



# **Rwanda Country Programme Strategy**

2021-2030

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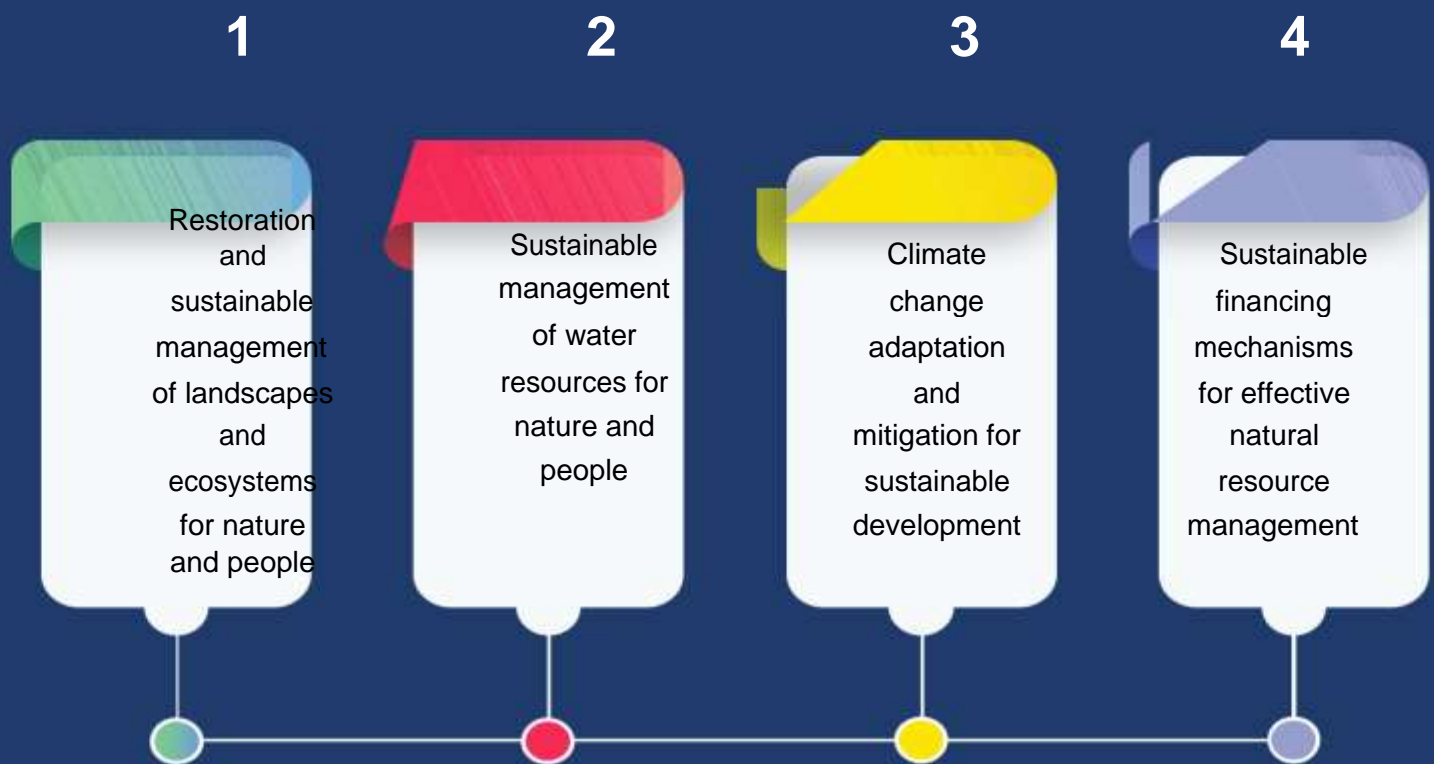


The International Union for the Conservation of Nature - IUCN opened an office in Rwanda in 2016, in order to support the Government of Rwanda in achieving its overall conservation and development objectives. Since then, it has implemented various projects that have contributed to Rwanda's national policies as well as to international commitments such as those under the Bonn Challenge/AFR100, Convention on Biological Diversity, Land Degradation Neutrality and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The IUCN Rwanda Country Office aims to address key threats to Rwanda's people and nature, caused by extremely high pressure on land and water, high levels of climate change vulnerability, and high levels of poverty, exacerbated by the recent COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time and in recognition of the drivers of biodiversity loss and the interdependencies between people and nature, the IUCN Rwanda Country Office aims to build on opportunities, provided by Rwanda's conducive biophysical factors and climate for nature, conducive biodiversity related policies towards green growth, and conducive development and investment potential.

The Rwanda Country Office can draw on the strong, global experience of IUCN's members and Commissions, and on the scientific credibility of its standards and tools, such as the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and the IUCN Red List of Ecosystems. Locally, the Rwanda Country Office holds in-depth expertise in, among other things, biodiversity conservation, Forest Landscape Restoration, water management, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and sustainable conservation finance. This puts the IUCN Rwanda Country Office in a unique position to fulfil its mission:

“to assist the Government and the people of Rwanda to conserve the integrity and diversity of Rwanda's nature, and to support and sustain healthy and resilient ecosystems that provide essential services to Rwanda's people”.



This strategy document describes the four interconnected strategic priorities that the IUCN Rwanda Country Office will pursue in the next ten years (2021-2030):

As such the implementation of the IUCN Rwanda Strategy contributes directly to the four goals of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework which are:

- Goal A

The integrity of all ecosystems is enhanced, with an increase of at least 15 per cent in the area, connectivity and integrity of natural ecosystems, supporting healthy and resilient populations of all species, the rate of extinctions has been reduced at least tenfold, and the risk of species extinctions across all taxonomic and functional groups, is halved, and genetic diversity of wild and domesticated species is safeguarded, with at least 90 per cent of genetic diversity within all species maintained.

- Goal B

Nature's contributions to people are valued, maintained or enhanced through conservation and sustainable use supporting the global development agenda for the benefit of all.

- Goal C

The benefits from the utilization of genetic resources are shared fairly and equitably, with a substantial increase in both monetary and non-monetary benefits shared, including for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity

- Goal D

The gap between available financial and other means of implementation, and those necessary to achieve the 2050 Vision, is closed.

The Theory of Change that underpins this strategy, combined with focused project cycle management, starts with producing relevant and up-to-date data, science and knowledge (assessments). This will help with the identification and implementation of high-quality action, together with stakeholders and target groups, and combined with appropriate financing mechanisms. The achievement of tangible conservation results, as well as policy and governance results, will contribute to one or more of the desired impacts: the overall improvement in species diversity and populations; well-functioning ecosystems that are delivering optimal services; and enhanced livelihoods. A robust monitoring, evaluation and learning system will ensure that new project cycles will incrementally build on ever-improving knowledge and experience.

This strategy document is purposefully short and describes IUCN's intentions in Rwanda over the next ten years.

This strategy is the outcome of an extensive process of internal (IUCN Rwanda and IUCN ESARO) and external (IUCN Rwanda members and key stakeholders) consultations.

It is a 'living document' and will be updated or needed.

# 1. RWANDA - SITUATION ANALYSIS

## 1.1 Background and context

The Republic of Rwanda is a landlocked country in the Great Rift Valley where the African Great Lakes region and East Africa converge. According to the Rwanda Statistical Yearbook 2019, Rwanda had a population of 12,089,721 in 2018, living on 26,338 km<sup>2</sup> of surface area. It is the most densely populated mainland African country, with about 2.5 million people living in cities and 9.6 million in rural areas. Known for its breath-taking scenery, Rwanda is often referred to as “land of a thousand hills”. The National Land-Use Development Master Plan (NLUDMP) 2020-2050 provides the following data and information about the land cover situation in Rwanda, in 2019:

Land cover	Km <sup>2</sup>	%
Agriculture	10,949	41.6%
Forests	7,242	27.5%
Bare high slopes	1,554	5.9%
Built up areas, infrastructure	2,888	11.0%
Water bodies	1,637	6.2%
Wetlands	2,068	7.8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26,338</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## Agriculture

Agriculture is a major economic sector for the people of Rwanda,

employing about

**70%** of the total population  
and contributing about  
**31%** to GDP.

(RDB, 2020)

Rwanda's principal agricultural exports are coffee, tea, and value-added products such as canned tomatoes, honey, French beans, passion fruit, macadamia nuts, and mushrooms.

## Forests

Forest area

**7,242 km<sup>2</sup>**

Natural forests

**1,389 km<sup>2</sup> (19.2%)**

Plantation forest

**3,873 km<sup>2</sup> (53.5%)**

Wooded savannah

**1,537 km<sup>2</sup> (21.2%)**

Shrubs and bamboo

**443 km<sup>2</sup> (6.1%)**

(NLUDMP).

The 2018 Rwanda Forest Policy mentions that approximately 98.5% of primary energy in Rwanda comes from biomass, in the form of firewood (83.3%) and charcoal (15.2%) (Source: EICV 4 carried out in 2013/14). Forests are also of critical importance for the country's tourism industry, which is considered as Rwanda's largest earner of foreign exchange (estimated at USD 498 million in 2019 – RDB annual report, 2019). This sector is hugely dependent on the Volcanoes, Nyungwe, and Gishwati-Mukura Forests.

#### Cities

**1,025 km<sup>2</sup>**

#### "rurban" settlements

**38 km<sup>2</sup>**

#### Rural settlements

**1,500 km<sup>2</sup>**

#### Industry

**12 km<sup>2</sup>**

#### Roads, railways and airfields

**313 km<sup>2</sup>**

(NLUDMP).

#### Bare high slopes

Rwanda is majorly a mountainous country and has slopes that range from 0-30% (64.5 % of the country), 30-55% (22.9 % of the country) and more than 55% (12.6 % of the country). Even the area with 55+% slopes is often used for forestry / agricultural purposes (upland tea, wheat, pyrethrum, coffee, and other cash crops) but about half of it (5.9%) is actually bare (NLUDMP).

#### Built up areas and

#### infrastructure Water bodies

The country's hydrological network includes 101 lakes and 861 rivers. Lakes and rivers cover 1,537 km<sup>2</sup> with an additional 100km<sup>2</sup> as 50-meter buffer zones (NLUDMP). Hydropower contributes 39% to Rwanda's overall energy production (July 2018- June 2019, REG).

#### Wetlands

480 km<sup>2</sup> (23%) of the 2,068 km<sup>2</sup> wetland area (860 marshlands according to REMA's State of Environment and Outlook Report of 2015; 935 swamps according to the List of Swamps, order No 006/03 of 2017) is protected, while 1,283 km<sup>2</sup> is used under conditions. 20-meter buffer zones cover 305 km<sup>2</sup> (NLUDMP). These different land covers and uses, house a rich variety of different ecosystems and habitats, each which its own unique biodiversity assemblages. Hence, "Rwanda is well-known for its rich biodiversity. It encompasses, despite its small size of 26,338 square kilometres, an array of species from the Albertine Rift in the West to the savannah lake and swamp systems of the Akagera region in the East" (Rwanda Biodiversity Policy).

## 1.2 Institutional context

The legal framework for environment and biodiversity conservation is established under the Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda. Further provisions are provided through various laws including the Organic Law of April 2005, determining modalities of protection, conservation and promotion of environment in Rwanda; the law determining the mission, organization and functioning of the Rwanda

Environment Management Authority (REMA) of August 2013; and the law governing biodiversity in Rwanda of September 2013. Based on the full set of laws, a range of policy documents and implementation modalities have been developed; the main policies are listed below, together with the responsible institutions and relevant implementation plans/strategies.

Table 1: Policies, plans and institutions related to nature conservation in Rwanda

Sector	Responsible Institution	Policies	Implementation plans
Overall policy framework	Government of Rwanda Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning	Vision 2050 (2016)	National Strategy for Transformation 1 (2017-2024)
Agriculture	Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources; Rwanda Agriculture Board; National Agriculture Export Board	National Agriculture Policy (2017)	Strategic Plan for Agriculture Transformation in Rwanda Phase 4 (2018-2024)
Biodiversity / Environment	Ministry of Environment	»» Rwanda Biodiversity Policy (2011) »» Environment and Climate Change Policy (2019)	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2016-2020)  Law on Biological Diversity 2021
Climate change / Green growth	Ministry of Environment; Rwanda Environment Management Authority	»» Green Growth and Climate Resilience - National Strategy for Climate Change and Low Carbon Development (2011) »» Environment and Climate Change Policy (2019)	»» Nationally Determined Contribution (2020) »» PPCR Strategic Program for Climate Resilience for Rwanda
Energy	Rwanda Energy Group	Rwanda Energy Policy (2015)	Energy Sector Strategic Plan (2018/19-2023/24)



Sector	Responsible Institution	Policies	Implementation plans
Finance (Green)	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning; Rwanda Environment Management Authority; Rwanda National Environment Fund (FONERWA)	Financial Sector Development Strategic Plan (2018-2024)	The Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN): Rwanda Biodiversity Financial Needs Assessment (2018)  FONERWA Funds Resource Mobilisation Strategy
Forestry	Ministry of Environment; Rwanda Water and Forestry Authority	Rwanda National Forestry Policy (2018)	Forest Sector Strategic Plan (2018–2022)
Land	Ministry of Environment; Rwanda Land Management and Use Authority	National Land Policy (2019)	National Land-Use and Development Master Plan (2020-2050)
Local Development	Ministry of Local Government; Local Administrative Entities Development Agency	Community Development Policy (2008)	National Strategy for Community Development and Local Economic Development (2013-2018, outdated)
Protected Areas	Ministry of Trade and Industry; Ministry of Environment; Rwanda Development Board	»» Rwanda Protected Areas Concessions Management Policy (2013) »» Wildlife Policy 2013	»» National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2016-2020) »» Post-2020 global biodiversity framework, Rwanda position. »» Law on Biological Diversity 2021
Tourism	Ministry of Trade and Industry; Rwanda Development Board	Rwanda Tourism Policy (2009)	
Water	Rwanda Water Resources Board	National Policy for Water Resources Management (2011)	Rwanda National Water Resources Master Plan (2015); catchment and sub-catchment plans
Wetlands	Rwanda Environment Management Authority	Provision of wetlands imbedded in the National Environment and Climate Change Policy 2019	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2016-2020)
Wildlife	Ministry of Trade and Industry; Ministry of Environment	Rwanda Wildlife Policy (2013)	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2016-2020)

The overall policy framework aims to be coherent and most policy documents refer to other relevant sectors, policies and plans. However, while sectoral policies such as for agriculture, forestry, water, land, energy etc are starting to better integrate environmental considerations into their objectives and operationalisation, they remain driven by an over-riding priority to achieve development objectives. This over-riding priority is also reflected in three recent national development documents commissioned by the Government of Rwanda: Vision 2050, the National Strategy for Transformation 1 (NST1) and the Future Drivers of Growth in Rwanda (in collaboration with the World Bank, 2020).

A word count for specific sectoral keywords in these three documents shows that environment is mentioned regularly (52 times) which shows broad awareness of the need to mainstream environmental considerations across these three documents. At the same time, agriculture (164 times), water (81), energy (44) and tourism (42) are mentioned much more regularly than for instance conservation (6), biodiversity (1) or protected areas (0), which may be an indicator that lower priority is assigned to these latter issues.



Table 2: Priority sectors in three national development documents (assessed by word counts)

SECTOR/THEME (keyword)	VISION 2050	NST1	FUTURE DRIVERS OF GROWTH	TOTAL NR of MENTIONS
Agriculture	24	76	64	164
Water	13	52	16	81
Environment	2	39	11	52
Energy	16	27	11	44
Tourism	8	21	13	42
Climate Change	2	22	11	35
Forests	0	18	0	18
Conservation	3	1	2	6
Wetlands	0	4	0	4
Catchments	0	3	0	3
Biodiversity	0	1	0	1
Protected Areas	0	0	0	0



# 1.3 Constraints and opportunities for nature conservation in Rwanda

## 1.3.1 Constraints

**Pressure on land and water** – Rwanda is almost entirely hilly and situated beyond 1,000 m above sea level; the central plateau is between 1,500 and 2,000 m high and the highest point is Mount Karisimbi (4,519 m). This landscape of altitudinal gradients (slopes) makes the country highly susceptible to soil erosion and landslides. Rapid demographic growth saw rural population density rise from 121 persons per km<sup>2</sup> in the 60's, to 525 persons per km<sup>2</sup> in 2020. Seventy percent of Rwanda's 12+ million people are engaged in agriculture, but with limited availability of productive land, farmers are forced to expand their agricultural activities into fragile ecosystems such as wetlands. Wetlands and other water bodies are also under siltation pressure from excessive erosion from unsustainable agriculture on slopes, environmental pollution caused by mining activities, and overfishing. More than 80% of households use firewood as their primary cooking fuel, a major threat to forests.

**Climate vulnerability** - Rwanda is highly vulnerable to climate change impacts, but its readiness to combat these effects is still moderate. While rainfall is expected to increase in some parts of the country, it will decrease in others. Rainy seasons are predicted to become more intense, while dry seasons will be longer and dryer. Together with extreme events such as (seasonal) droughts and floods, this will bring new challenges for food security and water management, storage and drainage, and may result in famine, drownings, population displacement, conflicts, and biodiversity loss.

**Poverty, and interrupted growth** - Despite the impressive economic recovery after the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, Rwanda's poverty rate is still high: 39% of the population lived below the poverty line in 2020 (down from 77% in 2001). Rwanda was in the middle of an economic boom prior to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic that hit the country in 2020. Economic growth exceeded 10% in 2019, driven mostly by large public investments for implementation of the National Strategy of Transformation. Strong growth was expected to continue, but the

pandemic disrupted international flows of goods and services with tourism taking the highest hit amid disruption in international travel. Many people lost their jobs and returned to earn their livelihoods based on the unsustainable use of natural resources, which increased the already high pressure on land and biodiversity.

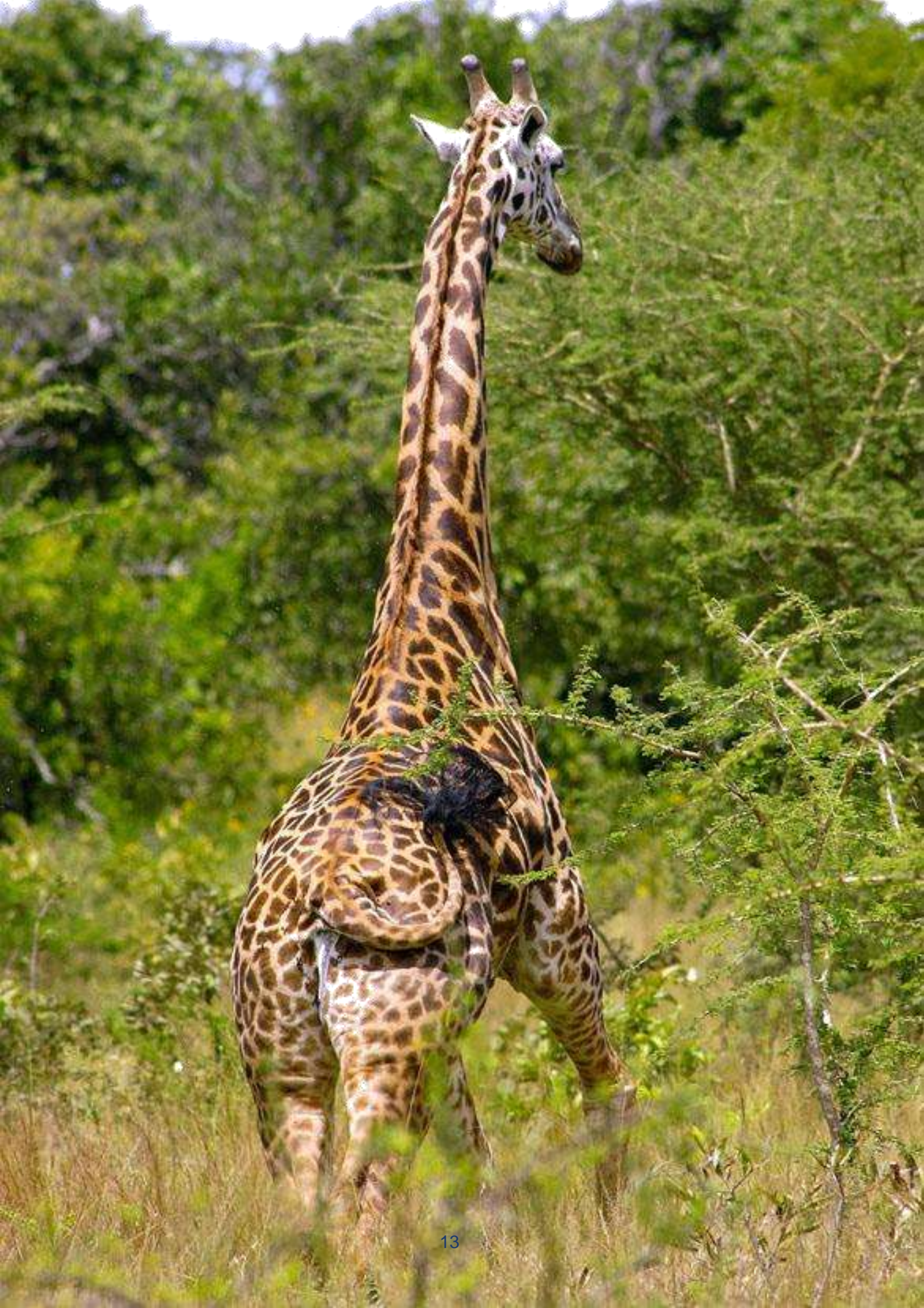
## 1.3.2 Opportunities

**Conducive biophysical factors and climate for nature** - Rwanda's climate, soils and substantial variation in altitude provide home for a rich biodiversity, including globally endangered, regional endemic, and iconic species (such as the mountain gorilla). Multiple areas in Rwanda are categorized and labelled that reflects this including: protected areas (4), protected forests (107), KBAs (7), Alliance of Zero Extinction Sites (2), Ramsar site (1), and UNESCO Biosphere (2) though not all sites (especially the protected forests) enjoy the level of protection they deserve.

Rwanda is a popular tourist destination with tourism (prior to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic) being the largest source of foreign exchange earnings. Revenues generated from the sector were USD 498 million in 2019, to which revenue from mountain gorilla tracking tourism was a major contributor.

**Conducive policies towards green growth** – Rwanda's Government has embarked on a process of promoting nature conservation through a range of inter-connected strategies and policies (see section 1.2). The country is also a signatory to most of the major global environmental agreements and conventions such as the CBD, Bonn Challenge, Ramsar Convention, World Heritage Convention, Nagoya Protocol, Aichi, UNFCCC, UNCCD, etc.

**Conducive development and investment potential** - Rwanda's operating environment is famously supportive, as shown by its place in the 2020 World Bank Doing Business Ranking (second position in Africa). Thanks to its current institutional good governance in both the government and the non-government sector, Rwanda remains among the safest countries for donors and business to invest in. Rwanda has the opportunity, ability and willingness to bypass old technologies and environmentally destructive development, and to build a prosperous society in a sustainably managed environment.



## 2. IUCN MANDATE

### 2.1 Global programme

IUCN's vision is "a just world that values and conserves nature". Its mission is "to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable". IUCN's mandate comes from its membership of over 1,400 government and non-government organisations, who develop the global IUCN programme and oversee its implementation.

In 2020, IUCN produced a draft ten-year framework 2021-2030 entitled "Nature 2030". It focuses on Land, Water, Oceans, Climate and People, and links directly to the Sustainable Development Goals, which form the core of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015. It revolves around five crosscutting 'conduits to change' (the "5R's"):



**"5R's")**



## 2.2 Regional programme

IUCN's work in Eastern and Southern Africa (the 'ESARO' region) will be aligned with and guided by the new Global Programme. For the past eight years, regional work focused on three main areas:

- *Valuing and conserving nature* - enhancing IUCN's heartland work on biodiversity conservation, emphasizing both tangible and intangible values of nature.
- *Promoting and supporting effective and equitable governance of nature's use* - consolidating IUCN's work on people-nature relations, rights and responsibilities, and the political economy of nature.
- *Deploying nature-based solutions to climate, food and development* - expanding IUCN's work on nature's contribution to tackling problems of sustainable development, particularly in climate change, food security and social and economic development.

## 2.3 Country programme

The Government of Rwanda has been an IUCN member since 2014. IUCN opened a Rwanda Country Office in 2016 to support the implementation of Rwanda's national environmental policies and strategies. It is working under a Memorandum of Understanding for the period 2019 – 2029 with the Ministry of Environment. In June 2020, the Government of Rwanda and IUCN signed a Host Country Agreement which is "to extend the collaboration between the two parties particularly through IUCN's Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office ("IUCN ESARO") and Rwanda Country Office in support of environmental strategies implementation to cover biodiversity conservation, forest landscape restoration, ecosystem management, payment for ecosystem services, wetlands and water resources management, climate change and protected areas management among others".

With nature conservation being central to IUCN Rwanda's mandate, vision, and mission, the IUCN Rwanda Country Office main areas of implementation are (April 2022):

- 1 Forest & Landscape Restoration  
Including e.g. the 2014 ROAM report; the 2011-2018 Bonn Challenge Barometer of Progress; the 2019 forest cover mapping; the 2020 Erosion Control Maps; the 2018 National Tree Reproductive Materials Strategy; the 2018-2024 Forestry Research Strategy and Guidelines for Rwanda; sustainable agriculture research, and natural protected forest restoration activities;
- 2 Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and restoration  
Including e.g. wetland ecosystem service valuation, catchment planning in Mukungwa, Akagera Lower, Kivu, and Akanyaru catchments, and restoration and agro-forestry through community approach in Sebeya;
- 3 Nature-based solutions  
Through its Forest & Landscape Restoration and IWRM programmes, and support for sustainable livelihoods and green jobs;
- 4 Climate change adaptation and mitigation  
Through re-forestation, agroforestry, restoration of pasturelands, and soil erosion control measures in the Eastern Province of Rwanda; and
- 5 Sustainable conservation finance for communities and private sector investors.  
Including through the Climate Smart Lending Platform, Village Savings and Loan Associations, the Community Environment Conservation Fund, Payment for Ecosystem Services, and the Enterprise Partnership Initiative.

<sup>1</sup> The IUCN Council endorsed a draft framework in February 2020 for transmission to the IUCN membership for consideration and approval during the 2020 World Conservation Congress. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this meeting has not yet taken place.



## 3. IUCN RWANDA – VISION and MISSION

### 3.1 Expertise

IUCN is a membership Union composed of both government and civil society organisations. It harnesses the experience, resources and reach of its more than 1,400 Member organisations and the input of more than 18,000 experts, including six science-based Commissions. This diversity and vast expertise makes IUCN the global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it. IUCN's 'trademarks' include credible, trusted knowledge; convening and building multi-stakeholder partnerships for action; a global-to-local and local-to-global reach; setting and influencing standards, practices and global policies, and drawing on a vast network of volunteer scientists and expert practitioners worldwide.

IUCN is the global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it. IUCN is in charge of the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and the IUCN Red List of Ecosystems, and is a key partner in the KBA partnership (Key Biodiversity Areas) and Protected Planet. It also manages PANORAMA which provides solutions for a healthy planet, among other conservation resources.

In Rwanda, the IUCN Rwanda Country Office has specific expertise in Forest & Landscape Restoration, Integrated Water Resources Management, biodiversity conservation (including on-farm), climate change adaptation and mitigation, natural resources governance, geo-spatial ecosystems mapping & modelling, natural resources economics and ecosystems valuation, sustainable agriculture within a densely populated landscape, and sustainable conservation finance instruments.

There are currently four national IUCN members in Rwanda (one state and three non-state members), and multiple international non-state members with offices in the country (see section 5.2: table 5).

### 3.2 Vision

The IUCN Rwanda Country Office subscribes to the overall IUCN vision: "A just world that values and conserves nature".

### 3.3 Mission

The IUCN Rwanda Country Office specifies its mission as follows: "To assist the Government and the people of Rwanda to conserve the integrity and diversity of Rwanda's nature, and to support and sustain healthy and resilient ecosystems that provide essential services to Rwanda's people".

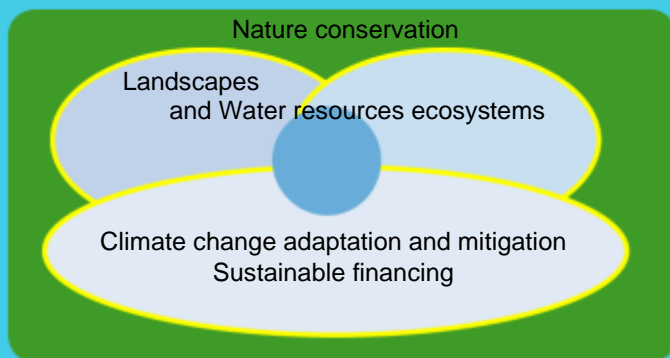
### 3.4 Strategic objectives

With "nature and biodiversity" central to IUCN's mandate and strategy, and in line with its vision and mission, the IUCN Rwanda Country Office will pursue four strategic priorities during the period 2021-2030:

- 5 Restoration and sustainable management of landscapes and ecosystems for nature and people
- 6 Sustainable management of water resources for nature and people
- 7 Climate change adaptation and mitigation for sustainable development
- 8 Sustainable financing mechanisms for effective natural resource management

These strategic priorities should not be considered as being separate; they are indeed explicitly interconnected and partly overlapping, providing ample opportunities for synergies and for enhancing Rwanda's nature conservation agenda. Further, the first two strategic priorities have a strong spatial focus, while strategic priorities 3 and 4 highlight and prioritize key cross-cutting issues. I.e. climate change adaptation and mitigation and sustainable financing mechanisms are essential for achieving positive conservation outcomes for landscapes, ecosystems and water resources, and add to other relevant cross-cutting issues such as gender and youth, monitoring, and communications.

The following sections describe these strategic priorities, and the associated planned activities, in more detail.



### 3.4.1 Restoration and sustainable management of landscapes and ecosystems for nature and people

Under this strategic priority, the Rwanda Country Office will engage in the following three main areas::

#### A. Data, science and knowledge:

: IUCN Rwanda Country Office will (1) produce an inventory of all terrestrial and freshwater Key Biodiversity Areas, and roll-out of the Green List of Protected Areas Programme in Rwanda; (2) apply geo-spatial ecosystems mapping & modelling, developing spatially-based Multi-Criteria Analysis (MCA) to determine restoration priorities and trade-offs, supporting critical decision-making on matters of biodiversity conservation.

IUCN Rwanda Country Office will also support biodiversity assessments and national and regional reports to global conventions; and (3) promote Nature-based Solution as actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural or modified ecosystems that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits.

#### B. Conservation action:

the focus of conservation action will be on:

(1) Protected Areas – uplist, restore, conserve and support the management of Protected Areas in Rwanda, and Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures’ (OECMs); (2) Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) planning, implementation and monitoring, including

extension work to landowners/farmers based on local and scientific knowledge; and (3) Species, Habitats and Ecosystems, both in- and outside protected areas, through protection, management, planning, and monitoring.

#### C. Agriculture:

IUCN Rwanda Country Office will identify and deploy sustainable agriculture solutions to support food and biodiversity security in Rwanda. The office will promote agriculture as a nature-based solution creating a common ground between agriculture, land health, and nature conservation.

### 3.4.2 Sustainable management of water resources for nature and people

Under this strategic priority, the Rwanda Country Office will engage in the following three main areas:

#### A. Data, science and knowledge:

IUCN Rwanda Country Office will generate knowledge and tools, founded on biodiversity and ecological data, to support the scale-up of sustainable management of surface water, including freshwater KBAs and Ramsar sites.

#### B. Integrated Water Resources Management

IUCN Rwanda Country Office will improve freshwater ecosystem and catchment health through well-implemented Integrated Water Resources Management, through among others development of catchment plans, the Nature-based Solutions approach that support freshwater biodiversity conservation, and supporting water conservation measures.

#### C. Governance:

IUCN Rwanda Country Office will support enhanced water resources governance to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable.

### 3.4.3 Climate change adaptation and mitigation for sustainable development

Under this strategic priority, the Rwanda Country Office will engage in the following three main areas:

**A. Data, science and knowledge:** IUCN Rwanda Country Office will (1) produce geo-spatial and economic analyses and models of climate impacts on natural resources – including biodiversity, productive sectors and communities, which will be made available to the relevant Rwanda Government departments to inform the development of appropriate policies; (2) invest in data, science and planning for Kigali and five secondary cities as part of the Green Infrastructure for Developing Cities and Disaster Management programme; and (3) provide data and science to youth and opinion leaders as part of an environmental education programme.

**B. Climate-resilient altitudinal gradients:** IUCN Rwanda Country Office will mainstream climate change considerations in all its programmes, including in the FLR and IWRM programmes in targeted catchment areas (altitudinal gradients) as well as in urban green infrastructure planning.

**C. Nature-based solutions:** IUCN Rwanda Country Office, based on available best practices from previous work in the country, the region and worldwide, will scale up Nature-based Solutions, with a sharp gender focus, to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

### 3.4.4 Sustainable financing mechanisms for effective natural resource management

Under this strategic priority, the Rwanda Country Office will engage in the following two main areas:

**A. Data, science and knowledge:** IUCN Rwanda Country Office will lead on forest/ecosystem services valuation in order to (1) support relevant government institutions and decision-makers to ensure that restoration provides benefits and contributions to people, nature, and the country's GDP; and (2) to encourage the development of new Payment for Ecosystem Services schemes.

**B. Innovative financing:** IUCN Rwanda Country Office will continue to develop country-specific innovative financing models, including (1) financing tools that are embedded in FLR-based value chains and business cases; (2) mechanisms that encourage investments in zero-net deforestation value and supply chains; (3) capacity development for investors to promote green businesses and entrepreneurship; and (4) the development of a nature conservation and sustainable livelihoods funds and incentives.

These eleven priority areas are in line with the global IUCN strategy, as follows:

Table 3: IUCN Rwanda Country Office’s eleven priority areas mapped against the “5R’s” in the global IUCN strategy

“5 R’s” Focal areas <sup>2</sup>	Recognise (...threats to nature, and opportunities to address them)	Retain (...nature, people’s rights, priority sites)	Restore (... ecosystems, species populations and stewardship)	Resource (... funding for conservation and investment in science/ knowledge)	Reconnect (... people-nature, ecosystems and habitats, visions and agreements)
Land	Geo-spatial ecosystems mapping & modelling, NbS	Identify, protect, monitor KBAs, Protected Areas, OECMs	Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) programme, biodiversity	Site-based biodiversity assessments; KBA inventory, Green List of Protected Areas	Sustainable agriculture solutions; national reports to global conventions
Water	Green Infrastructure for Developing Cities and Disaster Management	Identify, protect, monitor KBAs, Protected Areas	Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) programme, biodiversity	Data for upscaling and Green City Infrastructure / Disaster Management	Water resources governance
Climate	Modelling and analyses of climate change impacts, NbS	Catchment areas	Altitudinal Gradients through FLR and IWRM	Climate change projections, public awareness and environmental education	Gender-sensitive nature-based solutions
Financing	Forest / ecosystem services valuations	All areas of high biodiversity value	Selected ecosystems (through PES)	Various innovative funding schemes including private sector	Nature conservation and sustainable livelihoods fund

<sup>2</sup> Note that the focal area ‘Oceans’ has been omitted as it is not relevant in Rwanda; the focal area ‘People’ has been replaced with ‘Financing’ as the whole Rwanda strategy is people-oriented and the rights/responsibilities and opportunities/benefits for people are mainstreamed across all strategic priorities

## 4. IMPLEMENTATION

### 4.1 Theory of change

The global IUCN Programme 2017–2020 provides a “simple linear representation of a complex, dynamic and non-linear reality” in their overall Theory of Change (figure 2, page 18). Based on this IUCN blueprint, the theory of change for the IUCN Rwanda Country Office can be described as follows (similarly simplified):

Knowledge production: use the IUCN conservation tools, standards, datasets etc; identify Key Biodiversity Areas / biodiversity assessments; carry out geo-spatial ecosystems mapping / modelling, and modelling / analyses of climate change impacts; forest / ecosystem services valuations

Knowledge uptake and action identification: use available knowledge and expertise at the IUCN Rwanda Country Office; use science, knowledge from analyses to identify root causes of problems and design effective projects and programmes; establish partnerships and networks and find/ create an appropriate financing mechanism

Taking action: Forest Landscape Restoration; Integrated Water Resource Management and surface water protection; KBA assessments; Protected Area and OECMs conservation; make Altitudinal Gradients / catchments climate change-resilient; protection of ecosystem services; nature-based solutions and sustainable agriculture; education; Green Cities / disaster management

Physical change (results): hectares of restored landscape; hectares under improved management and/or protection; improved water quality; reduced soil erosion; reduced use of firewood; improved food security; reduced risks / shocks caused by disasters

Policy and governance (results): new catchment plans and structures; new / improved environmental policies / policies that take environmental considerations into account; improved reporting to Conventions; strong and inclusive governance systems for natural resources; new sustainable financing mechanisms

Impacts: overall improvement in species diversity and populations; well-functioning ecosystems are delivering optimal services; people’s livelihoods are enhanced.

## 4.2 Approach

Following the Theory of Change, and using IUCN's trusted conservation knowledge and tools, the Rwanda Country Office starts every planned intervention with detailed assessments of the problem. This problem analysis, applied in collaboration with partners and stakeholders, will ensure that root causes and appropriate solutions

are identified. Following the mobilisation and leveraging of financing, IUCN implements its activities through a range of strategic and innovative partnerships, applying robust Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning techniques. Based on in-depth analyses of lessons learned and the production/revision of best practices, the Rwanda Country office will proceed with scaling up its activities and/or initiating future project cycles.



## 5. PARTNERS

### 5.1 Strategic Government partners

Table 4: IUCN Rwanda Country Office's main Government partners

Institution	Areas of Collaboration	Existing Collaboration
Government of Rwanda	Host agreement for IUCN	Managed by Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
Ministry of Environment	Environment and Natural Resources Sector	MoU (2019-2029)
Ministry of Agriculture	Sustainable Agriculture	MoU under negotiation
Rwanda National Environment Fund (FONERWA)	Sustainable Finance for NR Sectors	MoU under MoE
Rwanda Development Board	Protected areas and OECMs	MoU under negotiation
Rwanda Water Resources Board	Water resources management	MoU under negotiation
Rwanda Water and Forestry Authority	Forest and landscape Restoration and management	MoU under MoE
Rwanda Environment Management Authority	Wetlands, Biodiversity and other ecosystem conservation	MoU under MoE
Rwanda Agriculture Board	Agriculture extension	MoU under MINAGRI
National Agriculture Export Board	Value Chains and supply chains	MoU under MINAGRI

## 5.2 IUCN members in Rwanda

Table 5: IUCN members that are active in Rwanda

Name of institution	Status (April 2021)	Area of Collaboration
Government of Rwanda (MoE)	National member	Environment and Natural Resources
APEFA - Action for Environment Protection and Promotion of Agriculture Sectors	National member	Rural Livelihoods and CBNRM
ARECO - Rwandese Association of Ecologists	National member	Conservation Enterprises, Wetlands and CBNRM
ARCOS – Albertine Rift Conservation Society	International member	Conservation Enterprises, Wetlands and CBNRM
AWF – African Wildlife Foundation	International member	Volcanoes National Park
ICF – International Crane Foundation	International member	Species Conservation, Conservation Agreements
ICRAF	International member	Agroforestry
RWCA – Rwanda Wildlife Conservation Association	National member	Biodiversity Conservation, Wetlands Restoration, PES
WCS – Wildlife Conservation Society	International member	Protected Areas Management and landscape restoration



# Targets 2021-2030

<p><b>Targets 2021-2030</b> IUCN will produce annual achievements towards the targets reports</p>	<p><b>Current funding sources</b> (plus additional funding sources to be identified, e.g. EU, BMU, SIDA, World Bank, GCF, GEF, USAID, British High Commission, AFD, GoR, private sector, and others)</p>
<b>Policies, strategies, and planning</b>	
<p>At least 20 new policies, strategies, management plans and/or approaches enacted, adapted, revised, or implemented that address and/or have explicit reference to sustainable nature, land, forest and water management as a result of IUCN's work in Rwanda.</p>	<p>EWMR, TREPA, DeSira, AREECA, COMBIO, Green List</p>
<p>IUCN Rwanda participating in at least 2 cross-sectoral and technical national workshops and meetings per month, organized by key stakeholders, that discuss, develop and guide sustainable nature, land, forest and water resources management in Rwanda and/or the region.</p>	<p>All current and new projects</p>
<p>All new IUCN projects apply the Nature-based Solution approach, where applicable.</p>	<p>All new projects</p>
<b>Financial flows in support of IUCN strategy priorities</b>	
<p>At least \$ 200 million funding generated by IUCN for sustainable nature, land, forest and water resources management in Rwanda.</p>	<p>New projects</p>
<p>At least 3 innovative financing models developed and rolled-out in Rwanda.</p>	<p>EWMR, TREPA, COMBIO</p>
<p>At least three PES scheme piloted in Rwanda.</p>	<p>EWMR</p>
<b>Technical capacity assessment and development</b>	
<p>At least 25,000 people trained on and their capacity build in sustainable nature, land, forest and water resources management.</p>	<p>EWMR, TREPA, DeSira, AREECA, COMBIO, Green List</p>
<b>Monitoring</b>	
<p>At least 3 IUCN tools used by stakeholders in Rwanda to monitor sustainable nature, land, forest and water resources management in Rwanda.</p>	<p>TREPA, COMBIO, new projects</p>
<p>All new IUCN projects develop and monitor explicit biodiversity indicators.</p>	<p>COMBIO, all new projects</p>

Landscapes and ecosystem	
At least 500,000 ha of degraded landscapes and ecosystems put under restoration, and sustainably managed through IUCN intervention.	EWMR, TREPA, DeSira, AREECA, COMBIO, Green List
At least 10 protected forests in Rwanda registered under IUCN Categories of Protected Areas; at least two protected areas achieving IUCN Green List status.	COMBIO, Green List
Rwanda Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) assessed.	New projects
At least 150,000 farmers, 50% of women, apply sustainable agriculture practices as a result of IUCN intervention.	EWMR, TREPA, DeSira, AREECA, COMBIO
Climate change adaptation and mitigation	
At least 1,500,000 tCO2e emission reduction through IUCN interventions.	EWMR, TREPA, AREECA, COMBIO
Biodiversity impact	
All IUCN projects demonstrate measurable positive impact on biodiversity and ecosystem services.	COMBIO, TREPA, all new projects
Rwanda Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) assessed.	New projects
Social-economic impact	
At least 100,000 green jobs (casual and long term) created through IUCN interventions.	EWMR, TREPA, DeSira, AREECA, COMBIO
Livelihood of at least 200,000 direct beneficiaries households improved through IUCN interventions.	EWMR, TREPA, AREECA, COMBIO
Beneficiaries gender balance under IUCN projects show a steady increase between 2021-2030.	All projects



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