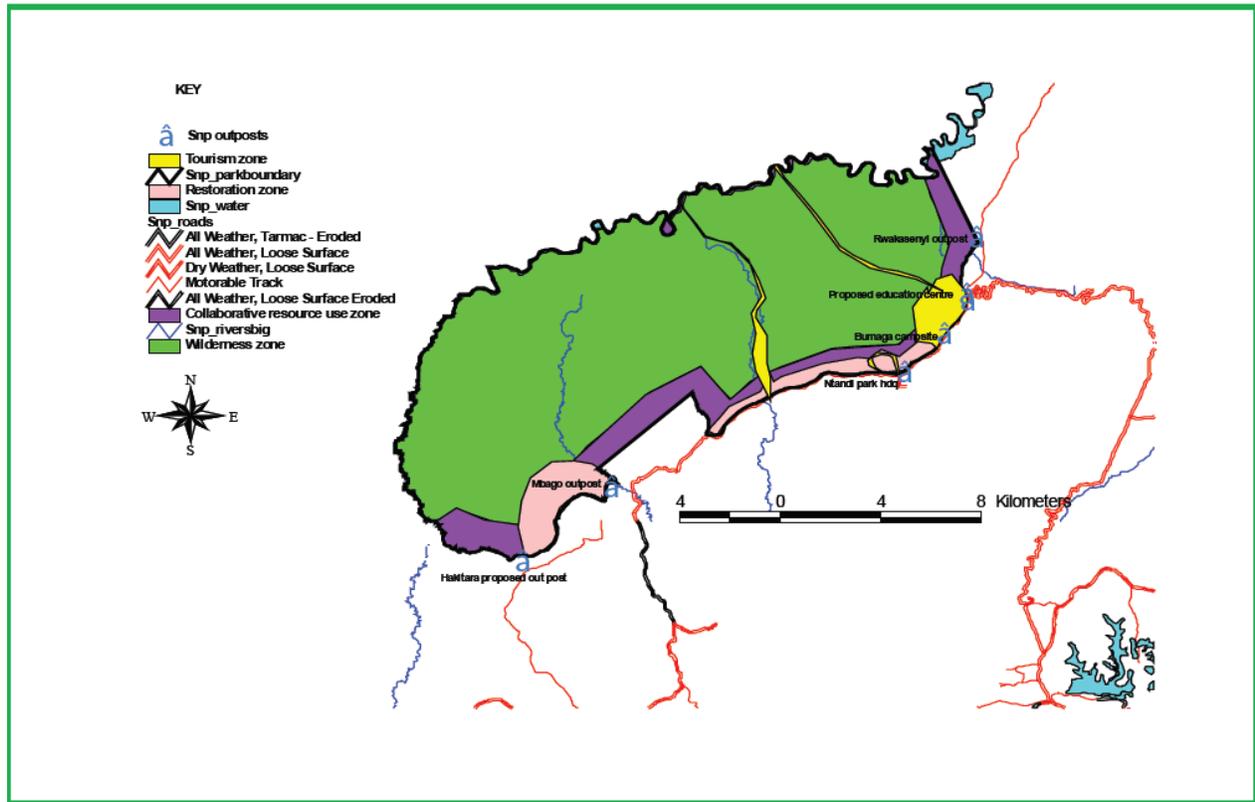


Figure 1. Map of SNP with zones

SNP is a distinct ecosystem within the larger Albertine Rift ecosystem. The park is located at the junction of several climatic and ecological zones, and as a result has a high diversity of plant and animal species and many microhabitats. Most of the plant and animal species in the park are also found in the Congo basin forests, with many of these species reaching the eastern limit of their range in SNP. The vegetation of the park is predominantly medium altitude moist evergreen to semi deciduous forest. The dominant plant species in the forest is the Uganda ironwood (*Cynometra alexandri*). There are also tree species of a more evergreen nature and swamp forest communities.

The park has more than 400 bird species, including the lyre-tailed honey guide. Two hundred sixteen of these species (66 percent of the country's total bird species) are true forest birds, including the rare Oberländer's ground thrush (*Geokichla oberlaenderi*), Sassi's olive greenbul (*Phyllastrephus lorenzi*) and nine hornbill species⁷. The park provides habitat for over 60 mammal species, including African buffalo, leopard, hippopotamus, mona monkey, water chevrotain, bush babies, African civet, African elephant, and the Pygmy scaly-tailed flying squirrel (*Idiurus zenkeri*). Nine duiker species are found in the park, including the bay duiker (*Cephalophus dorsalis*). The park has eight primate species and almost 460 butterfly species.

⁷ Ibid.

The forests in the park are of great socio-economic importance to the human communities that live near the park. The local people practice subsistence agriculture and use the park's forests to supplement their livelihoods. Some of the products they obtain from the forests include fruits and vegetables, herbal medicines, and construction materials. The local population is increasing at a rate of 3.4 percent per year. The high population density and declining agricultural productivity combined with an unavailability of alternative sources of income means that, the local population is dependent on the park's resources. The forest also plays an important cultural and spiritual role in local people's lives.

The Sempaya springs are the main tourism attraction in the park. The Male hot spring is about 12 meters in diameter and is called Bintente, while the female in Nyasimbi. Boiling geyser gushes out steam and bubbling water several meters high and can be seen more than 1 kilometer away.

Past practices of the managing authorities that excluded the local people created resentment among them. This reduced the effectiveness of conservation practices and contributed to the occurrence of illegal activities. Since the 1990s, the Ugandan Wildlife Authority has involved the local communities in park planning.

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.

For management purposes, the park is divided into five management zones: tourism, wilderness, administrative, resource use and restoration zones.

In this 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.

Communities neighbouring the park are allowed to harvest park resources within the Resource Use zone. In principle, this zone consists of a continuous two kilometres wide strip along the boundary in the areas surrounded by Ugandan communities. The communities may enter SNP to gather firewood, medicinal plants, and other regulated resources within this zone. Access and extraction will be subject to agreements with SNP management. The zone overlaps with the restoration zone in some parts such as Ntandi and Bumage areas.

The Batwa are only allowed to access resources in the collaborative resource use zone. 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.

During consultations, held on Tuesday 4th October 2022, at Ntanda, the Batwa demonstrated their awareness of these restrictions⁸. Through better engagement of the Batwa in CRM and provision of livelihoods support, the project is expected to have positive impacts especially if the Batwa are supported to engage in implementing activities that are not restricted in SNP.

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 where 20% of park entry fees (plus a portion of the gorilla permit fee), is shared with local governments, specifically the Sub-Counties surrounding the park;⁹. This has been operated by UWA since 1996. These funds are channeled through the local government authorities. Currently, community projects are vetted by a District Committee (or Council), which consists of the Conservation Warden and representatives from local government. Projects are often selected on the basis of communities with the largest population and the quality of project proposals submitted. With very small numbers and very low levels of education, the Batwa cannot access these funds. No special provision or affirmative action has been taken by UWA to ensure that a percentage of the revenue sharing collection is allocated to the Batwa who have been severely affected by the eviction.

The consultation process¹⁰ also noted that the current resource use model utilized in SNP is CRM. Collaborative resource management/ integrated Resource Use programme is a process whereby the Protected Area Authority negotiates with a local community to reach an agreement on sharing of benefits, decision-making authority and responsibility in the effective and sustainable management of the natural resources of a particular area. The details of this shared management are arrived at through meaningful negotiation and expressed in a written agreement (an MoU).

According to the park Authorities, when the Batwa were evicted from Semuliki forest they were initially hostile towards outsiders, especially if they were not given any form of assistance and would beg on the roadside for a living. UWA carried out sensitization meetings with them and gradually they became more receptive to neighboring communities. The Batwa now go to the UWA office for support - medical care and food. In line with provisions made in the Wildlife Use Rights and the Uganda Wildlife Act, the Authority has established guidelines for access of communities neighboring conservation areas to resources which are crucial to the survival of those communities. Thus, the Batwa are granted access to the Park to collect firewood for use and sale twice a week. In a day, a Mutwa can sell one bundle of firewood at UGS.3,000 (less than USD.1) to feed a family with up to 7 children and grandchildren.

⁸ During the consultative meeting held on Tuesday 4th October 2022, at Ntanda 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.

⁹ Itanda subcounty, being one of the sub-counties neighboring Semuliki NP, is also benefiting from this scheme.

¹⁰ Batwa community consultative meeting on Tuesday 4th /10/22 in Ntanda Bundibugyo District, Interview with a Batwa King on Tuesday 4/10/22 in Ntanda, Bundibugyo, Batwa community consultative meeting organized and facilitated by the VMGP team with Batwa NGO leaders on Tuesday, 4th October, 2022.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Under CRM UWA continues to engage in tourism and development of tourism products, such as trails. For example, UWA entered a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Batwa to develop a Batwa trail in Semuliki, under collaborative Resource Management (CRM) or Multiple Use Program (MUP), although it is not yet fully developed. The CRM/MUP involves local people around the park entering into agreements with National Park authorities in order to harvest park resources such as medicinal plants, handicraft materials and for beekeeping. For beekeeping, local people including the Batwa are allowed to place beehives inside the forest at the park periphery. So far fourteen parishes in BINP are benefiting from the programme, with the Batwa allowed to harvest forest resources such as firewood and medicinal herbs in a controlled arrangement. According to the SNP management plan, the Batwa currently access the park mainly for firewood collection, poles, and herbal medicine.

According to the existing CRM arrangement, monitoring of resource off-take is supposed to be done by the resource users and park staff. This is clearly indicated in the agreement signed by both parties but unfortunately this has not been followed. Their participation has been challenged by limited understanding and appreciation of the roles of members of Collaborative Resource Management institutions. This will be improved by strengthening the capacity of these CRM groups during review of existing Agreements and also during negotiation of new agreements. The SNP General Management Plan recognizes the role of the Batwa and the need to involve them not only in park management but also supporting them to implement activities that can improve their benefits and livelihood.

1.4 The Batwa around SNP

There are four ethnic groups living around the park i.e. Bamba, Bakonjo, Batuku and Batwa. The Bamba and Bakonjo are found in the valley and mountain slopes respectively and both are agriculturists depending on cash crops like coffee, cocoa and food crops mainly Cassava and bananas on a small scale. The Batuku who occupy the rift valley floor, north of the park are pastoralists who depend entirely on cattle products, which they trade in with their neighbours (in both Uganda and DRC).

The Batwa (pygmies) formally were hunter – gatherers and they are an Ituri ethnic group who historically depended on Semuliki forest. The Batwa are former forest dwellers that lived as hunter-gatherers in most of the forested areas occupying the Great Lakes region, particularly in southwestern Uganda, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Lewis, 2000). They are typical of short stature, are traditionally hunters, and they love ancestral dancing, especially the Rutwa dance. During their forest habitation, they used to wear hides and skins. The Batwa currently live around Protected Areas in the Districts of Rubanda, Kisoro, Kanungu and Bundibugyo. The Batwa exhibit social cohesion and are traditionally monogamous. Culturally, they pay a dowry in the form of sheep, goats, and honey.

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.

In 1932, Semuliki Forest Reserve, located in present day Bundibugyo district, was created and forest villages evacuated as a measure to control sleeping sickness and yellow fever. In 1993, the reserve was turned into a National Park.

In 1993, the Seventh-day Adventist Church Development Arm (ADRA) convinced the Batwa and resettled them near Ntandi in a bid to integrate them into local cultural and agricultural life though the integration has been rather slow.¹¹

The Batwa in Semuliki occupy one community in Ntandi Town council / Ntandi trading center, in the District of Bundibugyo (this is the only Batwa community in Budibugyo district). There are currently an estimated 160 Batwa adults and children living in the centre of Ntandi trading centre,¹² on a piece of land that is less than 2 acres in size. They reside in semi-permanent buildings, which are in a deplorable state of disrepair, shared by all – young and old - and lacking proper sanitary facilities These Batwa belong to different clans, such as the Babukwanga, Balese, Bandimulaku, Bandihunde, Bambuba, Bandibukusu, Bandibagudde, Bandimbere and Bandikutendyani¹³.

1.4.1 The socio-economic organization of the Batwa in Semuliki

(a) Batwa Culture

Evidence from literature¹⁴ indicates that the Batwa had a unique culture largely associated with their hunter and gatherer lifestyle, prior to 1991¹⁵. Several studies have reported that the Batwa were born and lived in the forests¹⁶. During the consultative meetings, the Batwa still identified themselves with the forest as their origin¹⁷. It was also noted that for this reason, most of the Batwa still go to the forests for spiritual and medicinal purposes under the arrangement of CRM with UWA.

Traditionally, the Batwa had places set aside for burial and sendoff rituals associated with the last funeral rites. For example, burial sites were usually deep in the forests near big trees and the dead were buried standing upright. Traditionally, the Batwa worshiped, venerated, sacrificed, and offered appeasement gifts to their “god” in special places. However, when they were driven out from the forest, their cultural practice of worshipping ancestors was greatly interfered with, as they have restricted access to the forest. Like most traditional patriarchal communities, Batwa men were responsible for protecting their families and property, while the production of food and reproduction remained roles for the women. On the other hand, men were free to use their money and resources as they wished. The Batwa believe that they were created to be kings (*batware*) of the area¹⁸. Originally, the men were hunters and the women were involved in ceramics. To be recognized as a man, one would first trap or kill an animal. Men would collect medicinal herbs to administer to male children, while women gathered for themselves and their children. Men were responsible for providing fire (*gushingata*) and were also expected to be warriors.

¹¹ <https://unpo.org/article/2435>.

¹² The population included in this document is based on estimates as provided by the leaders of the Batwa and some key informants. In Kisoro, Bundibugyo, and Kanungu districts, there have been some fluctuations of the numbers of Batwa in the settlements and communities. For example, the team preparing the VMGP discovered that there are a number of Batwa who move from DRC and join their fellow Batwa in Uganda, when the armed conflict intensifies in DRC. Some then go back when the situation has normalized, but others stay.

¹³ Interview with Geoffrey Inzito, leader of the Batwa Community in Bundibugyo, Tuesday 4th October, 2022.

¹⁴ Fauna and Flora (2013), Batwa cultural values in Bundibugyo Impenetrable and Mgahinga Gorilla National Parks, Uganda. A report of a cultural assessment, Mbarara University of Science and Technology (2020).

¹⁵ Lewis, J. (2000). cited in the Report on the African Commission’s Working Group on Indigenous Populations / Communities. Research and Information Visit to the Republic of Uganda, July 2006.

¹⁶ Interview with a Batwa King on Tuesday 4/10/22 in Ntanda, Bundibugyo.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Interview with a Batwa King, Tuesday 4th 2022, in Bundibugyo District.

A key element of the Batwa culture is their language. According to the Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda 2017,¹⁹ Batwa spoke and identified Orutwa (Rutwa) as their native language. Evidence from the consultations²⁰ also indicated that most of the Batwa can no longer speak Orutwa Language as they have continuously adopted other languages spoken by the dominant communities within which they live. The Majority of the younger generations in Bundibugyo district speak Kwamba, Lukhonzor or Lubwisi, which are commonly used in public spaces and schools. The Batwa in Bundibugyo, specifically their leader, traditional King Geoffrey Nzito, expressed worry about the loss of their language and culture.

Although the Batwa live in a secluded space within Ntandi Town Council, they interact with the host communities, and some of the negative influences noted above have eroded the self-respect and dignity of many adult Batwa. In the course of these interactions, they have intermarried with the Bakhonzor, Bamba and Batuuuku and are now losing their unique features and adopting the cultural ways of these communities. Some respondents²¹ noted that some Batwa youth are even beginning to reject their fellow Batwa in marriage. With their culture under threat, there is a high risk of assimilation, which not only poses a risk to their language and identity but to their ability to transmit and preserve traditional knowledge and skills for posterity.

With permission from the UWA, the Batwa have regulated access to the forest, often escorted by a Park Warden. They are able to access natural and cultural resources and visit their ancestral burial grounds, however this is within the confines of restricted access - they no longer enjoy the freedom to access all parts of the forest when they wish.

(b) Land Ownership, Access, and Utilization

Before 1991 many Batwa did not have the concept of land ownership since they did not settle permanently in one place as they moved from place to place, hunting small game and collecting plants, fruits and medicines. During the early 1990's, the Batwa moved out of SNP. While the Park was the main source of the Batwa livelihood, there was no deliberate government resettlement plan at the time. In addition, there was no alternative land provided to the Batwa outside the conservation area.

As a result of discrimination, marginalization, lack of land, and inadequate access to social, economic, and political opportunities and services, most Batwa around Semuliki live a destitute life. As such, land increasingly became a key component of Batwa's progressive marginalization and vulnerability. During the Batwa consultative meeting held in Ntanda on 2^{3rd} June 2022, it was observed that "Following the unplanned displacement, Batwa communities have depended on the work of NGOs who coordinate and support their livelihoods, with little or inadequate consultation of and involvement from the Batwa²². The community meetings between the team preparing the VMGP and the Batwa during preparation of this plan held in Bundimasyori (Ntanda) in October 2022, it was noted that some NGOs

¹⁹ <https://crossculturalfoundation.or.ug/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/In-the-Name-of-Conservation-The-eviction-of-the-Batwa-from-Semuliki-Forest-Bundibugyo-@CCFU2017.pdf>.

²⁰ Batwa community consultative meeting organized and Facilitated by the VMGP team with Batwa NGO leaders on Tuesday 4th October, 2022 in Ntanda, Bundibugyo District.

²¹ Interview with one of the Batwa Male elders held on Tuesday 4/10/22 in Ntanda, Bundibugyo.

²² Ibid.

and Government agencies such as UWA²³ have provided support to the Batwa over the years, including purchase and provision of housing estates and land. For example, the Batwa Settlement at Ntandi is located within the SNP.²⁴ Accordingly, observations from consultations²⁵ noted that most of the Batwa who own land have obtained it from support by NGOs, but even then, the few that have land do not enjoy the security of tenure. As such, they continue to live a life of neglect, begging for food and working as a source of cheap labor.

For example, in 1993, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with district authorities to provide services to the Batwa by constructing houses for them, but these were abandoned due to the noise on the iron sheets from rain. They are said to have demolished the buildings and sold the roofing sheets to their neighbors.

In 2005, the European Union donated UGX600 million to the Batwa community through Rural Welfare Improvement for Development (RWIDE), a community based organization. The money was budgeted to procure 16 acres of land in Bundimasoli village, Kasitu sub-county in Bundibugyo district and the resettlement of the Batwa in a homestead comprising 22 semi-permanent structures with roofing sheets. The settlement was also supposed to have adequate sanitation facilities like pit latrines for at least 90 inhabitants. A craft centre where the Batwa women were supposed to sell their crafts and generate income was also supposed to be constructed at Ntandi cultural village.²⁶ One piece of land of about 1.5 acres was purchased by RWIDE in Bumagga, in collaboration with Ntandi Sub-County for the resettlement of the Batwa but, when the new Fort Portal – Bundibugyo road was built, the structures were demolished.²⁷ The consultations²⁸ with key stakeholders also revealed that, the Batwa were not aware of any compensation made by the Uganda National Roads Authority and there is no further information available from District Local government Leaders.

Other funds under the above EU project were embezzled by the NGO leadership, without achieving set objectives.²⁹ To date there are no permanent structures in the Batwa settlement in Ntandi and RWIDE is no longer operational in the district. According to one of the NGO leaders³⁰, the land agreements (not yet processed into land titles) for the three small pieces of agricultural purchased for the Batwa, are held in the Community Development Office for safekeeping against illegal sale to unscrupulous people.

In 2005, a school for the Batwa children was opened, with support from ADRA.³¹

As a consequence of landlessness, the majority of the Batwa live destitute lives and suffer severe isolation, discrimination, and socio-political exclusion. This was also in line with the earlier observations made by Batwa leaders during the consultations with Batwa in the process of development of the VMGF that Batwa's customary rights to the forest lands have not been recognized within Uganda and

²³<https://ugandawildlife.org/explore-our-parks/parks-by-activity/boat-launch/uganda-wildlife-authority-hands-over-land-worth-ugx180-million-to-batwa-community>.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Batwa community consultative meeting on Tuesday 4th October, 2022 in Ntanda, Bundibugyo District.

²⁶ <https://ugandaradionetwork.net/story/3-arrested-for-embezzlement-of-batwa-community-resettlement-funds>

²⁷ <https://crossculturalfoundation.or.ug/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/In-the-Name-of-Conservation-The-eviction-of-the-Batwa-from-Semuliki-Forest-Bundibugyo-@CCFU2017.pdf>.

²⁸ Interview with a Batwa King on Tuesday 4/10/22 in Ntanda, Bundibugyo.

²⁹ <https://allafrica.com/stories/200909250093.html> and <https://ugandaradionetwork.net/story/3-arrested-for-embezzlement-of-batwa-community-resettlement-funds>.

³⁰ Batwa community consultative meeting organized and facilitated by the VMGP preparation team with Batwa NGO leaders.

³¹ <https://unpo.org/article/2435>.

they have not been compensated for the loss of their lands and the resultant lifestyle (hunter-gatherers) since their eviction from the forest.³²

It should be noted that although some Batwa have been supported to own land³³, the biggest percent remains landless. The Batwa's desire for hunting, medicinal plants, and religious rituals in the forests cannot simply be erased three decades after they left the forest. They have continued desire to access forest resources.

(c) Education

Batwa communities in Uganda are characterized with poor education. Many studies have alluded to the fact that more than half of Batwa have no formal education at all³⁴. The Batwa in Bundibugyo have very low rates of primary and secondary school attendance. A number of Batwa members alluded to this during consultative meeting³⁵, and attributed this to lack of funds to buy uniforms, scholastic materials and lunch, harassment by other students, and the lack of basic requirements such as food, clothing and shelter. Although the State has promoted equal access for all to all levels of education, the Universal Primary Education scheme does not cover food and uniforms. No specific measures are currently being undertaken in the UPE schools to ensure access for marginalized children such as the Batwa. In Bundigubyo, the Catholic Parish of Bugombwa has encouraged the Batwa to embrace education. The Parish has taken the initiative to accommodate the majority of the primary school going children at the mission school. For example:

In 2005, the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Church supported Batwa children to attend school at the Ntandi SDA Integrated Primary School. This was initially for the Batwa community but, because of discrimination and teasing, the Batwa children dropped out with the exception of Geoffrey Nzito's brother, who eventually attained Senior Three level of education. Another attempt at education was made by one Pastor in the community but according to respondents, the school had only one class in which old and young alike were taught from 9.00 am to 1.00 pm. There was no reference to the national syllabus, and eventually this intervention was abandoned. The missionary congregation of the Evangelising Sisters of Mary through pastoral work on health and education came into contact with the Batwa community in Ntandi. Although they initially received a hostile reception because they did not offer food or hand-outs, the Batwa were persuaded to take up education again. The church then attempted to establish an adult and nursery school in the community. Together with the community the Parish constructed a semi-permanent church which doubled as a classroom, but the distractions in the slum environment hampered class work, including from frequent visits by tourists and researchers. Pupils would also leave class to go to their mothers, to the market, and to collect firewood.

According to officials from Bundibugyo District Local Government, in 2014, the Parish decided to take 40 children to Bugombwa Missionary School 23kms away. It turned part of its social hall into a dormitory for the Batwa children and allowed these children to study at the nursery and primary school free of charge. For some time, children resisted and kept running away, but they gradually extended their 'stays' from a few days to 2 weeks, leaving in the third week. When asked why they were leaving school

³² Ibid.

³³ In 2005, the European Union donated UGS.600 million to the Batwa community through RWIDE, a community based organisation, to purchase land and construct permanent housing for the Batwa, among other provisions. One piece of land of about 1.5 acres was purchased by RWIDE in Bumagga, in collaboration with Ntandi Sub-County for the resettlement

³⁴ Mbarara University of Science and Technology (2020), The marginalization of the Batwa people of Southwestern Uganda, as an indigenous community, Bundibugyo Mgahinga Conservation Trust (2016) Batwa Population Census Report.

³⁵ Batwa community consultative meeting on Tuesday 4th October 22, in Ntanda Bundibugyo District.

to go home they said, they were tired; they needed to generate income, hunt small birds for meat and go to the disco. They also tended to fight among themselves frequently. Initially, the parents also distrusted the parish, fearing that their children would not return home.

This, however, changed with time and when one or two children ‘escape’, the parents now bring them back to school. The schools have initiated activities to keep Batwa children occupied, such as sports and the establishment of a heritage club where they are trained in traditional dances and music which help them keep interest in schooling. Parents visit the children regularly, and during the holidays the children are taken home. Evidence from meetings with stakeholders indicates that there is now marked improvement in the Batwa children’s retention and interest in education. The children fight less frequently and are competing favourably with children from other cultural communities in the school. The Bugombwa Catholic Parish continues to solicit support from well-wishers to provide food and other items, including second-hand clothes that are cut to fit the size of the Batwa children.

(d) Health and Wellbeing

During the consultative meetings with key stakeholders working on the Batwa issues, it was reported that apart from the government aided universal access to health, NGOs and civil society have been at the forefront of Batwa health and wellbeing. It was also reported that the Batwa communities have the poorest health. In the trading centre, Batwa adults and youth alike are exposed to the influence of drugs and alcohol, uncensored films and immorality. According to respondents, the neighboring ethnic groups believe that if a man has intercourse with a Mutwa woman, he will be healed of HIV/AIDS and backache. There has only been limited effort to sensitise the community and to dispel these misconceptions. Many Batwa women and men have, therefore, been infected, and with the stereotyping and discrimination they suffer from, they lack the confidence to go to the near-by health facility to test and receive treatment. Their limited access to healthcare facilities is also attributed to lack of cash to pay for services, as well as discrimination on the part of staff and patients, when they try to access health care in hospitals. In addition, the Batwa’s limited access to traditional herbs and medicine from the forest contributes substantially to their poor health.³⁶ Given their small number, all the respondents met feared that, if the Batwa in Bundibugyo are not supported and removed from this environment, they will soon become extinct.

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 Batwa currently, access the park mainly for firewood collection, poles, and herbal medicine. Some of the Batwa with support from UWA showcase their cultural heritage to visitors through dance, storytelling and other demonstrations. UWA and the Batwa community have established the Batwa trail in SNP; however, it is not well developed yet. The current General Management Plan for SNP envisages erecting appropriate interpretation panels and shelters along the Batwa trail. During

³⁶ Interview with Gad Shemajere, a mutwa Leader at the National Level held on Wednesday 5th October, 2022 in Bundibugyo.

consultations with key stakeholders³⁷, it was realized that a Batwa cultural center is one of the key infrastructures necessary to supplement on the Batwa benefits from the park. This cultural center would be used for Batwa handicraft sales and cultural performances, among others.

Through consultations with the Batwa and review of literature and the General Management Plan for SNP, 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 2: Batwa Cultural Values and their importance in conservation of SNP

	Cultural values	Importance in SNP management
1	Beliefs/Indigenous-local knowledge about medicinal herbs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable use of resources • Respect for park resources in terms of Human health improvement
2	Spiritual beliefs and practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valuing the park as a home
3	Batwa forest experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversified tourism products • Gainful engagement of the Batwa • Promoting and preserving the Batwa culture
4	Batwa Dance and Drama	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Communication strategy • Empowering the Batwa community

2.0 VMGP Development Process and Approach

This VMGP was developed through a series of consultative engagements, review of relevant documents, 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.

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, Bundibugyo District Local Government, representatives from NGOs working around issues of Batwa and conservation of SNP. 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 were 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:

³⁷ Batwa community consultative meeting organized and Facilitated by the Consultant with Batwa NGO leaders on Tuesday, October 4, 2022

- 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 - across all the groups, currently, the main resource access mechanism is CRM arrangements in SNP 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 revenue sharing and tourism development for the long-term sustainability of VMGs 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. This 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 SPOs, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), of no more than five people organized within the framework of SOPs, and virtual or telephone interviews with the leaders of the Batwa. During the interviews the key languages used were Kwamba and Rutwa, and these 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. 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 Tuesday 4th October 2022, a special consultation with the Batwa around SNP was carried out at Ntanda. The meeting was attended by 91 Batwa in total (51 were men and 40 women, with representation from the frontline communities around SNP). The goal of consulting the Batwa who reside around SNP 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 reports.³⁸ The Batwa community consultative meeting held on 4th October 2022, was conducted in Kwamba and Orutwa to enable them to 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 process, venue and intended outcome/outputs from the consultation meetings. During physical meetings the agenda below was followed:

³⁸ Specific Area issues, needs and aspirations are already presented in specific Protected Area Reports and Annexed to the project VMGF document.

Agenda of the consultation meeting held on 4th October, 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 Semuliki National Park
5. Discussion and feedback
6. Closing

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 4th October 2022, the Batwa from communities living around and obtaining livelihood from SNP 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 SNP are still not coordinated, 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). There is still a threat from scarcity of land, which took the 1st position in the ranking of problems by the Batwa in Semuliki.
- 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 these Batwa have links with other Batwa in DRC, Kisoro, Kabale, and some migrate.
- The government of Uganda has never studied the issue of resettling Batwa; there needs to be a detailed study.
- 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 Bundibugyo district local government and other conservation NGOs to encourage and promote domestication of park resources such as medicinal plants on to community farms
- Train the Batwa techniques of growing some indigenous trees

- 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 other tribes 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 SNP 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 SNP

Further consultations and deliberations were held with the key project anticipated implementing partners and stakeholders including: local level UWA staff, representatives from the Bundibugyo District Local Government (Chief Administrative officer, District Tourism Officer, District Natural Resources officer), NGOs, and community development groups that represent and assist the Batwa around SNP. Participants were purposively selected on the basis of their experience and work related to conservation in SNP and the Batwa. A meeting of stakeholders and NGOs working on issues of the Batwa in SNP was organized at Kalya Courts Hotel, Fort Portal on 5th October, 2022 and was attended by 23 stakeholders. The information generated from this stakeholder consultative meeting included the following:

- The current needs and preferred options for livelihood of the Batwa around SNP 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 SNP to determine what works and what does not
- Measures to ensure project benefits will accrue to the Batwa around SNP
- Measures to strengthen the capacity of local authorities, especially the district Local Government of Bundibugyo, 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 SNP. Some of the key organizations are presented in the table below:

Table 3. Key stakeholder organizations working with the Batwa in SNP

No	Organization	Key work Areas
1	Batwa twekulakulania	General livelihood improvement and development
2	Kinyambogo women’s bee keeping group	Bee keeping, agriculture, livelihood improvement
3	Kabuga Women’s bee keeping group	Bee keeping, general development Initiatives
4	Makere anti-poaching coalition	Conservation, forestry management
5	Balindiba-byobuhangwa tree planting group	Tree planting, conservation and forestry
6	Bundimasoli butterfly project	Conservation, income and livelihood improvement
7	Bamaga MDD group	Cultural Preservation and development
8	Bandimagwara drama group	Cultural preservation and development
9	Ntandi tree planting group (muzeyi)	Tree planting, forestry
10	Mantoroba Women’s drama group	Music, cultural development
11	Burondo Women’s drama group	Music, cultural preservation and development

2.5 Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)

The IFPA-CD project team has consulted³⁹ with Batwa during the project design with sessions specific with 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. At the current stage, FPIC is deemed not to apply, because most of the project activities will be implemented in the park. Therefore, they 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 major negative impacts on cultural heritage.

However, it is also understood that ESS7 is meant to avoid adverse impacts of projects on VMGs, which calls for informed consultations. Informed consultations⁴⁰ with Batwa were, therefore, carried out and this led to broad community support. Engagement of the Batwa in the consultations, information on the projects benefits and their participation was shared. During the consultations it was observed that a high number of the Batwa community members turned out for the sensitization and consultative meetings on the benefits and risks of the project. The members were keen to benefit from the government projects. There was active participation of the community members during the plenary

³⁹ Interview with Gad Shemajere, a mutwa Leader at the National Level held on Wednesday 5th /10/ 2022 Bundibugyo, Batwa community consultative meeting on Tuesday 4th /10/22 in Ntanda Bundibugyo District, Bundibugyo, Batwa community consultative meeting organized and Facilitated by the Consultant with Batwa NGO leaders on Tuesday 4/10/22

⁴⁰ Ibid.

and open discussion sessions, they asked many questions concerning the project and demonstrated support for the project.

3.0 Specific issues for the Batwa and Management actions

3.1 Aspirations, needs, and preferred options of the affected VMGs

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

- Increase and enhance participation and involvement of the Batwa in decision making processes such as the committee for revenue sharing. UWA should devise a strategy of ensuring that the Batwa directly benefit from the Park Revenue sharing scheme and also put in place deliberate efforts to have representation of the Batwa to advocate for the Batwa interests.
- Recruitment of Batwa (*those that qualify*) to work as UWA officers, guides and porters in SNP.
- Enhance alternative livelihood options as agriculture. The Batwa have got 3.8 acres of land at Makere in Ntoroko sub-county and other 5.8 acres at Karemba. This land can be used as an entry point for IFPA-CD to support set up of demonstration sites for improved on-farm practices and micro enterprise development skills training. The Batwa can, therefore, be supported to plant quick gestation crops such as vegetables which are highly demanded by the tourism sector.
- They will also be supported to produce products such as poultry used in the emerging hotels in the area.
- Promoting Batwa cultural-based tourism through setting up and promoting Batwa cultural trails.
- Ensure the preservation of Batwa culture by establishing a Batwa cultural Centre (*Cultural Performances, Music, dance and drama*).
- Promoting apiary and engaging UWA to allow the Batwa rear bees on the park boundaries or on their land. They will also transfer bees from SNP in order to colonize the beehives in the park boundary.
- There is need to train the Batwa in entrepreneurship and vocational skills to help them start up micro business to uplift their incomes

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 and negative impacts on Vulnerable and Marginalised Groups (VMGs);

In series of consultative meetings with the Batwa that took place on i) June 2021, at Ntanda SNP Headquarters, ii) at Ntanda SNP headquarters on Tuesday 4th October 2022, and iii) meeting of stakeholders and NGOs working on issues of the Batwa in Semuliki organized at Kalya Courts Hotel in Fort Portal on 5th October, 2022, the participants observed that the implementation of the project will likely result in a number of positive impacts such as:

- (a) 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 beekeeping.

- (b) Access to job opportunities provided by the project for civil works and ecotourism opportunities, etc.
- (c) 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.
- (d) 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.
- (e) 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.
- (f) Increased income from the sale of tourism products such as the handicrafts made by the Batwa.
- (g) Increased knowledge and awareness to the Batwa and local communities on the importance of sustainable forests and wildlife management.
- (h) Documentation of specific cultural values, spiritual beliefs, Batwa dance and drama.

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

According to consultative meetings⁴¹ 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:

- Strengthening the management of CRM groups in SNP
- Conducting 4 specialized trainings for the Batwa in livelihood and enterprise development
- Working with the Batwa, take an inventory of all medicinal plants for further research and mapping
- Conducting project awareness-raising campaigns to local Batwa communities on the importance of sustainable wildlife management
- Support on beekeeping, including on periphery of the park
- Developing and market Batwa tourism products – eg. crafts, trails, etc.
- Support and training on rainwater harvesting.

Meetings with Batwa June 2021, at Ntanda SNP Headquarters, ii) at Semuliki National Park Headquarters on Tuesday 4th October, 2022, and iii) meeting of stakeholders and NGOs working on issues of the Batwa in Semuliki organized at Kalya Courts Hotel in Fort Portal on 5th October, 2022.

3.4 Measures to strengthen the capacity of local authority and relevant government departments to address VMGs issues

The District Local Government of Bundibugyo is a key stakeholder for protection of SNP. 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 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 Bundibugyo District 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

These activities will be mainstreamed into general project implementation under the coordination and monitoring activities led by MWE with UWA.

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

SNP 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 held to ensure 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 (but after completion of the consultations on this VMGP).

Table 4. Stakeholder's roles and responsibilities

Key stakeholder	Role in the Implementation of the VMGP
Ministry of Water and Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall supervision of the preparation and implementation of VMGP for SNP • Participate in the district level meetings in Bundibugyo district • Coordinate with other Government Line Departments and agencies such as Ministry of Tourism for ensuring effective delivery of mitigation measures • Make budgetary provisions for implementation of project activities. • Provide technical support for implementation of the actions in the VMGP
UWA (Chief Warden)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of mitigation measures for adverse effects as per project components- Component 1 activities to be implemented by UWA- in and around Bundibugyo and Component 2 activities to be implemented by UWA (for tourism-related investments). • Supervision of plans and reporting to MWE
District Local Governments (Bundibugyo)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting communities in preparation of project activities. • 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 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.

Pro-biodiversity conservationists in Uganda (PROBICOU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobilise Batwa through Batwa Organizations, carry out training on VMG issues and conservation, strengthen the Batwa Forest Trail, work with Batwa in restoration of degraded areas of the forest, advocacy and revenue sharing management, support Batwa livelihood programs.
Arcus Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research, Support Batwa access to land to facilitate livelihood demonstration projects, resettlement programs, and community development.
Wildlife Conservation Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research on medical herbs, cultural sites and piloting medicinal gardens, supporting Batwa Forest Experience
The Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and heritage preservation, cultural preservation and protection of cultural values, cultural rights and development

Other Batwa led NGOs, such as Batwa indigenous Empowerment Organization, etc.	<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 SNP General Management Plan, this VMGP, and the approved project work plans; they will be closely monitored and supervised by SNP management as per the IFPA-CD implementation framework. MWE in collaboration with MTWA will provide the overall strategic direction, supervision and overall monitoring of implementation of the plan in sync with the overall IFPA-CD project.

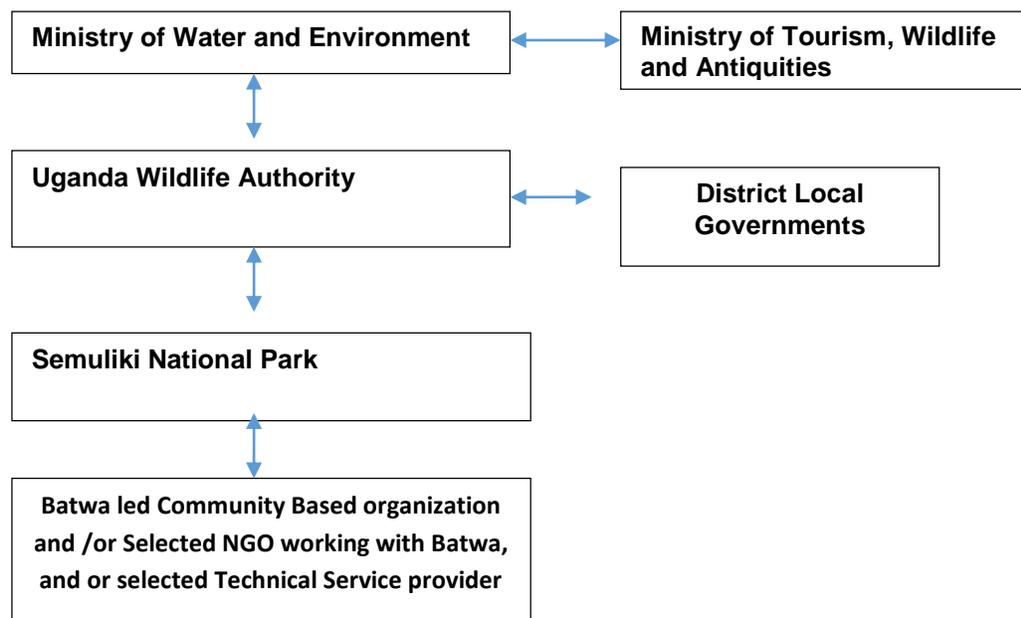


Figure 2.: Coordination and implementation Structure (Arrows: Coordination and communication channel)

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

During the Implementation of activities outlined in this VMGP for SNP, 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 the 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 visit consisting of Community conservation Warden or Chief Warden of SNP and District community Development Officer, Natural Resources officer of Bundibugyo 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 the 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), the 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 the 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. The project will support the Batwa in Semuliki to participate in the implementation of the agreed activities. The monitoring activities will result in regular feedback on the implementation of the VMGP. Their views on the positive and negative impacts should also be considered.

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 SNP, there is already baseline socio-economic information included in this VMGP and the protected 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 SNP 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 benefit from routine collection of data from activity reports.

4.0 Logical Framework for VMGP activities in SNP

The table below presents a sequence of activities, targets, assumptions etc. proposed in line with consultations with the Batwa held on 4th October, 2022 in Bundibugyo district.

Table 5. Logical Framework for SNP VMGP

Output and Targets	Specific activities for Batwa participation in the IFPA –CD project	Objectively verifiable indicators	Means of verification
<p>Target Reach out to a minimum of 30 Batwa and their leaders to strengthen Collaborative Resource Management</p>	Strengthen the management of CRM groups in SNP to effectively include Batwa participation through issue specific capacity building and training	<p>Number of functioning CRM groups where the Batwa are involved</p> <p>Number of issue specific training sessions targeting the Batwa conducted</p> <p>Number of Batwa attending the trainings (gender disaggregated)</p>	<p>Activity reports</p> <p>UWA Annual reports</p> <p>Training reports</p> <p>Attendance lists</p>
At least 10 Batwa youth, men, women are able to be recruited as labour for project supported civil works	Engage the Batwa as casual workers for civil works	Number of Batwa employed	Activity report
Reach a total of 30 Batwa in trainings for livelihood and enterprise development	Conducting 4 trainings for the Batwa in livelihood and enterprise development	Number of Batwa attending trainings	<p>Activity reports</p> <p>Training reports</p> <p>Attendance lists</p>
Reach out to a total of 60 Batwa members in awareness raising campaigns on the importance of sustainable resource management	Conduct project awareness-raising campaigns to local Batwa communities on the importance of sustainable wildlife management	<p>Number of awareness campaigns conducted</p> <p>Number of participants</p>	<p>Meeting reports</p> <p>Attendance lists</p>

Output and Targets	Specific activities for Batwa participation in the IFPA –CD project	Objectively verifiable indicators	Means of verification
Develop tourism products and attract over 50 tourists annually	Developing and market Batwa tourism products – e.g. crafts trails, etc.	Number of Batwa trained in tourism development Number of tourists visiting the Batwa	Activity reports Training reports Attendance lists
Support the Batwa community with training on rainwater harvesting (appropriate for the types of roofing that is preferred by the Batwa)	Support training on rainwater harvesting and simple infrastructure for rainwater harvesting	Training conducted	Activity report
Working with the Batwa, take an inventory of all medicinal plants for further research and mapping	Carry out research on medicinal plants	A study conducted	Research report

6.0 Budget Allocation

Table 6. Project Budget for VMGP

Management Action	Institution Responsible	Estimated Budget	Time line in years				
			Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Component 1. Investments to improve the management of Semuliki National Park to ensure it continues to generate revenues and provide important environmental services.							
Strengthen the management of CRM groups in Semuliki National Park	UWA	47,000,000					
Conduct 4 trainings for the Batwa in livelihood and enterprise development	UWA	20,000,000					
Working with the Batwa, take an inventory of all medicinal plants for further research and mapping	UWA	22,000,000					
Conduct project awareness-raising campaigns to local Batwa communities on the importance of sustainable wildlife management	UWA	10,000,000					
Conduct training on rainwater harvesting	UWA	10,000,000					
Component 2: Investments to increase revenues and jobs from forests and wildlife protected areas							
Develop and market Batwa tourism products – eg crafts trails etc	UWA	23,000,000					

6.1 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 SNP. 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 Bundibugyo, 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. The 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.

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Annex 1. Records of consultations

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 Semuliki National Park

Project Name: Investing in Forests and Protected areas for climate smart project (IFPA-CD)	Location of the Consultation: Ntanda, SNP Headquarters
Assessment Type: Projects where the Batwa “vulnerable and marginalized groups” are not the sole beneficiaries	Participants: Members of the Batwa “vulnerable and marginalized groups” of (Men, Women, Young men, Young girls and children)
No. of Target Participants: 91 (Number includes teenagers of 10-17 years). Male: 51 Female: 40 Infants: Not counted No. of other Participants: 3 Children bellow 10 Years: Not counted.	List of Facilitators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul Twebaze, Consultant • Gad Shemajere- Batwa Leader • Oscar Akatuhurira PROBICOU • Tumwesigye Robert Baganda
Report prepared by: Oscar Akatuhurira	Date: Tuesday 4 th October 2022

1. 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).

During project preparation, the MWE, jointly with UWA and NFA, prepared and disclosed the project specific Vulnerable and Marginalized Groups Framework (VMGF)⁴² and the Process Framework (PF).⁴³ 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

⁴²<https://www.mwe.go.ug/sites/default/files/Vulnerable%20and%20Marginalized%20Groups%20Framework%20-VMGF%20for%20Uganda.pdf>

⁴³<https://www.mwe.go.ug/sites/default/files/library/UG%20P170466%20Process%20Framework%20for%20disclosure.pdf>

(iv) *an indigenous language, often different from the official language of the country or region.* The Batwa is such a group around Semuliki 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.

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 (BINP), and the Semuliki National Park (SNP).

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 Vulnerable and Marginalised Groups plans (VMGPs) for each protected area. These VGMPs contain a set of activities and mitigation measures for any anticipated impact, and strategies to avoid, minimize or reduce the risks and mitigate effects of the anticipated impacts.

Following a consultative process, a specific VMGP has been developed for Semuliki National Park. 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 Semuliki National Park. The proceedings of the meeting informed the finalisation of a Vulnerable and Marginalized Groups Plan for Semuliki. 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 Semuliki were 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 Semuliki National Park (Bundibugyo District)

The purpose of consulting the Batwa vulnerable and marginalised group who live and derive their livelihoods from in and around Semuliki, 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 Semuliki.

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

Generally, the Batwa in Semuliki 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 as presented bellow;-

Agenda of the consultation meeting held on 4th October, 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 Semuliki National Park

5. Discussion and feed back

6. Closing

- 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 Semuliki National Park on Tuesday 4th October 2022 at Ntanda

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. Gad Shemajere. He thanked God for the day, his protection and guidance in the meeting.

Communication from the leader of the Batwa – King Nzito

- Mr. Nzito Geoffrey Extended appreciation to UWA, Government, PROBICOU, Ministry of water and Environment (MWE) and all the stakeholders for supporting the Batwa. He noted that he was happy receive the visitors, and thanked God that such kind of meeting took place. He noted that these meetings were very important in order to help improve the life of the Batwa.
- He welcomed 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, as there were many issues they needed to bring to the attention of the visitors especially from Government.

Opening remarks and objectives of the meeting - Twebaze Paul- Consultant

- 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, and all the key stakeholders for their support to interventions that promote peaceful co-existence of the Batwa and the Protected Areas.
- 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 Protected Areas.
- 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 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 meetings 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 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 National Parks. He noted that since the project was complementing 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.

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

After presentation of the details about the project, Mr. Twebaze opened the discussion by posing the following questions to the participants;-

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

Specific Issues for management of Semuliki National Park

- The Batwa around SNP are still not organised to engage in productive ventures such as agriculture, 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, as articulated by Nyamata Milly.
- According to Rushooke Yonathan, land continues to be a problem (There should be special effort to look for windows of acquiring more land for the Batwa). There is still a threat from scarcity of land, which took the 1st position in the ranking of problems by the Batwa in Semuliki.
- 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.

- If we are to be very much organised government should understand that there are social ties that have to be considered e.g. aspects of migration, since these Batwa have links with other Batwa in DRC, Kisoro, Kabale, and some migrate, Alphonsine Kalisa.
- The government of Uganda has never studied the issue of resettling Batwa; there needs to be a detailed study.
- Koburunga Adella observed that the Batwa also need to be considered in Revenue Sharing; they are usually left out by the District Local Governments.
- Increase and enhance participation and involvement of the Batwa in decision making processes such as the committee for revenue sharing. UWA should devise a strategy of ensuring that the Batwa directly benefit from the Park Revenue sharing scheme and also put in place deliberate efforts to have representation of the Batwa to advocate for the Batwa interests.
- Musinguzi Richard noted that there was a need to enhance alternative livelihood options as agriculture. The Batwa have got 3.8 acres of land at Makere in Ntoroko sub-county and other 5.8 acres at Karembe. This land can be used as an entry point for IFPA-CD to support set up of demonstration sites for improved on-farm practices and micro enterprise development skills training. The Batwa can, therefore, be supported to plant quick gestation crops such as vegetables which are highly demanded by the tourism sector.
- They will also be supported to produce products such as poultry used in the emerging hotels in the area.
- “Promoting Batwa cultural based tourism through setting up and promoting Batwa cultural trails, would be key if we are to earn more money for our development” Nsaku Cyprien.
- Bunju Roseo Paul argued that there was a need to ensure the preservation of Batwa culture by establishing a Batwa cultural Centre (*Cultural Performances, Music, dance and drama*) because the culture of the Batwa was being eroded.
- Night Katusabe, also observed that there was a need to promoting apiary and engaging UWA to allow the Batwa rear bees on the park boundaries or on their land. They will also transfer bees from SNP in order to colonize the beehives in the park boundary.
- There is need to train the Batwa in entrepreneurship and vocational skills to help them start up micro business to uplift their incomes

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.

Potential positive and negative impacts on Vulnerable and Marginalized Groups (VMGs);

The participants observed that the implementation of the project will likely result in a number of positive impacts such as:-

- (i) 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 beekeeping.
- (j) Access to job opportunities provided by the project for ecotourism opportunities, etc.
- (k) 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.
- (l) 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.
- (m) 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.
- (n) Increased income from the sale of tourism products such as the handicrafts made by the Batwa.
- (o) Increased knowledge and awareness to the Batwa and local communities on the importance of sustainable forests and wildlife management.
- (p) Documentation of specific cultural values, spiritual beliefs, Batwa dance and drama.

Summary of key observations from the meeting

- Explore options for Government to resettle the Batwa communities who want it as one way of resolving outstanding land /tenure challenges, along with compensation and livelihoods restoration from government since it has never provided these to the Batwa from the time they were evicted from the forests.
- Improve the education system for the Batwa people – government should ensure that the education is free and accessible.
- Put in place deliberate actions that effectively integrate the Batwa people into host community institutions to eliminate discrimination and stigmatization, while supporting maintenance of Batwa culture
- Engage Bundibugyo district local government and other conservation NGOs to encourage and promote domestication of park resources such as medicinal plants on to community farms

- Train the Batwa techniques of growing some indigenous trees
- 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 other tribes 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 SNP 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.