

SUCCESSFUL MODEL OF REGIONAL COLLABORATION FOR MOUNTAIN GORILLA CONSERVATION IN BWINDI-VIRUNGA LANDSCAPE

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Mountain gorilla (*Gorilla beringei beringei*) is one of the most fragile species in terms of survival. With only approximately 700 individuals remaining, protection of the highly endangered mountain gorilla is critical. Since 1991, the International Gorilla Conservation Program (IGCP) has brought together three protected area authorities and three leading international conservation organizations, African Wildlife Foundation (AWF), Fauna & Flora International (FFI), and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), to support the long term conservation of mountain gorillas in Virunga-Bwindi region in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Uganda. During the presentation we would like to share IGCP's unique partnership experience through a regional landscape-level approach, promoting integrated collaboration and capacity building, and an adaptive program strategy centered on four core components:

- Strengthening the protection of mountain gorillas and their habitat
- Establishing a strong information base to understand the dynamics between human populations and wildlife.
- Working with local communities to create livelihood opportunities that contribute to conservation.
- Advocating and strengthening supportive policy and legislation for conservation.

Additionally, we will present results of the Ranger Based Monitoring (RBM) program using data collected from 2000 to 2010. The RBM program is a tool for basic ecosystem surveillance across the Virunga and Bwindi forest blocks and provides information on events occurring inside the protected areas, home to mountain gorillas. Successful implementation of these components has led to IGCP's recognition as one of the most respected conservation programs in the world, and globally acknowledged for lasting conservation impact.

Keywords: Mountain Gorilla, Transboundary conservation