



AWF IN THE VOLCANOES NATIONAL PARK LANDSCAPE

A Conservation Model for Africa

The Volcanoes National Park landscape is a model of coexistence, where Rwanda's national strategy places conservation at the heart of the development agenda, creating a prototype for a green economy intentionally built to benefit people and wildlife.

As Rwanda embraces the 21st century, it faces a challenge seen throughout Africa: How to promote development while protecting natural systems that sustain people, allowing nature to flourish. Rwanda's answer is conservation investment that builds community resilience, creates jobs, and grows the economy.

AWF is the Rwandan government's partner of choice in its flagship program centered around **Volcanoes National Park (VNP)**, home to one of two remaining mountain gorilla populations. This iconic subspecies represents one of conservation's most notable successes: Where the apes once numbered only a few hundred or even fewer at their lowest point, concerted conservation efforts have increased their population to over 1,000.



The Rwandan government has reinforced this conservation success, developing mountain-gorilla tourism into a world-class product vital to Rwanda's economy. However, the gorillas and communities outside VNP face a new challenge: **limited space**. Gorilla families now frequently venture outside the protected area into human settlements, creating risk of disease exposure as well as conflict with people. At the same time, farms in this area are under 0.15 hectares, about a third the size of a football field—not sufficient to feed an average family. The rural, agrarian economy of the Volcanoes landscape must diversify and expand in the next decade.

The way forward is to continue to put people at the center of a pioneering plan that will enhance community livelihoods and resilience while restoring the park to give gorillas more room.

People living in the landscape will benefit from **3,400 modern homes** linked to new social infrastructure including **schools, health clinics, and community spaces with information and communications technology**. Other benefits will include flood protection, access to green jobs and training, and a projected 80% reduction in human-wildlife conflicts. Rwanda and the world will benefit from a 23% increase in the size of the park, a 50% reduction in gorilla infant mortality, and a 20% increase in opportunities to view gorillas. All of which aligns with economic ambitions projected in the Rwandan National Strategy for Transformation. That strategy includes goals such as creating 1.5 million off-farm jobs, with specific interventions outlined such as development of mechanisms to support at least one model income and employment-generating project in each Rwandan village.

PUTTING THE FOUNDATION STONES IN PLACE: THE PILOT

In restoring part of the park while centering investments to achieve real benefits for people, AWF is showcasing one of its core principles: that conservation and development can go hand-in-hand. Currently, we're working with communities, the Rwandan government, the private sector, and civil society partners to design and deliver a pilot program as proof of concept.

Building on approaches we pioneered for community ownership, benefit sharing, and habitat restoration, AWF is leading a pilot project focused on:

- developing a conservation and development master plan for the landscape
- securing the **free, prior and informed consent (FPIC)** of community members in 1,016 households who will need to relocate to new green villages (FPIC is a standard developed to protect the rights of Indigenous peoples and is recognized by the United Nations).
- building an investment pipeline of green businesses
- mobilizing climate financing for investments in a green economy and harnessing climate-adaptation funding for households on the frontlines of conservation efforts
- securing funding to acquire privately held land adjacent to the current park boundaries



PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

- **Transition the economy** of the Volcanoes landscape through investments in agriculture, tourism, forestry and other nature-based industries
- **Restore degraded portions of Volcanoes National Park** [approximately 3,740 hectares (37.4 square kilometers)]
- **Improve the socioeconomic opportunities and benefits** for more than 17,000 Rwandans (3,400 families);
- **Improving sustainable, conservation-based tourism** experiences and economic benefits for Rwanda and Rwandans; and
- **Create a land-use buffer** of 6,620 hectares

PILOT TIMELINE

We have a target to raise \$8.6 million by June, 2023 to purchase land for restoring the park and an additional \$5 million to fulfill our other commitments to the first part of pilot phase. Much of the foundational work has been done, including securing FPIC, land titles, the restoration plans, and a livelihoods development plan. Communities targeted for initial relocation are eager to move, and once their land valuations begins this summer, we have a three month window to pay households.

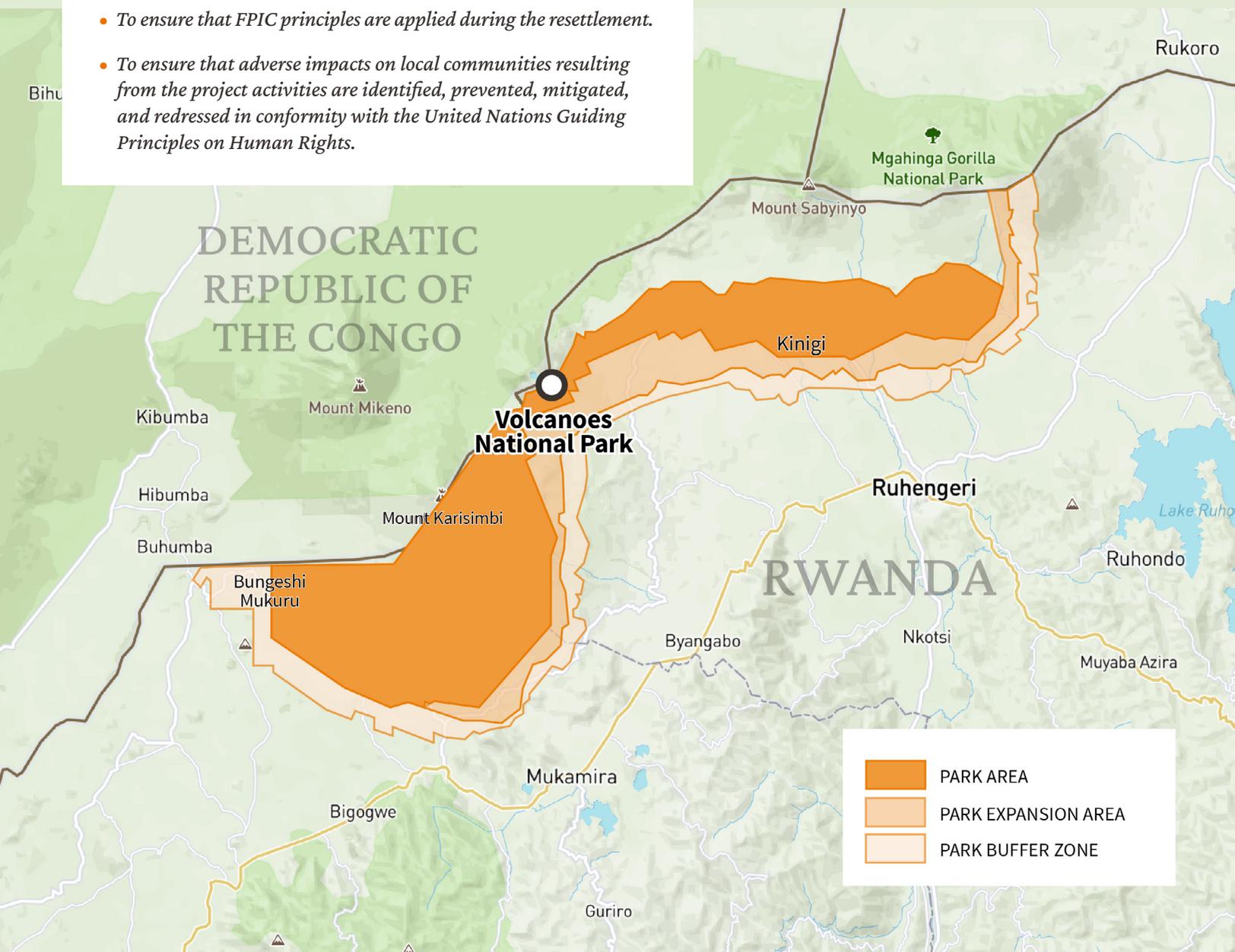
AWF's \$13.6 million investment will unlock \$150 million USD for the overall strategy fulfillment for the pilot from the World Bank Group, European Investment Bank, Nordic Development Fund, Wilderness Safaris, Rwandan Development Bank, PROGREEN, the Rwandan Green Fund and others.

The pilot, which sets the stage for the entire transformational vision for the landscape, has a total cost of \$79,412,611 million.



RESETTLEMENT ACTION PLAN PRIORITIES

- To ensure that FPIC principles are applied during the resettlement.
- To ensure that adverse impacts on local communities resulting from the project activities are identified, prevented, mitigated, and redressed in conformity with the United Nations Guiding Principles on Human Rights.



	PARK AREA
	PARK EXPANSION AREA
	PARK BUFFER ZONE

AWF IN VOLCANOES NATIONAL PARK BY THE NUMBERS

THE FULL PROJECT

INCREASE PARK SIZE BY
(37.4 square km)

23%

3,400

FAMILIES RESETTLED
IN GREEN VILLAGES

80%

REDUCTION IN HUMAN-
GORILLA CONFLICT

15-20%

INCREASE IN POPULATION SIZE
OF MOUNTAIN GORILLAS

7,500+

RWANDANS TO GAIN SKILLS
DEVELOPMENT AND JOBS WITH
THE TOURISM, CONSTRUCTION/
TRADES, AGRICULTURE, AND
SERVICE SECTORS

\$258.8
MILLION

TOTAL INVESTMENT REQUIRED

\$140 MILLION

INVESTMENT IN LIVELIHOODS AND
INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIRED

50%

REDUCTION IN
INFANT MORTALITY

THE PILOT

The pilot phase shapes how the full strategy will be delivered. The total cost of the pilot is \$79,412,611, which entails the following:

\$5.1 MILLION

(AWF COMMITMENT: \$5 MILLION)

SEEDING OF INCOME-GENERATING
ACTIVITIES IN AGROFORESTRY, SMALL
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, AGRICULTURE,
FOOD PROCESSING, AND OTHER AREAS

\$39.3
MILLION

BUILDING OF
GREEN VILLAGE
FOR 1,016
FAMILIES

\$4.91
MILLION

RESTORATION OF
1,080 HECTARES

\$19.25
MILLION

**(AWF COMMITMENT:
\$8.6 MILLION)**

PURCHASE OF
1,080 HECTARES



*Building a Future for Africa Where
People and Wildlife Thrive*

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