

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GREATER VIRUNGA LANDSCAPE (GVL) TRANSBOUNDARY STRATEGIC PLAN

1. CONTEXT

1.1. The Greater Virunga Landscape

The Greater Virunga Landscape (GVL) in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda, and Uganda is one of the most biodiverse places on Earth, with immense ecological, socio-economic and potential economic value. It is richest part of the African continent in terms of vertebrate species diversity¹. The GVL is home to some 5164 species of mammals (including 27 primates and 40 ungulate species), birds, amphibians, reptiles and plants. More than 50% of birds, 39% of mammals, 19% of amphibians and 14% of reptiles and plants of mainland Africa are found within this region.

Currently, the boundary covers an area of approx. 26,663 km² including 13,800 km² within protected areas, ranging from 600m above sea level (Semliki) to 5,109m (in the Rwenzori Mountains) The GVL creates the divide between the Congo Basin and the Nile Basin and their watersheds, thus forming one of the largest and most important 'water towers' in Africa. The landscape includes eight National Parks and many Game Reserves and Forest Reserves. GVL contains more terrestrial, endemic and threatened vertebrate species than any other defined landscape in Africa.

GVL is a hugely diverse area, geologically and geographically, with ancient tropical forests, ice-capped mountains, active volcanoes, savannah, grassland, swamps and wetlands. These provide habitats for large and globally important populations of African ungulates, hippos and several co-existing primate species, including the entirety of the world's remaining mountain gorillas, as well as rare birds and plants. Lakes George and Lake Edward are two of Africa's most productive lakes and form important fisheries as well as being home to many endemic fish species.

There are three World Heritage Sites (Virunga National Park - VNP, Rwenzori Mountains and Bwindi Impenetrable National Parks), three Ramsar Sites (Lakes George and Edward, Rwenzoris, Virunga NP) and two Man and Biosphere Reserve (Queen Elizabeth National Park, Volcanoes National Park).

GVL has immense socio-economic value. A large and growing human population depend on the rich natural capital, which also contributes significantly to sustainable national and regional economic growth. Forest products

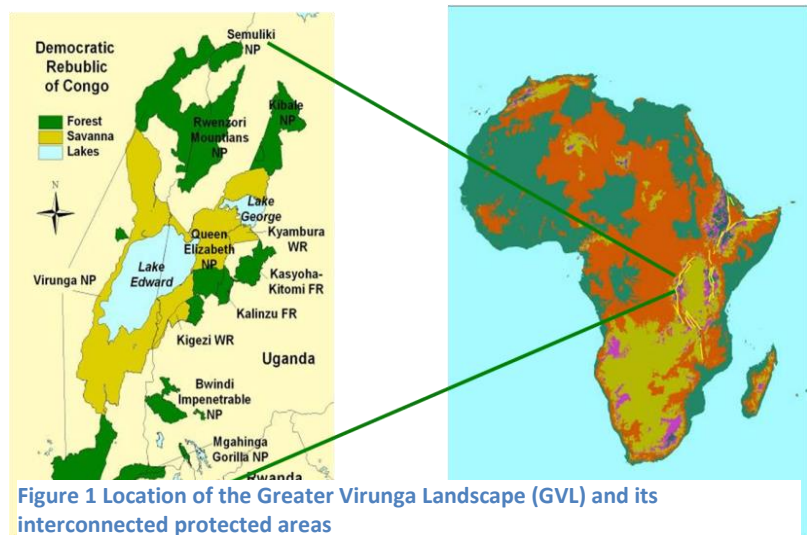


Figure 1 Location of the Greater Virunga Landscape (GVL) and its interconnected protected areas

¹ A.J. Plumptre *et al* (2007). Transboundary Conservation in the Greater Virunga Landscape: its importance for Landscape Species. Biological Conservation

are a key income source, supplemented by incomes from small-scale agriculture and fisheries, and tourism. Some of the World's highest rural population densities are found in this region, with very high densities (e.g. over 1,000 people per km² in areas adjacent to VNP - around Goma in DRC) and population growth rates of nearly 3% a year. Over 80% of the people living in the GVL are small scale landholders raising crops and livestock, with forest products, tourism and fisheries as other key income sources. Fishing in Lakes Edward and George and several other small lakes and rivers is one of the main sources of livelihood for approximately 20% of households. Around 60% of the people living in the GVL fall below the poverty line (*GVTC Annual Conservation Status Report 2015 and TSP, 2018*).

The GVL faces a number of conservation threats and challenges including: the fragmentation of the landscape as a result of high human pressure, poaching and illegal trade of wildlife and wildlife resources; conflicts between human and protected areas over resource use, crop raiding by animals; chronic insecurity and armed conflicts that have characterised this region over a long period; high level of poverty among the local populations; exploitation of natural resources including minerals, oil and gas; invasive and alien species in key conservation areas; effects of climate change.

1.2. Governance and stakeholder partnerships in the Greater Virunga Landscape

The primary body established to promote collaboration and coordination of conservation efforts among the three countries of the GVL is the **Greater Virunga Transboundary Collaboration (GVTC)** <https://greatervirunga.org/>. The transboundary collaboration process started in the early 90s as an informal collaboration mechanism initiated by the rangers charged to monitor the mountain gorillas, but has evolved through a formalization process that culminated into negotiation and signing of the GVTC Treaty by the 3 countries in October 2015. Today GVTC is recognized as an Interstate Institution (with diplomatic status) and a clear mandate of sustainable conservation of the wildlife resources and tourism promotion in the GVL. GVTC is governed by: Council of Ministers, Management Board, Executive Secretariat, Regional Technical Committees and a Forum of Stakeholders.

Prior to 2015 GVTC treaty, GVTC was a mechanism set up by the three national institutions in charge of wildlife conservation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda and Uganda namely the Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature (ICCN), Rwanda Development Board (RDB) and Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA). GVTC was established to help provide solutions through:

- Coordination and Convening stakeholder partnerships and meetings respectively
- Information and information management/ clearing house
- Brokering/Mediation
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Acting as a warning Bell / early warning system and
- Implementation of some interventions (Diminishing portion of GVTC actions focus on pilot projects with more attention to other roles and functions)

Most recently, conservation and development NGOs have initiated efforts to create stronger NGO collaboration and partnership with GVTC to address multiple conservation and development challenges in a forward looking, coordinated and strategic manner. This effort, called the "GVL Initiative" started to inspire formation of a GVTC-NGO partner collaboration to;



- Increase collaboration and effectiveness of conservation work in the Greater Virunga Landscape
- Build a shared vision for the GVL among collaborating conservation and development NGOs working alongside and in support of GVTC
- Agree a forward-looking GVL strategy and how best to collaborate in its implementation including via assigned roles and responsibilities
- Improve outcomes through better collaboration amongst NGOs, increase investments where there are gaps, and avoid duplication
- Agree some potential early projects where partners could collaborate and demonstrate the potential success of the initiative

GVTC is working with NGO collaborators and other stakeholders to develop a comprehensive landscape strategy to serve as an agenda for collective conservation of the GVL.

1.3. Past GVL Transboundary Strategic Plans

The first transboundary strategic plan (TSP) was developed by GVTC together with the stakeholders in 2006 – 2016 to guide implementation of activities in the landscape. This plan was reviewed in 2013 to give rise to the second transboundary strategic plan from 2013 -2018. Currently, the TSP from 2018-2023 will be expiring this year, 2023. All previous strategic plans have maintained the GVTC 30-year Vision first set in 2006 together with its goal. The Vision is that *“the Central Albertine Rift Transfrontier Protected Area network together with surrounding landscape conserved sustainably”* while the Goal is *“sustainable conservation of the Central Albertine Rift biodiversity for long term socio-economic development through strategic transboundary collaborative management”*.

2. THE ASSIGNMENT

This assignment is aimed at developing a GVL Transboundary Strategic Plan (TSP) for the next 10 years, (2024-2034) with a 5-year detailed plan. WWF, GVTC and its NGO partners believe that there is need to develop a longer term strategic and operational plan to holistically address complex development and conservation challenges in the GVL. This proposed plan will undergo a mid-term review process after 5 years to ensure that it’s adapted to any emerging issues and new opportunities in the course of the period.

Crucial to the strategic plan development process is its co-design and co-creation with key stakeholders and organizations working within the GVL. This strategic plan should be a joint endeavor, where the agreed outcomes are greater than the number of the individual parts of the various organizations working in the landscape, to better coordinate collaboration and planning towards a long-term vision and impact.

The GVL TSP will serve to:

- Strengthen ability of GVTC and partners in the GVL to strategically plan and coordinate our work, with clear and agreed priorities and areas of delivery between organizations and stakeholders.
- Underpin future fundraising efforts and prioritization.
- Effectively monitor, evaluate and report agreed outcomes and overall impact at a landscape scale; including biodiversity, connectivity, climate, habitat cover and health and human well-being related indicators.

In this regard, WWF in partnership with GVTC and other collaboration partners is launching the process of recruiting a consultant/ consulting firm to facilitate development of the new GVL Transboundary Strategic Plan. The consultancy will involve stakeholder consultations in GVL in Uganda, Rwanda and DRC. The assignment will be threefold:1). Situational Analysis, 2). Development of a Theory of Change, and 3). Drafting and finalizing the GVL Transboundary Strategic Plan and Business Plan

2.1. Specific responsibilities and tasks

- i. Review and update the situational analysis for GVL; including stakeholder mapping and analysis, current status of biodiversity and ecological assets, comprehensive threat analysis, socio-economic analysis particularly in relation to indigenous peoples and local communities, and current roles of organizations and where they operate in the landscape.
- ii. Develop the theory of change including reviewing and updating (if needed) the current vision, goal and objectives for GVL, and developing a new 10 year vision and goals/objectives. .
- iii. Develop 5-year implementation/ action plans and timelines against the proposed activities – who (including proposed partners) does what, when and how.
- iv. Review and update governance frameworks for landscape management including technical committees/ working groups to reflect current and projected trends.
- v. Develop a results framework with key indicators to measure progress against agreed Outputs, Outcomes and Impact through the implementation of the strategic plan
- vi. Develop a business/investment plan to support resource mobilization and associated fundraising efforts for the operationalization of the GVL TSP.

2.2. Proposed Methodology

The consultant(s) is expected to propose methodology, tools, process and schedule for the development of the GVL TSP as part of the technical application. The assignment is expected to take a participatory and co-development process, involving collaboration and consultation with GVL Initiative Partners, and key stakeholders and experts both within and outside of the GVL landscape. The assignment might include the following;

- a) Reviewing relevant internal and external documents/ literature/ reports such as previous GVL landscape plans, EAC Strategies, Strategies for Great Lakes Region and other landscapes, etc.
- b) Inception meeting/s with GVL key stakeholders including GVL Initiative core group members from GVTC, WCS, WWF, IGCP, CARE International and IUCN to discuss proposed approach and agree on a plan for stakeholder consultations.
- c) Consultations with donors and other key stakeholders and organizations working in the GVL and experts in relevant fields (i.e. wildlife, connectivity, food & agriculture, policy and governance, land use/ spatial planning, climate, freshwater, forest, business & livelihoods, sustainable financing mechanisms etc.).
- d) Consultations with other transboundary landscapes in Africa such as KAZA, SOKNOT, TRIDOM, Ruvuma to understand key approaches and key lessons learnt via zoom calls.
- e) Workshops to discuss theory of change in each country (Uganda, Rwanda and DRC), followed by one joint workshop to develop one overall ToC with (a small number of selected) reps from each of the three
- f) In-depth analysis of collected information to map priority intervention sites and themes for the GVL TSP. This will involve spatial analysis

- g) Facilitate and coordinate input required from the GVL working sub-group to finalize the TSP and its evaluation and monitoring plan
- h) Analysis of implementation/operational plans including estimates of required resources, development of detailed budget estimates including potential contribution to costs related to the running of the GVTC secretariat
- i) Financial analysis to determine resource requirements and possible sustainable sources
- j) Stakeholder validation meetings and or workshop/s
- k) Presentation to relevant committees including the GVL Initiative’s Steering Committee, the GVTC board and Council of Ministers

2.3. Deliverables

Key deliverables for this consultancy will include:

- An inception report with a conceptual framework detailing steps, detailed methodology, and activity schedule for the assignment, including planned stakeholder consultations.
- A situational analysis report providing clear status of GVL in terms of a comprehensive threat analysis, stakeholder mapping and analysis, current status of biodiversity and ecological assets, socio-economic analysis with a focus on indigenous peoples and local communities and current roles of organizations in the landscape, spatial analysis with updated conservation corridors, among others.
- An agreed theory of change with priority interventions/ thematic areas, and accompanying elements such as inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impact metrics, etc.
- Draft GVL Transboundary Strategic Plan (TSP) with an implementation plan and partners, roles and responsibilities and results / monitoring and evaluation framework
- A business/ investment plan for the GVL including resource requirements and associated fundraising strategies

Note: All expected deliverables shall be delivered in English, but with provision for translation in French, once approved. Translation costs should be integrated in consultant financial proposals.

2.4. Timeframe

The total duration of the consultancy shall not exceed 45 working days starting from the date of signing of the consultancy contract.

Table 1: Proposed time framework

Time	Deadline
Deadline for submission of proposals	14 days after date of posting bid: June 20th, 2023
Date for evaluation:	7 days after closing date
Date of feedback to successful bidder	2 days after evaluation
Negotiation period	5 working days after date of feedback, if needed
Date of signing contract	Immediately after close of negotiation
Date of debriefing	Within the first 1 weeks after signing contract
Date for submission of inception report	Within 2 weeks after debriefing
Date for completion of works	As shall be stipulated in the work schedule within the Contract

3. REQUIRED COMPETENCIES

This consultancy is open to consultancy firms/Institutions/Teams of Individuals with appropriate technical competences to deliver the work.

The team leader shall;

- Have advanced university degree (Masters, PhD or equivalent), preferably in Environmental/Natural resource Management, Development studies, social Sciences or another field related to the assignment;
- Proven experience in transboundary strategic planning and business/investment plan development with reputable organisations;
- Facilitation and consensus building including understanding of intergovernmental agencies, NGO and Government dynamics and politics and knowledge of conservation issues in the region;
- Excellent knowledge and application of the Theory of Change Approach to planning;
- Justified work experience in the Sub-Saharan Africa particularly, the Central Albertine Region with sound knowledge of challenges and opportunities for conservation in this region;
- Proven knowledge in relation to Transboundary Natural Resource Management aspects;
- Proven writing skills with ability to produce publishable reports;
- Fluency in English essential, the ability to speak French and/or Swahili will be beneficial.

The consultancy firm/ Institution/ team is also required to have three key experts; a spatial planning and GIS analyst with experience in remote sensing, landscape planning and modelling; a sustainable financing expert with comprehensive knowledge of conservation and ecosystem finance, including latest financing models for climate change and landscape conservation; and a Monitoring and Evaluation expert with understanding and experience in developing complex M&E frameworks and systems.

4. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4.1. Reporting and Coordination

The consultant will report to the GVL Initiative Core Working Groups Chaired by GVTC and made up of representatives from WWF, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), International Gorilla Conservation Program (IGCP), International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and CARE International. Regular communication will be through the WWF GVL coordinator. Contact details will be provided at the contracting stage.

4.2. Proposal Submission Requirements

Interested consultants (Teams / firms/ Institutions) are required to submit a proposal with the following components:

- a) Technical Proposal that shall include among other things:
 - A detailed description of the methodology to be used for performing the assignment;

- A clear and comprehensive work plan, outlining the major activities and implementation time schedule, including activity scheduling giving details of commencement and completion of different activities;
- A clear demonstration of capabilities and expertise in carrying out the consultancy (profiles) as detailed in these ToRs;
- CVs of team leaders and required experts;
- Any comments or suggestions on the ToRs.

b) A financial proposal: This should provide details in costing of the required resources to perform this assignment with itemized budgets and explanatory notes. The financial proposal should be submitted in USD.

The technical proposal should be limited to 10 pages (Maximum) in length (not including attachments), single-spaced, using a 12-Calibri font.

4.3. Deadline of submission

Proposals must be submitted electronically by email in English (OR French) with the subject line: Consultancy Services for GVL Transboundary Strategic Plan and should be addressed to:

Senior Procurement Officer
 WWF Uganda Country Office,
 Plot 2 Sturrock Road, Kololo
 P.O. Box 8758. Kampala
procurement@wwfuganda.org

The closing date will be 14 working days from the date of publication of the call for bids. Bidders should ensure that bids are sent to the collect address as indicated above. In case of late submission of the bid, that bid will not be considered for evaluation.

4.4. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated using criteria summarized in the table below

CRITERIA	MAXIMUM POINTS
Criteria 1: Soundness of implementation strategy and methodology in achieving project objectives, including clearly defined expected results and quantifiable targets/benchmarks, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of understanding of the ToRs • Clarity in the presentation of the bid • Clarity of the chronology/planning of the proposed activities • Relevance /suitability/soundness of the methodology to successfully carry out the assignment Logistics for a good and smooth administration of the assignment 	30
Criteria 2: Relevant experience and competence of the proposed consultancy team, demonstrated capabilities and expertise in similar assignments (Team Leader 15, other team members 15)	30
Criteria 3: Capacity and experience in implementing similar consultancy or similar assignments in the GVL region	10

Criteria 5: Cost reasonableness – a realistic budget in line with costs for similar activities in the region	30
TOTAL	100

Note: The client reserves the right to deviate from the suggested evaluation criteria