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EVALUATION OF USAID INVESTMENTS IN NYUNGWE NATIONAL PARK

PROSPERITY, LIVELIHOODS AND CONSERVING ECOSYSTEMS (PLACE) IQC
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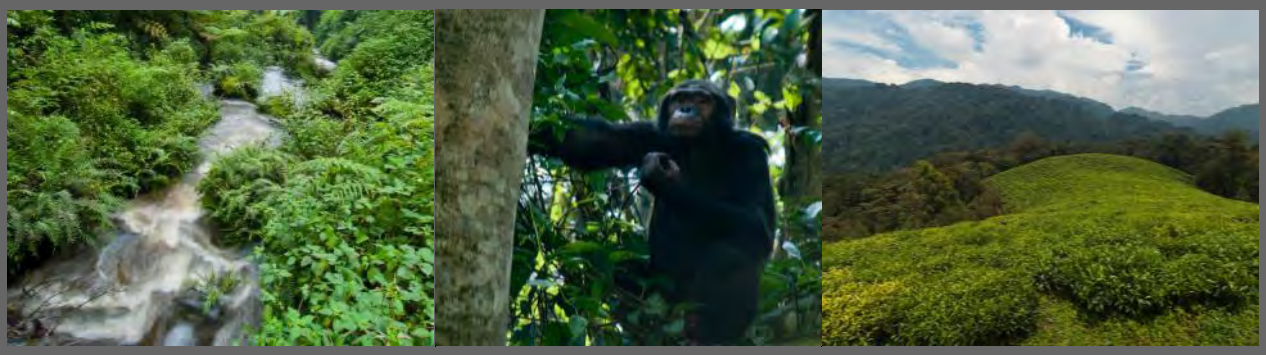

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AUTHORITY

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Although an effort was made to reduce the number of acronyms used in this text, they were necessary in some cases. Whenever the acronym or abbreviation appears the first time it is defined in the text. The following list is provided for ease of reference by the readers of this document.

ANICO	*Animateurs de Conservation*
ARECO	*Association Rwandaise des Ecologistes*
CBET	Community-Based Ecotourism
CDCS	Country Development and Cooperation Strategy
COR	Contracting Officer Representative
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DAI	Development Alternatives Inc.
DNP	Destination Nyungwe Park
EE	Environmental Education
ETOA	Environmental Threats and Opportunities Assessment
FAB	Forestry and Biodiversity [Team]
FONERWA	National Fund for Environment and Climate Change
GoR	Government of Rwanda
IR	Intermediate Result
IRG	International Resources Group
LAC	Limits of Acceptable Change
LWA	Leader With Associates
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MIST	Management Information System
NN	Nyungwe Nziza
NNP	Nyungwe National Park
NWP	Nature, Wealth, Power
NRM	Natural Resource Management
ORTPN	*Office Rwandais du Tourisme et des Parcs Nationaux*
PDD	Project Design Document
PES	Payments for Ecosystem Services
PIR	Project Intermediate Results
PMP	Performance Monitoring Plan
PPPF	Public Private Partnerships Fund
RBM	Ranger-Based Monitoring
RDB	Rwanda Development Board
REDO	Rural Environment and Development Organization
REMA	Rwanda Environment Management Authority
SBCNNP	Sustaining Biodiversity Conservation in Nyungwe National Park
SCAPES	Sustainable Conservation Approaches in Priority Ecosystems
SO	Strategic Objective
SOW	Statement of Work
SSENNP	Strengthening Sustainable Ecotourism in and around the Nyungwe National Park
VCS	Verified Carbon Standard
WCS	Wildlife Conservation Society
WRI	World Resources Institute
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The Nyungwe National Park (NNP) is an approximately 1,019 square kilometer park in southwest Rwanda and home to the Nyungwe Forest, a high-altitude, mountainous rainforest along the Albertine Rift. Since 2006, USAID has continuously been investing in NNP with the objective of accelerating rural economic growth and improving biodiversity conservation in and around the Park. USAID/Rwanda engaged the services of ECODIT LLC to conduct an eight-week performance evaluation (Feb–Apr 2013) and assess the results and achievements of the suite of USAID/Rwanda biodiversity programs in NNP since 2006. The ECODIT Evaluation Team also investigated the extent to which USAID investments are likely to be sustained after the current two projects close in 2015. The Evaluation focused on three projects, with various implementation periods from 2006 to 2015:

1. ***Profitable Ecotourism through Improved Biodiversity Conservation in Rwanda*** project (also known as the Destination Nyungwe Project), implemented by the International Resources Group (IRG) from 2006–2009 (~US $3.8 million contract). This project helped the Rwanda Office of Tourism and National Parks (ORTPN) broaden the country's appeal as a tourism destination by developing NNP infrastructure and management capacity.
2. ***Strengthening Sustainable Ecotourism in and around Nyungwe National Park*** project (also known as Nyungwe Nziza [NN])***,*** being implemented by Development Alternatives Inc. (DAI) from 2010–2015 (~$9 million contract). The primary objective of the NN project is to sustainably accelerate rural economic growth while contributing to biodiversity conservation in and around Rwanda's NNP and help Rwanda Development Board (RDB) transform NNP into a viable ecotourism destination.
3. ***Sustaining Biodiversity Conservation in Nyungwe National Park (SBCNNP)*** project, being implemented by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) from 2010–2015 (~$3.5 million cooperative agreement). This project is a comprehensive landscape program leveraging WCS's 25-plus years of research and experience working in NNP to reduce threats to the forest and improve biodiversity conservation.

Although the Destination Nyungwe Project struggled with implementation problems (slow start-up, staffing issues, over ambitious first-year work plan), it did achieve several key results that set the stage for tourism growth and improved conservation in Nyungwe. These key results include installation of the canopy walk and Uwinka Visitor Center, delineation of the Congo/Nile divide trail (37 km), support for improving chimpanzee habituation in Cyamudongo Forest, and enhancing the ranger-based monitoring (RBM) system.

Although both current projects (Nyungwe Nziza and SBCNNP) face challenges, it is clear that they are performing well and advancing their conservation and ecotourism objectives. DAI has made good progress in improving a handful of park tourism products (trails, bird watching); enhancing marketing strategies and internet presence; and helping cooperatives around the Park develop ecotourism products and better business practices, but has struggled with passing key park policies (National Concessions Policy) and, as a consequence, has delayed implementing the Public Private Partnership Fund to develop infrastructure and new accommodations in and around the Park. WCS has made great strides in improving park management's ability to identify, monitor, and address threats to the Park (including handover of the RBM system to RDB and development of a fire fire-management plan); revamped the *Animateurs de Conservation* (ANICO) program; led a successful pilot to get 200 households

around NNP to adopt fuel-efficient stoves; established and is technically advising the national task force on Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES); and has developed a sound and well thought out education strategy. Despite these achievements, progress on making any PES scheme operational has been slow, and implementation of the education strategy delayed.

PROGRAM DESIGN

The initial program design sought to marry the USAID/Rwanda Strategic Objective (SO) 7 to expand economic opportunities in rural areas with the improvement of biodiversity conservation. This was done to bring the program into alignment with both the mission's strategy and the Biodiversity Code, which guides the investment of earmarked biodiversity. The need for ensuring the improvement of biodiversity conservation limits the types, intensity, and extent of economic development alternatives that are available if the Biodiversity Code is to be respected. At the same time, the need for expanded economic opportunities makes it very difficult to limit all potential uses of or impacts on biodiversity. Additionally, while ecotourism development aligns well with conservation objectives, the limited market for ecotourism compared to broader agricultural or commercial development activities restricts the extent to which the program can expand rural economic opportunities

Although the initial design was relatively simplistic, the Evaluation Team thinks the USAID NNP program design is still reasonable and fits roughly into the Nature–Wealth–Power theory of change that underlies USAID's work in biodiversity conservation in Africa. However, we find that focusing on economic benefits directly from the Park (both through community-based ecotourism products and revenue sharing), while a valuable effort, does not provide sufficient benefits or broad distribution to the surrounding communities to address systemic poverty.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Project monitoring and data collection have taken a variety of forms. For the purposes of this discussion, we can highlight several sources of information that the projects have used (or are planning to use) to inform project or activity design. This includes information gathered by the project implementers (WCS, DAI, and their consultants and partners). The project has commissioned a number of assessments, which have informed project activities. Perhaps most importantly, a great deal of data is being used for the adaptive management of Nyungwe National Park itself by RDB, as the ongoing development of RDB capacity to use monitoring information for the effective management of NNP has been a project priority. Namely, RBM and MIST (Management Information System) have contributed substantially to understanding conservation threats and allowing WCS and RDB to adjust accordingly.

Both the Nyungwe Nziza and the WCS Sustaining Biodiversity Conservation projects are required to regularly report against project indicators to track and measure project results as part of a Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP). Like many multi-year, multi-million dollar development projects, both projects are complex and have myriad project activities, strategies, and expected results. Overall, the projects had satisfactory PMPs, indicators, and targets, though there were some weaknesses. Specifically, WCS should try to capture number of hectares under improved management as well as showing improved biological conditions, reduce the number of environmental education indicators, and improve targets for the livelihoods and climate change assistance indicators. DAI could consolidate some of its indicators and measure at a higher outcome level, and generally, we found the project's economic growth indicators somewhat weak with modest targets.

CONCLUSIONS

All three projects have performed relatively well under challenging circumstances, although they have faced a handful of common or global issues. Government bureaucracy on both ends of the table (Government of Rwanda [GoR] counterparts and USAID) frustrated a productive relationship between project implementers and RDB. There were frequent complaints about a slow bureaucracy and hard to understand decision-making processes aimed at both USAID and RDB/Kigali. Specifically, there were slow approvals or difficulties in passing key policies, such as the National Concessions Policy, approval for installation of Park signs that display rules or regulations, and approvals to construct boardwalks in wetlands within the Park. We repeatedly heard references from RDB about the over-emphasis on "soft" interventions (training, capacity building, planning) by NN during the current second phase. At the same time, NN and USAID feel they have been very clear on the need for a concessions policy and legal approvals like those for the wetland infrastructure before infrastructure development in the Park can proceed. In general, the Evaluation Team felt that due to the relatively small size of the NNP program, USAID was unable to give the kind of consistent engagement that would be needed to deal effectively with project implementation issues. Some of the institutional issues and miscommunications might have been forestalled with more consistent engagement at the working technical level and regular strategic engagement at higher levels.

With the New Forests Company starting to more intensively manage the buffer zone, there is a great deal of uncertainty surrounding the effects this will have, both positive (e.g., generating revenue and jobs) and negative (e.g., displacing areas previously available—sometimes illegally—for wood collection and other natural resources for surrounding communities). Additionally, expanding the growth of ecotourism in Banda and Gisovu is limited by the road conditions to these areas.

Some specific issues for main actors include:
Nyungwe Nziza. NN's cooperative grantees have achieved some impressive results so far, yet it is clear that they are still quite nascent and in need of continued and intensive capacity development if they are to be sustainable. The Evaluation Team recognizes that NN is reaching a very small fraction of the total human population living around NNP with ecotourism-oriented livelihoods opportunities. It also seems the marketing strategy for the Park was not developed in full collaboration with RDB and lacked some specifics target markets, as well as an analysis of the appropriate marketing mix given current resources, explanation of how the proposed brand was developed, and harmonization of branding across the different e-products (website, Facebook, etc.).

SBCNNP. Our initial impression of the SBCNNP project was that it seemed to be spread too thin across too many activities; however, it is clear that this range of activities is important in the context of an integrated threats-based approach to conservation. The Evaluation Team had concerns over the lack of study on gender or other disadvantaged groups for planning activities, a potentially prolonged timeline for the scaling up of the fuel-efficient stove pilot, institutionalization of the ANICO program given it floundered in the past, and that some of the environmental education messages may be too focused on threats and negative in tone rather than focusing on the values of NNP. Lastly, the carbon projects present interesting opportunities for sustainable finance for the Park, although could require significant human and financial resources up front and have high transaction costs.

RDB. The Rwanda Development Board is a highly professional government body serving as a one-stop shop for investors—across all sectors. RDB's Mission writ large is "Fast tracking

economic development in Rwanda by enabling private sector growth." It is an unusual institutional arrangement to house national park management within the institution responsible for attracting and catering to investors; this arrangement seems like it would give an immediate upper hand to business pursuits in the age-old conflict of economic development vs. environmental protection. There is a general concern about the relative strength of the conservation unit within RDB. The overall investment orientation of RDB in general tends to favor tourism development over biodiversity conservation concerns. This requires the intervention of civil society (usually international NGOs) to be watchdogs for conservation interests in and around national parks. RDB/Kigali recognizes, and to some extent shares, this concern. RDB argues, however, that the solution is to strengthen conservation within RDB rather than look to break it off from RDB entirely.

Although the Park is, for the most part, doing an excellent job of conserving Nyungwe Forest while providing a range of visitor opportunities, we did observe a few areas where improvements could be made, such as improving customer service of guides, institutionalizing canopy and other infrastructure maintenance, and upgrading the permitting process. Lastly, NN and SBCNNP are both doing a lot of training of NNP staff on a range of topics (guiding, hospitality, RBM data management, chimp tracking, etc.). It is not clear that RDB is ready or able to absorb or sustain the trainings at the scale that implementing partners are providing.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

During the Remaining Implementation Period

USAID's investments in Nyungwe have gone beyond just supporting park management and include a range of other activities that still have a ways to go before they reach a threshold for sustainability. In the remaining years of implementation, **USAID** should take a more proactive role in leading the partners, including working to facilitate problem solving between all partners (USAID, RDB, DAI, and WCS), building a relationship with other government actors in the environment sector including the Ministry of Natural Resources as well as the Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA), and potentially, inviting a team member from the USAID/E3/Forestry and Biodiversity Office or AFR Bureau to spend some time at the mission and help devise strategies for dealing with these institutional relationships and other issues raised in this report

At the project level, **DAI** could work to refine the Market Strategy and tie it to a Park Business Plan and an updated pricing structure, including a specific vision of what types and numbers of tourists it wants to attract. The Evaluation Team recommends appealing to the Rwandan tourism market (both Rwandans and foreign nationals), as these are the people who will come to the Park during the low season, build national interest and pride in the Park, and will probably be reached with lower marketing costs. DAI sustain its training and organizational development activities with the grantee cooperatives as well as devise a training program for potential recruits from the local communities to staff the new lodges supported by the PPPF.

WCS should prioritize the operationalization of the fire-management plan, as fire is such a serious threat to the Park and buffer zone. Additional recommendations for WCS include (1) looking for opportunities to hand off further conservation activities to RDB, for example the environmental education component; (2) looking for practical ways to scale up the wood stoves initiative such as a pilot stove sale; and (3) investigating other practical approaches for a national level PES pilot, such as a national water tax that could apply to utilities, bottled water companies, and/or industries that depend on clean water (power, tea, etc.). The Evaluation Team also encourages WCS to carry out a rapid gender/other disadvantaged groups' analysis.

In the remaining implementation period, the two projects should collaborate to develop a joint training plan for RDB, the members of which have limited capacity to absorb trainings; emphasis should be on ensuring the sustainability of the skills and abilities being transferred to RDB and utilizing a training of trainers approach. The Evaluation Team also encourages the two projects to collaborate to develop a shared measure of program impact. Lastly, USAID and both projects should look to assist RDB in developing a coordination mechanism for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) around NNP. The list of private sector beneficiaries of Nyungwe National Park is growing: the New Forestry Company, new (through NN's PPPF) and existing lodging businesses, and the tea companies. These companies all benefit directly to one extent or another from the existence and continued conservation of NNP (water, micro-climate, eco-tourists, buffer zone, etc.). There is a real opportunity to explore mechanisms, such as the national environment fund on environment and climate change or some other independent mechanism, for how these various entities might work together to fund CSR activities in and around the Park that have a direct linkage to ensuring the continued conservation of Nyungwe.

Other recommendations for **RDB** include strengthening conservation's voice within the organization at the headquarters level, increasing or reallocating park staff in critical program areas (tourism, education, trails), and establishing an internal training and review process for improving park staff's customer orientation, among other recommendations.

Phase 3 – Sustainability Phase

USAID is the most significant donor involved in Nyungwe (currently contributes more than half of WCS's operating budget in Nyungwe), and we feel ending funding at the conclusion of the current projects would threaten the long-term sustainability of USAID's biodiversity programs in the area. Depending on future decisions about the management of NNP, Phase 3 could pick up on key activities under Phase 2 that are not yet fully sustainable and/or RDB is not yet ready (financially or capacity-wise) to absorb into park management functions (e.g., Environmental Education [EE]) with a combination of direct assistance through RDB and Kitabi College (or other local actors), and/or a new NNP management authority, or a combination or government institutions and WCS. The following are some illustrative activities for an NNP **Sustainability Phase:**

- Strengthen capacity of RDB headquarters to internalize and manage conservation activities within NNP
- Build capacity of NNP staff (or other local entity) to deliver an EE program
- Fully develop PES/CSR mechanisms to enhance long-term sustainable finance (National Fund for Environment and Climate Change or other such mechanism)
- Support RDB to internalize a long-term, targeted NNP staff-training program
- Improve roads to Banda and Gisovu to open these areas to more tourists
- Help RDB to more effectively coordinate work in the buffer zone overall
- Continued support for annual business planning and marketing operations

Opportunities for an Expansion of USAID Investment in Nyungwe

In addition to the above Sustainability activities, USAID could find a way to significantly scale up livelihood improvements around the Park; not just for a few hundred people, but for tens or even hundreds of thousands of people. The key to this expansion of investment would be to tackle the issue of agricultural development and livelihood diversification of communities around the Park. USAID is already working in the Agricultural sector with RDB in other areas of the country. We believe USAID should investigate how a portion of its agricultural investments might be used around NNP as a means to improve the livelihoods of people living around the Park.

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The Evaluation Team would like to thank all those who participated in sometimes very long and detailed meetings with us. We appreciated the openness and candor we got from all stakeholders. It made pulling this information together in a very short time period possible. Although it is not possible to name everyone who provided important support to us, a few individuals should be acknowledged. Tony Nsanganira, RDB's Acting Chief Operating Officer, and Rica Rwigamba, Head of the Department of Conservation and Tourism, both provided their valuable time and candid and useful insights into the Rwanda Development Board. Chloe Cippolletta and James Seyler, the Chiefs of Party for WCS and DAI, respectively, each gave significant amounts of their time and that of their staff and provided key supports in making sure the field visits came off smoothly. Louis Rugerinyange, Nyungwe National Park's Chief Warden, provided his valuable time and quality thoughts and observations on NNP's management achievements and challenges. The hospitality provided by him and his team made our field visit much more productive. Ildephonse Kambogo, NNP's very capable Tourism Warden, was tasked with accompanying the Evaluation Team during a significant portion of our field visit, and held up well under our near constant barrage of questions. Dr. Michel Masozera, WCS Country Director, provided invaluable insights into management of Nyungwe through the years and was always ready to respond to our questions. Aimee Mpambara, USAID Rural Development Specialist, prioritized meeting with the team to provide important background and history on the current projects before leaving town. Last, but certainly not least, we would like to acknowledge and thank Terhi Majanen, USAID/Rwanda Environment Officer, and the Evaluation Team's COR. Terhi was extremely supportive, providing invaluable advice on stakeholders and issues. She and her team also provided great logistical backstopping that ensured we were able to focus on the tasks at hand.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

USAID/Rwanda engaged the services of ECODIT LLC to assess the results and achievements of the suite of USAID/Rwanda biodiversity programs in Nyungwe National Park (NNP) since 2006. The ECODIT Evaluation Team analyzed current program performance and is making a number of recommendations for improving performance for the two USAID-funded projects operating in NNP until 2015. Additionally, the Evaluation Team investigated the extent to which USAID investments are likely to be sustained after the two current projects close in 2015. The Task Order Statement of Work (SOW) stipulated the following primary Evaluation objectives:

Objective No. 1	Assess the results and achievements of USAID/Rwanda biodiversity programs since 2006 and obtain information about performance
Objective No. 2	Determine the extent to which USAID investments are likely to be sustained.
Objective No. 3	Make recommendations on how current projects can improve performance in the remaining years of the project, as well as recommendations for areas of focus for future USAID investments.

This Evaluation was carried out during February and March of 2013 (Period of Performance: February 6 – April 12, 2013). This Evaluation occurred while the Mission was in the process of finalizing its Country Development and Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) and was an opportunity to provide feedback on the Mission's biodiversity investments while USAID/Rwanda is strategizing its future investment priorities and project portfolio. See *Annex A* for full SOW for the Evaluation.

1.2 BACKGROUND

Background on Rwanda and Nyungwe National Park

Rwanda is a small, mountainous, landlocked country with high biodiversity due to its topography (lowlands to mountains) and diverse regional climatic conditions.[1] It is also one of the least developed and most densely populated (approximately 11.5 million people) countries in the world, with nearly half of its population under the age of 16. Most of the population resides in rural areas and depends on small-scale agriculture and other natural resources for subsistence. Nearly all of Rwanda's remaining forested lands (approximately 12 percent of total land) are within the borders of its three national parks and its two forest reserves. The other two national parks, Volcano National Park and Akagera National Park, were created in 1925 and 1934, respectively. Nyungwe National Park, which includes Cyamudongo and Gisakura Natural Forests, was promoted to a National Park from a forest reserve in 2005 (Law n° 22/2005 on November 21, 2005).

Nyungwe Forest bird. Photos by Olaf Zerbock, March 2013.

The Nyungwe National Park is an approximately

[1] USAID/Rwanda Environmental Threats and Opportunities Assessment (ETOA), 2008

1,019 square kilometer park in southwest Rwanda and home to Nyungwe Forest, a high-altitude, mountainous rainforest along the Albertine Rift. It is recognized as a site of global importance for its biodiversity and endemism values, which are among the highest within the biologically rich Albertine Rift eco-region[2,3]. NNP is the largest mountainous forest remaining in Africa and home to 20 percent of all African primates, including 13 primate species, as well as 280 bird species (including 25 endemic species), 43 species of reptiles, and 85 mammal species.[4] There is also an extremely rich plant life with more than 240 species of orchids.

Background on USAID Investments in NNP

USAID began investing in Nyungwe Forest Reserve in the late 1980s with a two-year grant to the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) focused on supporting biodiversity research. In the early 1990s, USAID funded another WCS project in Nyungwe that ran for approximately two years before it was cut short by Rwanda's civil war. Since 2006, USAID has been continuously investing in the newly established Nyungwe National Park with the objective to accelerate rural economic growth and improve biodiversity conservation in and around the Park via three different projects. These projects include:

1. ***Profitable Ecotourism through Improved Biodiversity Conservation in Rwanda,*** implemented by the International Resources Group (IRG) from 2006–2009 (~$3.8 million contract)
2. ***Strengthening Sustainable Ecotourism in and around Nyungwe National Park,*** being implemented by Development Alternatives Inc. (DAI) from 2010–2015 ($9 million contract)
3. ***Sustaining Biodiversity Conservation in Nyungwe National Park,*** being implemented by WCS from 2010–2015 (~$3.5 million cooperative agreement)

Profitable Ecotourism through Improved Biodiversity Conservation in Rwanda, also known as the Destination Nyungwe Project (DNP)

This project helped the Rwanda Office of Tourism and National Parks (ORTPN) broaden the country's appeal as a tourism destination by developing key areas of NNP. The project had three areas of concentration: (1) economic growth through positioning Nyungwe as a tourism destination, both alternative and complementary to gorilla trekking in Volcanoes National Park; (2) conservation of biodiversity by balancing tourism with protecting the forest's sensitive and diverse plant and animal life; and (3) addressing the economic needs of local communities that may be linked to tourism in and around the project's targeted areas. The project developed a number of important tourism products including the canopy walk and Congo-Nile trail and provided training for park guides to improve chimp tracking. This project also gave out 10 grants to cooperatives surrounding the Park to develop livelihood projects and community-based ecotourism (CBET) products.

Whereas the DNP had program components addressing economic growth and livelihoods, biodiversity conservation, tourism, and health, the follow-on program broke out these programming components into two different, yet complementary, projects via a cooperative agreement to WCS (focused on biodiversity conservation) and a contract to DAI (focused on ecotourism and health).

[2] ORTPN. Strategic plan 2004–2008, October 2008
[3] RDB/Rwanda. Nyungwe National Park Management Plan 2011–2021, 2011
[4] Antioch University, Nyungwe National Park, http://www.antiochne.edu/nyungwe/, accessed March 28, 2013

Strengthening Sustainable Ecotourism in and around Nyungwe National Park (SSENNP) also known as the Nyungwe Nziza (NN) project

The primary objective of the NN project is to sustainably accelerate rural economic growth while contributing to biodiversity conservation in and around Rwanda's Nyungwe National Park and to help Rwanda Development Board (RDB) transform NNP into a viable ecotourism destination. The project operates on the principle that if NNP becomes a robust tourism destination and surrounding communities benefit from park tourism, there will be an incentive to conserve and protect the Park. NN aims to achieve these objectives via activities that support the following five project intermediate results (PIR):

PIR	Description of Result (Strategy)	Illustrative Activities
1	**Developing Nyungwe's tourism products through increased private sector participation**	Improving trail signage, improving the chimp-tracking product, managing a public private partnership fund (PPPF) to support development of new accommodations in and around the Park
2	**Improving marketing and promotion of Nyungwe among targeted segments**	Developing a marketing and e-marketing strategy as well as marketing products, such as a park website and trail brochures
3	**Improving integration and linkages between communities and the ecotourism value chain**	Providing financial assistance to cooperatives surrounding the Park to develop cultural tourism products; encouraging private sector relationships with cooperatives around the Park
4	**Improving policy and enabling environment for ecotourism**	Analyzing and developing policy recommendations regarding a national concessions policy (for private sector to manage tourism assets inside national parks) and improving the pricing policy at NNP
5	**Improving RDB, private sector, and community capacity for ecotourism planning and management**	Providing trainings to RDB staff and technical and management training to cooperatives surrounding the parks

Sustaining Biodiversity Conservation in Nyungwe National Park

The Sustaining Biodiversity Conservation project is a comprehensive landscape program leveraging WCS's 25-plus years of research and experience working in NNP to reduce threats to the forest and improve park management. The overriding goal of the project is for Rwanda to benefit from the conservation of wildlife and sustainable use of ecosystem services in NNP. The principal objective is to improve the capacity of the RDB to sustainably manage the Park's resources and address specific threats (fire, poaching, timber, harvesting) to the Park and particular species of concern. The supporting objective is that communities and government are able to benefit from the conservation of wildlife and sustainable management and use of ecosystems in NNP. WCS utilizes six strategies to achieve these objectives and goals:

No.	Description of Strategy	Illustrative Activities
1	**Strengthening RDB's Biodiversity and Threats Monitoring Capacity**	Improving capacity to use ranger-based monitoring as a park management tool
2	**Strengthening RDB and Districts' capacity to manage conflict, mitigate threats, and manage tourism**	Reestablishing and improving a volunteer environmental outreach program (*Animateurs de Conservation);* developing a fire-management plan
3	**Strengthening the knowledge and interest of the Government of Rwanda to develop and support PES policies**	Providing trainings and a forum to discuss PES and coordinating an inter-ministerial task force on PES
4	**Develop PES schemes**	Commissioning a study of the landscapes hydrology and recruiting buyers and sellers to the market
5	**Develop Alternatives for Resource Use**	Piloting energy-efficient wood stoves and studying the feasibility of establishing bamboo woodlots
6	**Implement Education and Outreach Programs**	Developing formal and informal education programs

1.3 METHODS

The Evaluation Team had a condensed period of time to conduct the Evaluation, but benefited from a large Evaluation Team that included one Team Leader, one Natural Resource Management (NRM) Specialist, one Environment and Tourism Specialist, two USAID/Washington staff members (Forestry and Climate Change Specialist and Environment Officer) and one USAID/Rwanda Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Specialist (see *Annex B* for Biographical Sketches of the Evaluation Team Members). The initial literature review began in mid-February; the in-country field work and consultations with stakeholders occurred during the first two weeks of March (March 1–15, 2013).

USAID tasked ECODIT with conducting a Performance Evaluation (see *text box*), which focuses on answering descriptive and normative questions; this was primarily a ***mid-term*** evaluation for the purposes of the DAI and WCS projects. The Evaluation Team employed a mix of methods to carry out the evaluation including: (1) a review of project documentation (work plans, reports, and technical reports and studies; see *Annex C* for list of references), (2) focus groups, (3) key informant interviews, and (4) direct observations to answer a series of Evaluation questions provided by USAID in the SOW and developed by the Evaluation Team (see *Annex D* for a full list of questions). The Evaluation Team spent one week at their respective home bases conducting a desk review of existing project documentation and other Rwandan policies, strategies, etc., and preparing and planning field work, including some basic question guides.

> **Performance Evaluations** focus on descriptive and normative questions: what a particular project or program has achieved (either at an intermediate point in execution or at the conclusion of an implementation period); how it is being implemented; how it is perceived and valued; whether expected results are occurring; and other questions that are pertinent to program design, management and operational decision making. Performance evaluations often incorporate before-after comparisons, but generally lack a rigorously defined counterfactual.
>
> ***– USAID Evaluation Policy, January 2011***

Stakeholder Workshop, Serena Hotel Kigali, March 7, 2013.
Photo by Olaf Zerbock.

In country, the Team met with USAID staff, project implementing staff, stakeholders, and beneficiaries (including the RDB staff in Kigali and the Park). The team interviewed and consulted more than 45 individuals (see *Annex E* for a List of Individuals Consulted and Institutional Affiliation) and visited more than 15 park and project sites, including project offices, potential concession sites, grantee cooperatives, and park trails and ecotourism products (see *Annex F* for list of sites visited). Additionally, the Evaluation Team held a Nyungwe National Park Stakeholder Workshop on Thursday, March 7, "to introduce major activities and initiatives of past and current USAID projects in the Park, involve informed stakeholders in the Evaluation process, and seek feedback and perspective on the institutional framework and policy environment for tourism and conservation in Nyungwe National Park and Rwanda at large." (A full list of Stakeholder Workshop participants can be found in *Annex B*.)

The condensed timeline for this Evaluation was the largest limitation, constraining the amount of time spent with and number of stakeholders that could be consulted as well as overall time for analysis. It should also be noted that the Evaluation Team, at the instruction of USAID, did not evaluate the health components of the USAID investments in NNP. The fact that this was a mid-term evaluation (current projects still have two years of implementation) did not permit us to do a more rigorous before-and-after comparison of impacts. Both current projects have baseline information for many aspects of their activities (cooperative finances and capacity as well as environmental knowledge), but at this mid-point, have not yet completed follow-up assessments against those baselines, although both projects are planning this analysis. We did analyze project Performance Monitoring Plans and progress against targets (see Section 2.3 on Program Management) and other project monitoring data provided by WCS and DAI. In addition, our qualitative methods allowed us to triangulate between diverse stakeholder observations and opinions, as well as the team's personal observations of project activities, in order to draw conclusions about the outcomes and impacts the program has had to date.

1.4 ORGANIZATION OF THIS REPORT

The report has three main chapters. Chapter 1 is an Introduction (this chapter) and provides background and describes the Team's methodology. Chapter 2 is the Discussion of the Findings. The Discussion of the Findings is organized around a series of questions formulated using the objectives of the exercise and the evaluation questions we used to guide our inquiry (see *Annex D*). In some cases, the discussion questions will be identical to the evaluation questions; in other cases, we have modified the discussion questions to fit the flow of the report and intention of the objectives. We have ensured, however, that all key evaluation questions were answered, and we have used information gathered through the discussion questions to enhance our reporting. Chapter 3 presents the Team's Conclusions, including outlining specific and global issues and challenges for the project. Finally, Chapter 4 describes global and project specific Recommendations to ensure sustainability.

2. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

2.1 PROGRAM DESIGN

Was the initial program design appropriate and does it hold up today?

The initial program design sought to marry the USAID/Rwanda Strategic Objective (SO) 7 to expand economic opportunities in rural areas with the improvement of biodiversity conservation. This was done to bring the program into alignment with both the mission's strategy and the Biodiversity Code, which guides the investment of earmarked biodiversity funds (see *text box* below). This design led to two different but necessarily integrated implementation components: traditional biodiversity conservation activities (patrols, environmental education and outreach, ecological research and monitoring, etc.) and those focused more on the acceleration of economic growth via an emphasis on ecotourism development in NNP. The initial program design also included a link to USAID/Rwanda SO 6 to increase the use of community health services.

Box 1. Biodiversity Conservation at USAID: The Biodiversity Code

Biodiversity conservation is one of several interrelated areas of USAID environmental programming, including sustainable forestry, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and water resources management, that generate their own economic and social development results while improving the sustainability of other USG investments. Over the years, biodiversity activities and programs have become more complex and better integrated with other Agency development programs. At the same time, USAID has been required, due to a Congressional earmark, to program additional funds for biodiversity activities. As a result, a clear definition of what constitutes a biodiversity program has been critical, and the Agency's "Biodiversity Code" guides USAID missions in determining which programs are included in the accounting toward the biodiversity earmark.

The Biodiversity Code is composed of four key criteria, all of which must be met to be considered a biodiversity program:

1) The program must have an explicit biodiversity objective (it isn't enough to have biodiversity conservation result as a positive externality from another program);
2) Activities must be identified based on an analysis of threats to biodiversity;
3) The program must monitor associated indicators for biodiversity conservation; and
4) Site-based programs must have the intent to positively impact biodiversity in biologically significant areas.

The linkage of the two objectives, however, constrains opportunities for both to some extent. The need for ensuring the improvement of biodiversity conservation limits the types, intensity, and extent of economic development alternatives that are available if the Biodiversity Code is to be respected. At the same time, the need for expanded economic opportunities makes it very difficult to limit all potential uses of or impacts on biodiversity. The dynamic tension between these elements reduces opportunities or alternatives for both, but over the long term, it is expected that they will reinforce each other and enhance the potential for sustainability of both. In other words, benefiting economically, in a demonstrable fashion, from biodiversity should enhance support (social, political, and economic) for biodiversity conservation. The Evaluation Team feels that the USAID investments overall have done a good job of laying the groundwork for ensuring this kind of impact in Nyungwe.

A further constraint on economic growth in the design is the focus on ecotourism development. Although ecotourism development aligns well with conservation objectives, the limited market for ecotourism compared to broader agricultural or commercial development activities restricts the extent to which the program can expand rural economic opportunities. The program's design allows for economic impacts for several hundred individuals whereas the human population around Nyungwe is well over 300,000. It is possible to broaden economic opportunities beyond

ecotourism investments while still ensuring biodiversity conservation, but it would require a more complex design and implementation regime.

Under Phase 1 of implementation (Destination Nyungwe Project 2006–09), the project started with a wide scope, intending to execute project activities concerning biodiversity conservation, rural livelihoods, ecotourism, and public health; an ambitious Year 1 work plan was drawn up. At the start of Year 2 and after minimal progress on the work plan and dissatisfaction over benefits materializing for the Park, a large stakeholder workshop was held and the project refocused and implemented activities and built park infrastructure primarily to advance ecotourism objectives. DNP also implemented a grants program to support cooperatives around the Park to develop CBET projects and livelihood activities like mushroom growing and honey production.

Many of the DNP grantees' livelihood activities did not last into Phase 2. It is unclear if these activities were dropped purposely or simply because there was an ineffective handover between phases. There was also speculation that some DNP grants funding those activities were made with no emphasis on sustainability (e.g., little or no accompanying training to ensure that cooperatives were able to operate effectively), which led to those investments not being sustained or being squandered. In any case, our team felt the linkages to biodiversity conservation for some of the livelihood activities—like mushroom growing and beekeeping—were weak in their conception and implementation. It is interesting to note, however, that WCS, from another funding source, has worked on honey production in Nyungwe as a way of addressing the threat of wild fire in a way that seems to be effective and would be acceptable under the Biodiversity Code. Overall, DNP had some serious implementation issues; however, it did achieve some key outcomes (infrastructure and conservation) that set the stage for Phase 2.

It seems USAID poorly managed the transition from Phase 1 to Phase 2. There is lack of basic documentation and institutional memory of how and why Phase 2 was designed (split into two agreement mechanisms, etc.). Additionally, the Mission has not had a new country strategy (current CDCS for 2013–2017 is still awaiting approval) since 2009 to guide programming, although the 2008 Environmental Threats and Opportunities Assessment (ETOA) recommended continued investments in NNP[5]. It's clear that Phase 1 of the program was not properly closed out (lack of documentation), which suggests that lessons learned from Phase 1 were not captured nor used to guide the design of Phase 2. RDB Kigali was consulted for Phase 2 and suggested that they expected DAI's implementation work to be similar to IRG's project, including financing new park infrastructure; the Chief Park Warden stated that management at the park level was not involved in design of Phase 2. USAID Staff, who were new to the Mission at the time, were also assigned to manage the two agreements of Phase 2 with minimal guidance and relatively little NRM background. Despite the deficiencies in the planning and management process, the Evaluation Team agrees in principle with the two different implementation awards as WCS is a highly capably conservation organization with deep experience in NNP and deserving of its own award to conduct traditional biodiversity conservation activities, while ecotourism development work is more appropriate for a contractor.

Even though the initial design was relatively simplistic, we think the USAID NNP program design is still reasonable and fits roughly into a Nature-Wealth-Power theory of change (see *text box*), which underlies USAID's work in biodiversity

Box 2. Nature, Wealth, and Power: Summary of principles and best practices for revitalizing rural Africa; NWP strategic framework recognizes the effectiveness of simultaneously addressing nature (environmental management), wealth (economic concerns), and power (good governance).

[5] Note the Evaluation Team was not provided a more recent Biodiversity Assessment or Environmental Threats and Opportunities Assessments despite numerous requests. If the Mission has not conducted a more recent biodiversity assessment than 2008, it should consider doing so.

conservation in Africa. However, we find that focusing on economic benefits directly from the Park (both through community-based ecotourism products and revenue sharing), while a valuable effort, does not provide sufficient benefits or broad distribution to the surrounding communities to address systemic poverty. The lack of resources and economic alternatives in these communities remains a key driver of forest degradation that needs to be addressed. More recently, the Park has developed the 2012–2021 Nyungwe National Park Management Plan, which complements USAID investments and has programs that support the three cornerstones of the Nature, Wealth, and Power framework.

Alignment with NNP Management Plan 2012–2021

The Nyungwe National Park Management Plan 2012–2021 was developed by RDB with financial support from the Global Environment Facility–Protected Areas Biodiversity project between August 2011 and April 2012. The Management Plan was developed while the current USAID-supported projects were in full implementation, and WCS and DAI staff were among those involved in the consultation process. WCS and DAI also figure prominently in many of the specific Program Activity Plans developed under each of the Management Plan's components as a source of funding and/or among those responsible for undertaking particular activities. Therefore, it is not surprising that the activities of WCS and DAI align well with the Management Plan's priorities. We noted that DAI's Third Annual Work Plan specifically maps their activities to the corresponding section of the NNP Management Plan. The Plan outlines four broad management programs:

- An **Ecological Management Program**, under which much of WCS's project activities fall. This includes the threat monitoring and analysis especially through the use of Ranger-Based Monitoring (RBM). Long-term biodiversity and ecological monitoring, partially supported by USAID funds, also falls under this program.
- A **Tourism Management & Development Program**, with which much of DAI's work, and some of WCS's effort, align. This section specifically calls for the improvement of the ecotourism and adventure products as well as the strengthening of the community ecotourism value chain. Examples of specific USAID-supported activities include the development and maintenance of tourism infrastructure, creating new tourism focus areas (e.g., development of activities at Gisovu), monitoring the impacts of tourism via the Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC), and increasing tourism marketing for NNP.
- The **Community Partnership Program** calls for efforts to address human-wildlife conflicts, promote sustainable livelihoods and resources use, and maintain awareness-raising and education programs, among other activities. USAID-supported activities under this program include support to the ANICO program, environmental education in communities around NNP, and sustainable alternatives to resource extraction.
- The **Park Operations Program** intends to strengthen law enforcement, improve road management, maintain RDB's human and physical resources, and identify options for sustainable financing. USAID investments supporting this program include improvements to ranger patrols using the RBM and Management Information System (MIST), training RDB staff, and exploring financing options for PES.

Another key feature of the Management Plan is the zonation scheme, which divides the Park into four zones with different management implications. Although a detailed discussion of these zones is unnecessary here, it should be noted that many of the USAID tourism investments are appropriately concentrated in the Tourism High Use Zone, and DAI and WCS tourism-related activities appear to be well aligned with the Management Plan's treatment of these zones (for

example, DAI's ecolodge consultancy report aligns well with the relevant guidelines for ecolodges outlined in the Management Plan).

2.2 PROGRAM RESULTS

What are the key results achieved through USAID investment in Nyungwe since 2006?

Phase 1: 2006–2009

The **Destination Nyungwe Project** (DNP), implemented by IRG (with a sub-award to WCS) from 2006–2009, was the only instrument used under the first phase of implementation. Although the project struggled with implementation problems (slow start-up, staffing issues, over ambitious first-year work plan), DNP did achieve several key results that set the stage for tourism growth and improved conservation in Nyungwe. These include:

- The canopy walk was a major investment under Phase 1. Cost estimates range from $750,000 (the USAID funds expended) to over $1 million (including IRG estimates of contractor and home office contributions). The canopy walk, a 90-meter suspension bridge, provides a visually stunning and exciting way to experience Nyungwe Forest. It has enhanced visitor numbers to the forest (particularly among Rwandan and other local tourist groups) and increased NNP's visibility in Rwanda, including high government delegations visiting the attraction. Almost a fourth of all visitors to Nyungwe traverse the canopy walk. The canopy walk appears to have stimulated RDB interest in positioning NNP as an "adventure" tourism destination.

Canopy Walk. Photo by Edith McClintock, March 2013.

- The Uwinka visitor center was another critical investment. This professionally designed attraction provides bathrooms, ticket sales, a forthcoming gift shop and refreshment stand in addition to a very impressive interpretive center with a compact but comprehensive display focused on communicating the values of and threats to Nyungwe Forest.

- A comprehensive trail guide was drafted during DNP, although some modifications and final publication did not occur until Phase 2.

- Under DNP, WCS supported the Ranger-Based Monitoring (RBM) System, which was first introduced in NNP in 2003, and enhanced its effectiveness through the use of the MIST software program. This innovation has led to much more accurate and detailed monitoring of threats across the Park and has enhanced law enforcement planning and implementation. MIST is currently used in all national parks in Rwanda.

- WCS led efforts to expand environmental education and the ANICOs (*Animateurs de Conservation*) concept to enhance communication between the Park and surrounding communities, and identified and recruited ANICOs in new areas around NNP.

- The Congo/Nile divide trail (37 km) was delineated to facilitate an overnight hiking experience during this phase of the program, although it did not become fully operational until Phase 2.

- Support for improving habituation of Chimpanzees at Cyamudongo Forest. This training and tracker mentorship significantly improved the likelihood of chimpanzee viewing for tourists.

Phase 2: 2010–Present

The second phase of implementation saw a division of responsibilities between two different mechanisms: a contract that went to DAI through a competitive process and an associate award (Cooperative Agreement) to WCS through the Sustainable Conservation Approaches in Priority Ecosystems (SCAPES) Leader With Associates (LWA). The second phase projects will close out in 2015, roughly two years from now. Although both projects face challenges, it is clear that they are performing well and achieving their conservation and ecotourism objectives.

Under the DAI-led project, called **Nyungwe Nziza** (NN), the focus of activities has been almost entirely on enhancing the ecotourism experience in the Park and providing support to local communities to help them benefit from ecotourism. DAI has made good progress in improving a handful of park tourism products (trails, bird watching); enhancing marketing strategies; and helping cooperatives around the Park develop ecotourism products and business operations, but has struggled with passing key park policies (National Concessions Policy)[6] and, as a consequence, has delayed implementing the Public Private Partnership Fund. DAI's project activities have undoubtedly contributed to an increase in park visitors in 2010 and 2011 (tourism data available in *Annex G* and a more detailed discussion on increases of park revenues and tourists and attribution in Section 2.3: *Program Management*). Major achievements include:

- Among NN's first activities was to ensure an effective launch of the canopy walk and Uwinka visitor center. This required significant trail work, training of guides, rehabilitation of parts of the center that were poorly constructed, and the installation of a rain water collection system.

Bridge independently built to NPS specifications by cooperative. Photo provided by DAI.

- NN has also been actively involved in rehabilitating visitor trails and training community cooperatives in the maintenance of Nyungwe's trail system. This included significant work to enhance the Waterfall trail. We feel the use of community cooperatives to provide paid labor for trail maintenance in the Park is an important innovation and helps link community income directly to the survival of the Park. Also of note is the fact that communities have quickly adopted the US National Park Service techniques taught to them and are using them consistently without project intervention.

- NN has engaged in significant capacity development of park guides, including bird guiding, interpretive skills, customer service, etc. Training activities have also been provided for private sector driver/guides and staff from lodges around the Park. It is clear when talking to private sector stakeholders that the

[6] The Protected Areas Concession Management Policy was passed by Cabinet on April 24, 2013.

skills of park guides have demonstrably improved in recent years, although it is generally agreed that there is still room for improvement, particularly in customer service orientation.

- NN introduced and commissioned the development of the use of the Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) planning system for Nyungwe. This is a good innovation for protected area management in Rwanda. Given its focus on monitoring impacts on key resources rather than trying to find a magic tourist "carrying capacity" for NNP, it gives managers much more freedom in managing visitors to the Park and deals with generally unfounded concerns about how many visitors is "too many" by ensuring key resources are not degraded.

- Although private partnerships funds (PPPF) for infrastructure were significantly delayed, NN has recently accelerated the selection of PPPF opportunities that will increase mid-level lodging opportunities near the Park, and development of these projects is getting started soon. Ecolodge development could conceivably still be redirected inside the Park as originally envisioned, pending final approval and implementation of the Concessions Policy.

- NN has supported four community cooperatives with ecotourism infrastructure investments and significant capacity building to help them develop viable community-based ecotourism products. As noted in DAI's 11th Quarterly Report, all four of the targeted cooperatives reported gross profits for October/November to December 2012: Friends of Nyungwe, Rwandan Francs (RWF) 683,050; Kitabi Women's Handicrafts, RWF 473,560; Banda Pillar of Nature and Tourism Promotion, RWF 561,800; and Cyamudongo Tourism Promotion Cooperative, RWF 631,900.
  - The Cyamudongo cooperative now has a canteen with storage room, gift shop, pit latrine, and gazebo. The cooperative includes a nationally recognized dance troupe and an energetic membership. Although the group is still quite nascent in terms of capacity, members seem to have a good idea of what they want to do in terms of business activities, and have begun serving tourists.

Cooperative Dancers in Cyamudongo. Photo by Edith McClintock, March 2013.

  - The Banda Village cooperative (not visited by the Evaluation Team) received infrastructure support under DNP that NN was able to pick up and continue. The cooperative offers cultural tourism as well as a gift shop, although we often heard that the group does not get the tourism numbers it should due to poor road conditions to reach Banda.
  - The Kitabi Handicraft Women's cooperative has also received support under both phases of the program. Like Banda, they received infrastructure (work space and shop) under DNP and have gotten capacity development from NN. The group makes a range of products (baskets, necklaces, sweaters), but it is the sweaters that seem to

be driving the business, with local sales being more important than sales to tourists, showing the group is able to adapt to existing markets.

- The Kitabi Cultural Village cooperative has received both infrastructure and capacity development from NN. They offer a good-quality cultural village experience and have been slowly expanding their business, and providing benefits to members. We were told a significant source of income for the group comes from hosting Rwandan weddings, another sign of adaptation to the market.

- Many marketing products have been developed and printed by NN, including websites, trail brochures, a general park brochure, and birding brochures, which are being used and seem valued by tour operators. FAM trips have been organized, several international promotional articles written, and NNP-branded merchandise developed, including t-shirts, hats, and baskets. NN also edited and printed the Trail Guide begun under DNP. A Marketing Strategy was recently developed and provides a good preliminary analysis of RDB's internal and external constraints to improving the promotion of NNP.

- NN has invested significantly in supporting the development of a concessions policy for RDB. The policy has been accepted by RDB and included in the 2012–2021 NNP Management Plan, but still needs cabinet-level approval, which is taking a significant amount of time. NN has also contributed to policy through the Entrance Fees Pricing study, as a means to improve pricing structure in the Park. DAI also conducted an Optimization of Visitor Fees study that assisted RDB in developing a revised pricing structure for its products that recently received approval from RDB-HQ.

- Although not the focus of this evaluation, NN has provided support to health programs around the Park, including: training in family planning/reproductive health, HIV/AIDS prevention, antenatal care and maternal and child health, health and environment sessions, and a healthy workplace.

The SCAPES LWA associate award under Phase 2 to WCS is officially titled "**Sustaining Biodiversity Conservation in Nyungwe National Park**" (SBCNNP). WCS has made great strides in improving park management's ability to identify, monitor, and address threats to the Park; lead a successful efficient stove pilot; established and is technically advising important task forces on PES; and developed a sound and well thought out education strategy. Despite these achievements, progress on making any PES scheme operational has been slow, and implementation of the education strategy delayed. Although the project suffered from a slow start up and staffing difficulties early on, it has had some important results. These include:

- Through SBCNNP, WCS has developed a true landscape vision for the conservation of the contiguous Nyungwe and Kibira Forests. Through co-finance sources which nearly double the USAID funding available, WCS has put together a comprehensive landscape conservation program that includes trans-boundary collaboration with the Kibira National Park in Burundi and a range of threat-based activities in and around NNP. This vision is based on a shared conceptual model that is well thought out and aligned with project activities, and reflects priorities identified in the NNP Management Plan.

- WCS has a long history at Nyungwe and has collaborated with the Government of Rwanda on the forest's management for more than 25 years. It is important to note that WCS seems to have a good history of handing over activities to the Government of Rwanda (GoR). Over the life of the current program, the SBCNNP has handed over Cyamudongo chimp tracking and is in the final stages of handing over the RBM and MIST

software to RDB park management. The RBM/MIST system has been adopted by RDB at all national parks in Rwanda and is a key tool in monitoring threats and managing rangers.

- The SBCNNP is implementing a strong Environmental Education component and restarted the *Animateurs de Conservation* or "ANICO" program, which is nicely integrated with WCS's adult environment education program. ANICO's are local community volunteers who receive special education and training related to being an outreach agent for the NNP. This outreach work includes educating community members on the Park as well as acting as the Park's eyes and ears out in the communities. As such, they are viewed as instrumental by the Chief Park Warden in carrying through a conservation agenda with communities. While we were visiting the site, an ANICO was instrumental in ensuring the capture of a poacher wanted in connection with an attack on a park ranger last year.

Women describing her experience using a fuel-efficient stove. Photo by Olaf Zerbock, March 2013.

- SBCNNP is engaged in a pilot implementation of an improved wood stove in Rusizi District, bordering the Park. The stove improves cooking efficiency, reducing labor for women and reducing significantly the amount of wood needed for cooking (approximately 10 percent or more reduction, Rural Environment and Development Organization [REDO], 2012). Two hundred stoves have been installed in demonstration households. According to sources we interviewed, the stoves are almost universally appreciated and are ready for the next stage of promotion.

- WCS has been working on the development of forest carbon projects in and around NNP. One effort, undertaken with USAID funding, is working with a Ugandan organization (ECOTRUST) and a local partner (Adenya) to develop a feasibility analysis for a reforestation project outside of the NNP. The project could generate voluntary-market carbon credits under the Plan Vivo carbon project standard. As envisioned, the project would plant a limited number of trees on smallholder farm fields in either a boundary-planting or alley configuration. To date, ECOTRUST has completed a feasibility study showing that the project has the potential to sequester 122 to 254 tons CO_2/ha, depending on planting modality. The project could start small and scale up as farmers are recruited in the areas around NNP.

- WCS initiated another forest carbon project, which would reforest approximately 6,300 hectares of previously burned areas inside the NNP through assisted natural regeneration, generating income through carbon credits certified under the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) and sold on the voluntary market. Although the technical work towards this effort was completed separately from USAID funding, WCS has continued to develop the Project Design Document (PDD) with Terra Global Capital.

- WCS has provided extensive technical support to the work of a PES Technical Task Force under the leadership of the Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA), with the intention to advance the understanding of PES at the national level in Rwanda and work towards practical implementation. To this end, WCS commissioned a detailed policy analysis on the institutional, legal, and policy frameworks for PES in Rwanda, and

produced a related policy brief intended to inform the Post-2012 Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy. Although the work completed to date by WCS is important for any future design of PES schemes at meaningful scale, it appears that true progress on national PES awareness and framework development has proceeded slowly. Delays and challenges in this process can be expected, as PES is a new, complex concept.

At the local level, WCS (with technical support from World Resources Institute [WRI]) is working with stakeholders to examine how water PES could contribute to a sustainable financing plan for NNP. The project has engaged stakeholders—including the portion of the private business sector that benefits economically from the provision of water by the NNP—to understand their perceptions and potential interest. Originally, WCS intended to work towards the establishment of a functional PES scheme in and around Nyungwe over the lifetime of the USAID project. Although the (draft) NNP Sustainable Financing Plan (Dec. 2012) represents progress in laying out a logical approach for PES to contribute to financing NNP, it is somewhat unlikely that the project will be able to get a PES project up and running by the end of the USAID project.

- SBCNNP has also developed a comprehensive fire-management plan for the Park, which is not yet fully funded, but provides the basis of a system for controlling the impact of fire on Nyungwe, a significant threat to the Park's ecological integrity. This effort is aligned with the NNP Management Plan, which places a heavy emphasis on managing fire as a key threat to the Park.

In addition to the above project-specific results, it is worth noting that the overall capacity of RDB/Nyungwe National Park (staff, infrastructure, systems) is quite high, particularly when taken in the context of East and Central Africa. The Park is reasonably well organized and provides a good range of tourism products. There is very good collaboration between both projects and RDB/Nyungwe. Although not entirely attributable to USAID investment since 2006, it is clear that USAID support has made a significant contribution to enhancing the capacity of NNP.

2.3 PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Has project monitoring and data collection improved project planning processes, decision making, and implementation?

Project monitoring and data collection has taken a variety of forms. For the purposes of this discussion, we can highlight several sources of information the projects have used (or are planning to use) to inform project or activity design. This includes information gathered by the project implementers (WCS, DAI, and their consultants and partners). The project has commissioned a number of assessments that have informed project activities. Perhaps most importantly, a great deal of data is being used for the adaptive management of Nyungwe National Park itself by RDB, as the ongoing development of RDB capacity to use monitoring information for the effective management of NNP has been a project priority.

Threat-Monitoring Data

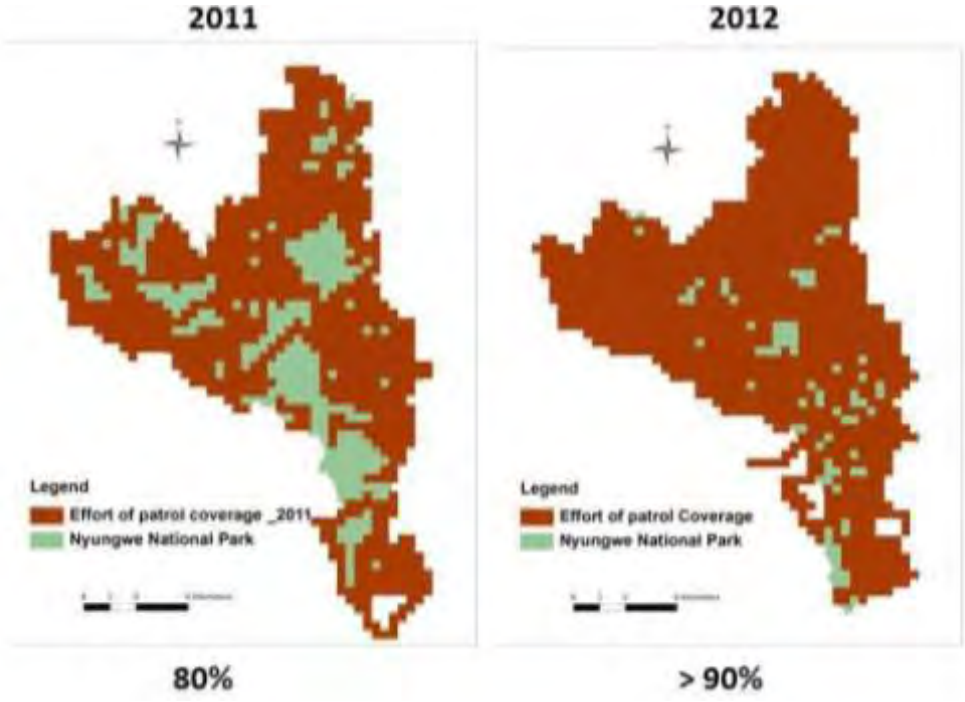
RBM and MIST have contributed substantially to understanding conservation threats and allowing WCS and RDB to adjust accordingly. RBM was introduced to NNP in 2003, and its use has been extensively supported by WCS. MIST, a software-based system introduced by WCS, is used to systematize ranger patrols and analyze the RBM data (patrol routes, observed threats, and animal sightings) they collect. Reports generated using RBM/MIST information are

used to inform community members, conservation partners, and local authorities of the status of park threats, as well as to help RDB in planning ranger patrols.

Although RBM and MIST are now increasingly managed by RDB, it should be noted that in the early years of USAID support, the RBM system was managed almost entirely by WCS. The conceptual model (or Theory of Change) used by WCS to understand conservation threats and drivers, and plan appropriate response interventions, has evolved considerably over time. The model incorporated into the 2010 project agreement was rather simplistic; however, when the Evaluation Team met with WCS, they presented a much more nuanced and detailed discussion, showing that their understanding of threats and their contributing factors (underlying causes) has been extensively informed by park management data (detailed threats analysis available upon request). Some potential issues originally considered important in 2006 (e.g., park degazettement) are no longer considered to be clear and present threats.

Meanwhile, analysis of RBM data showed that illegal activities such as small game poaching, illegal beekeeping, and fires inside the Park were much more common threats. By better understanding threats to the Park, WCS—and increasingly RDB—have been able to use the RBM/MIST information to adaptively manage threat response and plan conservation strategies as needed throughout the project. For example, WCS used RBM monitoring data and social assessments to set priorities for which communities to work with; tree cutting for fuel wood was a key threat identified in Buyeye and Cyamudongo communities, leading WCS to prioritize these areas to pilot the improved efficiency cook stoves. RBM data on the prevalence of mining activities led to the establishment of a temporary ranger post at Gahuriro, Nyaruguru District. MIST-based analysis of spatial areas covered by patrols (some areas were rarely visited due to terrain and accessibility issues) led to the prioritization of new areas for rangers to visit. Park coverage by ranger patrols has increased substantially as a result of MIST; whereas 46–60 percent of the Park was patrolled annually during the years 2006–2010, by 2012 patrols reached around 90 percent of the park area (see *Exhibit 1*). RDB encountered substantial evidence of illegal activity in the newly reached areas, indicating that this new effort is yielding conservation results.

Exhibit 1. Recent Patrol Coverage in Nyungwe National Park



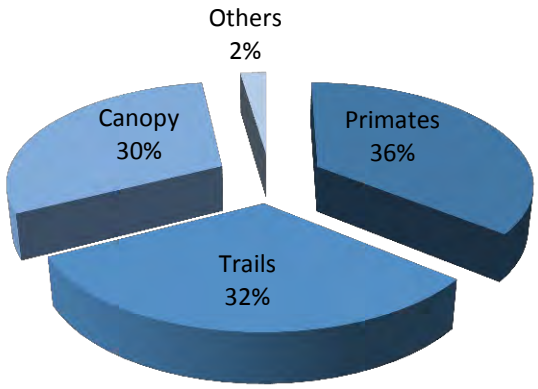
Source: Maps provided by WCS

Delays encountered by WCS over the years in centralizing RBM reports, analyzing the data, and producing reports on a timely basis led to changes in the Park's patrol management structure; the resulting establishment of a zone system for planning patrols and analyzing data has led to a reduction in the amount of time required for RBM data analysis. WCS's ongoing observation of the RBM system in action has led to adjustments in training and support; for example, by helping RDB to refine the procedure for RBM data entry and database replication procedures between zones and the headquarters at Kitabi. A major priority of the current WCS project has been to prepare RDB for the handover of the RBM/MIST system. Currently, RDB is able to manage data collection and use the MIST system to plan future patrols, although they continue to rely on WCS for technical support and training.

Tourism Data

Discussions with Ildephonse Kambogo, the Park's Tourism Warden, indicated that RDB is collecting detailed information on the numbers of tourists visiting the Park and the activities those tourists pay for. This information provides input to RDB's evolving strategy for park tourism. The data show, for example, that chimp visits increased substantially between 2009 and 2012. This is likely due to higher success rates in chimp encounters (presumably attributable to the chimp tracker and guide trainings provided under the project). RDB cites the fact that chimp tracking is consistently sold out (at a maximum of eight visitors per day) as evidence for the need to further develop the chimpanzee product in other locations inside the Park. The project subsequently decided to work with RDB to explore further chimp possibilities, settling on the Gisovu area as the most promising area for future development of chimp encounters. This aligns with the NNP Management Plan's identification of Gisovu as a promising area for tourism development. *Exhibit 2* demonstrates RDB's ability to track number of park activities sold and identify products with weak (and strong) sales. For example, birding and camping (the "Other" products represented in the graph below) made up only 2% of product sales in 2012; further analyses could help contextualize why these products make up such a small percentage of sales and what could be done to increase sales (i.e. devote more resources to product development, increase/improve marketing of these products, packaging with other products, reducing the price of these products, etc.).

Exhibit 2: Park Activities sold in Nyungwe by Products, 2012



Source: RDB-Nyungwe

RDB's tourism monitoring data shows consistent increases in the numbers of tourists visiting since 2006. Although this may be due to a number of factors, it is highly likely that project interventions during Phase 1 and 2 have resulted in success promoting NNP as a destination. For example, increases in 2010 and 2011 of overall tourist numbers, especially the number of local (Rwandan) tourists, may be attributable to travel journalism promotional trips ("FAM trips") and resulting media coverage. These FAM trips were supported by DAI (one partially and the other entirely). The launch of the canopy walk in late 2010 and related media coverage was also likely a large factor in NNP's increased visitation over the last few years. Annual tourist activity purchases rose 28 percent in 2010 and another 36 percent in 2011 (see *Annex G* for 2006–2012 tourism data provided by RDB/Nyungwe). Tourism increases related to the canopy walk are behind RDB's interest in positioning NNP as an "adventure" destination and their enthusiasm for additional investment in a zip line or similar product.

Numbers of tourist activities fell in 2012 (approximately 10 percent). the reasons for this are unclear, there is speculation that there are two factors at play. First, the unrest in portions of the Democratic Republic of Congo bordering Rwanda led to the US State Department to issue travel advisories beginning in June. Second, RDB raised prices for gorilla permits to $750. Both of these factors reduced the number of international tourists coming to Volcanoes Park in Rwanda, with likely negative knock-on effects for NNP.

Additional NNP Monitoring Data

Despite the good progress made in handing over RBM to park management, there are additional data collection and monitoring efforts that remain mostly the domain of WCS, especially for analysis. For example, WCS (later RDB) chimp trackers have a rich data set (since 2008) on the number of chimps observed, their locations and behavior, and other information. However, RDB is not yet able to effectively manage or analyze this information to support better management. Likewise, WCS has managed an extensive 15-year biological monitoring program on the populations of key species (e.g., primates, duikers, small mammals) inside the Park, yet RDB does not yet have the capacity to collect and analyze this information, let alone use it to support effective park management as recommended in the NNP Management Plan. Both organizations see it as a long-term goal to hand these processes over to RDB; however, there are mutually acknowledged barriers to doing so. There could be opportunities to build on the research that Antioch University has conducted in the Park, and involve more Rwanda graduate students, in particular from the National University of Rwanda, in monitoring and research.

Project Assessments and Baseline

Among other proposed conservation and ecotourism interventions, a number of studies have been commissioned in support of project and activity planning. These studies have helped WCS and DAI to appropriately target interventions, understand potential limitations, and determine feasibility of scaling up. For example, the improved cook stove activity included preliminary assessments and a baseline study to determine how communities were obtaining fuel wood. This study quantified household wood use, and by comparing wood use data before and after the stove introduction, the project was able to determine stove effectiveness in reducing wood use on a per-household basis. The observed success of the stove pilot has led the project to further explore how to scale up the stove interventions. RBM data on the prevalence of bamboo cutting inside the southern zone has led to a renewal of interest in finding alternative sources of bamboo for communities to exploit; work by ARECO is being used to inform the project's strategy on this component. Both potential pilot PES components (water and carbon) have

benefitted from strong feasibility analyses by expert partners to produce hydrological models and potential carbon sequestration projections.

The project's education component has evolved over time, and data yielded by baseline surveys has been used to refine implementation strategies. WCS plans to perform a post-test of stakeholders to better understand the results of the education program in the final year of implementation.

Are the indicators selected for the projects adequate (both for reporting in the PMP and internally via work planning and annual reporting)? Are targets appropriate and is there measurable progress toward achieving targets?

Both the Nyungwe Nziza and the WCS Sustaining Biodiversity Conservation are required to regularly report against project indicators to track and measure project results as part of a Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP). The PMP is meant to provide an objective measure of project success as well as aid in project monitoring, planning, and management.

Choosing appropriate indicators as well as the right mix of indicators is important to accurately measuring process against results. According to USAID TIPS[7], seven key criteria should guide selection of performance indicators:

No.	Criterion	Definition
1	Direct	The indicator clearly represents the intended result and measures at the *right level*. An outsider or an expert in the field would agree that the indicator is a logical measure for the stated result.
2	Objective	The indicator is clear and unambiguous about what is being measured and what data is being collected.
3	Useful for Management	The indicator is useful for management decision making.
4	Attributable	The indicator can be plausibly associated with USAID interventions.
5	Practical	Data can be collected on a timely basis at a reasonable cost.
6	Adequate	The indicators, taken as a group, are sufficient to measure the stated result. All major aspects of the result are measured.
7	Disaggregated, as necessary	The indicators are appropriately disaggregated by gender, age, location, or some other dimension that is important for programming.

The Evaluation Team employed these criteria when analyzing the NN and WCS projects' indicators and targets and drew on their own experience in monitoring and evaluation biodiversity conservation projects at other sites. Like many multi-year, multi-million dollar development projects, both the Nyungwe Nziza and the WCS Sustaining Biodiversity Conservation project are complex and have myriad project activities, strategies, and expected results. Determining the right mix of indicators to accurately capture project results while not measuring *everything* is challenging. The following section comments on the projects' current indicators and makes recommendations for improving project monitoring for the purposes of meeting USAID reporting requirements.

[7] USAID, *Performance Monitoring & Evaluation TIPS: Selecting Performance Indicators, 2nd Edition*, 2010.

WCS Sustaining Biodiversity Conservation

Background

The original project Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) was submitted with the first Annual Work Plan and approved by the Agreement Officer Technical Representative in 2010. An internal revision of the PMP was initiated in Year 2, and the revised PMP was revised in February 2012 and approved in April 2012 by the USAID AOTR. This revised PMP serves as the basis for the Evaluation Team's analysis. A September 2012 Project Monitoring and Evaluation Report completed by Dr. Amy Vedder as part of a consultancy noted at the time, "It is recognized that the [WCS Sustaining Biodiversity Conservation] project is monitoring a great deal—from project performance to outcomes—but that it has been difficult to produce monitoring results in a timely fashion." At that time, Dr. Vedder also assisted the WCS project in designing an efficient and meaningful information management system for compiling project monitoring information and assuring that it is available for project and donor use. Fidele Ruzigandekwe is the project's M&E Manager and is regularly populating the newly established project database.

Analysis

In general, the revised PMP does seem to be an improvement on the original PMP in the area of making indicators more direct, practical, and useful for management. It's clear that Dr. Vedder's consultancy brought organization and efficiency to the M&E system; the WCS team has since been producing quarterly reports in a timely fashion and was able to provide updated monitoring data for Year 3 to the Evaluation Team ahead of completing the Year 3 Annual Report. The Evaluation Team concurs with Dr. Vedder's conclusion that quarterly reporting (including reporting on project indicators) is an unnecessarily cumbersome requirement for the project, and beyond that, an uncommon requirement for an agreement of this nature.

Adequacy of Indicator Mix:

The project PMP has 14 indicators for a $3.5 million project with six different project strategies. On average, this is 2.3 indicators per strategy and 4 indicators per $1 million. This is certainly a reasonable amount of indicators for the purposes of limiting the burden of collecting data and reporting on scores of indicators, but could potentially be insufficient to fully capture project results. The majority of the indicators are on the output level, presenting a count of activities, people reached, etc., and a handful of impact and outcome indicators (i.e., Percent of RDB patrols guided by analysis of MIST data). As *Exhibit 3* below suggests, too many project indicators may be attributed to Strategy 6 and too few indicators for Strategies 2 and 5, especially as the Indicator for Strategy 5 is very output oriented and relatively unambitious as the project thinks about scaling up the efficient stove pilot.

Exhibit 3. Analysis of Indicators per Strategy vs. Budget

Strategy	Number of Indicators (percentage)*	Approximate Percentage of Activity Budget**
1	5 (~36%)	27%
2	1 (~7%)	21%
3	2 (~14%)	8%
4	1 (~7%)	9%
5	1 (~7%)	18%
6	6 (~43%)	17%

*Note some indicators monitor more than one strategy.

**Based on only budget amounts for project activities in annual work plans and does not include staff time, management, etc.

See *Exhibit 4* on the next page for a general analysis of the project's 14 indicators.

Exhibit 4. WCS PMP Indicators, Baseline, Year 5 Target, and Comments

WCS Indicators	Baseline	Current	YR5	Comments
1. Number of hectares in areas of biological significance showing improved biophysical conditions as a result of USG assistance[8]	0	478	420.2	Target already exceeded; extended discussion in text
2. Number of people receiving USG-supported training in natural resources management and/or biodiversity conservation	0	442	537	Potential for double counting of individuals via different trainings; may be value in logging training hours
3. Number of policies, laws, agreements, or regulations promoting sustainable natural resource management and conservation that are implemented as a result of USG assistance	0	1	3	Appropriate standard indicator and target value
4. Number of days of USG-funded technical assistance in climate change provided to counterparts or stakeholders	0	4	4	Target values seem low for Life of the Project
5. Percent of RDB patrols guided by analysis of MIST data	0	53.2%	40%	Excellent custom indicator; Target already exceeded
6. Number of illegal activities detected per km walked by patrols (measuring unit: average threat per km walked)	0.34	0.07	0.20	Data needs analysis for explanation in dramatic drop and inconsistency in activities detected
7. Number of Nyungwe-Kibira coordination meetings & patrols per year	0	5	7	Appropriate indicator and target value
8. Percentage of 200 pilot households with access to and use of energy efficient stoves	0	94%	100%	Only Strategy 5 indicator; unambitious target; missing Indicator Reference Sheet
9. Percentage of surveyed students who demonstrate an improvement in their attitude toward NNP	82%	N/A	95%	Target could be high; most difficult to change attitudes of the disaffected, uninterested, rebels of a population
10. Number of target students participating in the program with USG assistance	0	1,600	4,000	Appropriate indicator and target value
11. Number of target teachers/educators trained with USG support	0	19	40	Appropriate indicator and target value
12. Percentage of surveyed community members who have supportive attitude towards NNP	72%	N/A	95%	Target could be high; most difficult to change attitudes of the disaffected, uninterested, rebels of a population
13. Number of individuals from all target user groups participating in the program with USG assistance	0	3,000	3,000	Appropriate indicator and target value
14. Number of target community educators and communicators trained with USG support	0	48	58	Static indicator; target does not change after YR1

[8] In Year 4, WCS will change this indicator to "Number of hectares under improved management." WCS has yet to set a new target for this indicator and will do so in collaboration with USAID and NNP management.

WCS is also capturing data for a number of USAID Standard Indicators that are appropriate to the project (# of NRM trainings; # of policies, etc.), yet there is some debate about a key biodiversity indicator. Dr. Vedder's report suggested replacing the project indicator "Number of hectares in areas of biological significance showing improved biophysical conditions as a result of USG assistance" with "Number of hectares in areas of biologically significance under improved management". Many biodiversity conservation projects use both measures, where improved management tends to increase quickly, and early on, the improved conditions indicator shows longer term, more significant changes in conservation impacts. Given that WCS already has an acceptable system (and data) for measuring improved conditions and that the RBM/MIST system provides evidence for improved management over approximately 90 percent of the Park, it may be fairly easy for the project to report on both indicators. This combination of indicators would provide a more accurate measure of the value of this project globally to USAID. That said, if only one indicator is used, then the improved management indicator is likely most appropriate. The Evaluation Team finds the target for ***number of days of USG-funded technical assistance in climate change provided to counterparts or stakeholders*** to be relatively minimal over the life of the project.

Lastly, WCS should consider logging person hours of training to capture the magnitude of training and avoid double counting of unique individuals in the "Number of people trained" indicator (in fact, this is the new F process indicator and the project may be required to do this anyway). WCS should also consider adding an indicator about number of threats/events, etc., reported/held by the ANICOS to enhance monitoring of Strategy 2. It should be noted that the low budget allocation and programming for the PES activity as well as small target for the stove pilots constrains WCS's ability to contribute to financial stability of the Park and families around the Park.

Project Planning and Management

Although WCS is becoming more efficient and timely in their capturing and reporting of M&E data, it's unclear if this information is actively being used in project planning and management. Given that many of the indicators are output (counts) indicators, it seems unlikely that they could provide rich information for project planning, except perhaps Indicators 5 through 7, which are oriented towards the capacity of park management/rangers. Nonetheless, it is evident that WCS is regularly conducting mini-evaluations and surveys, and has good baseline data for a number of activities (in particular the Schools and Education survey) that are actively guiding project planning and will be useful in the project's final evaluation and demonstration of impact.

DAI Nyungwe Nziza

Background

The original Monitoring and Evaluation Plan was approved in May 2010. The original M&E Plan had 31 indicators for the ecotourism project activities (supporting SO 7) and 22 indicators for the health component (supporting SO 6), for a total of 53 project indicators. In June of 2011, the M&E Plan underwent a review and revision based on the lessons learned in Year 1 of implementation, and DAI analyzed all indicators for validity and applicability and all targets to determine if they were achievable and realistic. A handful of indicators from the ecotourism component were dropped or amended, and a couple of new indicators added, bringing the new total indicators for the ecotourism component to 34. The health component was significantly reduced and prematurely truncated, so the number of indicators was reduced to 6 and are no longer tracked past Yr3 Q2. The majority of the revised targets were reduced to less ambitious targets, but more than one target was increased. Language and definitions of many of the indicators were fine-tuned and made more specific. The connection to USAID sub-IR 7.1.2.

Improved access to business development services (under IR 7.1 *Improved agriculture productivity*) was dropped from the Nyungwe Nziza results framework in the revised PMP. NN uses DAI's Technical and Administrative Management Information System (TAMIS) to organize project reporting data and report against project performance indicators. Firmin Karitanyi is NN's M&E Specialist and is charged with distributing to and retrieving data collection forms from the appropriate party and entering data into TAMIS.

Analysis

The revised PMP did not cause a major overhaul of the system, but did make a number of minor adjustments and improvements across about a third of the indicators. The Critical Assumptions outlined in the PMP are useful for understanding the implementation context. DAI's annual and quarterly reporting has been comprehensive and complete. Two interesting and creative components of the DAI PMP include (1) third-party customer satisfaction surveys for DAI's counterparts and (2) working with the cooperatives to develop community-based M&E at the grantee level. The Evaluation Team likes the idea of both these components, though it seems as though a customer satisfaction survey has not been conducted yet, but is planned for the near future.

The Evaluation Team did have concern over the scarcity of biodiversity conservation indicators, or more specifically that the project has low targets for these indicators or has plans to drop them in the coming year.

Biodiversity Conservation Indicators	Number hectares under improved natural resources management as a result of USG assistance
	Number of people with increased economic benefits from sustainable NRM and conservation as a result of USG assistance around NNP
	Number of people receiving USG-supported training in natural resources management and /or biodiversity conservation
	Number of policies, laws, agreements, or regulations promoting sustainable natural resource management and conservation that are implemented as a result of USG assistance
	Threat levels in selected critical buffer zone areas reduced (percentage reduction)

DAI has indicated that they may drop the indicator measuring ***number of hectares of under improved natural resource management,*** as they are not actively contributing to improved management (i.e., WCS is doing the actual training for the Limits to Acceptable Change policy). Additionally, the ***threat levels*** indicators is problematic as (1) it is a static indicator, maintaining the status quo, (2) the direct linkage from DAI's activities and maintaining the threats level is not clearly explained, and (3) it seems DAI is having difficulty monitoring this indicator. We will make recommendations on measuring overall program impact in our conclusions that should allow DAI to drop or at least modify this indicator.

Adequacy of Indicator Mix:

NN currently has 39 project indicators for a $9 million project. The biodiversity conservation component has 34 indicators allocated across the results framework as such:

Results Level	Number of Performance Indicators
Strategic Objective 7	2
Intermediate Results	4
Sub-Intermediate Results	3
PIR No. 1: Tourism Products	5
PIR No. 2: Improved Marketing	7
PIR No. 3: Communities	5
PIR No. 4: Policy and Enabling Environment	2
PIR No. 5: Improved Capacity	6
Total	34

The project has a relatively good spread of performance indicators across the different project results, though Project Result No. 1 (Tourism Products) has the largest budget for implementation activities (more than 50 percent of project activity budget according to annual work plans, even without the PPPF). The Evaluation Team feels that 34 indicators may be too many, even for a project of this size and complexity, and some of the indicators are too narrowly focused and/or could be combined. **Fewer indicators, but higher level indicators are ultimately desirable.** Analysis of specific indicators or a group of indicators related to specific results follows.

USAID/Rwanda Strategic Objective 7: Expanded economic opportunities in rural areas

Indicator	Baseline	YR2[9] Total	YR5 Target
No. 1: Percent change in rural income of targeted population	0%	9%	25%
No. 2: Number of person days employment generated by USG assistance	0	1,024	450

Indicator No. 1 one is an appropriate indicator and excellent for measuring economic impact on beneficiary communities from project activities. The Evaluation Team noted that DAI is measuring this primarily as increased revenue for the cooperatives, though it should be noted that DAI is reporting that the number of cooperative members is increasing, which may dilute overall increases in income per individual cooperative member. It's unclear if DAI is controlling for this dynamic. It should also be noted that this percent change will only be monitored for the ***targeted population*** (members of cooperatives receiving grants from DAI, and in the future, individuals employed by new hotels/lodges developed under the PPPF), which may not be a very large absolute number (approximately, 250–300 cooperative members).

The Evaluation Team discussed a number of issues with Indicator No. 2 with the NN Chief of Party, one of those being that the overall target is relatively low (450 person days is equivalent to less than two years of full-time employment for one person). Although it's worthwhile to employ local communities for construction labor (trail habitation), the project is meeting this employment generation indicator primarily via temporary, direct project hires in the surrounding communities, but the COP did point out that the project is supplementing salaries of some work contracted directly by the Park. This means the employment generated may not be very sustainable, and may not meet the "employment" definition in the PIRS of being at least three months in duration. The PPPF infrastructure investments currently being initiated should contribute to both of these indicators.

[9] Year 3 Annual Report had not been prepared at the time this report was drafted.

Intermediate Result 7.4: Improved management of selected ecosystems

Indicator	Baseline	YR2 Total	YR5 Target
No. 3: Number hectares under improved natural resources management as a result of USG assistance	0	0	300
No. 4: Number of visitors to targeted national parks (*Number of visitors to Nyungwe Forest National Park)*	4,050	9,460	13,000
No. 5: Revenue generated by NNP			$3 M**
No. 6: Number of people with increased economic benefits from sustainable NRM and conservation as a result of USG assistance around NNP	0	435*	700

*DAI reports a cumulative Year 3 total of 640 people with increased economic benefits through Q3 (DAI, Nyungwe Nziza Quarterly Report, Q11).

**Data obtained from RDB/NNP two quarters ago indicated that park revenue had doubled from $259,180 in 2008 to $525,858 in 2011. Unfortunately, RDB/NNP was again not able to provide us with revenue data for 2012 due to time constraints, but promised to send it during the next quarter (DAI, Nyungwe Nziza Quarterly Report, Q11).

DAI has indicated that the project is likely to drop Indicator No. 3 for the reasons stated under the biodiversity conservation indicator discussion above. Indicators No. 4 and 5 were stated explicitly in the DAI contract with targets already set. This is an unusual practice on USAID's part, potentially unfair to DAI. Activities carried out by DAI, such as the canopy walk launch and high profile journalist visits to the Park, were influential in increasing the number of tourists in 2011; however, overall attribution of performance on these indicators to DAI project activities is difficult and subject to other external influences, such as political instability in the Congo, US State Department travel warnings, and increases in gorilla prices (which have been speculated to be the cause of decreases in tourism numbers in 2012). There was a notable decrease in the sale of activities (between 8 42 percent) during the typically busiest summer months (June–September) of 2012, according to data provided by RDB park staff (see *Annex G* for details).

It should be noted that current revenue data is unavailable (and the Evaluation Team was told by more than one person that RDB's current practice is to aggregate revenue data across all parks). From the most recently available revenue figures (RDB website), DAI did report that park revenue had doubled from $259,180 in 2008 to $525,858 in 2011.[10] Given the drop in number of activities sold in 2012, it is safe to speculate that it is unlikely that revenues increased in 2012.

Lastly, Indicator No. 6 is a very fitting indicator and goes directly to the main objective of the project, although it could overlap with Indicators No. 1 and 2 under the SO level. It should be noted that the target for this indicator is also rather low, given the number of community members surrounding the Park. This could also be at least partially due to the nature of ecotourism's limitations as a development option (see discussion in Section 2.1). One could argue that if DAI is able to attribute increase of park revenues to project activities that they could be credited with economically benefitting a larger number of people from sustainable NRM via the revenue sharing scheme (national policy allocating at least 5 percent of total gross revenue from national parks to support projects in communities surrounding the parks). Given that Virunga National Park still brings in the lion's share of park revenues (four times the revenue of Nyungwe National Park from 2004–2010)[11] and given that recent increases in revenue at NNP are still modest, it would be difficult to tease out economic benefits to surrounding communities from the DAI project via the revenue sharing policy, but these also happen on a longer time

[10] DAI, Nyungwe Nziza Quarterly Report, Q11.
[11] Kagarama, John, et al. *Assessment of the Performance of the Revenue Sharing Implementation during 2005–2010.* RDB, 2011.

scale and via a longer causal chain (i.e., DAI improves tourism products => park revenues increase => revenues aggregated and redistributed => community projects implemented).

Sub-IR 7.4.1 Improved capacity to sustainably manage ecosystems

Indicator	Baseline	YR2 Total	YR5 Target
No. 7: Number of people receiving USG-supported training in natural resources management and /or biodiversity conservation	0	274*	750
No. 8: Number of units of ecotourism infrastructure built, refurbished, or equipped	0	7	6
No. 9: Number of policies, laws, agreements, or regulations promoting sustainable natural resource management and conservation that are implemented as a result of USG assistance	-	1	3

*Year 3 totals exceed 700.

Indicators No. 7 and 9 are appropriate USAID standard indicators for this project and appropriate measures of an output for the purposes of improving capacity (for policy, at the national level). DAI may want to consider moving to the new USAID standard indicator measuring number of training person hours to capture the magnitude of training and avoid double counting of the same individual who attends multiple DAI trainings. Indicator No. 8 could potentially be eliminated as there as “units” as currently defined, are not a clearly defined group nor very homogenous (some units demonstrate significant impact/infrastructure, other units represent an investment of much smaller value [i.e. lodges vs. signs]).

Additional analysis of DAI indicators for the additional project results can be found in *Annex H*. In general, it seems as though DAI is probably measuring more than it needs to, and the Evaluation Team recommends eliminating and/or consolidating some of the performance indicators as noted above.

3. CONCLUSIONS

What are some of the common or global issues the projects have faced?

During the course of our assessment, certain issues seemed to be common to the projects or were of a global nature and warranted mentioning in that context. These include the following:

- **DNP and SBCNNP difficulties in starting up activities.** This mainly seems to be related to staffing issues, particularly Chiefs of Party candidates that did not work out and other key staff changeover early on. Some activities were delayed as a result. In the case of SBCNNP, finding a COP with USAID experience was a limiting factor.

- **Difficulties in passing/approving needed policies or actions.** The Concessions Policy, which USAID invested in, is the obvious example of this issue. NN contributed to developing this policy with input from the US Park Service and identified the policy as a key part of their overall investment strategy in park Infrastructure, yet the policy remains blocked at the ministerial level awaiting an opportunity to go to the Cabinet for approval. Other examples include the need for RDB CEO-level approval for park signs that display rules or regulations, and the difficulty of getting approvals to construct boardwalks in wetlands within the Park. These are a handful of examples of what might be symptomatic of a larger institutional issue or inefficiency.

Installing new park signs required RDB-HQ approvals. Photo by Olaf Zerbock. March 2013.

- **Bureaucracy and difficult processes for decision making.** There were frequent complaints about a slow bureaucracy and hard to understand decision-making processes aimed at both USAID and RDB/Kigali. There seemed to be some obscurity around decision-making processes and lack of clear communication. A few examples include - if NN should proceed with a zipline project or why RDB put out a feasibility study for a company to manage Rwanda's tourism assets.

- **Obvious tension between RDB/Kigali and Nyungwe Nziza.** RDB/Kigali feels there has not been the same level of infrastructure development under NN as there was under DNP. We repeatedly heard references from RDB about the over emphasis on "soft" interventions (training, capacity building, planning) by NN during the current second phase. At the same time, NN and USAID feel they have been very clear on the need for a Concessions Policy and legal approvals like those for the wetland infrastructure before infrastructure development in the Park can proceed. Miscommunication and disagreements between these actors is slowing implementation.

- **Tourism versus conservation dynamic within RDB.** There is a general concern about the relative strength of the conservation unit within RDB. The overall investment orientation of RDB in general tends to favor tourism development over biodiversity conservation concerns. This requires the intervention of civil society (usually international NGOs) to be watchdogs for conservation interests in and around national parks. RDB/Kigali recognizes and to some extent shares this concern. RDB argues, however, that the solution is to strengthen conservation within RDB rather than look to break it off from RDB entirely.

- **Limitations placed on ecotourism by the condition of the roads to Banda and Gisovu.** Banda has received significant investment under both phases of the program and has excellent potential for chimp viewing, while work in Gisovu to set up new accommodations (including a camp site), develop a tea tour, etc., is just getting underway. Both roads are to be reconditioned by the GoR, but the timing for said work is not known. This is a serious limitation to increasing tourism numbers and benefits to these communities.

- **Inability of USAID to give the kind of consistent engagement that would be needed to deal effectively with project implementation issues due to the relatively small size of the program.** More consistent engagement at the working technical level, and regular strategic engagement at higher levels, might have forestalled some of the institutional issues and miscommunications that have been encountered. For example, difficulties in passage of the Concessions Policy or wetlands infrastructure approvals through the Ministry of Natural Resources might have been eased with strategic interventions by USAID. We recognize that the Mission would not want to get between two GoR entities; however, individual contacts could be used to help better define what the issues are between them and to potentially help them to find a solution. The tension between RDB/Kigali and NN mentioned above might also be due to a lack of involvement of USAID in helping to facilitate this relationship. It was our impression that DAI is taking much of the blame from RDB over the perceived lack of progress, from RDB's perspective, on infrastructure development in the Park. This may well be because RDB was reluctant, in our interviews, to place the blame on USAID, but it does suggest that a stronger role for USAID could help the partners to focus on the real problems.

- **Lack of sophistication and clarity of Nyungwe National Park Marketing and Promotion Strategy**. A marketing strategy was developed under NN; however, RDB/Kigali was frustrated by the lack of specifics in the report. RDB wanted clear guidelines and a more sophisticated marketing approach. It seems likely that the consultant who prepared the strategy did not get the engagement needed from stakeholders to make these kinds of decisions. The Evaluation Team found it difficult to figure out the answer to a range of marketing questions: Is NNP being developed as a strictly "high-end" destination? Should NNP emphasize the "low-end" backpackers or should it concentrate on the growing local tourism market? The Tourism Value Chain study completed by DAI, as well as other studies cited in DAI's ecolodge consultancy report, pointed out that high-end tourism often has fewer beneficial impacts on community incomes due to the capture of revenue by entities based outside of the community. If we are shooting for a mix of high, middle and lower end visitors then what are the consequences for lodging and other park infrastructure and staffing issues, as well as community economic benefit?

Additionally, it seems like the Marketing Strategy may have been developed without full engagement of RDB staff at the Kigali level in envisioning the park brand and differentiators. The process described for developing the strategy involved consultation with RDB staff, but there was certainly a focus on tour operators by the strategy consultant. Although the brand—*Escape to Nyungwe*—was prescribed by the Marketing Strategy, it was unclear if this brand was developed in a collaborative process that would have encouraged ownership by RDB, whether or not other branding concepts were considered, or if the *Escape to Nyungwe* brand was pretested among potential consumers. Lastly, as noted in the Tourism Value Chain study, an updated marketing strategy could be useful as the new fees and pricing structures are adopted.

- **Limitations of RDB/Nyungwe to sustainably absorb training efforts by the two current projects**. NN and SBCNNP are both doing a lot of training of NNP staff on a range of topics (guiding, hospitality, GIS, RBM data management, chimp tracking, etc.). It is not clear that RDB is ready or able to sustain many of the trainings that are taking place. For example, the National Association of Interpreters certification training was a great opportunity for the RDB staff members who were able to participate. However, it is not clear that this certification system in particular is the right choice for RDB; some basic organizational development and a customer service orientation is necessary. There needs to be some discussion within RDB about how to absorb and sustain this type of training, including potentially incentivizing guide performance, evaluating and regularly giving feedback on guide performance, etc.

- **Uncertainty surrounding the intensive management of the buffer zone.** The New Forests Company (NFC), a UK-based firm, has been given a concession to manage tree plantations within the NNP buffer zone. This includes some 10,000 hectares of mature, exotic forest plantations, which the company plans to clear cut and replant with similar species for use in a range of products. This investment represents both opportunities and challenges for NNP. The potential for revenue generation for the government and jobs for local communities is clear. What is less clear is how NFC and RDB/Nyungwe will deal with issues of forest exploitation by surrounding communities, which is currently focused on the buffer zone but could well move to the natural forest once NFC begins managing the area intensively. The NNP Management Plan calls on RDB and NNP staff to interface with buffer zone actors, including communities and the New Forests Company, to ensure that the multiple objectives of economic opportunity and sound environmental management are fulfilled, and that the area continues to serve as a buffer between the human settlement areas and the Park itself.

- **Projects' lack of rigorous data collection for the purposes of an impact evaluation**. NN and SBCNNP were not designed with future impact evaluations in mind, and any attempts to undertake a rigorous impact evaluation at the end of the project will face certain obstacles. However, this project does have a number of data sources to work with, some going back many years (RBM, biological monitoring, etc.), which could lend themselves to more detailed qualitative or quantitative analysis of outcomes and impacts in the future.

What other specific issues did we perceive?

Nyungwe Nziza

One of our concerns about Nyungwe Nziza revolves around the capacity of the community cooperatives. Although these groups have achieved some impressive results so far, it is clear

that they are still quite nascent and in need of continued and intensive capacity development if they are to be sustainable. The District Cooperative Officers, who have the official responsibility in Rwanda for supporting cooperatives, are not consistently involved in capacity development efforts forwarded by NN. This could be a missed opportunity for enhancing both sustainability and the prospects for scaling up capacity development efforts by building the capacity of this government service.

This is not really an issue that the project can resolve, but the team recognizes that NN is reaching a very small fraction of the total human population living around NNP with ecotourism-oriented livelihoods opportunities. This is really a function of working in ecotourism, and there is a limit to how many cultural tourism, camping, and curio shop opportunities can be operated profitably around NNP at a given time. This limits the potential impact of NN's activities, at the same time that it underlines the need for broader discussions about other biodiversity-friendly livelihood options around the Park. Also of concern is the limited capacity of local community members to work as employees in new and existing lodges. It seems likely that higher level positions in these enterprises will be filled by Rwandans and/or regional expertise from outside the park area.

Online marketing of NNP is handled by NN and the Park Tourism Warden using the NN website rather than a government website. We recognize that this is a "work around" that was needed due to the RDB decision to retool their website, which has taken much longer than expected. It does raise issues of sustainability, however, they might be minimal if website hosting cannot be worked out before the end of NN. The Evaluation Team understands that RDB may have limited financial resources for marketing; however, using Facebook as the crux of the e-marketing strategy seems flawed, as Facebook, Twitter, etc., have serious content limitations. The center of the e-marketing strategy intuitively seems to be a well-developed park website that would serve as a landing page for all social media utilized in an e-marketing strategy.

SBCNNP

Our initial impression of the SBCNNP project was that it seemed to be spread too thin across too many activities. After looking more closely at the project's conceptual model and seeing some examples of what they have done on the ground, however, it is clear that this range of activities is important in the context of an integrated threats-based approach to conservation, and it becomes very difficult to identify activities to drop or postpone. A few issues that we noted:

- There is no written gender analysis backstopping the project's work. This was a missed opportunity early on in Phase 1, and although it seems that WCS staff has a good handle on gender issues on the project, there could be some missed opportunities.

- The pilot introduction of improved stoves seems to be going well, but the Evaluation Team is concerned that follow-on activities involving the development of a cooperative business around the stoves may be overly complicated and will take too long to see results.

- WCS had more than a decade of biophysical monitoring data when the activity was ended a few years ago due to a lack of internal funding. Given the lack of long-term conservation projects with quality data on ecological changes over time, we are concerned that an opportunity to better understand the biophysical impacts of WCS's (and USAID's) efforts may be lost.

- Given the fact that the ANICOs were supported by WCS in the past but had to be "revived" under the current project suggests that something in the way they have been conceived may not lend itself to long-term sustainability. WCS should work with RDB to identify ways to improve sustainability.

- The education program is off to a strong start, with baseline study in the communities surrounding the Park, an excellent education strategy, and several piloted education activities targeting youth, teachers, and community members, including an innovative program using a comedy show and national comedian that incorporates environmental messages. One concern is that the printed educational materials (posters) for the afterschool environmental clubs are primarily focused on threats and dissuading certain behaviors (cutting bamboo, poaching, starting fires) rather than multiple values of NNP and its conservation. This is a good approach for targeting the adult poachers, bamboo cutters, etc., but should not be the sole focus for a school-based informal or even formal education program. Rather, it should also be combined, as outlined in their education strategy, with a strong message about the intrinsic and utilitarian values of the Park.

- The informal outreach program is strongly connected to park threats and has a good connection between ANICOs, park wardens, ranger-based monitoring, and outreach to communities. Here too, the messages are targeted primarily around threats and in the future it might be helpful to more strongly include the utilitarian value of the Park (water, tourism), especially for community influencers/leaders.

- Regarding Carbon PES, it should be noted that even small forest carbon projects face a number of hurdles before they can be implemented, including technical validation of project designs and the need for sometimes significant upfront investment prior to generating income from offset sales. Although the modest scale of the ECOTRUST smallholder tree-planting effort suggests a reasonable approach to implementation, the overall carbon sequestration impact would be quite small. In addition, working with numerous smallholders can result in significant delays and increased transaction costs as individual carbon agreements must be aggregated in order to achieve sufficient scale to cover operating costs. The other forest carbon initiative (assisted natural regeneration inside the Park), although beyond the scope of USAID funding, represents a concrete opportunity to improve biodiversity habitat and leverage carbon financing, and WCS should be encouraged to seek funding for its implementation.

RDB

The Rwanda Development Board is a highly professional government body serving as a one-stop shop for investors across all sectors. RDB's Mission writ large is "Fast tracking economic development in Rwanda by enabling private sector growth." It is an unusual institutional arrangement to house national park management within the institution responsible for attracting and catering to investors; this arrangement seems like it would give an immediate upper hand to business pursuits in the age-old conflict of economic development vs. environmental protection. Nonetheless, the Director of RDB's Tourism and Conservation Department reassured the Evaluation Team that this institutional arrangement allows for a healthy tension between these camps and that the department takes its mandate, "*To conserve the rich biodiversity of the Protected Areas and to develop, sustainable tourism in collaboration with stakeholders for the benefit of all the Rwandan People*," very seriously. The Director also recognized the need to strengthen both the capacity and voice of conservation within the institution.

Overall, the Evaluation Team found RDB staff to be dedicated to protecting and conserving Nyungwe Forest, for its water, biological, and forest resources as well as its potential to provide economic returns nationally and locally via tourism. The RDB headquarters team in Kigali inevitably had an emphasis on meeting its tourism targets in regards to NNP, but the RDB staff at the park level were primarily concerned with reducing threats to the Park, and generally, found to be highly competent and managing the day-to-day operations of the Park well. The relationship between the RDB HQ and Park staff seemed amicable and productive, despite any delayed decision making at the headquarters level. *Exhibit 5* captures some (though it is not an exhaustive list) of the strengths and weaknesses of RDB at the headquarters and park level observed by the Evaluation Team.

Exhibit 5. Strengths and Weaknesses of RDB at the Headquarters and Park Level

RDB/Kigali	
Strengths	***Weaknesses***
• Highly professional, performance driven, and results-oriented staff • High capacity for assisting in facilitation of private sector investment in the NNP and potentially, marketing NNP • Ability to employ innovation and leverage business funds for the environment (CSR) • Commitment to making Nyungwe a successful ecotourism destination, including advocating for additional infrastructure	• Lack of Ministerial voice • Ecological data collected in the Park is not used at national level in decision making • Overarching economic development Mission that may overshadow national and park conservation goals • Undervaluing of natural resource assets in an investment environment • Inefficient decision making regarding day-to-day park operations decisions
RDB/Nyungwe National Park	
Strengths	***Weaknesses***
• Competent and dedicated management • Strong institutional memory (many long-standing managers) • Comprehensive Nyungwe National Management Plan for 2012–2021as a guide and planning tool • Rich threats monitoring data and growing capacity to use this data for managing the Park • Learning culture and willingness among staff to learn new skills	• Lack of financial resources/sufficient budget • Insufficient management staff/human capacity • Underdeveloped customer service skills among some park staff who interface with visitors frequently • Uncertainty regarding ability to manage continued infrastructure investments (particularly the Canopy Walk)

Within this institutional framework, the Park is, for the most part, doing an excellent job of conserving Nyungwe Forest while providing a range of visitor opportunities, we did observe a few areas where improvements could be made.

- The Chief Park Warden could be given more autonomy over park management and operating decisions to speed up implementation of routine or minor park business. This could also help counteract weaknesses in conservation management at the headquarters level.

- NNP staffing seems stretched. Like most parks around the world, NNP is doing much more than it should have to with limited financial and human resources. Many expressed concerns over the operating budget and its need to expand to meet new park priorities and activities. Despite budgetary issues, the park management has been successfully taking over staff (trackers) and activities (RBM) from WCS.

- Although private sector stakeholders agree that customer service at the Park has improved, there is still room for improvement, including English skills, implementation of interpretation skills more thoroughly (post- interpretation certification) and making the visit to the park an enriching ecological and cultural experience, and attentiveness to customers' needs.

- The process of issuing permits to visitors is complicated and slow. We saw and felt, to some extent, the frustrations of visitors (and NNP staff) as they dealt with the permitting system. A more efficient system could be set-up – computerized or simplified, but it is also tied to the need for a customer service orientation by park staff.

- RDB now has access to the Canopy Walk Maintenance Report and is able to discuss the maintenance needs, but there is still a concern that actual maintenance activities have yet to be internalized and adopted. This could be because the results of the report are just out and RDB has yet to be able to develop a system, but this process should be monitored.

Lastly, the Evaluation Team heard speculation or discussion of an RDB reorganization from a number of different actors (USAID, RDB, implementing partners), which could result in moving the conservation and park management function out of RDB and, perhaps, to the Ministry of Natural Resources. Such an arrangement could potentially better align NNP's conservation goals with this government affiliate. No one could confirm plans or a timeline for such a reorganization. It should also be noted that GoR recently issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) to prepare a business plan for a tourism assets management company for the purposes of commercially running and managing all of the country's tourism assets in a sustainable manner, with a strong emphasis on conservation. This RFP and discussion suggests that there is a strong desire to change the institutional arrangement concerning national park management in the country. If there were mutual interest, this could be an opportunity for USAID to assist the GoR (and specifically, RDB) with such organizational and institutional development in the area of tourism and conservation.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

How can we enhance sustainability during the final two years of implementation?

It is clear that significant progress has been made in building the capacity of RDB to manage NNP. Basic systems are in place, and there are very competent staff members who understand their roles and responsibilities and carry them out on a daily basis. That said, USAID's investments in Nyungwe have gone beyond just supporting park management and include a range of other activities that still have a ways to go before they reach a threshold for sustainability. This section will discuss the Evaluation Team's recommendations for enhancing sustainability over the final two years of Phase 2 implementation.

Our global recommendations include the following:

1. **USAID should take a more proactive role in leading the partners.** We recognize that this program did not have the funding levels needed to ensure a full-time USAID NRM team leader position, as is the case in other missions with larger NRM programs. That said, it should be recognized that this has made implementation more difficult for WCS and DAI. Our specific recommendations for USAID involvement are:

    a. ***Work to facilitate problem solving between all partners (USAID, RDB, DAI, and WCS)***. While the quarterly partner meetings are a good way to pull decision makers together regularly, they are probably not the best place to resolve conflicts and discover the underlying causes of issues. This would best be done in regular one-on-one meetings with partners (NGO and GoR) aimed at building personal relationships and better understanding the causes of tension or blockages. This would also be a good opportunity to make absolutely clear (repeatedly if need be) USAID's stand on the need for a Concessions Policy or a letter of approval for infrastructure development in wetlands.

    b. ***Build a relationship with other government actors in the environment sector, including the Ministry of Natural Resources as well as REMA***. As mentioned above, we recognize that USAID would not typically want to intervene between two GoR entities, such as the Ministry and RDB. That said, this relationship does seem to be problematic (i.e., Concessions Policy and wetland investment blockages), USAID could gain perspective on that relationship by getting to know the key contacts in the Ministry. This could lead to suggestions for interventions or other opportunities for improving the functionality of this relationship and understanding delays in policy.

    The Evaluation Team also found that REMA was not very aware of USAID and its work in Nyungwe. Although not as important a player in Nyungwe, they are involved in PES, the government focal point on climate change, and may become the facilitator of the National Fund for Environment and Climate Change (FONERWA). REMA also has district-level environment officers who are peripherally involved in Nyungwe. Again, building relationships here could provide opportunities for synergy and understanding of shared objectives.

    c. ***Invite a team member from the USAID/E3/ Forestry and Biodiversity Office or AFR Bureau to spend some time at the mission Mission and help devise strategies for dealing with these institutional relationships and other issues raised in this report***. The Forestry and Biodiversity (FAB) team has broad experience working with missions that often have to deal with these kinds of

issues and could help the Mission's technical lead to develop practical responses. In fact, we would encourage more regular involvement of FAB or AFR bureau to enhance the Mission's resources available to lead this program and any potential follow on.

2. **WCS and DAI should develop a joint training plan for the remainder of Phase 2.** As mentioned above, there are a lot of different trainings occurring under these projects, and it is not clear to what extent these trainings are being internalized and/or coordinated among the partners. We think it would be well worth the time for RDB, DAI, WCS, and representatives of the private sector to sit down and discuss training needs and expectations for the remainder of the program. Emphasis should be on ensuring the sustainability of the skills and abilities being transferred to RDB. This could be accomplished through the training of trainers approach, or potentially by considering a role for Kitabi College given its proximity to the Park and capacity to do a range of trainings. Although we did not have an opportunity to assess the College's capacities, it is well respected by all program stakeholders and could potentially be a place for future USAID direct investment, perhaps under the USAID Forward Framework.

3. **Nyungwe National Park needs a more sophisticated Marketing Strategy tied to a Park Business Plan, including a specific vision of what types and numbers of tourists it wants to attract.** The lack of specific targets for whom marketing efforts should be targeted is making it difficult to be specific in marketing NNP and to evaluate what kinds and amounts of infrastructure are actually needed. Again, this should be a joint vision based on the experiences and expertise of RDB (Kigali and Nyungwe), WCS and DAI with support from USAID. Although there is some initial, valuable analysis in the original Marketing Strategy, the strategy overall could use a more thorough analysis of the four Ps (Price, Product, Promotion, and Place) and how these affect NNP's ability to attract tourists. The rationale behind the suggested park brand (*Escape to Nyungwe*) should be elaborated upon and developed through a more inclusive and thorough process, as the brand is a serious investment for the Park (the need to brand all park promotion materials, website), will be attached to the Park for many years to come, and is critical to positioning the Park as a unique destination.

   Additionally, the Market Strategy should ideally be tied to a Park Business Plan and have a more in depth catalogue of resources to implement the strategy, including some sort of budget. The Marketing Strategy needs to be a flexible and living document as the tourism industry and its context is dynamic and constantly changing. The Strategy should have a mechanism for monitoring progress, reach, and impact and should institutionalize a process for regularly revisiting and updating it.

   Lastly, the Evaluation Team sees a large missed opportunity if the Park does not consider marketing more to the local Rwandan market (both Rwandans and foreign nationals) as these are the people who will come to the Park during the low season, build national interest and pride in the Park, and will probably have lower marketing costs. Park tourist data shows that the number of Rwandan visitors doubled in 2011 and 2012, compared to the previous two years, 2010 and 2009 (see *Annex G* for data). This market segment probably presents some low-hanging fruit on gaining new tourists, as the local market is not very saturated. In addition, lower or mid-level tourism, whether by independent international or local tourists, has the potential to deliver significant economic benefits (i.e., more so than high-end tourists) to local communities.

4. **Projects assist RDB develop a coordination mechanism for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) around NNP.** The list of private sector beneficiaries of Nyungwe National Park is growing: the New Forestry Company, new (through NN's PPPF) and existing lodging businesses, tour operations, and the tea companies. These companies all benefit directly to one extent or another from the existence and continued conservation of NNP (water, micro-climate, eco-tourists, buffer zone, etc.). We think there is a real opportunity to explore mechanisms for how these various entities might work together to fund CSR activities in and around the Park that have a direct linkage to ensuring the continued conservation of Nyungwe. USAID/Rwanda has an existing relationship with the American Tea Company elsewhere in Rwanda that could be leveraged to support this effort. The CSR funds could contribute to the FONERWA or serve as an independent mechanism.

Communicating fire threats to visitors. Photo by Olaf Zerbock, March 2013.

5. **USAID/WCS prioritize the operationalization of the fire-management plan.** Fire is such a critical threat to the Park, and its threat could be expected to grow with new timber harvesting operations in the buffer zone. We understand that NFC has offered to support this work and encourage WCS to explore how the parties might come together to make it happen. In addition, USAID should be supportive of using project funds (perhaps at the expense of lower priority activities) to implement the plan. RDB should look for additional budget support to cover at least partial implementation of the plan.

6. **The partners should work together to develop a shared measure of program impact.** As described above RDB, WCS, and DAI are all undertaking significant data collection activities either as part of their implementation protocols (pre- and post-treatment surveys), day-to-day management (RBM/MIST), long-term biophysical monitoring (by WCS), or project PMPs. We see a real opportunity for gaining insight into the actual impact of USAID's program on key threats and, potentially, biophysical conditions in NNP. We recommend that the Mission contact the FAB office to discuss the possibility of involving the new DC-based project, Measuring Impact (MI), in this activity, as they may be very interested in finding viable examples of biodiversity programs capable of measuring the impacts they have had.

   Critical to this recommendation is finding a way to fund at least one more year of biophysical monitoring and preferably reinstituting it completely. WCS has done a great job of collecting very comprehensive biophysical monitoring data on Nyungwe through the years. This was discontinued a couple of years ago due to budget reductions. We would like to encourage WCS to restart this process but perhaps with longer timelines (every two, three, or even five years) to reduce budget impact. It is so rare that conservation programs have really good long-term data that we want to encourage WCS to reconsider this at Nyungwe. Obviously, data would be most helpful to USAID if it were collected again in the final year of implementation.

In addition, we have specific recommendations for the implementation partners:

Development Alternatives Inc. (DAI)

1. **Focus on ensuring cooperatives have the full range of skills they need to adapt and survive in the ecotourism market.** Two years is not a long time to bring community-based organizations from a nascent stage of development to one that is more likely to sustain itself for the long term. As mentioned above, we think a good start has been made with these four key ecotourism cooperatives, and our recommendation is, therefore, simply to keep up the momentum. We also recommend that DAI facilitate the participation of district level cooperative officers in the capacity development process. This will build their capacity to do their job better (potentially increasing the scale of project impacts) while building a long-term relationship with the project cooperatives that could serve to enhance the sustainability of the groups.

2. **Prioritize critical park infrastructures where feasible.**

   a. There is a need for a Gisakura reception center. Currently RDB is forced to share a small space with WCS that is problematic for both partners. A site has been identified and, if issues around the placement of toilets can be worked out to USAID and DAI specifications, then construction should be supported by Nyungwe Nziza.

   b. An environmental education center has also been discussed, and the team believes this could be a good use of USAID funds if the details of how RDB could sustain it are worked out. Linking the center to the Kitabi College would seem to make sense as would a longer term plan for turning over EE to RDB from WCS (see below).

   c. There have been plans for a trail around Kamiranzovu swamp and trail rehabilitation in wetlands that, according to USAID, may proceed once a letter of approval[12] has been secured from the Ministry of Natural Resources. RDB has said this letter should be issued in the very near future. These trails are important products and should go forward once approvals are in place.

Gisakura Reception. Photo by Olaf Zerbock, March 2013.

   d. There was much discussion and not a little tension around discussions of a zip line investment. USAID has made it clear that they are not averse to funding the construction of a zip line, once the Concessions Policy has been approved and the long-term management and maintenance of the infrastructure is ensured. RDB is concerned that, since the Concessions Policy could be delayed significantly, they would like to propose an interim measure that would respond to USAID's concerns about long-term maintenance. We recommend that

[1212] The Letter Approval was received in the spring of 2013, and this issue is now resolved.

USAID and RDB sit down and discuss this issue. There may not be a satisfactory resolution for both parties, but we feel it is important to get all the cards out on the table.

3. **Need a recruitment and training plan for new lodging PPPF investments.** Given the short time frame, we recommend that DAI work with its private sector investors to ensure all is in place to recruit quality staff that DAI may then be able to support with customer service training, again possibly through the Kitabi College, which is looking to expand its hospitality services training offerings.

Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)

1. **Look for opportunities to hand off further conservation responsibilities to RDB or other local actors.** As mentioned above, WCS has, over the years, handed off responsibilities to RDB (ORTPN in the past) as skills and abilities and budgets have become available to manage the Park. We would like to encourage this and, although it is not clear if further activities could or should be handed off in the time remaining, we think the discussion between RDB and WCS, with USAID facilitation, would be helpful. RDB/Nyungwe greatly values the ANICO and Environmental Education programs. Although the broader EE program might be beyond RDB for the foreseeable future, there may be an opportunity to discuss the hand off of the ANICOs, which would give the partners an opportunity to identify and address the issues that led to them failing in the past. Other organizations like Kitabi College, REDO, and ARECO may also have a role to play longer term in these activities. WCS should assess the potential of these actors to become more involved, particularly under the USAID Forward Framework. Another area that should be discussed is biophysical monitoring; although a handover to RDB may not be feasible within the horizon of current USAID support, it may be worth building some capacities within RDB towards this function and/or tap students at the National University of Rwanda to assist in monitoring and data collection.

2. **Look for practical ways to quickly scale up the improved wood stoves.** The Evaluation Team was really excited to hear about the results from the piloting of 200 improved wood stoves. The potential reduction in fuel wood use around the Park is impressive, and we think ways should be explored to scale this up more quickly. WCS's idea to create a local business around stove production and installation does have some potential, but we fear the length of time to start up and get this business running could be challenging and beyond the time frame of the current project. One potential approach that the team discussed was to work with a fabricator in Kigali (or closer to Nyungwe, if possible) to facilitate the transport and sale of stoves to the pilot areas. WCS could agree to cover (through its revolving funds possibly) the fabricator's risks (production and transport) to actually get another 200 or so stoves to the site. Installation could be handled by local laborers organized by WCS who could, in the future, form a cooperative should the stoves prove to be a profitable endeavor for the fabricator. This would tell us exactly what price people are willing and able to pay and provide more practical information on how to facilitate adoption.

3. **Continue to lead the national task force on PES, develop better understanding of NNP values for ecosystem services, and look for opportunities for a practical national level pilot of PES.** Much work remains to be done before the generation of PES revenues from water becomes a reality. Although many businesses and local inhabitants may perceive benefits from the existence of NNP, translating this into a

functional scheme whereby service users contribute financially to the conservation of Nyungwe is still far from a practical reality. USAID (and RDB) expectations for this component should be tempered in light of the fact that the amount of USAID resources invested in this component ($5,000–$15,000 per year) is rather modest considering the complexities of the issue.

Although the logical, analysis-heavy approach to PES in and around NNP is laudable, WCS should consider options for getting a practical "win" in sustainable financing, however minor, before the end of the project. Even a very small-scale PES project could be something to build from. For example, a fund with voluntary PES payments from one or two small-scale ecosystem service beneficiaries, such as tea factories, would demonstrate some momentum. If this was combined with contributions from, say, a voluntary hotel surcharge of a few dollars/night directed toward conservation efforts, a small revolving fund to support NNP could at least provide a platform to build on.

That said, we think that given the fact that somewhere around two-thirds of Rwanda's water supply comes from Nyungwe, there is a real opportunity to pilot a national water tax that could apply to utilities, bottled water companies, and/or industries that depend on clean water (power, tea, etc.). WCS's work in better understanding the actual value of the forest in water production will be key to convincing government and other stakeholders of the need of this. It will also be critical to the success of the pilot to ensure that a significant amount of the revenues generated go to support conservation of Nyungwe either directly (park activities) or by supporting communities to improve their livelihoods either by contributing to the FONERWA or an independent mechanism.

4. **Carry out a rapid gender and other disadvantaged groups' analysis to ensure project activities are in line with the realities for disadvantaged groups living around the Park.** The absence of a documented gender and/or disadvantaged groups' analysis to guide WCS's implementation is an issue. We see that the WCS team is engaged on gender issues and seems knowledgeable about disadvantage groups around the Park; however, it is still important to document this knowledge and ensure all activities are implemented with this in mind.

5. **Recommendations for Education Component:**

- If WCS decides to continue with the school-based education approach, and it seems like this is important to the Park, then the focus should move toward a stronger multiple values of NNP approach. Specifically, it should include activities explaining why the Park is important to them and their community. WCS's environmental education strategy suggested focusing on the intrinsic value of the chimpanzees and other wildlife in the Park as well as the utilitarian value of the hydrological services of the Park. Right now, activities are primarily focused on threats, with some education around chimps.

Youth who live around NNP need to be provided with positive behaviors they can perform and learn about the utilitarian value of the Park, not just be told what they cannot do (poach, cut trees, etc.) via the environmental education program. Photo by Olaf Zerbock. March 2013.

- Long-term, for a school-based formal or informal education program, WSC should develop environmental club activities focused around positive activities youth can undertake (whether to deal specifically with threats or educating their community) to protect NNP and their own communities. This could be developed long-term in partnership with REMA and NNP staff, with a focus on building the capacity of NNP staff to take over education activities. The education portion of the WCS grant is currently so small that we don't recommend they do anything additional now other than determining the best way forward for ensuring the sustainability of the EE program. Kitabi College or some other Rwandan NGO like ARECO or REDO might also be candidates to take over education activities, although we did not specifically evaluate these institutions' capacities to take on such a task; this could reduce the burden on RDB while providing a local EE implementer.
- For the adult portion of the education program, messaging should include a strong connection between alternative livelihood programs and threat-based messages (don't poach, don't start fires, etc.) within future USAID-funded activities (such as radio and comedian programs), as well as include the utilitarian value of park (water, tourism) more clearly to community leaders (including at the national level).

Rwanda Development Board – Home Office in Kigali (RDB/Kigali)

1. **Strengthen conservation's voice in the organization.** As discussed with RDB leadership, this is a critical priority for the organization. They make a good argument for keeping conservation and park management connected to tourism within RDB but recognize the need to find ways to strengthen its voice. Although likely beyond the scope of the final two years of implementation, there may be some other arrangement that could be made with WCS to provide some expertise to RDB to help with this. Thinking longer term, it might be possible to place a technical advisor at RDB/Kigali to support this objective through follow-on funding (if there is any). Additionally, there may be an opportunity to establish a short-term engagement with RDB HQ staff, holding mini-seminars, forums, and trainings on natural resource accounting, the business case for conservation, and sustainable tourism. The Chief Park Warden could also be given more autonomy—both for the purposes of speeding up decision making at the park level and to serve as a conservation advocate in the RDB organization at large. If there were was mutual interest from both USAID and RDB, more assistance in organizational development and institutional restructuring could be provided to RDB/GoR in the areas of tourism and conservation.

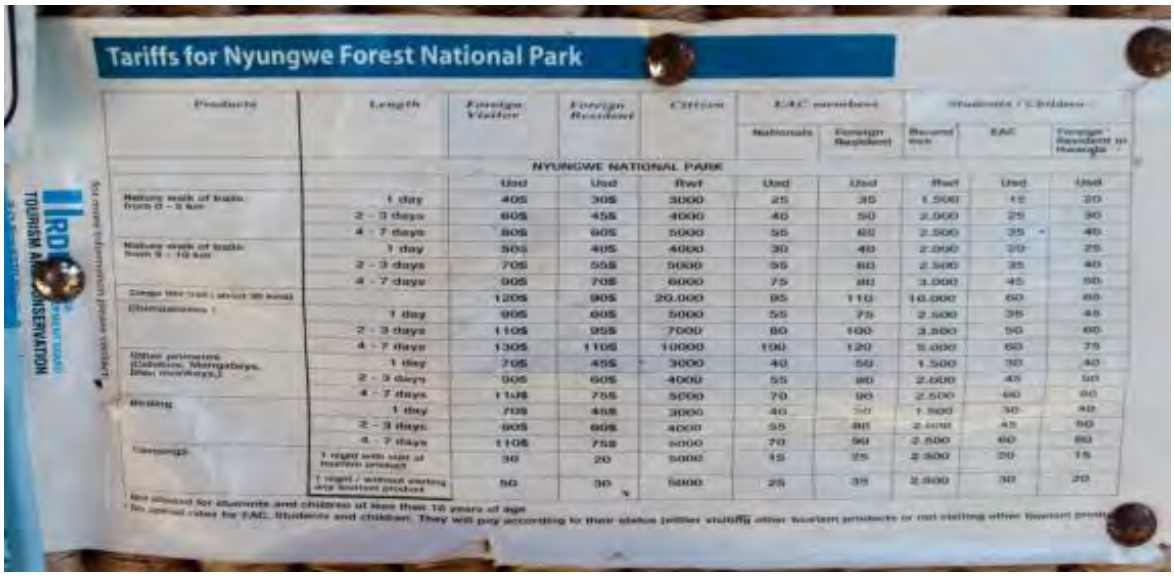
2. **Improve working relationship with the Ministry of Natural Resources.** As discussed with RDB staff, this is a critical relationship. We understand that it is complicated and that our superficial observations probably are not perfectly presented, but there is a need for the two entities to work together, and we encourage RDB to find a way to do this. USAID may be able to play some role in this, even if direct facilitation is not possible. USAID may be able to meet separately with the Ministry to clarify any issues.

Rwanda Development Board – Nyungwe National Park (RDB/Nyungwe)

1. **Increase staffing of park in critical areas.** Like park staff throughout the world, the RDB staff are consistently asked to do more with inadequate resources. We feel strongly, however, that there is a critical need for more staff at Nyungwe, or even a reallocation of resources. Specifically, we note the need for an Education Warden, particularly if RDB is going to begin taking over ANICO and EE responsibilities. Another

and probably more important need we saw was for a Trails Warden, since this function is currently being carried out by an already over programmed and very important Tourism Warden. Trails are critical to the products that Nyungwe has to offer, and it requires a specialized set of skills to take care of trails, so it makes sense to add this position. In general, the Tourism Warden was overburdened and could be relieved or provided more assistance; this would be even more important if the National Concessions Policy were passed and development inside the Park ramped up.

2. **Improve the visitor permitting process.** The process of obtaining a permit to use a particular Nyungwe product is too long and inefficient. It is easy to see (and feel) the frustration of visitors as they wait to receive a permit as the very detailed data is copied onto the ticket as well as entered onto a spreadsheet form. A less detailed ticket/permit system should be seriously considered. What is the minimum information we need from a visitor? Also RDB could improve signage, advertising what kinds of permits and passes are available (for instance, we heard there were two- and three-day passes available but did not see any indication of this on the site. Hopefully, this process will be re-thought as the new pricing structure is adopted



Some tourist complain about the lack of visible postings of park prices. Photo by Olaf Zerbock, March 2013.

3. **Develop and implement a specific plan for the short-, medium- and long-term maintenance of the canopy walk.** RDB/Nyungwe seems to be well aware of the recent findings and recommendations made by the consultant on the maintenance of the canopy walk. We encourage RDB to internalize and operationalize a maintenance system through some formal mechanism. This would go a long way to allaying USAID fears about potential liability. This should be a priority, as well as a precondition to USAID funding any additional “adventure” infrastructure in the Park.

4. **Continue to seek out training opportunities to improve customer service orientation by staff.** As noted above, great strides have been made in improving the visitor experience at Nyungwe. We heard repeatedly, however, that more is needed to be done particularly in the area of improving the customer service orientation of all staff who come into contact with tourists. Establishing a bank of trainers who can contribute to this could be critical, and a relationship with Kitabi College could also support this effort.

Improving the management system by which guides and other park staff are regularly provided feedback on their performance, and that good performance is incentivized, would be useful. To the extent that there is a more direct feedback loop – from park visitors and/or park management – to park staff who regularly cater to tourists, the better.

5. **RDB should consider making their visitor numbers public** (i.e., disaggregating visitation numbers on the park website, or posting activity data at the tourism centers). This could encourage discussion among park staff around how to manage rising numbers of tourists and how to allocate resources such as rangers and guides. Also, posting information such as the number of tourists visiting different attractions, or the success rate in seeing chimps, would be helpful for tour operators or independent tourists as they plan which activities they want to see.

What are some potential consequences of USAID ending funding for Nyungwe at the end of the current projects?

USAID has had and is continuing to have significant positive impacts in and around Nyungwe National Park. The Evaluation Team Leader, who previously visited Nyungwe on a fairly regular basis for several years in the late 1980s, found significant positive changes in management, infrastructure, government capacity, community engagement, and ecotourism opportunities as well as an equally positive minimal loss in forest cover over the intervening years, which included a civil war. Although this is not all attributable to USAID, it is clear that USG investments here have played an important role in these positive impacts. USAID is the most significant donor involved in Nyungwe (currently contributes more than half of WCS's operating budget in Nyungwe), and we feel ending funding at the end of the current projects would threaten the long-term sustainability of the Program's efforts. We see the following key risks should USAID funding for Nyungwe National Park end in 2015, as currently planned.

- The sustainability of the community cooperatives would likely be compromised. Capacity development takes time. The process is highly variable and requires groups to grasp, plan for, and implement complex operations (governance, marketing, strategic planning, benefit distribution, etc.) in a way that allows the group to adapt to changing circumstances while continuing to provide adequate returns to its membership. To bring a group from a nascent to a mature stage of development can take as little as two years or as many as five; indeed some groups just never make it and disband or just "muddle" along. The groups in question are quite nascent and, although significant progress can and should be made over the final two years, there is no guarantee that these groups will be capable of surviving without some level of continuing capacity development support.

- Investments made in the last two years (PPPF lodging) may not get the benefit of USAID-funded training for staff. As we look at the history of infrastructure installation at Nyungwe, it seems clear that things happen more slowly than anticipated. It seems likely that the PPPF investments will be fully constructed by the end of project funding, but it may not be possible to provide the level of training of new staff that would ensure a smoother start-up of these businesses.

- WCS will have to cut back on the intensity of its conservation work around Nyungwe. Right now, USAID/Rwanda provides around 50 percent of the finances for WCS's work in the Nyungwe–Kibira landscape. Ending funding would likely have a very strong

negative impact on environmental education activities, the ANICO program, and PES (carbon and water). WCS will no doubt seek and find alternative financing for certain conservation activities, but it will almost certainly not find a donor that can contribute at the level of USAID.

- Changes in buffer zone management by the New Forestry Company are going to begin to take place and could have a strong negative impact on the Park if RDB and WCS are not able to advocate effectively for Nyungwe. A loss of USAID funding as this work is beginning could reduce WCS's ability to respond effectively.

- If RDB has not yet internalized a process for maintaining the Canopy Walk (as per our recommendations above), it may not receive the attention it needs in terms of maintenance. This, of course raises concerns for USAID about liability in the event of structural failures that could result in injury or death. This risk also extends to a zip line, if USAID and RDB do agree to invest in one.

How might a continued investment in Nyungwe be used to enhance results from the two phases of implementation?

We would see several advantages to a third phase of investment in Nyungwe, a ***Sustainability Phase,*** that could focus on enhancing sustainability of USAID investments made to date through direct government- to-government investment, particularly in terms of enhancing/building the institutional framework for conservation within RDB and/or the Government of Rwanda overall, if there was mutual interest. Depending on future decisions about the management of NNP, Phase 3 could pick up on key activities under Phase 2 that are not yet fully sustainable and/or RDB is not yet ready (financially or capacity-wise) to absorb into their park management functions (e.g., Environmental Education), using a combination of direct assistance through RDB, Kitabi College (or other local actors), and/or a new NNP management authority, or a combination or government institutions and WCS. This phase could also build opportunities for the USAID Forward Framework to begin to directly fund local NGOs and institutions (see *text box*), and potentially set up formal or informal mentor relationships between local NGOs and WCS. Suggested activities for a Sustainability Phase include:

> **Box 3. USAID Forward**: Promote sustainable development through high-impact partnerships. In order to achieve long-term, sustainable development, we have to support the institutions, private sector partners, and civil society organizations that serve as engines of growth and progress for their own nations. We must develop the capabilities of our partners to direct their own development by investing directly in partner governments and local organizations where the capacity exists, and strengthening it where there are gaps, so they can provide for their own citizens; and forging high-impact public-private partnerships with new and existing partners that leverage new resources and expertise to expand the reach and impact of our work.

- Strengthen the capacity of RDB headquarters to internalize and manage conservation activities within NNP.
- Build capacity of NNP staff to deliver an environmental education program in collaboration with District Environment Officers in communities surrounding the Park.
- Continue capacity development of ecotourism cooperatives, ensuring they have the systems, skills, and abilities needed to adapt and survive in a dynamic business environment.

- Continue development of PES and CSR mechanisms to enhance long-term sustainable finance mechanisms for the benefit of the Park and communities around it.
- Continue and help RDB to internalize a long-term, targeted NNP staff training program, possibly including support to Kitabi College.
- Improve roads to Banda and Gisovu to open these areas to more tourists.
- Help RDB to more effectively coordinate work in the buffer zone overall, with a particular emphasis on collaboration with the New Forests Company as they come online and begin exploitation of the buffer zone.
- Continue support for institutionalizing the development process and operationalizing an annual business plan and marketing operations.

These are just a few examples of the types of activities we could envision should USAID decide to fund a Sustainability Phase; obviously, the details would flow from a significant planning effort by USAID/Rwanda. We would strongly suggest the inclusion of the FAB or AFR teams from USAID/Washington in this design development.

What opportunities do we see for an expansion of USAID investment in Nyungwe?

Sophisticated farm outside of NNP. Photo by Olaf Zerbock, March 2013.

As the Evaluation Team became familiar with the USAID investments made to date and began to understand the breadth of the challenge facing RDB/Nyungwe, we began to discuss what our "dream" approach to conserving NNP would entail. The key would be to carry out all the activities outlined above in the sustainability phase and, in addition, find a way to significantly scale up livelihood improvements around the Park, not just for a few hundred people but for tens or even hundreds of thousands of people. This could not be done by further expanding ecotourism opportunities for communities since the market is relatively limited, and USAID investments to date have largely responded to existing and near-term demand. The key to this expansion of investment would be to tackle the issue of agricultural development and livelihood diversification of communities around the Park. These communities are among the poorest in Rwanda, and the potential for improving and intensifying their farming activities while linking them to functional value chains represents an important opportunity. USAID is already working in the Agricultural sector with RDB in other areas of the country; we believe USAID should investigate how a portion of its agricultural investments might be used around NNP as a means to improve the livelihoods of people living around the Park. Some important considerations:

- A multi-pronged approach to conservation and economic development would require strategic collaboration from multiple sectors and multiple funding types (e.g., biodiversity, sustainable landscapes, Feed the Future, climate change adaptation) within USAID. Since funding for activities would come from different sources, it will be critical to design the program using a well-founded, integrated theory of change so that projects and activities complement each other. For example, agricultural investments should not endanger the Park. Special attention to the impact of new roads or new agricultural products on biodiversity would be required, as would a focus on replacing lost sources of fuel wood as the buffer zone is harvested or increased agricultural investment crowds out trees in smallholder systems, etc.
- It is important to remember that economic development does not necessarily lead to improved biodiversity conservation. Special attention should be paid to the mitigation of threats to the Park (hunting, firewood), which wouldn't necessarily be alleviated by increased agricultural productivity, or which could be exacerbated by increased economic well-being (e.g., increased demand for timber to improve houses). It would be important to simultaneously improve law enforcement capacity and effectiveness.
- This expanded approach would have many opportunities to involve Rwandan NGOs and enhance the use of the USAID Forward Framework. In addition to those mentioned in the Sustainability Phase above, we understand that there are also agricultural and other development-focused NGOs whose capacities could be developed to enhance their ability to manage USAID grants directly.

In a way, this is the logical progression of the original program design, which sought to marry improved biodiversity conservation with expanded economic opportunities in rural areas. There is an opportunity here for innovation that could be an example across USAID as an institution. This would be a very innovative approach to integrating conservation and development in a meaningful fashion and would provide great opportunities for learning and improving our understanding of how to forward a truly sustainable development that encompasses meaningful economic improvements and biodiversity conservation.

ANNEX A: STATEMENT OF WORK

C.1 Purpose

The purpose of the task order is to assess the results and achievements of the suite of USAID/Rwanda biodiversity programs in Nyungwe National Park since 2006, as well as obtain information about current program performance. The evaluation findings and recommendations will help improve program performance and permit refinement of activities to achieve intended results in the remaining two years. Another major focus of the assessment is to determine the extent to which USAID investments are likely to be sustained (economic, social, ecological aspects of sustainability) after the activities conclude in early 2015.

C.2 Background

Nyungwe National Park (NNP) was created in 2005, primarily to protect natural resources that are widely recognized as being of global as well as national significance. It is also believed that Nyungwe is the source of about 70% of Rwanda's water, making it the most important water tower for the country. When Nyungwe was originally designated a forest reserve in 1933, its total area was 1,141 km²; encroachment by local farmers between 1958 and 1979 reduced the reserve area to 971 km². Today, partially buffered by forest plantations and tea estates around some of its borders, and with the addition of the remnant forest of Cyamudongo, NNP covers 1,019 km2. Overall in the past 40 years, Rwanda has lost 95% of its natural forests and 43% of its national parks.

USAID has been investing in NNP since 2006 with an objective to accelerate rural economic growth and improve biodiversity conservation in and around the park. USAID/Rwanda supported a three-year project (2006-2009) in NNP called "Profitable Ecotourism through Improved Biodiversity Conservation in Rwanda." To keep up the momentum of this project, two projects are currently active in Nyungwe (2010-2015): "Strengthening sustainable ecotourism in and around the Nyungwe National Park" (Nyungwe Nziza) implemented as a contract by Development Alternatives Inc. (DAI) and "Sustaining Biodiversity Conservation in Nyungwe National Park" implemented as a cooperative agreement by Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS). The two projects are required to work in strong synergy to jointly accelerate rural economic growth and improve biodiversity conservation.

During the 2006-2009 project, USAID/Rwanda committed US$3.8 million to help the Rwanda Office of Tourism and National Parks (ORTPN) broaden the country's appeal as a tourism destination by developing key areas of Nyungwe Forest National Park. The project had three areas of concentration: economic growth through positioning Nyungwe as a tourism destination, both alternative and complementary to gorilla trekking in Volcanoes National Park; conservation of biodiversity by balancing tourism with protecting the forest's sensitive and diverse plant and animal life; and addressing the economic needs of local communities that may be linked to tourism in and around the project's targeted areas. The anticipated results were (1) threats to biodiversity demonstrably mitigated over the life of the project(2) benefits to local communities demonstrated in the form of income generated, park revenues shared, employment, diversification of income sources and/or increased access to community services including health and other relevant services, (3) number of visitors to and revenues generated from

Nyungwe Forest National Park increase, and (4) increased number of women participating in rural enterprises development activities and in key positions in their communities.

The overriding goal of the 2010-2015 conservation project ("Sustaining Biodiversity Conservation in Nyungwe National Park") is that Rwanda benefits from the conservation of wildlife and sustainable use of ecosystem services in Nyungwe National Park. The principal objective is to improve the capacity of the Rwanda Development Board (replaced the Rwanda Office of Tourism and National Parks as the government body in charge of national parks) to sustainably manage the park's resources and address specific threats (fire, poaching, timber harvesting) to the park and specific species of concern. The supporting objective is that communities and government are able to benefit from the conservation of wildlife and sustainable management and use of ecosystem services in NNP. WCS aims to meet these objectives by helping to mitigate the key direct threats to Nyungwe's biodiversity and ecosystem services and by targeting key factors contributing to them as described in the conceptual model (Fig. 1).

The objectives of the 2010-2015 ecotourism project ("Strengthening sustainable ecotourism in and around the Nyungwe National Park") are to help RDB transform NNP into a viable ecotourism destination. The hypothesis is that if the park is capable of generating employment and sustainable and equitable income for local communities and other stakeholders, there will be economic incentives to reduce threats to the park and conserve its rich biodiversity. The ultimate goal is a thriving economy in NNP with engaged communities and a private sector that realize they can benefit economically by protecting and leveraging the unique environment in which they live and work. The project team is designing and implementing market-driven product development and marketing strategies which will: Diversify the local economy, create jobs, and increase family income, resulting in reduced poverty and reduced threats; forge scalable and creative public-private partnerships to increase investment in and around the Park, resulting in a sustainable, market-driven ecotourism business plan for NNP; improve the ecotourism enabling environment, resulting in sustainable ecotourism development at Nyungwe and beyond; and better integrate local communities into existing and new ecotourism value chains.

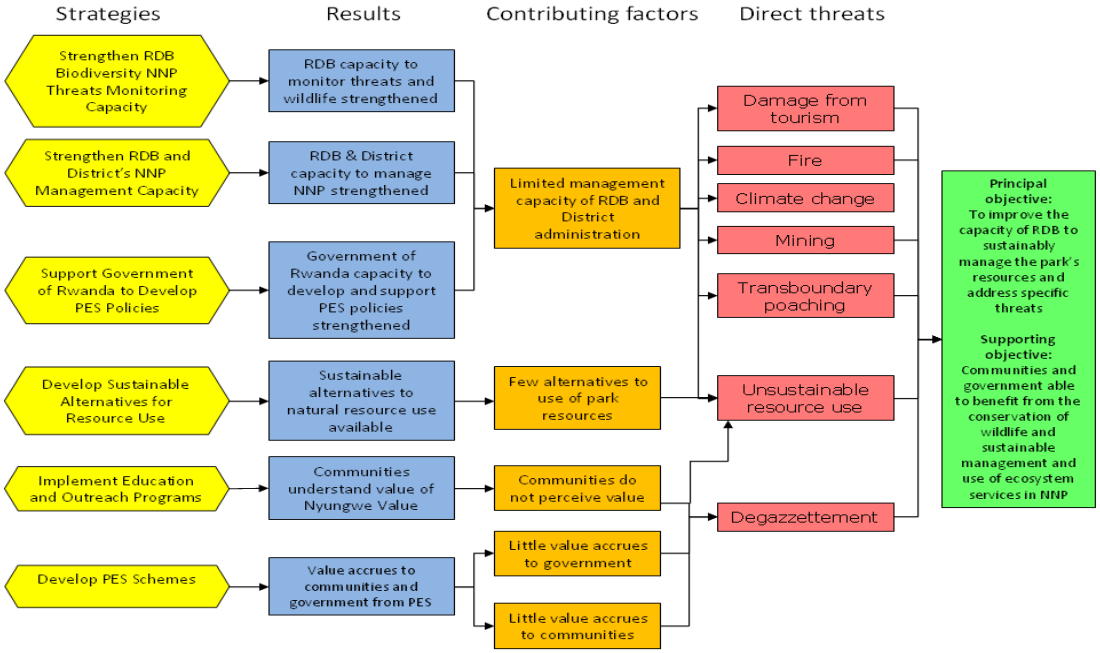


Fig. 1: Conceptual model showing relationships between the projects objectives (in green), threats to these (in red), contributing factors (in orange), intervention strategies (in yellow), and project results (in blue).

Measuring project effectiveness, relevance and efficiency, disclosing those findings to stakeholders, and using evaluation findings to inform resource allocation and other decisions are core USAID Responsibilities. In this particular case, an evaluation is of particular interest in part because:

- The results (especially conservation ones) from 2006-2009 "Profitable Ecotourism through Improved Biodiversity Conservation in Rwanda" project were not clearly documented. As a result, the designs of the two current Nyungwe projects did not necessarily build on successes or identified gaps. We believe this has led to some overlapping expected results between the previous project and the current projects and an evaluation can reveal some important lessons learned in this regard.
- Investments in Nyungwe National Park are funded by the biodiversity earmark and should contribute to the reduction of threats to biodiversity in the park. The evaluation should verify to what extent this is the case, based on threat mapping and Ranger Based Monitoring reports.
- After six years of capacity building to the Government of Rwanda (GoR), an evaluation is needed to align activities to ensure sustainability of USAID investments.

C.3 Services and Tasks Required

The objective of the task order is to assess the results and achievements of USAID/Rwanda biodiversity programs since 2006 in accelerating economic growth in and around NNP and improving biodiversity conservation. The contractor will also assess the results of capacity building activities to the Government of Rwanda and how they contribute to the main goals of the program. The team will produce a report, which will also present substantive recommendations on how the projects can improve performance in the remaining years of the project, as well as recommendations for areas of focus for future USAID investments, as discussed in Section C.5 below.

C.3 (a) Evaluation Requirements

For each of the primary questions (below), the evaluation team should:

1. **Assess performance with regards to meeting program and sustainability objectives.** In order to answer primary and supporting questions, the evaluation team will review progress made towards each objective and intermediate result, and analyze the validity of results and the expectations for achievement of indicator targets.
2. **Identify Challenges to Implementation.** The Team will identify the major challenges to effective implementation that impact program performance and analyze potential mitigation strategies. Challenges should include logistical and management issues, as well as the political context in which the program operates.
3. **Document Lessons Learned.** The Team will identify key achievements, lessons learned, and best practices from USAID support to date and distill them into clear guidance for the remaining period of implementation. Lessons learned and best practices may include both technical and implementation/management/coordination guidance.

C.3 (b) Data Collection Methods

In preparing this evaluation, the team will ensure that their research includes the following activities:

- Review of existing Nyungwe documentation. Most of projects reports and assessment are available on the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC). USAID/Rwanda will make other programs documents not posted on the DEC, including program descriptions and statements of work, available within two weeks of the signing of the contract via email.
- Analysis of pertinent reports, assessments, laws, bills, regulations associated with conservation and tourism in Rwanda.
- Interviews with relevant stakeholders and program staff to learn more about the programs' implementation.
- Visits to field offices and communities to learn firsthand how the programs are progressing.

C.3 (c) Evaluation Questions

Evaluation questions will be refined by the evaluation team as part of the work plan deliverable discussed in Section C.5(a) below, but the questions used consider the following illustrative questions:

1. To what extent have program objectives and targets been met and results achieved?

2. To what extent were results from Phase I of Nyungwe support acknowledged and sustained in Phase II?
   a. Which, if any, Phase I results were inappropriately claimed/attributed to Phase II?
   b. To what extent where Phase I results strengthened or neglected in Phase II?

3. What challenges have been overcome or still remain for the current projects?

   a. INTRINSIC CHALLENGES
      i. To what extent do the initial design, and the assumptions within it, hold up?
      ii. What has been successful and what opportunities exist for improving implementation, including coordination, communication and management relationships among partners and between projects?
      iii. Are the indicators selected for the projects adequate?

   b. EXTRINSIC CHALLENGES
      i. To what extent are the existing policy environment (including institutional framework/coordination structures) and proposed policy activities conducive for the program's achievement of its main objectives?
      ii. Have policy bottlenecks, like the delay in passing the Concessions Policy, affected the projects' abilities to achieve their goals?
      iii. Are there missed opportunities when it comes to coordinating with other stakeholders (GoR, other donors, NGOs)?

4. To what extent are USAID investments likely to be sustained (economic, social, ecological aspects of sustainability)?

a. What can be done in the last two years to ensure full turnover of park management to the Government of Rwanda?
b. How are the projects being perceived and valued by the Government of Rwanda (Rwanda Development Board, RDB, in particular; the government body in charge of tourism and conservation), and other stakeholders?
c. Does the main recipient (GoR/RDB) have clear policies, strategies and plans related to the program objectives? If so, are program activities aligned with RDB's strategies and plans?
d. How are the projects' activities contributing to accelerating the economic growth to communities living around Nyungwe National Park?

5. Additional potential questions that may be considered for resolution in the assessment report:

- What are the overall biodiversity program's key achievements since 2006?
- To what extent have threats to biodiversity been ameliorated and biodiversity or ecosystem function been improved or secured?
- What additional monitoring during the duration of the current projects could improve measurement of impact (economic growth and biodiversity indicators) at the end of the program?
- How could investment in other sectors potentially support (directly or indirectly) conservation in Nyungwe?

C.4 General Program Implementation Guidelines

The following general guidance is provided with respect to the composition of the evaluation team and logistics.

C.4 (a) Evaluation Team Composition

The evaluation will be led by an independent consultant or employee ("Team Leader") provided by the Contractor. The contractor may choose to propose additional technical/support personnel as needed to comply with the requirements of the task order. USAID/Rwanda will be responsible for providing an additional expert to complete the evaluation; a description of the skills of the additional expert is attached to this Task Order in Section J.3. However, the contractor must ensure that all required technical areas are fully covered.

The Team Leader must have professional experience coordinating evaluations, and leading evaluation teams composed of multiple stakeholders. The candidate must have exceptional organizational, analytical, writing, and presentation skills. S/he must be fluent in English and have a master's level degree or higher in a relevant analytical field. It would be highly desirable for the candidate to have knowledge and/or experience working with USAID rules, regulations, and procedures.

The Team Leader should have:

- Significant experience in impact and performance evaluation, including as a leader of an evaluation team
- Significant biodiversity expertise
- Expertise in rural development and ecotourism development in developing countries, ideally in East/Central Africa
- Advanced degree in natural resources management, environmental sciences, rural development, or a related field
- Fluency in English, working knowledge of French

The Team Leader will oversee the overall drafting of the evaluation framework, including methodology determinations; organization of calendar/travel/meetings; coordinating the desk study, interview, survey and other data collection; and analyzing the data with input from team members and USAID to draft an evaluation report. In the field, the Team Leader will be responsible for day-to-day direction of team members, including USG. All evaluation team members should have defined roles and know in advance an outline of the report and the portion they are expect to draft.

The evaluation team will additionally include one USAID/Washington technical staff member with significant biodiversity expertise, who will be identified and paid for by USAID/Rwanda in consultation with the Economic Growth, Education and Environment (E3) Bureau and Africa Bureau in Washington. This team composition will allow for both an in-depth USAID angle as well as an independent perspective.

C.4 (b) Logistics

The contractor will work under the general guidance of the USAID/Rwanda Economic Growth Team, which manages environment projects. The contractor will work in USAID/Rwanda office space while in Kigali. USAID/Rwanda will provide the evaluation team with program documentation in advance and assist with organizing meetings and interviews with program partners and beneficiaries in Kigali and in Nyungwe, as needed.

C.5 Deliverables

The following deliverables are required. All written documentation for submission by the Contractor to USAID must be in English.

C.5 (a) Work Plan

The Contractor shall develop a work plan to be approved in content and format by the Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) consistent with the schedule set forth in Section F.2(a) below. The work plan shall set forth the conceptual approach and methodology for completing the deliverables. It must be realistic, set forth meaningful milestones, and seek to maximize results within budget resources that ensure a prompt and effective launch of contract activities. It also must set forth the schedule, approved by the COR, for the field work.

The work plan has the following specific additional requirements:

1. The work plan must include the complete and final set of evaluation questions based on the guidance above in Section C.3(c).
2. USAID/Washington team members, likely from the E3 Bureau, must be consulted prior to the field work in Rwanda to develop the work plan.

C.5 (b) Evaluation De-Briefing

The Contractor is required to provide a de-briefing presentation to USAID/Rwanda and stakeholders approved in content and format by the COR consistent with the schedule set forth in Section F.2(b) below. The presentation will take place at the end of the field work and will describe preliminary findings. The presentation should roughly cover the requirements for the

evaluation specified in the work plan and for the final assessment report set forth below in Section C.5(c).

C.5 (c) Final Assessment Report

A final assessment report, including an Executive Summary, is required and must be approved in content and format by the COR consistent with the schedule set forth in Section F.2(c) below. In order to ensure the highest quality reporting, the final report will follow the requirements set forth below.

- The evaluation report should represent a thoughtful, well-presented, well-researched, and well organized effort to objectively evaluate what worked in this project, what did not work, and why.
- The evaluation report is expected to be a high quality technical report, in a professional writing style.
- The evaluation report will meet the criteria outlined in USAID's Evaluation Policy, Appendix C.
- Evaluation reports shall address all evaluation questions included in this scope of work.
- The evaluation report should include all the key sections: cover sheet, table of contents and acronym list/glossary of terms, executive summary, background, evaluation objectives, main evaluation questions, methods, findings, conclusions and lessons learned, recommendations, and any other sections requested.
- The evaluation report should include the scope of work as an appendix. All modifications to the scope of work, whether in technical requirements, evaluation questions, evaluation team composition, methodology, or timeline need to be agreed upon in writing by USAID/Rwanda.
- The evaluation report should include an introduction that adequately describes the project, explains where it is implemented, includes contextual information, and includes the "theory of change" or development hypotheses that underlie the project.
- Evaluation methodology shall be explained in detail and all tools used in conducting the evaluation such as questionnaires, check lists, and discussion guides will be included in an appendix in the final report.
- Evaluation findings will sex disaggregate outcomes and impacts.
- Limitations to the evaluation shall be disclosed in the report, with particular attention to the limitations associated with the evaluation methodology (selection bias, recall bias, unobservable differences between comparator groups, etc.).
- Evaluation findings should be presented as analyzed facts, evidence, and data and should not be based on anecdotes, hearsay, or a compilation of opinions. Findings should be specific, concise, and supported by strong quantitative or qualitative evidence.
- Sources of information need to be properly identified and listed in an appendix.
- The report must clearly distinguish between conclusions, findings, and recommendations.
- Recommendations need to be supported by a specific set of findings.
- Recommendations should be action-oriented, practical, and specific with defined responsibility for the action.

ANNEX B: REFERENCES

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ANNEX C: BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF TEAM MEMBERS

Paul Cowles, Team Leader, has more than 20 years of international and domestic experience in helping people better manage their natural resources. Key to his success is the ability to assess and evaluate program performance from social, environmental, economic, and governance perspectives. Most recently, Mr. Cowles has been working with the *USAID Washington Forest and Biodiversity Team* to help NRM programs worldwide assess their environmental governance needs and results. Paul has also worked with *USAID's Sustainable Conservation Approaches in Priority Ecosystems (SCAPES) Team* in adapting the "limiting factors" evaluation methodology into an easy-to-use survey methodology to help USAID evaluate progress on seven common threats to biodiversity across nine landscapes on three continents. With degrees in both Biology and Conservation Social Sciences, two decades of experience managing, assessing, and building capacity for successful implementation of USAID environment programs in Africa and Asia, and experience teaching program management and evaluation/statistical methods at universities in the USA, Paul has the tools and experience required to meaningfully assess NRM programmatic performance. He has traveled extensively in Rwanda, is fluent in French, and understands the socio-cultural and environmental context of USAID's work in-country.

Cassie Ann Hoffman is an NRM Specialist with expertise in payments of ecosystem services, environmental economics and policies, strategic communication and behavior change, and monitoring and evaluation. During her tenure at ECODIT, she has provided technical backstopping support to five USAID Biodiversity Assessments (Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Georgia, Nepal, and Ukraine) and managed and/or contributed to three evaluations of USAID environmental programs, including an Evaluation of USAID Ecuador Biodiversity Conservation Strategies with Lowland Indigenous Groups, an external Evaluation of the Central African Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE), and an Assessment of USAID-managed Environmental Program in Central America to support compliance with CAFTA-DR. In 2008, she conducted an Evaluation of Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) Scheme for Fundación Natura in Bolivia and provided research support, analysis, and survey implementation to Ecosystem Marketplace's first State of Biodiversity Markets report. She has a master's degree in Environmental Management and speaks English, Spanish, and Portuguese

Emmanuel Hakizimana, Environment and Tourism Specialist**,** is an experienced environmental specialist with more than 18 years of experience developing strategies and plans for biodiversity conservation, tourism, and management of national parks; conducting environmental and social impact assessments, needs assessments, baseline studies, and project evaluations; and preparing national reports on environmental needs and vulnerabilities, providing recommendations for improving natural resource management. He has previously supported teams conducting needs assessments for integrated vector management for USAID in Burundi and Democratic Republic of Congo, and has worked with Rwandan Tourism and National Parks Authority on planning, monitoring and evaluating management and tourism plans for three National Parks, including Nyungwe National Park.

Participating USAID Staff:

Olaf Zerbock is a Forestry and Climate Change Specialist who provides technical expertise to USAID missions on program and project design for biodiversity, forestry, and climate change

mitigation. He understands the broad perspective of USAID in natural resources management programming, including compliance with Agency program design and reporting requirements, and best practices in conservation programming. He helped design and manage an agency initiative to support improved monitoring and evaluation across the Agency biodiversity portfolio, and works with other USG agencies to coordinate technical expertise and programming in support of biodiversity, forestry, and climate change programs. Olaf has previous experience in designing and overseeing a portfolio of forest conservation and REDD+ projects, including in eastern DRC, Liberia, and Madagascar. He holds an MS in Forestry and a BS in Biology, and speaks fluent Spanish and German and understands/reads French.

Edith McClintock has broad experience working on environmental issues ranging from watershed management and ecotourism to protected areas management and climate change. Prior to joining USAID, she worked as a consultant on environmental education program development, strategic planning, and business development for nonprofit and for-profit clients. Previous to that, she was Executive Director of two community nonprofits in Miami focused on environmental education and behavior change. Other accomplishments include establishing the City of Miami's Office of Sustainable Initiatives, development and passage of significant environmental legislation, and completion of the city's climate action plan. She has managed communications, environmental education, and government relations for prominent conservation groups including the Nature Conservancy and World Wildlife Fund. Edith has a MS in Environmental Studies from Florida International University with a focus in community-based protected areas management and ecotourism.

Jackson Bamwesigye is a multidisciplinary Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist. Working at USAID/Rwanda, he serves as the lead for monitoring and reporting of program results and provides oversight and technical guidance to an outside firm responsible for supporting data collection, data quality improvement, and a data management system. For more than seven years, Jackson has worked at different levels across virtually all sectors in which international development agencies are active, and has delivered technical assistance in setting up and operationalizing M&E systems and in monitoring & evaluation methodologies, data collection methods and data/statistical analysis, including management of web-based reporting systems. Jackson has an MA in Development Studies from Institute of Social Studies in the Netherlands.

ANNEX D: EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Key Evaluation Themes and Questions[1]

Key Theme	Key Question(s) Associated with Theme
1. Program Design	• Were the program's initial design and assumptions appropriate and *to what extent do the initial design, and the assumptions in it, hold up?* (O1, O3)
2. Program Management	• *What has been successful and what opportunities exist for improving implementation, including coordination, communication and management relationships among partners and between projects?* (O3) • Has project monitoring and data collection improved project planning processes, decision making, and implementation? (O1, O3)
3. Program Outcomes	• *To what extent have program objectives and targets been met and results achieved?* (O1, O2)
4. External Constraints	• What are the primary barriers to implementation and achieving project outcomes and how can they be overcome? (O1, O2, O3)
5. Sustainability	• Will the RDB be able to maintain and sustain project investments and respond to new and evolving threats in the future? (O2, O3)
6. Recommendations	• *What can be done during the last two years to ensure full turnover of park management to the Government of Rwanda?(O2, O3)*

[1]Italicized questions come from the original USAID Scope of Work

1. Program Design

Key Question:
Were the program's initial design and assumptions appropriate and *to what extent do the initial design, and the assumptions in it, hold up?*

Supplementary Questions:

- *To what extent are the existing policy environment (including institutional framework/coordination structures) and proposed policy activities conducive for the programs' achievement of its main objectives?*
- *Are there missed opportunities when it comes to coordinating with other stakeholders (GoR, other donors, NGOs)?*
- *To what extent were the results of Phase 1 of Nyungwe support acknowledged and sustained in Phase 2?*
    - *Which, if any, Phase 1 results were inappropriately claimed/attributed to Phase 2?*
    - *To what extent were Phase 1 results strengthened or neglected in Phase 2?*

2. Program Management

Key Questions:
What has been successful and what opportunities exist for improving implementation, including coordination, communication, and management relationships among partners and between projects?

Has project monitoring and data collection improved project planning processes, decision making, and implementation?

Supplementary Questions:

- To what extent are ecosystem functions (carbon, water, soil, biodiversity, etc.) understood by the Government of Rwanda (scientific understanding of the NNP ecosystem)?
- What has been done to include women and disadvantaged groups in project activities?
- *Are the indicators selected for the project adequate (both for reporting in the PMP and internally via work planning and annual reporting)?*
- *What additional monitoring during the duration of the current projects could improve measurement of impact (economic growth and biodiversity indicators) at the end of the program?*

3. Program Results and Outcomes

Key Question:
To what extent have program objectives and targets been met and results achieved?

Supplementary Questions:
Improved Biodiversity Conservation (Nature)

- *To what extent have threats (fire, poaching, timber harvesting) to biodiversity been ameliorated?*
- *To what extent have biodiversity or ecosystem function been improved or secured?*

Economic Benefits/Improved Incomes (Wealth)

- *How are the projects' activities contributing to accelerating the economic growth of communities living around NNP?*
- What are the different types of concrete economic benefits that the projects produced for RDB and surrounding communities?
- To what extent have the projects been able to increase the number of visitors to NNP?
- To what extent have the projects been able to increase income to RDB from the NNP?
- To what extent have women and other disadvantaged groups benefited from project activities?

Capacity of RDB (Power)

- To what extent is income from ecotourism, park revenues, employment, diversification of income sources, and/or increased access to community services (health, education) equitably distributed?
- To what extent have women and other disadvantaged groups benefited from project activities?
- What are strengths and weaknesses of the RDB in relation to taking over management of NNP?
- *Does the main recipient (GoR/RDB) have clear policies, strategies, and plans related to the program objectives? If so, are program activities aligned with RDB's strategies and plans?*

Public Perception

- To what extent do communities connect improved incomes with the continued existence of NNP's biodiversity?
- *How are the projects being perceived and valued by the Government of Rwanda (RDB, in particular) and other stakeholders?*

4. External Constraints

Key Question:
What are the primary barriers to implementation and achieving project outcomes and how can they be overcome?

Supplementary Questions:

- To what extent does legislation and policy support public and private ecotourism investment?
- *Have policy bottlenecks, like the delay in passing the Concessions Policy, affected the projects' abilities to achieve their goals?* Would current/future plans for concession in NNP support or threaten to undermine the progress achieved by the program?

5. Sustainability

Key Question:
Will the RDB be able to maintain and sustain project investments and respond to new and evolving threats in the future?

Supplementary Questions:

- What are strengths and weaknesses of the RDB in relation to taking over management of NNP?
- To what extent are economic opportunities supported by the projects likely to be sustained? Why or why not?
- Ecotourism investments can be maintained/enhanced by stakeholders?
- *How could investment in other sectors potentially support (directly or indirectly) conservation in Nyungwe?*

6. Recommendations and Looking Forward

Key Question:
What can be done during the last two years to ensure full turnover of park management to the Government of Rwanda?

Supplementary Questions:

- *What challenges have been overcome or still remain for the current projects?*

ANNEX E: LIST OF INDIVIDUALS CONSULTED AND THEIR INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION

Institutions	Names	Position
USAID/Rwanda	Peter Malnak	Chief of Mission
	Jessye Lapenn	Deputy Chief of Mission
	Terhi Majanen	Environment Officer
	Jackson Tumwesigye	M&E Specialist
	David Cohen	Economic Growth Team Leader
	Aimee Mpambara	Rural Development Specialist
	Brian Frantz	General Development Officer
	Fina Kayisanabo	Agriculture Advisor
Rwanda Environmental Management Authority (REMA)	Dr. Rose Mukankomeje	Director General
	Marie Laetitia Busokeye	Director Research Environmental Planning and Development
Protected Areas Biodiversity (PAB) Project	Raphael Mpayana	Ex-Project Coordinator
Rwanda Development Board: Headquarters (RDB)	Tony Nsanganira	Acting Chief Operating Officer
	Rica Rwigamba	Head of Department of Conservation and Tourism
	Telesphore Ngoga	Acting Manager of Conservation Division
	Claudine Rubagumya	Senior Officer in Charge of Tourism Products Development
	Francois Bizimungu	Senior Officer in Charge of Wildlife Conservation Planning
	Faustin Karasira	Head of Division Product Development and Planning
	Emmanuel Werabe	Manager of the Division of Quality and Standards
Rwanda Natural Resources Authority	Dismas Bakundukize	Director of Forest Management Unit
	Assumpta Uzamukunda	Professional in Charge of Forests Management
	Goretti Manirakiza	Professional in Charge of Biodiversity Conservation
Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)	Dr. Michel Masozera	Country Director
	Fidel Ruzigandekwe	Officer in Charge of Monitoring and Evaluation
	Chloe Cipoletta	Director of Nyungwe Project and Chief of Party
	Felix Mulindahabi	WCS – Nyungwe Program Assistant Director
	Joseph Ngango	Finance Officer

Rusizi District	Jean Luc Nsabayezu	District Officer in Charge of Cooperative Promotion
	Gilbert Ntakirutimana	Professional in Charge of Facilitation of Investments and Cooperative Promotion
Nyamasheke District	Prisac Byukusenge	REMA/Environmental Officer
	Jean Baptiste Ndagijimana	Executive Secretary
Kitabi College Conservation Training Center	Richard Kagoboka	Principal
RDB-Nyungwe National Park	Louis Rugerinyange	Chief Park Warden
	Ildephonse Kambogo	Tourism Warden
	Patrice Nzamuye	Protection Warden
	Innocent Ndikubwimana	Research and Monitoring Warden
	Roger Hategekimana	Community Conservation Warden (Karongi, Bweyeye, and Gasumo sectors)
DAI	James R. Seller	Chief of Party
	Eric Maniraguha	Ecotourism Field Coordinator
	Moise Bigirabagabo	Business Development Services and Field Coordinator
	Tasha Jubilie	Operations and Grant Manager
	Donnah Mariza	Business Development Specialist
	Firmin Karitanyi Safari	M&E Specialist
	Boaz Tumwesigye	Ecotourism Team Leader
Association Rwandaise des Ecologistes (ARECO)	Emmanuel Dufitumukiza	Programme Assistant
	Jacques Habimana	In Charge of Bambous Programme
New Forests Company	Hannes Winter	Country Director
	Joseph Munyarukaza	Corporate Social Responsibility Manager
Primate Safaris	Chris Munyaro	General Manager
Rwanda Tour Travel Association	Flavia Mitali	Director RTTA
Rural Environment and Development Organization (REDO)	Jean Baptiste Gashumba	Executive Director
	Inshuti Amata	Program Manager REDO
	Chantal Shirimpumu	Field Officer REDO, Nkungu Sector, Rusizi District
Gisakura Tea Factories	Tyali Satendra Kumar	General Manager
	Emmanuel Kanyesigye	Head of Administration and Finance
Nyungwe Resort Lodge	Jerry Were	General Manager
Nyungwe Touraco Ecolodge	Gervais Habimana	Operator Private Sector, Rusizi District
Kitabi Women's Handcraft Cooperative	Victorina Uwimana	Vice President
	Christiana Ntabudakeba	Secretary

Friends of Nyungwe Cooperative	Jean Baptiste Bazambanza	Program Coordinator
	Faustin Munyakayanza	President of Cooperative
Nyungwe Honey Processing and Seles Center	Vincent HAKIZIMANA	Beekeeping Development Officer
	Gerry Godebelt	VSO Volunteer
Cyamudongo Tourism Promotion Cooperative	Leonard Birikunzira	President of Cooperative
	Gaston Muvara	Vice President
Community member, beneficiary of cooking stoves	Cesary Nyirantibangirukuhe	Community member
Community member, beneficiary of cooking stoves	Felicite Murebwayire	Community member

March 7, 2012 – Stakeholder Workshop Participants

No.	Name	Affiliation	Email address
1	Japhat Habinshuti	RNRA/Lands and Mapping	mjanshuti@yahoo.fr
2	Chloe Cipolletta	WCS Nyungwe	ccipolletta@wcs.org
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25	Francois Xavier Tetero	RNRA	fteterov@yahoo.fr
26	Jim Seyler	DAI	jim_seyler@dai.com
27	Faustin Karasira	RDB	

ANNEX F: SUMMARY OF SITES VISITED

	Name of site	Location	Brief description
1	RDB, Nyungwe National Park Office	Kitabi Sector, Nyamagabe District; before the entrance into the Park	Office of RDB's staff, NNP
2	Cyamudongo Tourism Cooperative	Nkungu Sector, Rusizi District	Office constructed through DAI support (bar, store, and show and selling rooms of handcraft).
3	Cyamudongo RDB Ranger Post		Ringer Post constructed through support of WCS support (main house, cooking room, restroom, and container for rain water collection.
4	Gisakura Tea Plantation and Tea Factory	Gisakura tea plantation, near WCS's Gisakura office, Nyamashake District	Headquarters of Gisakura factory
5	Gisakura, WCS Office	Gisakura Sector, Nyamasheke District	WCS's offices and lodge facilities. It hosts RDB reception.
6	Nyungwe Resort Ecolodge	Gisakura tea plantation on the ridge of NNP	High-end ecolodge and owner of a portion of the tea plantation
7	Uwinka Visitors Center	Uwinka visitors center, NNP	Nyungwe Interpretation Center, tourists reception
8	Canopy Walkway	Igishigishigi trail, near Uwinka visitors center	Project supported by IRG, USAID support, Phase 1
9	Water Falls Trail	Nyungwe National Park	Renovation of trail with support of DAI
10	Beneficiaries of improved cooking stoves	Cell Gatare, Sector of Nkungu in Rusizi District	All cooking stoves have been set up in kitchen outside the family main house.
11	Nyungwe Touraco Lodge Site	Gisakura Tea Plantation, Nyamashake District	New project for medium accommodation rooms. Request of support to DAI through mechanism of PPPF. Gervais Habimana is owner of the project.
12	RDB Reception, Gisakura Reception Site	Gisakura, located at the Western entrance of NNP	New RDB project for construction of reception and center for handcraft sales
13	Karamba Concession Site	Inside Nyungwe National Park, western part	Project for construction of medium Tourist Accommodation facilities
14	Mugote Stop Point	Inside Nyungwe National Park, inside the Park after Uwinka towards Kitabi RDB office	Project of RDB to set up public toilets, dust bins, and canteen for travelers

15	Gasare Concession Site	Inside the NNP, located near Uwasenkoko stream	Project of construction of high-end ecolodge through PPPF
16	Uwasenkoko Natural Freezing Trail	Along Uwasenkoko stream, inside NNP	Project to establish a new trail for bird and orchid watching
17	Kitabi Accommodation Concession Site	Before the entrance of NNP and outside the Park, after RDB's Kitabi office	Project to establish a medium ecolodge for visitors and should be an extension of Golden Monkey Hotel based at Nyamagabe City.
18	Kitabi Women's Handcraft Office	Kitabi Sector, close to Tamac Road, Nyamagabe District	Office, handcraft and weavers of adult and children sweaters
19	Nyungwe Honey Processes and Sales Center	Kitabi Sector, close to Tamac Road, Nyamagabe District	Promotion of honey collected by the union of beekeepers operating around NNP
20	Friends of Nyungwe Cooperative	Kitabi Sector, close to the RDB's office, Nyamagabe District	Promotion of traditional culture through dancers and traditional king dwellings, low accommodation for facilities
21	DAI's Kitabi Office	Kitabi Sector, in the compound of the RDB's offices, Nyamagabe District	DAI's offices hosted by RDB, Nyungwe offices

ANNEX G: TOURISM DATA

Tables and data provided by RDB-Nyungwe – April 2013

Number of Park Activities sold by Product and Month

2012	Nyungwe					
	Primates	Trails	Camping	Canopy	Birding	Total
January	212	242	1	199	1	655
February	295	232	14	135	5	681
March	165	152	4	121	2	444
April	161	128	4	121	2	416
May	161	132	10	112	5	420
June	206	256	3	166	3	634
July	269	304	22	249	11	855
August	331	208	26	429	-	994
September	231	109	2	125	10	477
October	163	164	15	172	7	521
November	166	279	3	227	14	689
December	301	136	3	191	3	634
Total	**2,661**	**2,342**	**107**	**2,247**	**63**	**7,420**

2011	Nyungwe					
	Primates	Trails	Camping	Canopy	Birding	Total
January	183	121	41	199	32	576
February	151	214	34	148	9	556
March	116	128	5	125	13	387
April	143	257	20	100	8	528
May	157	203	8	117	3	488
June	246	215	31	147	51	690
July	381	452	53	318	49	1,253
August	455	530	76	311	14	1,386
September	221	243	17	342	8	831
October	181	173	15	227	5	601
November	128	126	18	101	8	381
December	194	207	2	180	14	597
Total	**2,556**	**2,869**	**320**	**2,315**	**214**	**8,274**

	Nyungwe					
	Primates	Trails	Camping	Canopy	Birding	Total
2010						
January	94	141	47	-	2	284
February	90	137	38	-	9	274
March	83	136	30	-	7	256
April	106	136	19	-	25	286
May	132	325	37	-	-	494
June	163	238	26	-	2	429
July	214	324	28	-	18	584
August	323	384	81	-	18	806
September	240	247	29	94	11	621
October	156	187	16	68	12	439
November	150	185	51	145	10	541
December	176	233	29	295	8	741
Total	**1,927**	**2,673**	**431**	**602**	**122**	**5,755**

	Nyungwe					
2009	Primates	Trails	Camping	Canopy	Birding	Total
January	175	133	20	-		328
February	170	64	15	-	20	269
March	91	138	17	-	8	254
April	69	147	17	-	16	249
May	158	91	40	-	2	291
June	140	122	31	-	4	297
July	342	298	100	-	20	760
August	409	334	97	-	16	856
September	175	155	30	-	3	363
October	123	185	26	-	6	340
November	141	109	22	-	15	287
December	164	173	38	-	19	394
Total	**2,157**	**1,949**	**453**		**129**	**4,688**

	Nyungwe					
	Primates	Trails	Camping	Canopy	Birding	Total
2008						
January	170	85	13	-	7	275
February	196	141	13	-	-	350
March	116	212	14	-	7	349
April	80	74	11	-	2	167
May	148	130	26	-	1	305
June	153	97	58	-	-	308
July	352	257	75	-	40	724
August	364	310	247	-	25	946
September	247	144	62	-	14	467
October	207	95	8	-	3	313
November	125	97	20	-	2	244
December	158	165	34	-	5	362
Total	**2,316**	**1,807**	**581**		**106**	**4,810**

Number of Park Activities sold by Resident Category
RR = Rwandan Resident; FR = Foreign Resident; FV = Foreign Visitor

	Nyungwe NP			
2012	**RR**	**FR**	**FV**	**Total**
January	159	86	410	655
February	120	99	462	681
March	126	37	281	444
April	119	64	233	416
May	95	75	250	420
June	74	80	480	634
July	112	93	650	855
August	114	259	621	994
September	90	76	311	477
October	97	120	304	521
November	217	192	280	689
December	162	100	372	634
Total	**1,485**	**1,281**	**4,654**	**7,420**

	Nyungwe NP			
2011	**RR**	**FR**	**FV**	**Total**
January	151	63	362	576
February	62	146	348	556
March	42	79	266	387
April	53	144	331	528
May	50	115	323	488
June	93	67	530	690
July	120	207	926	1,253
August	305	137	944	1,386
September	387	56	388	831
October	162	112	327	601
November	52	63	266	381
December	162	77	358	597
Total	**1,639**	**1,266**	**5,369**	**8,274**
2010				
January	15	42	227	284
February	6	58	210	274
March	31	49	176	256
April	26	66	194	286
May	159	82	253	494
June	6	53	370	429
July	51	79	454	584
August	75	115	616	806
September	55	45	521	621
October	99	78	262	439
November	114	116	311	541
December	200	143	398	741
Total	**837**	**926**	**3,992**	**5,755**
2009				
January	30	18	280	328
February	13	44	216	273
March	26	17	211	254
April	111	36	102	249
May	16	62	213	291
June	9	41	247	297
July	80	100	580	760
August	101	50	705	856
September	23	38	305	366
October	26	75	239	340
November	16	64	207	287
December	27	54	313	394
Total	**478**	**599**	**3,618**	**4,695**

ANNEX H: ADDITIONAL DAI PMP ANALYSIS

PIR 1: Nyungwe's tourism products developed through increased private sector participation

Indicator	Baseline	YR2 Total	YR5 Target
No. 10: Number of private-public partnerships developed	0	0	5
No. 11: Amount of private sector resources leveraged for park ecotourism products	0	$28,000	$US 3M
No. 12: Number of new ecotourism infrastructure products developed	1	2	5
No. 13: Number of concession opportunities/ecotourism products identified and assessed	1	9	5
No. 14: Number of concession opportunities taken over by private investors	0	0	5

Overall, these indicators are directly measuring the project result, albeit dependent on the highly delayed approval of the National Concessions Policy. The target for Indicator No. 13 has been reached and exceeded and is now static.

PIR 2: Improved marketing and promotion of Nyungwe among targeted segments

Indicator	Baseline	YR2 Total	YR5 Target
No. 15: Percent increase in number of visits from United States and United Kingdom-based tourists		81.2%	350%
No. 16: Number of people attending annual promotional events held in or about Nyungwe	0	N/A	500
No. 17: Number of social media channels discussing NNP in a positive light	0	4	3
No. 18: Number of blogs discussing NNP in a positive light	0	2	5
No. 19: Number of online marketing products developed	0	5	3
No. 20: Private sector interest for the development of Nyungwe–Lake Kivu circuit (*to be dropped*)	N/A	N/A	N/A
No. 21 Number of NNP's promotional materials used in key travel industry events in United States and United Kingdom	0	4	7

Much like Indicator No. 4 measuring overall number of tourists to the NNP, Indicator No. 15 is subject to other external events, but given that the project is conducting targeted marketing in the US and UK, not entirely superfluous.

In general, Indicators No. 17 through 19 could be combined into one indicator that captures online media appearances or "events," especially given the way these indicators are being tracked and reported on. As it is defined now, it is very unclear what "online marketing products" are, and one of the blog discussions counted in Indicator No. 18 was that of DAI subcontractor, SW Associates. Additionally, and in line with traditional marketing practices, it would be highly

valuable for DAI to capture the "reach" of its marketing products—something along the lines of a cumulative number of website "hits," blog visitors, Facebook fans, readership of FAM articles, number of marketing brochure distributed, etc. This would better capture the effectiveness of its marketing materials. Even further, if DAI could capture the conversion rate of its marketing materials (how many people actually visit the Park as a result of their marketing materials), that would be ideal, although we recognize this could be burdensome in terms of cost-effectiveness.

PIR 3: Improved integration and linkages between communities and the ecotourism value chain

Indicator	Baseline	YR 2 Total	YR5 Target
No. 22: Threat levels in selected critical buffer zone areas reduced (percentage reduction)	0	0%	0%
No. 23: Number of community/private sector partnerships developed and in operation	0	0	4
No. 24: Amount of private sector resources leveraged for community initiatives	0	0	US$ 1M
No. 25: Number of community-based attractions and tours available for sale	1	2	4
No. 26: Number of consolidated ecotourism and related small to medium enterprises (SME) that are fully operational	0	0	4

The Evaluation Team had concerns regarding Indicator No. 22 per the discussion above, and it's unclear if DAI has made progress on monitoring this indicator. Overall, Indicators 23–26 are appropriate and direct indicators, and in particular, Indicator No. 26 represents a sophisticated outcome of successful capacity building of grantee cooperatives.

PIR 4: Improved policy and enabling environment for ecotourism

Indicator	Baseline	YR 2 Total	YR5 Target
No. 27: Increased visitor satisfaction	TBD	0	40%
No. 28: Positive policy environment for investment in tourism development in and around NNP	-	0	30%

Indicator No. 27 is an excellent indicator, though it seems it is not currently being measured due to a lack of park resources (human resources) to conduct the customer satisfaction survey. This survey data would be very useful in helping DAI assess the impact of its guide training on customer service and satisfaction, but also serve as a rich planning resource for the Park. The definition of Indicator No. 28 (Definition = Percent increase in private investment dollars in the development of tourism products in and around NNP) should be the actual indicator. The Evaluation Team also suggests moving Indicator No. 9 (number of policies, etc.) to this project result level as it is better suited here.

PIR 5: Improved RDB, private sector and community capacity for ecotourism planning and management

Indicator	Baseline	YR 2 Total	YR5 Target
No. 29: Number of tours operators/tourism related	0	-	4

enterprises applying for impact investment funds			
No. 30: Increased capacity of targeted community organizations/cooperatives to manage community-based ecotourism initiatives	0	Pending	20%
No. 31: Increased capacity of RDB to assess the potential environmental impact of tourism in NNP	0	-	3
No. 32: Increased capacity of RDB to use GIS as a park planning and management tool	1	Dropped	7
No. 33: Number of guide certification or other "official recognition" guide training programs in place and functioning	0	1	1
No. 34: Increased capacity and ability of RDB to conduct market analyses and to provide accurate and timely market intelligence to local communities and the public and private sectors		-	1

DAI has indicated that it is likely that Indicators No. 31 and 32 will be dropped.

The Evaluation Team found the definition for "capacity" for Indicator No. 30 inappropriate (from PIRS: "Increase capacity will be measured by the percent increase in the number of annual visitors to target sites, income from tourism per capita [by member], and the change in the rate of requests by visitors for information"), because it is unclear how a "unit" or rather a percentage of capacity could be measured given the definition. Secondly, this definition is not an accurate measure of capacity, but should rather capture organizational, financial, and technical capacity of the community organizations/cooperatives, along the lines of if they've completed a business plan, are regularly holding meetings and elections, and other measures of a functioning organization.