



# The Greater Virunga Landscape Transboundary Strategic Plan

1<sup>st</sup> July 2024 to 30 June 2033



***Building Resilience, Fostering Prosperity***

Validated 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024

## Foreword: Charting a Course for Greater Virunga

The Greater Virunga Landscape (GVL), a tapestry of volcanoes, forests, and savannas, is a symbol of shared heritage and resilience. Here, in this cradle of biodiversity across the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, and Uganda, we are regularly reminded of our kinship with the natural world. Yet, shared challenges threaten this precious ecosystem, demanding a response as united as the landscape itself. Today, we stand on the shoulders of giants, those who came before us and understood the value of working together.

The Greater Virunga Landscape Transboundary Strategic Plan of July 2024 to June 2033 is that response. It is a testament to the power of collaboration, a beacon of hope, and a blueprint for a future where the GVL thrives – a future made possible by our collective commitment.

Our vision is that the Greater Virunga Landscape is sustainably conserved for the benefit of people and nature. This rests on four pillars:

- **Transboundary Collaboration and Coordination:** The Plan strengthens regional cooperation for effective natural resource management and shared responsibility in addressing challenges.
- **Community Advocacy and Empowerment:** Local communities are integral to conservation success. The Plan prioritises their voices, skills development, and sustainable livelihoods.
- **Enterprise, Investment, and Finance:** The Plan fosters responsible business and green investment, mobilising diverse financing for sustainable development.
- **Sustainable Natural Resources Management:** Protecting the GVL's ecological integrity is vital. The Plan addresses poaching and habitat loss and promotes climate-resilient practices.

The Plan calls for concerted action from all stakeholders. Innovation, resilience, and unwavering commitment will ensure a healthy and vibrant GVL for the benefit of people and nature, setting an example for conservation across Africa and globally. This Transboundary Strategic Plan will be a turning point where we collectively shape a brighter future for this extraordinary landscape.

### Chair of the Board

Greater Virunga Transboundary Collaboration (GVTC)

# Executive Summary

Nestled across the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Rwanda, and Uganda, the Greater Virunga Landscape (GVL) hums with biodiversity. Yet, this natural haven faces daunting challenges – habitat loss, unsustainable practices, climate shifts, and political instability. This ten-year Transboundary Strategic Plan 2024-2033 (TSP) navigates these complexities, aiming for a future where nature and people thrive in harmony.

**Our Vision:** Greater Virunga Landscape is sustainably conserved for the benefit of people and nature.

**Our Mission:** To enhance the sustainable conservation of ecosystems and biodiversity and improve people's well-being through peaceful, strengthened transboundary collaboration in the Greater Virunga Landscape.

**Our Goal:** A resilient and sustainable ecosystem and quality of life of people in Greater Virunga Landscape by 2033.

Our journey to a thriving GVL rests on four key pillars. A clear framework for implementation assigns roles and responsibilities, while robust monitoring and evaluation systems track progress and hold us accountable. Specific goals anchor each pillar, tackling crucial challenges and seizing opportunities. The plan aims for financial sustainability through combined public, private, and philanthropic resources.

- 1 Transboundary Collaboration and Coordination:** Recognising that the GVL transcends borders, the TSP commits to strengthening regional cooperation and governance mechanisms.
- 2 Community Advocacy and Empowerment:** Local communities are the heart of the GVL and must thrive alongside conservation. The TSP prioritises empowering them through advocacy, skills development, and sustainable livelihood opportunities.
- 3 Enterprise, Investment, and Finance:** Sustainable development requires innovative and strategic investments. The TSP fosters an enabling environment to attract responsible business and green investment and leverage diverse financing mechanisms.
- 4 Sustainable Natural Resources Management:** Safeguarding the ecological integrity of the GVL is paramount. The TSP advocates for effective natural resource governance, combating threats like poaching and habitat loss, and prioritising climate-resilient practices.

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Together, we are committed to realising the shared vision for a thriving Greater Virunga Landscape, where communities prosper alongside a healthy and resilient environment.

*Photo credits on cover page: GVTC and publicly available images.*

## List of Acronyms

AEWA	Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds.
APAC	Africa Protected Areas Congress
ARCOS	Albertine Region Sustainable Development Project
AWF	African Wildlife Foundation
CBD	UN Convention on Biological Diversity
CBO	Community-based Organisation
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CMS	Convention on Migratory Species
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EAC	East African Community
ESSF	Environmental & Social Safeguards Framework
FPIC	Free, Prior, and Informed Consent
GBF	Global Biodiversity Framework
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GMP	General Management Plan
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
GVL	Greater Virunga Landscape
GVTC	Greater Virunga Transboundary Collaboration
ICCN	The Institut Congolais Pour La Conservation De La Nature (DRC PAA)
IP	Indigenous Peoples
IPLC	Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities
IGCP	International Gorilla Conservation Partnership
IUCN	The International Union for Conservation of Nature
JGI	Jane Goodall Institute
KAP	Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices

LC	Local Communities
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tools
NbS	Nature-Based Solutions
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategies & Action Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PA	Protected Area
PAA	Protected Areas Authorities (ICCN, RDB, UWA)
QENP	Queen Elizabeth National Park
PES	Payment for Ecosystem Services
PESTLE	Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental (strategic view)
POPS	Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants
PPP	Public Private Partnership
PS	Partner States (of the East African Community)
RBSAPs	Regional Biodiversity Strategies & Action Plans
RDB	Rwanda Development Board (Rwandan PAA)
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound (referring to goals etc)
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise(s)
TSP	Transboundary Strategic Plan
UN	United Nations
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UWA	Uganda Wildlife Authority (Ugandan PAA)
VPN	Virunga National Park
WCS	Wildlife Conservation Society
WWF	Worldwide Fund for Nature

# 1. Introduction

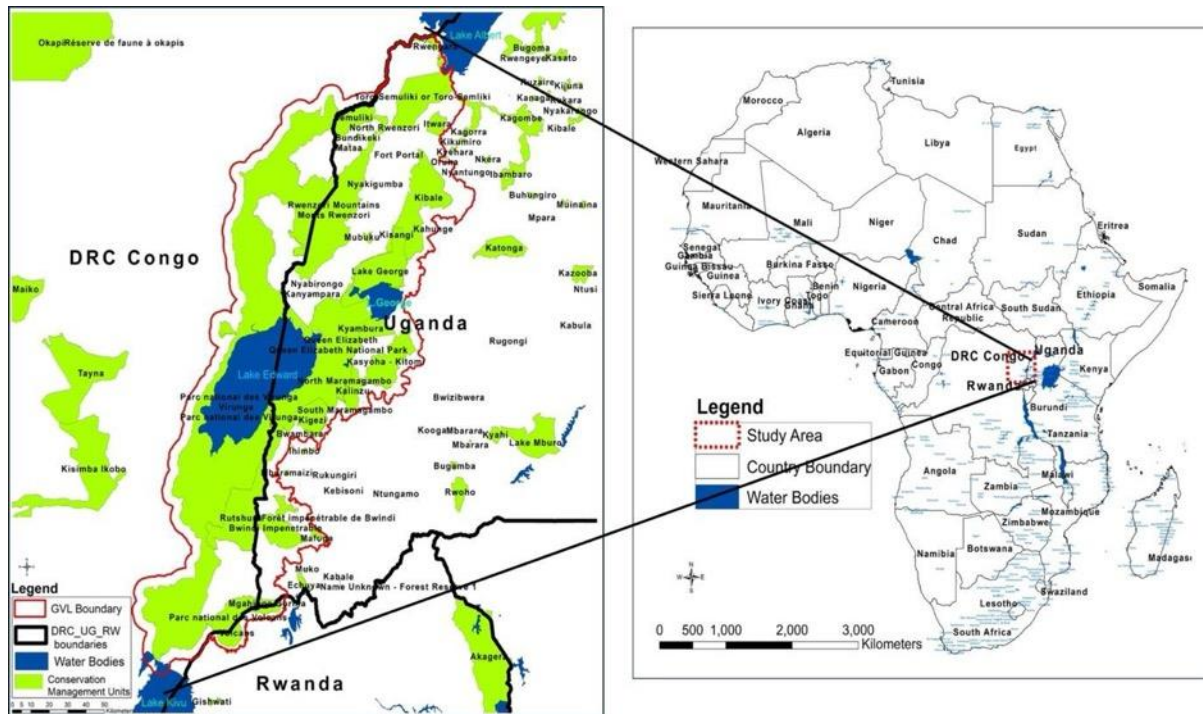
## 1.1 *Background and context*

The GVL stretches across the borders of the DRC, Rwanda and Uganda. It is characterised by transboundary ecosystems and cross border protected areas (Figure 1). There are three World Heritage Sites (Rwenzori Mountains NP, Bwindi Impenetrable NP and Virunga NP) a Man and Biosphere Reserve (Queen Elizabeth NP), and a Ramsar Site (Lake George and Kazinga Channel) Within this landscape is the Virunga NP, which is Africa's oldest park, gazetted in 1925, and is one of the most biodiverse landscapes in Africa. Kibale National Park is recorded as having the largest biomass of primates per hectare of any forest in Africa and the Virunga-Queen Elizabeth NP savannas support a large biomass of wild ungulates. The rich biodiversity is a result of diverse habitats which are determined by the elevation which ranges from 600-5,100 metres a.s.l. Margherita peak is Africa's third highest peak, at 5,100 metres is in the centre of a glacier, and below the ice and rock at the summit is alpine habitat that gives way to peat bogs and giant lobelia/giant Senecio habitat. Below this habitat type is giant heath, bamboo and montane forest which then give way to medium-altitude forest in wetter areas or savanna woodland and grassland in drier areas at lower altitudes, with rain forests, wetlands and swamps found in some areas. This biodiversity hotspot is home to more than 150 Albertine Rift endemic species. The landscape plays a crucial role in regulating regional water resources and supports the livelihood of millions of people living within its boundaries.

Coordination in the GVL take places at multiple levels, from the work of the United Nations, East African Community and other international and regional bodies, agreements and conventions, through to member states, private companies, third sector players and individuals. Of particular relevance is the 'Greater Virunga Transboundary Collaboration', or GVTC, and its associated secretariat. The GVTC, with its secretariat in Kigali, Rwanda, has a rich history rooted in conservation. It began as a grassroots effort in the late 1990s among field personnel from the DRC, Rwanda, and Uganda, aiming to protect the shared mountain gorilla population. This collaboration was formalized in 2004 through a Memorandum of Understanding, expanding its scope to the entire Greater Virunga Landscape. Continued commitment led to the signing of a treaty in 2015 at the operational level, making the GVTC an official interstate institution. Currently, the GVTC focuses on coordinating biodiversity conservation, facilitating joint planning and monitoring, promoting sustainable tourism, securing funding for GVL initiatives, sharing knowledge, and safeguarding the safety of wildlife and tourists.

The natural resources found in the GVL drive the three countries' national socio-economic development through agriculture, forestry, wildlife tourism, fisheries and provide many other ecosystem goods and services. However, the landscape is currently experiencing multiple pressures,

which include habitat loss, armed conflict in eastern DRC, poaching and illegal trade in wildlife and timber products, human-wildlife conflict, inadequate coordination at policy and site levels, climate change, extractive industries and infrastructure development, wildlife diseases, and invasive species, among others.



**Figure 1. Location of the Greater Virunga Landscape in Africa.**

Social and political instability further complicates conservation efforts. Recognising the urgency of addressing these challenges, Greater Virunga Transboundary Collaboration (GVTC) partnered with the governments of three Partner States, WWF, other civil society organisations, and development partners to develop a comprehensive strategy for the GVL. This GVL TSP builds upon previous efforts, acknowledging both successes and setbacks. It represents a renewed commitment to safeguarding the GVL's natural treasures while ensuring the well-being of its communities.

The TSP comes at a critical juncture. The GVL stands at a crossroads, with the potential for either irreversible degradation or a prosperous future for both nature and people. The TSP serves as a beacon of hope, outlining a collaborative and action-oriented path towards a thriving GVL, where conservation, community development, and transboundary cooperation go hand-in-hand.

## **1.2 Rationale of the GVL Transboundary Strategic Plan**

The rationale behind this TSP is multifaceted, driven by the urgent need to address converging threats and capitalise on emerging opportunities:

- **Urgency of Action:** The GVL faces numerous interconnected challenges. Habitat loss and fragmentation continue at alarming rates, while unsustainable resource use and climate change further pressure its delicate ecosystems. Social and political instability in the region adds complexity, hindering conservation efforts and jeopardising the well-being of local communities. Without immediate and unified action, the future of this irreplaceable natural treasure hangs in the balance.
- **Need for a Transboundary Approach:** The GVL transcends national borders, with its ecological processes, biodiversity, and communities interconnected across the DRC, Rwanda and Uganda. Fragmenting conservation efforts along political lines proves ineffective, as challenges like poaching and resource exploitation spill over boundaries. This Plan recognises the interconnectedness of the landscape and prioritises a collaborative, transboundary approach for sustainable management.
- **Harnessing Opportunity:** Despite the challenges, the GVL holds immense potential. Its rich biodiversity contributes to regional climate regulation, water security, and tourism, offering economic opportunities for local communities. The Plan seeks to tap into this potential by promoting sustainable development initiatives that empower communities and incentivise conservation.
- **Building on Progress:** The latest TSP does not reinvent the wheel. It builds upon the foundation laid by previous efforts, acknowledging past successes and learning from shortcomings. By incorporating feedback from stakeholders and utilising the latest knowledge, the plan strives to chart a more effective and inclusive path for the future of the GVL.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Strategy**

The GVL, spanning the DRC, Rwanda, and Uganda, faces intricate challenges that demand collective action. The GVL TSP charts a collaborative course for a thriving future over the next decade. It builds on previous strategies for the landscape including former GVTC-specific strategies up to 2023, though this TSP is wider than for GVTC alone. This journey prioritises:

- **Stakeholder Inclusivity:** The process values diverse perspectives and actively engages governments, NGOs, communities, and the private sector.
- **Joint Effort:** By working together, the impact will far exceed individual efforts.
- **Strategic Coordination:** The TSP strengthens coordination among GVTC and its partners, ensuring alignment for maximum impact, focused on wider GVL collaboration and action.

The TSP will be adaptive, with a mid-term review to address evolving issues. Robust monitoring will ensure progress tracking and accountability and attract resources aligned with its goals. This collaborative approach aims to secure a long-term commitment from stakeholders for lasting impact.

## **1.4 Strategy Development Process**

The GVL strategy development process comprised the following three key phases, which drew on a review of existing materials, consultation, and collaborative working between stakeholders:

- **Taking stock of the current landscape:** This phase delved into the GVL's complex realities, analysing its ecological health, socio-economic dynamics, governance structures, and existing conservation and development efforts. This incorporates a review of existing literature, grey and published and stakeholder consultations.
- **Identifying trends and challenges:** Key challenges like habitat loss, climate change, and socio-political complexities were identified through stakeholder consultations, field visits, and data analysis. A consultation phase took place over two months in late 2023.
- **Understanding opportunities:** This phase also sought to uncover and assess potential opportunities for positive change through consultations and specialist advice.

Building upon the situational analysis and consultations, a "Theory of Change" was developed that serves as a roadmap outlining how interventions can lead to lasting positive outcomes for the GVL and its communities. Measurable goals and objectives were established, focusing on biodiversity conservation, community well-being, sustainable development, and transboundary collaboration. Specific actions and approaches were identified to achieve the set goals, ensuring alignment with stakeholder priorities and available resources. The assumptions behind the expected changes were interrogated to ensure that the plan incorporated all necessary inputs, including the context and operating environment.

Outputs from the situational analysis and theory of change developed were combined [integrated] , resulting in a comprehensive and actionable Transboundary Strategic Plan and other supporting documentation. Through consultations and feedback mechanisms, the plan presented here was refined and validated by stakeholders, including a technical committee and two large-scale consultation meetings, ensuring inclusivity and ownership.

## **2. Situational Analysis**

### **2.1 *Landscape and Wildlife Resources Management***

The Greater Virunga Landscape (GVL) is located within the Albertine Rift, one of Africa's most biodiverse regions. Due to its high number of endemic species, the Albertine Rift is globally identified as important for conservation.

The GVL boasts an incredible diversity of habitats and wildlife, making it one of Africa's most species-rich protected areas. It is also a vital water source and provider of resources for the region's dense human population. Conservation efforts in the GVL have mainly been successful, with stable or increasing wildlife populations, especially within protected areas. However, challenges remain, including insecurity, poor political relations, resource pressures from surrounding communities, tensions between conservation and local needs, limited institutional capacity, climate change impacts, unsustainable financing, and threats from extractive industries. This strategy aims to build on conservation successes while addressing these challenges to ensure the long-term sustainability of the GVL.



## **2.2 *Natural Resource-based Socio-Economic Development***

The GVL is richly endowed with various natural resources that are drivers of national and regional economic development. These provide multiple socio-economic benefits, which range from direct and indirect use values to non-use values such as ecosystem services. Key among the natural resources, are forests and wildlife and other forms of biodiversity, which directly benefit people through sustainable uses such as timber production and tourism and food security through pollination. Biodiversity is also crucial for climate change resilience, providing jobs, and even fostering peace by combating criminal networks that are leading to illegal wildlife trade.

## **2.3 *International and Regional Context***

The East African Community (EAC), which includes DRC, Rwanda, and Uganda, aims for greater regional integration and a higher standard of living. Recognising the economic importance of wildlife, the EAC has prioritised its conservation. This is outlined in a wildlife conservation and management policy that promotes coordinated efforts, harmonised laws, community participation, including indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLC), and sustainable financing. This policy aligns with regional and international initiatives, including treaties like CITES, CMS and the Rio Conventions like the UNFCCC and UNCBD. While commitment levels vary, the EAC countries strive to implement these agreements and achieve sustainability goals together. There is a growing focus on working with IPLC's, supported by APAC in 2022 and the CBD Global Biodiversity Framework of 2022.

## **2.4 *Policy and Legal Issues***

The GVL is a transboundary landscape with vital natural resources supporting development in DRC, Rwanda, and Uganda. To conserve these resources, the countries recognise the need for a holistic, landscape-wide approach that promotes sustainable use such as wildlife-based tourism. This approach is supported by the EAC, which has a specific wildlife conservation policy. The GVTC Treaty is a critical enabler for effective wildlife conservation in the GVL.

Key policy issues the GVL TSP must address include:

- **Community Engagement:** Communities and indigenous peoples living with wildlife must benefit from conservation, be empowered and engaged in the planning and

management of natural resources and be supported in managing human-wildlife conflict.

- **Wildlife Law Enforcement:** Poaching and illegal trade remain major threats, requiring enhanced enforcement capacity, cross-border collaboration, awareness raising and intelligence sharing.
- **Private Sector Engagement:** Private investment across the region is needed, in key sectors like tourism, forestry and mining, amongst others, with clear regulations and frameworks to ensure both profit and sustainability.
- **Cross-Cutting Issues:** The strategy must tackle competing land uses, wildlife diseases, climate change impacts, capacity limitations, and the need for inclusivity in the conservation sector.

## **2.5 Governance and institutional arrangements**

Conservation efforts in the GVL have a long history, with protected areas established as far back as 1925. This history includes important partnerships between governments, NGOs, and communities. The Greater Virunga Transboundary Collaboration (GVTC), formalised by a Treaty, coordinates conservation efforts across the landscape. Key achievements include coordinated law enforcement efforts, landscape management, tourism development, and community conservation efforts. Effective strategy implementation requires a robust cross-border governance framework and broader engagement with stakeholders, including local communities and marginalised groups. Areas of common interest for collaboration include managing cross-border ecosystems, combating wildlife crime, addressing human-wildlife conflict, climate change adaptation, sustainable tourism, and equitable benefit sharing.

## **2.6 Biophysical Values**

The GVL is incredibly biodiverse and holds many endemic and threatened species. Biodiversity within protected areas is well-conserved, with some population increases seen in large mammals. However, unprotected ecosystems remain highly threatened by human pressures. Ongoing monitoring and conservation efforts are crucial, particularly as the region faces pressure from development, as are community based natural resources management practices and approaches. Special attention is needed for threatened species such as lions, elephants and Chimpanzees, migratory species, and those vulnerable to climate change, requiring the development of focused conservation plans. Mountain gorillas are restricted range species that only occurs in GVL and yet plays a very critical role in the tourism sector with huge potential to drive economic development in the region.

## 2.7 Threats Analysis

The GVL holds incredible biodiversity but faces serious threats. Habitat loss from agriculture and development, along with poaching and illegal wildlife trade, are major concerns. Diseases, especially zoonotic diseases represent an increasing threat, witnessed by the spread of Ebola and the coronavirus pandemic that caused COVID-19 and represent a threat not just for humans but for wildlife too. Climate change, invasive species, biopiracy, and diseases further threaten wildlife and the ecosystem. Conflict and insecurity pose ongoing challenges for conservation, though cross-border collaboration has made progress. To protect the GVL's biodiversity, it's crucial to address habitat loss, poaching, climate impacts, and resource pressures from the growing human population. Additionally, capacity building, sustainable financing, and private sector engagement are needed.

**Table 1. Main drivers of threats.**

Drivers	Links to Direct Threats
Poverty, lack of access to resources necessary for livelihood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of habitat to agricultural activities and human settlements.</li> <li>• Poaching.</li> <li>• Tree cutting and vegetation clearing.</li> <li>• Encroachment on protected areas and wetlands.</li> </ul>
Inadequate capacity for biodiversity-aware natural resources management planning and implementation at national and local levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack or inadequate biodiversity preservation knowledge, tools and skill for planning, manifested in ecosystem data and information inconsistencies.</li> <li>• Human-wildlife conflicts.</li> <li>• Pollution mainly from agrochemicals and erosion from unsustainable agriculture and mining practices.</li> </ul>
Illegal Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poaching.</li> <li>• Illegal fishing e.g. overharvesting/net size etc.</li> <li>• Tree cutting and vegetation clearing.</li> <li>• Encroachment on protected areas and wetlands.</li> </ul>
Development plans and priorities (medium and long term) do not adequately consider ecosystem services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ecosystem-disrupting infrastructures.</li> <li>• Ecosystem-disrupting land uses e.g. inappropriate wetland use.</li> <li>• Unsustainable mining practices.</li> <li>• Climate Change impacts on biodiversity.</li> </ul>
Insecure / inequitable resource concessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unsustainable practices in:</li> <li>• Fishing,</li> <li>• Mining,</li> <li>• Utilization of public forest products.</li> </ul>

## **2.8 Stakeholders, roles, responsibilities, and partnerships**

The Greater Virunga Transboundary Collaboration (GVTC) provides a framework for biodiversity conservation across the GVL.

The GVTC Treaty between DR Congo, Rwanda and Uganda promotes the conservation of GVL as a single landscape. The Treaty is based on four pillars of collaboration namely Landscape Management, Law Enforcement, Tourism Development and Community Conservation. The Treaty has a structured governance hierarchy segmented into Policy, Executive, Implementation and Technical Advisory levels. The treaty has eight objectives aimed at promotion and effective coordination of activities for conservation of sustainable use of biodiversity and enhancement of socio-cultural values within the GVL. However, the Treaty has never been ratified and this needs to be fast-tracked. To further promote collaboration within the GVL, some stakeholders have agreed MoUs with GVTC on specific areas of collaboration.

The GVTC framework involves multiple organisations like WWF, IGCP, and others. While each organisation has its strengths, greater synergy through experience-sharing could further enhance conservation efforts. Importantly, conservation initiatives must acknowledge the contributions and rights of indigenous peoples and local communities. Traditional knowledge systems can guide sustainable practices, and the unique challenges faced by groups like the Batwa must be addressed. Supporting community-led initiatives and incorporating cultural conservation approaches can foster long-term success.

## 3. Strategic Focus and Theory of Change of the Strategy

### 3.1 *Strategic Direction*

This ten-year Transboundary Strategic Plan 2024-2033 (TSP) navigates through a complex situation, aiming for a future where nature and people sustainably thrive in harmony. The Strategic direction outlines the plans that need to be implemented by GVTC and all its partners to progress towards achieving the GVL Vision and mission and fulfilling the overall Goal. The implementation of these interconnected strategies across key areas has the potential to realise a shared vision for the Greater Virunga Landscape: a place where communities and nature thrive in harmony.

- **GVL Vision:** Greater Virunga Landscape sustainably conserved for the benefit of people and nature.
- **GVL Mission:** To enhance the sustainable conservation of ecosystems and biodiversity and improve people's well-being through peaceful, strengthened transboundary collaboration in the Greater Virunga Landscape.
- **GVL Goal:** A resilient and sustainable ecosystem and quality of life of people in the Greater Virunga Landscape by 2033.

The journey to a thriving Greater Virunga Landscape rests on the following four key pillars:

- **Transboundary Collaboration and Governance:** Strengthen regional cooperation and governance mechanisms and ensure shared responsibility, information exchange, and joint actions to tackle challenges and maximise opportunities.
- **Community Advocacy and Empowerment:** To ensure indigenous peoples and local communities are the heart of the GVL and must thrive alongside conservation, with a recognised role in owning and delivering on conservation outcomes, to empower local communities through advocacy, skills development, and sustainable livelihood opportunities - ensuring their voices are heard and their well-being supported.
- **Enterprise, Investment, and Finance:** To ensure innovation in sustainable development and strategic investments. The TSP fosters an enabling environment to attract responsible business and green investment and leverage diverse financing mechanisms to ensure long-term sustainability.
- **Sustainable Natural Resources Management:** Safeguarding the ecological integrity of the GVL is paramount, including all sectors of all protected areas and biodiversity in and outside of protected areas. The TSP also advocates for effective natural resource

management, combating threats like poaching and habitat loss, and prioritising climate-resilient practices. Community based natural resource management approaches are critical as is the leadership of indigenous peoples and local communities.

A clear framework for implementation assigns roles and responsibilities, while robust monitoring and evaluation systems track progress and hold us accountable. The plan aims for financial sustainability through combined public, private, and philanthropic resources. This TSP is not just a blueprint; it's a rallying cry. Together, stakeholders across borders can transform the GVL, securing a brighter future for this irreplaceable natural treasure.

### 3.2 **Strategic Objectives and Outcomes**

The objectives and outcomes are all articulated with the strategic activities in the Action Plan, which is mainly informed by the feedback from the consultations workshop, as well as the Situational Analysis. GVTC and its Partners undertake to achieve the following strategic objectives, with their respective identified outcomes:

**Table 2. Strategic Objectives and Linked Strategic Outcomes**

Strategic Objectives:	Strategic Outcomes:
<p><b>SO-1</b> Strengthen transboundary collaboration and coordination for effective natural resource management in GVL.</p> <p><b>SO-2</b> Strengthen advocacy and community empowerment to improve participation in effective management of the GVL.</p> <p><b>SO-3.</b> Support the development and implementation of innovative finance and investments for effective conservation of GVL.</p> <p><b>SO-4</b> Improve governance and effective management of transboundary natural resources in the GVL.</p>	<p>Outcome 1.1: Functional transboundary coordination mechanisms for effective natural resource management in the GVL</p> <p>Outcome 1.2: Functional transboundary collaboration for effective natural resource management in GVL.</p> <p>Outcome 2.1: Communities in the GVL are empowered and actively participating in natural resource management.</p> <p>Outcome 3.1: Innovative investments and finance for effective conservation of GVL developed and functional.</p> <p>Outcome 3.2: Supported conservation-friendly enterprises in the GVL are operational and generating economic benefits.</p> <p>Outcome 4.1: Natural resources in the GVL are effectively managed.</p>

	Outcome 4.2: Governance of transboundary natural resources in the GVL improved.
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### **3.3 Theory of Change**

#### **3.3.1 Development Hypotheses**

If transboundary coordination and collaboration in Greater Virunga Landscape (GVL) are strengthened, then there will be functional coordination and collaboration mechanisms in GVL and then natural resources in GVL will be effectively managed, leading to a reduction in threats to ecosystem degradation and biodiversity loss in GVL and finally a resilient and sustainable ecosystem and quality of life of people in GVL.

If communities in the GVL are empowered to participate and benefit from natural resource management, then they will adopt behaviours that support ecosystem restoration and conservation, leading to a reduction in threats to ecosystem degradation and biodiversity loss and, finally, a resilient and sustainable ecosystem and the quality of life of people in GVL.

If communities in the GVL are empowered to participate and benefit from natural resource management, then they will adopt behaviours that support ecosystem restoration and conservation, leading to a reduction in threats to ecosystem degradation and biodiversity loss, then improved recovery of degraded ecosystem and finally, a resilient and sustainable ecosystem and the quality of life of people in GVL.

If communities in the GVL are empowered to participate and benefit from natural resource management, then there will be improved livelihoods and resilience of communities, leading to improved recovery of degraded ecosystems and finally, a resilient and sustainable ecosystem and quality of life of people.

Improved livelihoods and resilience of communities in GVL will lead to a reduction in threats to ecosystem degradation and biodiversity loss, improved recovery of degraded ecosystems and finally, a resilient and sustainable ecosystem and the quality of life of the people in GVL.

If innovative investment and financing conservation schemes are developed, then there will be functional innovative investment and financing conservation schemes and an improvement in the livelihood of communities in GVL, leading to reduced threats to ecosystem degradation and biodiversity loss and finally, a resilient and sustainable ecosystem and the quality of life of people in GVL.

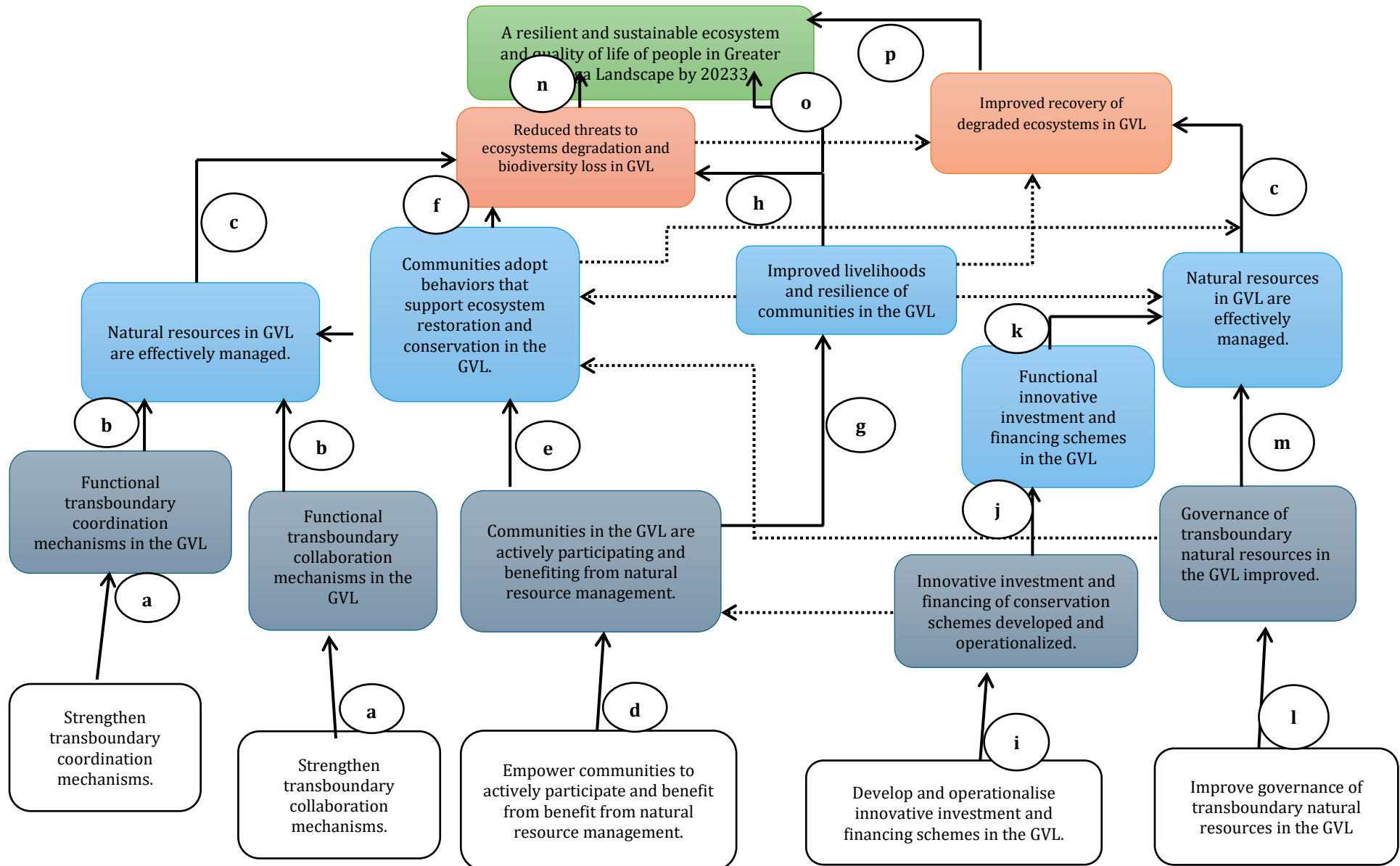
If innovative investment and financing conservation schemes are developed, then there will be functional, innovative investment and financing conservation schemes, and natural resources in GVL will be effectively managed, leading to the improved recovery of the

degraded ecosystem and, finally, a resilient and sustainable ecosystem, and the quality of life of people in GVL.

If governance of transboundary natural resources in GVL is improved, then there will be effective management of natural resources in GVL leading to improved recovery of the degraded ecosystem and, finally, a resilient and sustainable ecosystem, and the quality of life of the people in the GVL.

The following diagram details the theory of change, illustrating the flow.

### 3.3.2 GVL Theory of Change Diagram



### **3.3.3 Key Assumptions of the Theory of Change**

- a. All stakeholders are willing and participate in transboundary coordination and collaboration engagements.
- b. All stakeholders will provide the necessary support required to sustain the coordination and collaboration efforts.
- c. Effective natural resource management practices will be adopted and sustained across the three countries.
- d. Communities are willing to participate and engage in natural resources management.
- e. Community attitudes will positively change towards natural resources and biodiversity conservation.
- f. Pro-conservation practices adopted by the community will be sustained to significantly reduce reliance on the ecosystem to survive.
- g. Community participation will generate for them economic benefits that they will diversify.
- h. Communities will have access to sustainable alternative livelihood sources to reduce reliance on ecosystems for survival.
- i. The business community, private sector, and financial institutions will be willing and motivated to support the investment and financing of innovative conservation enterprises.
- j. The required amount of funding will be generated to sustain innovative conservation enterprises.
- k. The business community, private sector, and financial institutions will be willing to collaborate with all stakeholders in GVL to effectively manage natural resources through innovative investment and financing.
- l. The responsible stakeholders will have the minimum resources to effectively monitor and strengthen systems, structures and policies required to effectively manage resources.
- m. The effective monitoring and strengthening of systems, structures and policies required to effectively manage natural resources will be sustained by the relevant stakeholders.

### 3.4 GVL Transboundary Strategic Plan 2024-2033: Strategic Framework

Below is the entire strategic framework. It builds on the theory of change and defines strategic objectives, outcomes, and activities.

**Table 3. GVL TSP Strategic Framework**

Strategic Objective	Strategic Outcomes	Strategic Activities
<b>SO-1</b> Strengthen transboundary collaboration and coordination for effective natural resource management in GVL.	<b>Outcome 1.1:</b> Functional transboundary coordination mechanisms for effective natural resource management in the GVL.	Engage ministerial representatives to review the GVTC treaty
		Convene partner states to sign the treaty at head of state level
		Strengthen capacity of GVTC/ Secretariat to implement the treaty
		Advocate for the establishment of an “Elders Council” for dialogue and open discussion for peace keeping, prosperity and conservation promotion.
		Support environmental diplomacy and good governance to address transboundary conservation related conflicts, including diplomatic efforts in challenging locations
		Develop a coordination mechanism for GVTC partners to plan and implement a common vision, structured at both strategic and operational levels
	<b>Outcome 1.2:</b> Functional transboundary collaboration for effective natural resource management in GVL.	Develop protocols for information sharing
		Promote collaboration with EAC and beyond in the management of GVL
		Promote collaboration for research and monitoring
		Promote collaboration for tourism industry development including fully reinstating the gorilla tourism revenue sharing agreement, returns directed at park level and GVTC secretariat
<b>SO-2</b> Strengthen advocacy and community empowerment to improve participation in effective management of the GVL.	<b>Outcome 2.1:</b> Communities in the GVL are empowered and actively participating in natural resource management.	Conduct needs assessment for target community areas
		Establish training of trainers’ workshops in target community areas
		Promote platforms that enable articulation of community needs (Women Saving Group Associations, Interest Groups along economic products and livelihoods, regular consultative workshops, annual review workshop, Annual M & E workshops, engagement meetings with government and development partners)
		Advocate for the protection of community rights at grassroots level (What are these rights? E.g. rights to access resources, rights to be compensated, rights to alternative resources)
		Influence laws, policies and regulations that promote community based natural resource management (e.g. revenue sharing, benefit sharing, compensation law, community Based natural Resource management e.g. HUGOs, education for development)

Strategic Objective	Strategic Outcomes	Strategic Activities
		<p>Support community-based institutions and CSOs that enhance community participation (Cooperatives, CBOs)</p> <p>Promote linkages between communities and government programs (Poverty reduction, marginalised communities, land rights, PDM, Umuganda, Ubudehe, mass vaccination)</p> <p>Support transboundary learning and knowledge exchange programs between/among community groups</p> <p>Support relevant capacity development and leadership training</p> <p>Train and support implementation of social and environmental safeguards (Grievance redress, Free prior Informed Consent, Conducting EIA)</p>
<p><b>SO-3.</b> Support the development and implementation of innovative finance and investments for effective conservation of GVL</p>	<p>Outcome 3.1: Innovative investments and finance for effective conservation of GVL developed and functional.</p> <p>Outcome 3.2: Supported conservation-friendly enterprises in the GVL are operational and generating economic benefits.</p>	<p>Identify potential conservation friendly and socially acceptable business and investment opportunities and conduct a feasibility assessment and publish an investment prospectus for GVL</p> <p>Build Capacity for development and management innovative finance mechanisms</p> <p>Develop and promote marketable products for feasible investment options, including improving value chain and market</p> <p>Engage the private sector and other players to actualize feasible investment options</p> <p>Set up an endowment fund to finance the GVL</p> <p>Promote innovative financing mechanisms such as biodiversity credits, payments for Ecosystem Services, transboundary tourism (both in and outside protected areas), etc</p> <p>Develop capacity of communities to design and implement innovative and profitable enterprises,</p> <p>Promote measures to increase and improve community access to finance</p> <p>Support communities to scale-up nature-based enterprises</p> <p>Support linkages with service providers to improve access of communities to key services (e.g. Telecom, banking, insurance) to increase their enterprise development opportunities</p> <p>Explore and tap into national and international government sources/programmes to fund Community enterprises</p>
<p><b>SO-4</b> Improve governance and effective management of transboundary natural resources in the GVL</p>	<p>Outcome 4.1: Natural resources in the GVL are effectively managed</p>	<p>Promote use of conservation technologies for effective management of PAs (SMART, Earth Ranger, Satellite technologies)</p> <p>Develop integrated communication mechanisms between and among PAs</p> <p>Develop and promote implementation of SOPs for harmonised planning at site level</p> <p>Promote exchange of technical knowledge during GMP development</p> <p>Conduct management effectiveness assessments for PAs, as appropriate.</p>

Strategic Objective	Strategic Outcomes	Strategic Activities
		Conduct annual experience and lessons learned/seminars based on priority issues.
		Develop and implement Climate Change Adaptation/ Mitigation Strategies for the GVL.
		Remodel corridors for migratory species.
		Support restoration and conservation of priority corridors.
		Scale up effective/ promising conservation models in the GVL.
		Develop and promote sharing of annual conservation status and other relevant reports.
		Promote one-health approach to safeguard keystone species and communities in the GVL.
		Support and promote Human-Wildlife conflict management innovations.
	Outcome 4.2: Governance of transboundary natural resources in the GVL improved.	Formalise working frameworks for Chief Wardens/Wardens In-charge/Chef de site at transboundary level
		Support establishment and operationalisation of an environment and natural resources conflict management forum
		Promote GVL-wide and existing GVTC multi-sectoral/ multi-stakeholder platforms to address key conservation issues on a regular basis.
		Support and promote donor engagement fora to increase awareness about GVL

### 3.5 GVL Transboundary Strategic Plan 2024-2033: Outline Budget and Responsibilities

The total budget for ten years is estimated at USD \$100,000,000 (one hundred million dollars), broken down into strategic activities and budget lines in the provisional budget below. The overall coordination role is allocated to GVTC and associated government PAA's whilst each strategic objective is allocated to an overall lead execution organisation whose role will be to coordinate the various organisations involved. Not listed are CBOs, these will need to be added at the operational level based on the skillsets and capabilities of CBOs concerned locally.

**Table 4. GVL TSP Outline Budget and Responsible Parties(Ten Years)**

Strategic Outcome and Activity	Coordination	Execution	Budget Line Items for Ten Years 2024 - 2029										Total activity Budget for 10 Years	
			Capitalise GVL Endowment Fund	Specialist Brokerage and Consultancy Services	Travel, Fuel and Security	Personnel	Infrastructure, capital expenditure	Research, training and capacity building	Information Technology Equipment	Partnerships and Community Engagement	Workshops, Conferences and Brokerage	Office Supplies and Materials		
<b>Strategic Objective 1: Strengthen transboundary collaboration and coordination for effective natural resource management in GVL.</b>														
<b>Primary Coordination: GVTC; Primary Execution: PAA</b>														
Engage ministerial representatives to review the GVTC treaty	GVTC	WWF		10,000	100,000	10,000					40,000	5,000	165,000	
Convene partner states to sign the treaty at head of state level	GVTC	All Partners		20,000	15,000	20,000	10,000			30,000	30,000	30,000	10,000	165,000
Advocate for the establishment of an "Elders Council" for dialogue and open discussion for peace keeping, prosperity and conservation promotion.	GVTC	WWF		50,000	50,000	10,000	5,000	40,000	5,000			50,000	16,000	226,000

Strategic Outcome and Activity	Coordination	Execution	Budget Line Items for Ten Years 2024 - 2029										Total activity Budget for 10 Years
			Primary Coordination	Primary Execution	Capitalise GVL Endowment Fund	Specialist Brokerage and Consultancy Services	Travel, Fuel and Security	Personnel	Infrastructure, capital expenditure	Research, training and capacity building	Information Technology Equipment	Partnerships and Community Engagement	
Support environmental diplomacy and good governance to address transboundary conservation related conflicts, including diplomatic efforts in challenging locations	GVTC	WWF, IUCN		250,000	100,000	100,000	2,500,000	500,000	10,000	150,000	200,000	50,000	3,860,000
Develop a coordination mechanism for GVTC partners to plan and implement a common vision, structured at both strategic and operational levels	GVTC	WWF		50,000	100,000	400,000	20,000	30,000	25,000	250,000	50,000	50,000	975,000
Develop protocols for information sharing	GVTC	All Partners		20,000	10,000	20,000	10,000	10,000	40,000	60,000	20,000	4,000	194,000
Promote collaboration with EAC and beyond in the management of GVL	GVTC	IUCN			50,000	20,000		20,000		20,000	50,000	5,000	165,000
Promote collaboration for research and monitoring	GVTC	WCS, IGCP, GD		50,000	20,000	20,000		100,000	10,000	50,000	20,000	5,000	275,000
Promote collaboration for tourism industry development including fully reinstating the gorilla tourism revenue sharing agreement,	GVTC	IGCP, WWF		50,000	100,000	50,000	100,000	50,000	10,000	60,000	30,000	10,000	460,000

Strategic Outcome and Activity	Coordination	Execution	Budget Line Items for Ten Years 2024 - 2029										Total activity Budget for 10 Years	
			Primary Coordination	Primary Execution	Capitalise GVL Endowment Fund	Specialist Brokerage and Consultancy Services	Travel, Fuel and Security	Personnel	Infrastructure, capital expenditure	Research, training and capacity building	Information Technology Equipment	Partnerships and Community Engagement		Workshops, Conferences and Brokerage
returns directed at park level and GVTC secretariat														
Promote collaboration and Implementation of One Health programmes	GVTC	GD		60,000	800,000	30,000	250,000	500,000	90,000	300,000	50,000	30,000	2,110,000	
Strengthen inter-agency cooperation in joint protection of natural resource in the GVL	GVTC	IGCP		50,000	500,000	100,000			50,000	500,000	50,000	5,000	1,255,000	
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>610,000</b>	<b>1,845,000</b>	<b>780,000</b>	<b>2,895,000</b>	<b>1,250,000</b>	<b>270,000</b>	<b>1,460,000</b>	<b>550,000</b>	<b>190,000</b>	<b>9,850,000</b>	
<b>Strategic Objective 2: Strengthen advocacy and community empowerment to improve participation in effective management of the GVL.</b>														
<b>Primary Coordination: GVTC; Primary Execution: WWF</b>														
Conduct needs assessment for target community areas	GVTC	WWF, AWF, CARE, IGCP, TECHNOSERVE			150,000	60,000	100,000	90,000	90,000	500,000	400,500	50,000	1,440,500	
Establish training of trainers workshops in target community areas	GVTC	WWF, AWF, CARE, IGCP, TECHNOSERVE			150,000	60,000	100,000	90,000	90,000	600,000	400,500	20,000	1,510,500	

Strategic Outcome and Activity	Coordination	Execution	Budget Line Items for Ten Years 2024 - 2029										Total activity Budget for 10 Years	
			Primary Coordination	Primary Execution	Capitalise GVL Endowment Fund	Specialist Brokerage and Consultancy Services	Travel, Fuel and Security	Personnel	Infrastructure, capital expenditure	Research, training and capacity building	Information Technology Equipment	Partnerships and Community Engagement		Workshops, Conferences and Brokerage
Promote platforms that enable articulation of community needs (Women Saving Group Associations, Interest Groups along economic products and livelihoods, regular consultative workshops, annual review workshop, Annual M & E workshops, engagement meetings with government and development partners)	GVTC	WCS, WWF, IGCP,CTPH			150,000	50,000			250,000	50,000	150,000	500,000	20,000	1,170,000
Advocate for the protection of community rights at grassroots level (What are these rights? E.g. rights to access resources, rights to be compensated, rights to alternative resources)	GVTC	CARE, WWF, IUCN, IGCP, ARCOS			25,000	100,000			250,000	50,000	500,000	100,000	20,000	1,045,000

Strategic Outcome and Activity	Coordination	Execution	Budget Line Items for Ten Years 2024 - 2029										Total activity Budget for 10 Years
			Primary Coordination	Primary Execution	Capitalise GVL Endowment Fund	Specialist Brokerage and Consultancy Services	Travel, Fuel and Security	Personnel	Infrastructure, capital expenditure	Research, training and capacity building	Information Technology Equipment	Partnerships and Community Engagement	
Influence laws, policies and regulations that promote community based natural resource management (e.g. revenue sharing, benefit sharing, compensation law, community Based natural Resource management e.g. HUGOs, education for development)	GVTC	CARE, WWF, IUCN, IGCP, ARCOS		150,000	100,000	100,000	50,000	200,000	90,000	300,000	100,000	30,000	1,120,000
Support community-based institutions and CSOs that enhance community participation (Cooperatives, CBOs)	GVTC	WWF, IGCP, AWF			150,000	150,000	150,000	90,000	90,000	500,000	90,000	30,000	1,250,000
Promote linkages between communities and government programs (poverty reduction, marginalised communities, land rights, PDM, Umuganda, Ubudehe, mass vaccination)	GVTC	WWF, ARCOS, AWF, IGCP		30,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	150,000	50,000	150,000	80,000	20,000	630,000

Strategic Outcome and Activity	Coordination	Execution	Budget Line Items for Ten Years 2024 - 2029										Total activity Budget for 10 Years
			Primary Coordination	Primary Execution	Capitalise GVL Endowment Fund	Specialist Brokerage and Consultancy Services	Travel, Fuel and Security	Personnel	Infrastructure, capital expenditure	Research, training and capacity building	Information Technology Equipment	Partnerships and Community Engagement	
Support transboundary learning and knowledge exchange programs between/among community groups	GVTC	CARE, IUCN, JGI, IGCP, ARCOS, DFGFI, CTPH, Gorilla Doctors.		50,000	250,000	300,000	50,000	60,000	50,000	50,000	120,000	10,000	940,000
Support relevant capacity development and leadership training	GVTC	CARE, WWF, IGCP, AWF, Academic Institutions, ICCN,RBD, UWA		50,000	100,000	180,000	10,000	250,000	5,000	150,000	50,000	15,000	810,000
Train and support implementation of social and environmental safeguards (Grievance redress, Free prior Informed Consent, Conducting EIA)	GVTC	WWF, IGCP, AWF, WCS, ARCOS		100,000	100,000	150,000		50,000	20,000	150,000	100,000	10,000	680,000
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>380,000</b>	<b>1,225,000</b>	<b>1,200,000</b>	<b>510,000</b>	<b>1,480,000</b>	<b>585,000</b>	<b>3,050,000</b>	<b>1,941,000</b>	<b>225,000</b>	<b>10,596,000</b>
<b>Strategic Objective 3: Support the development and implementation of innovative finance and investments for effective conservation of GVL</b>													
<b>Primary Coordination: GVTC; Primary Execution: WWF</b>													

Strategic Outcome and Activity	Coordination	Execution	Budget Line Items for Ten Years 2024 - 2029										Total activity Budget for 10 Years
			Primary Coordination	Primary Execution	Capitalise GVL Endowment Fund	Specialist Brokerage and Consultancy Services	Travel, Fuel and Security	Personnel	Infrastructure, capital expenditure	Research, training and capacity building	Information Technology Equipment	Partnerships and Community Engagement	
Identify potential conservation friendly and socially acceptable business and investment opportunities and conduct a feasibility assessment and publish an investment prospectus for GVL	GVTC	WWF, AWF, CARE, IGCP, TECHNOSERVE, ASG-ARCOS			150,000	60,000	500,000	250,000	100,000	500,000	100,000	10,000	1,670,000
Build Capacity for development and management innovative finance mechanisms	GVTC	WWF, AWF, CARE, IGCP, TECHNOSERVE, ACORSE FOUNDATION		50,000	150,000	100,000	100,000	500,000	90,000	200,000	100,000	5,000	1,295,000
Develop and promote marketable products for feasible investment options, including improving value chain and market	GVTC	WCS, WWF, AWF, WWF, Private Sector (Chambers of Tourism).			200,000	100,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	50,000	5,000	2,355,000

Strategic Outcome and Activity	Coordination	Execution	Budget Line Items for Ten Years 2024 - 2029										Total activity Budget for 10 Years
			Primary Coordination	Primary Execution	Capitalise GVL Endowment Fund	Specialist Brokerage and Consultancy Services	Travel, Fuel and Security	Personnel	Infrastructure, capital expenditure	Research, training and capacity building	Information Technology Equipment	Partnerships and Community Engagement	
Engage the private sector and other players to actualize feasible investment options	GVTC	WCS, AWF, WWF, Local partners (ITFC,CTPH).		100,000	60,000	50,000	500,000	150,000	250,000	90,000	50,000	5,000	1,255,000
Set up an endowment fund to finance the GVL	GVTC	WCS, WWF, Private Sector. GVTC, Trust Funds (where applicable), AWF.	5,000,000	50,000	60,000	100,000		50,000	50,000	200,000	100,000	5,000	5,615,000
Promote innovative financing mechanisms such as biodiversity credits, payments for Ecosystem Services, transboundary tourism (both in and outside protected areas), etc	GVTC	WCS, WWF, International, TECHNOSERVE, GVTC, AWF, Birdlife		100,000	250,000	200,000	500,000	500,000	250,000	500,000	100,000	5,000	2,405,000

Strategic Outcome and Activity	Coordination	Execution	Budget Line Items for Ten Years 2024 - 2029										Total activity Budget for 10 Years
			Primary Coordination	Primary Execution	Capitalise GVL Endowment Fund	Specialist Brokerage and Consultancy Services	Travel, Fuel and Security	Personnel	Infrastructure, capital expenditure	Research, training and capacity building	Information Technology Equipment	Partnerships and Community Engagement	
Develop capacity of communities to design and implement innovative and profitable enterprises,	GVTC	TECHNSERVE, WWF, WCS, ICGP, CARE, Birdlife International, JGI			400,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	90,000	300,000	50,000	5,000	2,345,000
Promote measures to increase and improve community access to finance	GVTC	TECHNSERVE, WWF, JGI, WCS, ICGP, CARE, Birdlife International.		150,000	100,000	300,000		250,000	15,000	500,000	100,000	5,000	1,420,000
Support communities to scale-up nature-based enterprises	GVTC	TECHNSERVE, WWF, JGI, WCS, ICGP, CARE, Birdlife International.		100,000	100,000	250,000		150,000	100,000	500,000	100,000	5,000	1,305,000

Strategic Outcome and Activity	Coordination	Execution	Budget Line Items for Ten Years 2024 - 2029										Total activity Budget for 10 Years
			Primary Coordination	Primary Execution	Capitalise GVL Endowment Fund	Specialist Brokerage and Consultancy Services	Travel, Fuel and Security	Personnel	Infrastructure, capital expenditure	Research, training and capacity building	Information Technology Equipment	Partnerships and Community Engagement	
Support linkages with service providers to improve access of communities to key services (e.g. Telecom, banking, insurance) to increase their enterprise development opportunities	GVTC	WWF, AWF, CARE, IGCP, TECHNOSERVE, WCS.		250,000	200,000	250,000	500,000	200,000	100,000	150,000	150,000	5,000	1,805,000
Explore and tap into national and international government sources/programmes to fund community enterprises	GVTC	WWF, IGCP			150,000	150,000	150,000	90,000	90,000	300,000	90,000	5,000	1,025,000
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>			<b>5,000,000</b>	<b>800,000</b>	<b>1,670,000</b>	<b>1,910,000</b>	<b>3,100,000</b>	<b>3,050,000</b>	<b>1,545,000</b>	<b>3,440,000</b>	<b>900,000</b>	<b>55,000</b>	<b>21,470,000</b>
<b>Strategic Objective 4: Improve governance and effective management of transboundary natural resources in the GVL</b>													
<b>Primary Coordination: GVTC; Primary Execution: PAA</b>													
Promote use of conservation technologies for effective management of PAs (SMART, Earth Ranger, Satellite technologies)	GVTC	WCS, WWF, IGCP, JGI		200,000	250,000	250,000	3,000,000	200,000	250,000	500,000	100,000	5,000	4,755,000
Develop integrated communication mechanisms between and among PAs	GVTC	WWF, IGCP, WCS			100,000	1,000,000	50,000	100,000	100,000	500,000	100,000	5,000	1,955,000

Strategic Outcome and Activity	Coordination	Execution	Budget Line Items for Ten Years 2024 - 2029										Total activity Budget for 10 Years	
			Primary Coordination	Primary Execution	Capitalise GVL Endowment Fund	Specialist Brokerage and Consultancy Services	Travel, Fuel and Security	Personnel	Infrastructure, capital expenditure	Research, training and capacity building	Information Technology Equipment	Partnerships and Community Engagement		Workshops, Conferences and Brokerage
Facilitate review, development and promotion of SOPs for harmonised planning at site level	GVTC	WWF, IGCP, WCS		75,000	150,000	150,000			50,000	50,000	100,000	50,000	5,000	630,000
Promote exchange of technical knowledge during GMP development	GVTC	WWF, GVTC, IGCP, WCS			250,000	250,000	500,000	150,000	50,000	150,000	40,000	5,000	1,395,000	
Conduct management effectiveness assessments for PAs, as appropriate.	GVTC	WWF, GVTC, IGCP, WCS, PAAs.		-	150,000	150,000		150,000		120,000	40,000	5,000	615,000	
Conduct annual experience and lessons learned/seminars based on priority issues.	GVTC	IGCP, WWF		75,000	150,000	150,000		250,000	50,000	150,000	50,000	5,000	880,000	
Facilitate the review, development and implementation of climate change adaptation/ Mitigation strategies for the GVL.	GVTC	WWF			150,000	150,000	30,000	500,000	90,000	500,000	50,000	5,000	1,475,000	
Remodel corridors for migratory species.	GVTC	WCS, WWF, IGCP			150,000	250,000	2,000,000	250,000	45,000	2,000,000	100,000	5,000	4,800,000	

Strategic Outcome and Activity	Coordination	Execution	Budget Line Items for Ten Years 2024 - 2029										Total activity Budget for 10 Years
			Primary Coordination	Primary Execution	Capitalise GVL Endowment Fund	Specialist Brokerage and Consultancy Services	Travel, Fuel and Security	Personnel	Infrastructure, capital expenditure	Research, training and capacity building	Information Technology Equipment	Partnerships and Community Engagement	
Support restoration and conservation of priority corridors.	GVTC	WWF, JGI, IGCP, WCS, IUCN, AWF		110,000	200,000	250,000	5,000,000	250,000	40,000	2,000,000	50,000	5,000	7,905,000
Scale up effective/promising conservation models in the GVL.	GVTC	All Partners			150,000	250,000	3,000,000	100,000	5,000	2,000,000	20,000	5,000	5,530,000
Facilitate, develop and promote sharing of annual conservation status and other relevant reports.	GVTC	PAAs.		50,000	100,000	100,000		10,000		120,000	50,000	5,000	435,000
Promote one-health approach to safeguard keystone species and communities in the GVL.	WWF	GVTC, WCS, IGCP, GD			500,000	500,000	5,000,000	500,000	100,000	5,000,000	50,000	5,000	11,655,000
Support and promote Human-Wildlife conflict management innovations.	WWF	IGCP, WCS, AWF, JGI			150,000	250,000	2,000,000	250,000	150,000	2,000,000	50,000	5,000	4,855,000
Formalise working frameworks for Chief Wardens/Warden's In-charge/Chef de site at transboundary level	GVTC	WWF, IGCP			100,000	1,000,000		50,000		50,000	500,000	5,000	1,705,000
Support establishment and operationalisation of an environment and natural resources conflict management forum	GVTC	WCS, IGCP, WWF, IUCN		150,000	250,000	1,000,000	100,000	150,000	50,000	500,000	100,000	5,000	2,305,000

Strategic Outcome and Activity	Coordination	Execution	Budget Line Items for Ten Years 2024 - 2029										Total activity Budget for 10 Years		
			Primary Coordination	Primary Execution	Capitalise GVL Endowment Fund	Specialist Brokerage and Consultancy Services	Travel, Fuel and Security	Personnel	Infrastructure, capital expenditure	Research, training and capacity building	Information Technology Equipment	Partnerships and Community Engagement		Workshops, Conferences and Brokerage	Office Supplies and Materials
Promote GVL-wide and existing GVTVC multi-sectoral/multi-stakeholder platforms to address key conservation issues on a regular basis.	GVTVC	WCS, IGCP, WWF, IUCN				250,000	200,000						100,000	5,000	555,000
Facilitate transboundary meetings with local governments across the border for best practices.	GVTVC	IGCP		100,000		300,000							100,000	4,000	504,000
Support and promote donor engagement fora to increase awareness about GVL	GVTVC	IUCN, WWF		90,000		100,000			100,000			60,000	40,000	5,000	395,000
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>850,000</b>		<b>3,450,000</b>	<b>5,900,000</b>	<b>20,680,000</b>	<b>3,060,000</b>	<b>980,000</b>	<b>15,750,000</b>	<b>1,590,000</b>	<b>89,000</b>	<b>52,349,000</b>	
<b>Management, Monitoring and Oversight (Lead execution: GVTVC Secretariat)</b>															
Management and Personnel Costs (Secretariat)	GVTVC					2,500,000	500,000			150,000				5,000	3,155,000
Board and oversight meetings (Board, Technical Committees, Stakeholders Forum)	GVTVC					100,000	50,000		25,000	50,000			100,000		325,000
Technical Assistance support	GVTVC	WWF		50,000		20,000	250,000		250,000	100,000	20,000			10,000	700,000
Internal Knowledge Management, Evaluation and Learning	GVTVC			50,000		500,000	250,000		50,000	50,000	50,000				950,000

Strategic Outcome and Activity	Coordination	Execution	Budget Line Items for Ten Years 2024 - 2029										Total activity Budget for 10 Years	
			Primary Coordination	Primary Execution	Capitalise GVL Endowment Fund	Specialist Brokerage and Consultancy Services	Travel, Fuel and Security	Personnel	Infrastructure, capital expenditure	Research, training and capacity building	Information Technology Equipment	Partnerships and Community Engagement		Workshops, Conferences and Brokerage
External Communication and Public Engagement	GVTC			25,000	75,000				30,000	10,000	50,000	10,000	60,000	260,000
Mid Term Review (external)	GVTC			50,000	20,000	50,000						50,000	2,000	172,000
Terminal Evaluation (external)	GVTC			50,000	20,000	50,000						50,000	3,000	173,000
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>225,000</b>	<b>735,000</b>	<b>3,150,000</b>	<b>500,000</b>	<b>355,000</b>	<b>360,000</b>	<b>120,000</b>	<b>210,000</b>	<b>80,000</b>	<b>5,735,000</b>	
<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>			<b>2,865,000</b>	<b>8,925,000</b>	<b>12,940,000</b>	<b>27,685,000</b>	<b>9,195,000</b>	<b>3,740,000</b>	<b>23,820,000</b>	<b>5,191,000</b>	<b>639,000</b>	<b>4,208,000</b>	<b>100,000,000</b>	

## **4. Implementation of the Transboundary Strategic Plan**

### **4.1 *Approach to Implementation of the Plan***

This Greater Virunga Landscape Transboundary Strategic Plan 2024-2033 features several governance and coordination elements. A Transboundary Steering Committee comprised of representatives from the DRC, Rwanda, and Uganda will guide the TSP's overall implementation. Each country will form a National Working Group to coordinate actions at the national level, and thematic Technical Working Groups will ensure cross-border collaboration and knowledge sharing on pillars like conservation and livelihoods. A dedicated Joint Secretariat will support these committees and facilitate communication, knowledge management, and progress monitoring.

Community engagement and empowerment strategies include outreach programs to raise awareness, community-based conservation initiatives for participation in activities like patrolling, and sustainable livelihood development training. Benefit-sharing mechanisms will ensure communities equitably reap the rewards of conservation and sustainable development.

Resource mobilisation and financing will rely on attracting diverse funding sources, promoting responsible investment aligned with TSP goals, and ensuring transparency in financial management for accountability.

Additional considerations include capacity building through training for government agencies, communities, and stakeholders, conflict resolution mechanisms for peaceful collaboration, and the integration of climate change adaptation strategies throughout the TSP to build resilience in the GVL. Effective implementation of these arrangements will pave the way for the plan to achieve its ambitious goals for biodiversity conservation, improved community well-being, and sustainable development in the region.

### **4.2 *Governance and Institutional Arrangements***

This TSP promotes a collaborative, inclusive, and accountable approach. Recognising the GVL's transboundary nature, success hinges on joint action by the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, and Uganda. While a central coordination body exists (GVTC), the plan allows for decentralised implementation, empowering local and national authorities. All stakeholders, including local communities, indigenous groups, civil society, and the private sector, will be actively involved in decision-making. Transparency and accountability will be

ensured through robust monitoring and evaluation to track progress and hold all parties responsible.

A Greater Virunga Landscape Steering Committee, comprised of representatives from each country, will provide overall strategic direction. Thematic Technical Working Groups will offer expertise in specific areas, and each partner country will have a National Coordination Mechanism. Local Implementation Committees will ensure on-the-ground community involvement.

Challenges like political instability, resource mobilisation and ensuring meaningful community engagement must be navigated. However, by adhering to the principles of collaboration, decentralisation, stakeholder engagement, and transparency, this plan has the potential to bring transformative change to the GVL.

### **4.3 Critical Success Factors**

The success of the Greater Virunga Landscape Transboundary Strategic Plan depends on several key elements. Foremost is strong, inclusive, transboundary collaboration. This requires sustained political will from Rwanda, Uganda, and DRC for joint implementation, decision-making, and equitable resource allocation. Harmonised policies and laws across borders are crucial to combat challenges like illegal wildlife trade. Transparent and regular information sharing between stakeholders is equally important.

Empowering local communities is essential. They must have meaningful participation in decision-making and conservation efforts, and GVTC must show cultural sensitivity and inclusivity of diverse needs, values, and traditional knowledge. Effective human-wildlife conflict resolution mechanisms will ensure peaceful coexistence between communities and wildlife while providing alternative, sustainable livelihoods that will reduce reliance on unsustainable practices.

Resource mobilisation and investment also play a vital role. Diversifying funding streams through public, private, and philanthropic sources will ensure long-term financial sustainability. Attracting responsible businesses and green investments requires an enabling environment that aligns with conservation and community development goals. Transparent and accountable financial management will attract further investment, functioning market access, enhanced value-addition and effective benefit-sharing mechanisms ensure communities and partner countries equitably share the rewards.

Evidence-based decision-making informed by scientific data and local knowledge is key for effective natural resource management. Strengthening law enforcement and cross-border cooperation to combat poaching and illegal wildlife trade is imperative. Sustainable land-use

practices like climate-resilient agriculture are vital, and regular monitoring and evaluation will ensure progress, adaptability, and accountability.

Additional factors include strong leadership and capacity building at all levels for stakeholders, adaptive management strategies in response to changing circumstances, effective communication, and outreach to raise awareness, and regular monitoring and evaluation to ensure the plan's effectiveness and inform necessary adjustments.

#### **4.4 *Partnerships for Delivery***

The journey towards a thriving Greater Virunga requires a collaborative effort. Success depends on strong partnerships with national and local governments across the three countries, ensuring transboundary collaboration, policy harmonisation, and effective law enforcement. Close collaboration with the East Africa Community (EAC) is vital for efficient coordination, advocacy, governance, and resource mobilisation across the region.

To ensure that local voices are heard, it's essential to work with community-based organisations, empowering them to take leadership in conservation and development initiatives. Civil society and NGOs bring valuable expertise and resources to strengthen implementation and capacity building.

The private sector must also be engaged with responsible businesses and investors, driving sustainable economic development aligned with conservation goals. Research institutions and academia are key partners, providing scientific knowledge to inform effective decision-making.

Finally, development partners and philanthropists play a crucial role by providing financial support and technical assistance to ensure the plan's long-term sustainability. These diverse partnerships require transparent communication, joint planning, and a shared commitment to monitoring and evaluation to achieve success.

#### **4.5 *Rights and Constituents, Partners, and Donors.***

This plan embraces respect for the rights of all individuals and communities living within the Greater Virunga Landscape. It recognises the unique cultural heritage, land tenure systems, and aspirations of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and other stakeholders. Meaningful participation and equitable benefit-sharing are core principles.

Transparency and accountability in all aspects of work are non-negotiable. Through respect for rights, meaningful partnerships, transparency, and accountability, this plan aims to create a future where the GVL thrives, its communities prosper, and its irreplaceable biodiversity is protected for future generations.

## **5. Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL)**

A Monitoring and Evaluation Framework with SMART indicators will track progress on each pillar's goals. Regular monitoring, reporting, and participatory monitoring involving local communities will inform decision-making and ensure their perspectives are considered.

The following describes the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) framework essential to the TSP. This should be developed in an operational context, based on actual resources available and detailed the financial and resource capabilities that each partner organisations able to commit on an operational level. The framework details the structure and a detailed tabular version of this framework should be developed at an operational level, linked back to strategic objectives and the overall Theory of Change.

Guiding principles of transparency, accountability, inclusivity, adaptability, and evidence-based decision-making will shape the process. Both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods will be used, tailored to fit each pillar and goal. Existing monitoring efforts will be leveraged, and local knowledge will be incorporated through community-based monitoring.

SMART indicators, aligned with each pillar and goal, will cover ecological, social, and economic aspects while remaining culturally appropriate and feasible to collect. Data analysis will occur regularly to assess progress, identify gaps, and inform strategy adaptations. Participatory analysis methods will ensure stakeholder perspectives are included.

Findings will be shared transparently through progress reports, workshops, and online platforms, engaging stakeholders in understanding the results and implications. Evaluation findings will drive strategy adjustments, improve interventions, and enhance the TSP's overall effectiveness.

Specific pillar-focused MEL strategies will track progress in transboundary collaboration, information sharing, governance effectiveness, and diverse stakeholder participation. Community advocacy and empowerment efforts will be assessed through well-being changes, livelihood opportunities, participation, and capacity-building effectiveness.

Additional considerations include capacity building for stakeholders in MEL processes, ensuring systems remain resource-efficient and adaptable, and fostering a culture of learning that prioritises critical reflection and knowledge sharing. By implementing a robust MEL framework aligned with the TSP's pillars and goals, the Greater Virunga Landscape can ensure progress towards a thriving future for both nature and people.

## 5.1 *Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework*

Overall Goal	Goal level Indicators	Goal level Targets
<p>A resilient and sustainable ecosystem and quality of life of people in the Greater Virunga Landscape by 2033.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Percentage change in the population of selected flagship species.</li> <li>● Percentage change in species richness</li> <li>● Percentage change in vegetation cover</li> <li>● Change in wellbeing Index.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● By 2033, GVL-wide biodiversity conservation efforts will have resulted in thriving keystone and flagship species populations, restored ecosystems, and heightened awareness of biodiversity values. roles.</li> <li>● By 2033, a robust funding and enterprise model will be established, featuring conservation-friendly businesses; innovative investments and enterprise mechanisms supporting sustainable resource use.</li> <li>● By 2033, communities will be empowered, actively involved in natural resource management, and fully aware of their rights and resource use.</li> </ul>

Strategic Objective	Outcome	Indicators	Targets
<p><b>SO1:</b> Strengthen transboundary collaboration and coordination for effective natural resource management in the GVL.</p>	<p>Outcome 1.1: Functional transboundary coordination mechanisms for effective natural resource management in the GVL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of formal agreements on transboundary conservation initiatives.</li> <li>• Number of joint actions/operations between partner states and other stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By 2029, the transboundary conservation coordination mechanisms are developed, adopted and functional in the GVL.</li> </ul>
	<p>Outcome 1.2: Functional transboundary collaboration for effective natural resource management in GVL.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of Member States that have ratified the treaty at Head of State level.</li> <li>• Number of functional transboundary information sharing platforms</li> <li>• Proportion of interviewed GVL stakeholders reporting an improvement in collaboration.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By 2029, the treaty is ratified by the members States.</li> <li>• By 2033, an effective collaboration framework will be functional.</li> </ul>
<p><b>SO2:</b> Community Advocacy and Empowerment.</p>	<p>Outcome 2.1: Communities in the GVL are empowered and actively participating in natural resource management.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of community groups actively engaged in conservation decision-making processes.</li> <li>• Number of community-led conservation-friendly initiatives implemented.</li> <li>• Proportion of Households satisfied with their level of involvement in Natural Resource Management</li> <li>• Number of policies and / or key decisions positively influenced by community groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By 2033, communities will be empowered and 60% of households are actively involved in natural resource management.</li> <li>• By 2033, communities will be fully aware of their rights and roles in natural resource management.</li> </ul>

Strategic Objective	Outcome	Indicators	Targets
<p><b>SO3:</b> Support the development and implementation of innovative finance and investments for effective conservation of GVL.</p>	<p>Outcome 3.1: Innovative investments and finance for effective conservation of GVL developed and functional.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of innovative investment and financing mechanisms developed and/or identified.</li> <li>• Number of innovative investment and financing mechanisms financing conservation.</li> <li>• Amount of funding raised from diverse sources for conservation and sustainable development in the GVL.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By 2028, innovative investments will have been identified and functional to raise at least USD \$30 million.</li> <li>• 6 new innovative enterprises developed and functional.</li> </ul>
	<p>Outcome 3.2: Supported conservation-friendly enterprises in the GVL are operational and generating economic benefits.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proportion of households with improved economic benefits derived from conservation friendly enterprises.</li> <li>• Percentage change in incidences of human wildlife conflict.</li> <li>• Number of special interest persons (women, youth and PWDs) involved in the implementation of the enterprises.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By 2033, at least 60% of households have improved economic benefits.</li> <li>• By 2026, conservation-friendly enterprises will have been developed and available to the community.</li> <li>• By 2033 at least 5 new enterprise mechanisms established and functional</li> </ul>
<p><b>SO4:</b> Improve governance and effective management of transboundary natural resources in the GVL.</p>	<p>Outcome 4.1: Natural resources in GVL are effectively managed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage change in incidences of poaching, unlawful possession and trafficking of wildlife and wildlife products of flagship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By 2033, unsustainable use of biodiversity will have been significantly reduced.</li> </ul>

Strategic Objective	Outcome	Indicators	Targets
		<p>species. (Elephants, Pangolins, Hippos, Gorillas, Chimps).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of wildlife trafficking cases successfully prosecuted.</li> <li>• Degraded areas in hectares restored.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By 2033, degraded ecosystems will have been restored.</li> </ul>
	<p>Outcome 4.2: Governance of transboundary natural resources in the GVL improved.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transboundary frameworks for Natural Resource Managers established and operational.</li> <li>• A Framework for conflict management in place and functional.</li> <li>• Number of land use and zoning plans developed and/or reviewed and implemented.</li> <li>• Number of key conservation issues addressed through a multi-sectoral and/or multi-stakeholder approach.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By 2033, at least 6 transboundary frameworks for natural resources management established.</li> <li>• By 2033, 1 framework for conflict management</li> <li>• Increase in participation of local communities measured by no. of CBOs and NGOs engaged.</li> </ul>

## **5.2 Strategic Plan Review and Evaluation**

The complexity of the Greater Virunga Landscape (GVL) and the ambitious goals of the ten-year Transboundary Strategic Plan (TSP) demand a robust and ongoing review and evaluation process. Annual reviews will focus on progress towards the overall Goal and each pillar's SMART Objectives using a mix of quantitative data, stakeholder feedback, and expert assessments. A comprehensive mid-term review at the five-year mark will assess overall effectiveness, identify necessary adjustments, and adapt to changing circumstances. The evaluation framework will assess relevance to evolving GVL challenges, effectiveness in achieving goals, efficiency of interventions, and concrete impacts on biodiversity, ecosystem health, community well-being, and overall sustainability. Key steps include developing clear indicators for each SMART Objective within each pillar and utilising data collection methods that include robust quantitative data and participatory stakeholder feedback mechanisms. An independent evaluation team will ensure the objectivity and credibility of annual and mid-term reviews. Findings and recommendations will be widely disseminated, informing adaptations that drive continuous improvement. Additional considerations include ensuring meaningful community participation, focusing on challenges unique to women and girls, recognising the need for flexibility given unforeseen circumstances, and dedicating sufficient resources to support the process. Through a comprehensive and inclusive review and evaluation framework, the TSP can remain dynamic and relevant and ultimately contribute to a thriving GVL for both people and nature.

## **5.3 Lessons and Information Sharing**

Given the TSP's ambitious goals and the GVL's complex context, promoting continuous learning and open information sharing is vital for success. Here's how this can be achieved:

Dedicated mechanisms, such as an internal knowledge repository accessible to all partners, will store project documents, reports, best practices, and lessons learned. Regular regional workshops will facilitate experience sharing on successes and challenges related to each pillar of the plan. Peer-to-peer exchanges across borders will allow communities and organisations to share effective strategies.

Active information sharing is essential. Communication materials like summaries, infographics, and case studies will highlight key learnings. Local media partnerships will disseminate information in local languages. Social media platforms will be used for updates, celebrating wins, and sparking discussions.

Feedback loops must be incorporated through regular community dialogue platforms and monitoring and evaluation surveys to gather stakeholder perceptions and adapt the plan accordingly. Partnerships with research institutions will drive studies and evaluations, feeding insights back into the plan.

A comprehensive mid-term review will assess progress, identify areas for improvement, and inform strategy adjustments, while regular updates to the knowledge repository and communication materials will reflect new learnings. Annual reporting will ensure transparency and accountability.

Considerations for each pillar include sharing successful models of cross-border collaboration (Governance), case studies of effective community engagement and livelihood programs (Community Advocacy), best practices for attracting responsible business and sustainable financing (Enterprise), and innovative approaches to natural resource management and climate resilience (Sustainable Natural Resources).

Technology should play a key role, with online platforms, mobile apps, and other tools facilitating information sharing, communication, and knowledge management across borders and diverse stakeholders.

By establishing these mechanisms and tailoring them to each pillar, the TSP can foster a culture of continuous learning, adaptation, and shared success. This is essential for achieving its goals and ensuring a thriving future for both nature and people in the GVL.

## **5.4 Safeguarding and Accountability**

The plan's vision, mission, and goals guide a safeguarding framework built upon an Environmental & Social Safeguards Framework (ESSF) and diversity and inclusion principles. This approach emphasises responsible and accountable implementation.

Key principles include the precautionary principle, which anticipates and prevents potential environmental and social harm. The 'do no harm' principle ensures actions avoid negative impacts. Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) promotes meaningful community engagement in decision-making. Transparency, accountability, equality, equity, and cultural sensitivity are also cornerstones of the approach.

Safeguarding mechanisms include a tailored ESSF addressing the GVL's unique environmental and social risks and opportunities, with each pillar and project covered. Social Impact Assessments (SIAs) will be conducted for all significant projects to identify potential community impacts and inform appropriate mitigation measures. A transparent, accessible Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) will allow communities to raise concerns and seek

resolution. Independent monitoring will ensure implementation aligns with ESSF standards, and capacity-building will train staff and partners on ESSF principles.

Accountability structures are crucial. Clear roles and responsibilities for each pillar, project, and partner will be defined. A robust performance measurement framework using SMART indicators will track progress, including environmental, social, and economic factors. Regular, publicly accessible reporting will detail progress, challenges, and lessons learned. Multi-stakeholder engagement with communities, governments, NGOs, and the private sector will be paramount.

Diversity and inclusion demand inclusive participation across factors such as gender, age, and ethnicity. Equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms will be developed, and targeted capacity-building will empower marginalised groups. Outreach will be culturally appropriate to reach diverse communities.

Additional considerations include addressing the DRC's ongoing conflict and political instability, managing potential land-use conflicts, integrating climate change strategies, and regularly reviewing and updating the framework.

This framework provides a foundation for a safeguarding and accountability system that upholds the highest standards of environmental and social responsibility.

## **6. Risks, Assumptions and Mitigation Measures**

### **6.1 Risks**

The following top-level risks have been identified for this TSP:

- **Political instability:** The DRC's ongoing conflict threatens security, conservation efforts, collaboration, access to certain areas, and resources.
- **Insufficient funding:** Long-term funding for a ten-year, three-country plan is a potential challenge, vulnerable to fluctuations in donor support and economic downturns.
- **Community engagement challenges:** Effectively engaging diverse communities requires significant resources and expertise. Failure could lead to resentment and lack of support.
- **Sustainability of livelihoods:** Balancing conservation and community development requires ensuring alternative livelihoods are truly sustainable and don't create new environmental pressures.

- **Climate change impacts:** The TSP must be adaptable to unforeseen climate change impacts that could exacerbate existing threats or require strategy adjustments.
- **Corruption and illegal activities:** Addressing poaching, illegal logging, and other threats requires strong, transparent cross-border law enforcement.

## **6.2 Assumptions**

The following top-level assumptions have been identified for this TSP:

- **Continued government commitment:** Success hinges on sustained political will from all three partner governments.
- **Effective collaboration:** Transboundary cooperation means overcoming bureaucratic hurdles, cultural differences, and potentially conflicting interests between countries.
- **Active community participation:** Communities must actively participate in decision-making and implementation to ensure their needs are addressed.
- **Responsible investment:** The plan assumes it can attract responsible businesses and green investments aligned with conservation and community well-being.
- **Effective monitoring and evaluation:** Robust systems are needed to track progress, identify challenges, and adapt strategies.

## **6.3 Mitigation Measures**

The following top-level associated mitigation measures have been identified for this TSP:

- **Transboundary Collaboration & Governance:** Secure high-level government commitment, define clear roles for partners, and foster trust through communication.
- **Community Advocacy & Empowerment:** Ensure meaningful participation, invest in sustainable livelihoods education, and establish transparent grievance mechanisms.
- **Enterprise, Investment, & Finance:** Develop guidelines for responsible investment, offer aligned incentives, and conduct thorough impact assessments.
- **Sustainable Natural Resource Management:** Strengthen law enforcement, implement climate-resilient strategies, and increase investment in protected areas and monitoring.
- **Cross-cutting:** Ongoing monitoring, evaluation, effective communication for awareness and trust-building, and addressing root causes of unsustainable practices (like poverty).

## 7. Resourcing TSP Implementation

During TSP development, an indicative ten-year budget to support implementation under each pillar was agreed, confirmed and potential sources of financial support were reviewed, and actions to ensure sufficient resources for successful implementation were discussed. Resourcing needs and approaches will be reviewed annually, including project costs, operational costs, and staffing, as well as resourcing to ensure longer-term sustainability.

Key principles for resourcing TSP implementation include:

- Ongoing relationships should be nurtured across a range of potential donors, including government agencies, international organisations, philanthropic foundations, private companies, and individual donors.
- Donor relationships should be seen as long-term partnerships. Building trust and transparency with donors is crucial.
- Funding should be diversified beyond traditional grants, with the exploration of mechanisms like public-private partnerships, impact investing, payment for ecosystem services, debt-for-nature swaps, crowdfunding, and corporate social responsibility initiatives.
- Strategic partnerships should be fostered with organisations sharing the TSP's vision to allow for joint fundraising, network leveraging, and sharing of best practices.
- Resource mobilisation can be supported through compelling communication materials that showcase the TSP's progress and impact across various channels, such as websites, social media, presentations, and events. Regular updates and success stories maintain engagement.
- A compelling value proposition is essential, emphasising the GVL's critical importance, the TSP's positive impacts, and its alignment with global goals like biodiversity conservation, sustainability, and climate change mitigation. Highlighting the GVL's uniqueness and potential for innovation strengthens the case.
- Data from the TSP MEL Framework should be utilised to convey effectiveness to donors, including where lessons are learnt, and adaptations required.
- Importantly, resource mobilisation efforts should align with the specific SMART goals of each pillar, ensure transparency and accountability, foster community participation, and maintain adaptability throughout the implementation period.

## 8. Outline Business and Investment Plan

Taking into account the resource mobilisation approaches outlined in the previous section, the following is guidance on an outline of a business and investment plan that may be drawn up for the whole strategy, for specific strategic outcomes or to meet particular temporal and spatial outcomes within the wider strategic plan. The business or investment plan need to be specific, detailed to the activity level, to specific budget lines and linked to the wider monitoring and evaluation framework.

The following structure may be considered:

### 8.1 *Introduction*

The introduction should provide a brief overview of the GVL's ecological importance and the context of the TSP and rationale. It should also offer a summary of the four strategic objectives (SO-1, SO-2, SO-3, SO-4) or otherwise focus on a particular strategic objective or outcome for more specific plans. The vision and mission of the investment plan in relation to the TSP goal and strategic outcomes, generally and specifically may also be highlighted here.

### 8.2 *Resource Requirements*

Below is a breakdown of required resources under each Strategic Objective which should be weaved into business planning accordingly. The list is not exclusive and provides an overview with examples of some of the potential resources needed to meet each strategic objective. More can be drawn for the strategic framework at the activity level and associated budget:

#### **SO-1: Strengthen transboundary collaboration and coordination.**

- **Personnel:** Project coordinators, transboundary facilitators, technical specialists (e.g., GIS, conservation biologists).
- **Infrastructure:** Office spaces, communication equipment, vehicles.
- **Capacity Building:** Training workshops, exchange programs, knowledge-sharing platforms.
- **Operational Costs:** Travel, meetings, event organization.

#### **SO-2: Strengthen advocacy and community empowerment.**

- **Personnel:** Community outreach specialists, educators, communication experts.
- **Materials:** Educational resources, awareness campaign materials (print, digital, multimedia).

- **Community Engagement:** Participatory planning workshops, support for community-led initiatives.
- **Partnerships:** Collaboration with local NGOs, community-based organizations.

**SO-3: Support innovative finance and investments.**

- **Personnel:** Financial analysts, sustainable investment and nature-finance experts, business development specialists.
- **Market Research:** Feasibility studies, identification of sustainable revenue streams.
- **Partnership Development:** Networking with impact investors, green finance institutions, private sector actors, donor agencies.
- **Project Development:** Business plan creation, pilot project implementation

**SO-4: Improve governance and effective management.**

- **Personnel:** Policy analysts, legal experts, institutional development specialists
- **Policy Development:** Participatory policy review, legal framework support.
- **Institutional Capacity-Building:** Training for park authorities, governance structures.
- **Monitoring & Evaluation:** Data collection systems, impact assessment tools.

### **8.3 Fundraising Strategies**

To build on the outline provided under the resource mobilisation guidance, business and investment plans should consider a range of fundraising strategies, depending on the kind of financing sought, whether public, private or blended in some form. Some approaches and related opportunities include:

- **Diversified Funding Portfolio:**
  - Grants from foundations, governments, multilateral agencies
  - Impact investing, green bonds, blended finance
  - Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) schemes
  - Carbon credit/offset and nascent biodiversity credit markets
  - Sustainable tourism revenue (boosting revenue-sharing agreement)
  - Corporate partnerships and sponsorships
  - Crowdfunding

- **Compelling Communication and Outreach:**
  - Website and social media presence
  - Case studies, success stories, impact reports
  - Events, conferences, donor engagement tours
  - Partnerships with media and influencers
- **Strategic Partnerships:**
  - International conservation NGOs
  - Research institutions and universities
  - Development agencies
  - Philanthropic organizations
  - Private sector companies with a sustainability focus
- **Proposal Development Expertise:**
  - Dedicated grant writer or team
  - Staff or consultants specializing in conservation finance.

#### **8.4 *Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning***

- Business and investment planning should utilise and build on the TSP's outline MEL framework to track fundraising progress.
- Regular reporting to donors and investors on resource utilization and impact should be incorporated.
- Planning should take an adaptive management approach to able to refine fundraising and investment strategies based on results.

#### **8.5 *Investment Plan Budget***

The investment plan will need a specific budget, this should build on, with greater nuance, the detailed ten-year budget projection for this TSP, aligned with specific activities under each Strategic Objective. The budget should include capital investment, project-specific and operational costs.

## 9. References and Bibliography

### 9.1 *Recommended Reading*

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## 10. Definition of Terms

**Authority:** A governing body with legal jurisdiction at a regional, national, or local level.

**Biodiversity:** The variety of life, including ecosystems, species, and genetic diversity.

**Community Forestry:** Local communities directly manage and control forest resources.

**Conservation:** Protecting, maintaining, restoring, and sustainably using wildlife resources.

**Deforestation:** Human-caused conversion of forest to non-forest land or long-term reduction of tree cover below 10%.

**EAC:** The East African Community, an intergovernmental organisation with eight member countries.

**Ecosystem:** A community of plants, animals, and their environment interacting as a unit.

**Endemism:** A species found only within a specific geographic location.

**Environment:** All physical, social, political, economic, and visual surroundings.

**Forest:** Land over 0.5 hectares with trees taller than 5 meters and over 10% canopy cover, excluding predominantly agricultural or urban areas.

**Invasive Species:** Species rapidly expanding outside their native range, potentially disrupting ecosystems and human health.

**Landscape:** A diverse geographical area shaped by interactions between geology, topography, climate, living organisms, and human activity.

**Natural Forest:** Forest with key characteristics of native ecosystems, as defined by recognised standards.

**Regulation:** A binding legal document adopted by an authority.

**Sustainable Utilisation:** Using wildlife and tourism resources responsibly to ensure their availability for future generations.

**Stakeholder:** Any individual or group with a legitimate interest in goods, services, or environmental impacts within the landscape.

**Transboundary Conservation Area:** Geographically defined protected areas crossing international borders, managed with some form of cooperation.

**Wildlife:** Wild animal and plant species and their habitats and ecosystems.

**Wildlife Resources:** Any wild, indigenous animals and plants, their habitats, and ecosystems.

**Key Partner Organisations:**

Governmental (Protected Areas Authorities):



Non-Governmental Organisations supporting the TSP development process:

