
Implementing Agency	World Bank
Country	Uganda
Focal Area	Biodiversity
Project Title	Bwindi Impenetrable National Park and Mgahinga Gorilla National Park Conservation
GEF Allocation	US\$4.0 million
Cofinancing	US\$2.31 million
	US\$1.42 million (offshore trust fund established by project)
	US\$0.89 million (U.S. Agency for International Development)
Total Financing	US\$6.31 million
Dates	January 1995–December 1999
Environmental Problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internationally significant biodiversity and ecosystems threatened by growing human populations, logging, and harvesting of forest products
Project Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create trust fund to manage two national parks and build community support for sustainable development

Until the early 1970s, Uganda ably managed a rich natural endowment through a system of natural areas that supported thriving tourism. Fifteen years of political instability, however, devastated the economy and natural resources. The current government is now working to revitalize its conservation program and tourism.

Uganda's Bwindi Impenetrable National Park and Mgahinga Gorilla National Park protect some of the most biologically diverse tropical forests in East Africa. Both parks conserve rare and dwindling Afrotropical and Afro-alpine. Mgahinga represents the Ugandan share of the Virungas Volcanoes range and is contiguous with the Virungas National Park in the Republic of Congo and Parc National des Volcans in Rwanda. Up to fifty mountain gorillas use Mgahinga for part of the year. It is also home to numerous other rare mammals and eleven regionally endemic bird species. Bwindi is particularly rich in biodiversity. It contains at least 120 species of mammals, including ten primates and half the world's population of 600 mountain gorillas. Bwindi also holds forests that are rich in tree, butterfly, vertebrate, invertebrate, reptile, amphibian, and bird species. The two parks serve as important water catchments and sources of forest products for local communities.

Forest exploitation has been unsustainable. Logging has significantly affected much of Mgahinga; only 10 percent of Bwindi remains completely undisturbed. Human populations near these parks are large and growing. Agricultural land is intensively used and scarce. The government has limited funds to manage the parks adequately and work with communities to gain their support.

The Project This project, being implemented by Uganda's Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife, and Antiquities, is supporting biodiversity conservation in the two national parks by providing incremental support for park management and related research activities and funding grants that help local community groups develop income-generating alternatives to traditional activities based on harvesting forest resources. The project represents an experiment in: (a) using a trust fund as a mechanism to provide reliable, long-term funding for conservation

activities and (b) including community representatives as full partners in project decisionmaking to gain community support and ownership. As a first step, therefore, in funding conservation activities, the project set up and capitalized the Mgahinga and Bwindi Impenetrable Forest Conservation Trust Fund.

Activities Income from the trust fund is now being used for the following types of activities:

- *Community development activities*, including projects that are proposed by established community groups, promote positive impacts on park and biodiversity conservation, are consistent with national policies and park management plans, and are socially and environmentally sound, equitable, and transparent.
- *Research activities*, including ecological and socioeconomic research that provides data needed to improve park management and park/community interactions.
- *Park management activities*, including assistance to Uganda National Parks to help meet costs of implementing management plans for the two parks.

- Benefits**
- Preserve biodiversity, including mountain gorillas and other endemic, rare, or endangered species
 - Maintain environmental services, such as watershed protection and erosion control
 - Provide long-term economic gains for communities.

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is a financial mechanism that provides grants and concessional funds to developing countries for projects and activities designed to protect the global environment. GEF resources address climate change, biological diversity, international waters, and depletion of the ozone layer. Activities concerning land degradation, primarily desertification and deforestation as they relate to the four focal areas, are also eligible for funding.

GEF is a joint venture of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the World Bank. These three agencies implement GEF projects.

For more information on this project, contact:

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