



Enhancing the role of local communities in the protection of Rugezi Marsh and its iconic Grey Crowned Cranes

Type of priority area

Terrestrial Protected Area

Key Biodiversity Area

Primary objective

Management Effectiveness

Target groups

Local Communities

Women

Main activity focus

Enforcement

Threatened Species

Ecosystem/habitat restoration

Duration
27.08.2020 – 26.06.2023

Type of grant & project budget
Medium Grant | 332,037.64€

Location
Rwanda, Eastern Africa

Protected & Conserved Areas
Rugezi-Burera-Ruhondo Ramsar Site,
Wetland of International Importance

WDPA ID
109095

BIOPAMA RRS Link
<http://rris.biopama.org/pa/109095>

Project Lead

Rwanda Wildlife Conservation Association (RWCA)

Description of the project

This project will implement a range of activities to address conservation problems, while engaging and involving community members in the management and protection of the Marsh. RWCA will recruit and train additional Community Rangers at Rugezi Marsh to carry out patrols, report illegal activities, educate community members and monitor populations of Grey Crowned Cranes and breeding activities. Community campaigns and other educational events will be organised to raise awareness among community members about key conservation messages. The team of Marsh Rangers also increase awareness by educating community members during their patrols. The project will involve community members in conservation actions including the restoration of two islands within the Marsh planting 6,000 indigenous trees. There will be opportunities for paid work for community members to plant the trees. RWCA believes in the idea of ‘growing trees’ rather than just ‘planting trees’ so communities will also be involved in follow-up activities. Additional activities will work to strengthen law enforcement through workshops with local leaders, joint patrol exercises with stakeholders, organising meetings of the Inter-Agency Committee for Illegal Wildlife Trafficking and a workshop for police and other agencies introducing the new wildlife law in Rwanda.





Diagnostic Tools Used

R-METT (Ramsar Site Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool)



The BIOPAMA Action Component Objectives Addressed

- Enhance the management and governance of priority protected areas by addressing existing limitations (strengthening on-site infrastructure/equipment for patrolling, poaching control, developing capacity of staff).
- Enforce the legal framework required to achieve effective biodiversity conservation.
- Support local communities' initiatives aiming to enhance the livelihoods of local people whilst effectively contributing to protected areas management.



Priority Need Addressed

The project will address the following priority needs:

- to enhance the role of local communities in the protection of Rugezi Marsh and its iconic Grey Crowned Cranes, with the ultimate goal of building their sense of ownership so that they can play a greater role in managing the marsh, ensuring its sustainable use, and protecting biodiversity and
- to improve the protection of Rugezi Marsh and law enforcement so that illegal activities are reduced, and the Grey Crowned Crane population is able to recover.



The change the project implementation will bring for the protected areas

Rugezi Marsh is a Ramsar protected site of international importance and this project will bring about a number of key changes to improve its management and protection. Engaging and involving communities in the management of the Marsh will increase its protection in a sustainable way. As RWCA strengthens its team of Community Marsh Rangers, this will reduce the number of illegal activities that take place around the Marsh. Education is key to engaging communities and changing attitudes towards conservation issues. As the project raises awareness, communities will show increased knowledge of conservation issues which will increase their collaboration and involvement in the management of the Marsh. Additionally, increased protection will come from the strengthening of law enforcement efforts which will also reduce the risk of illegal trade of Grey Crowned Cranes. Information gathered about Rugezi Marsh will be shared with international stakeholders and databases which will help to improve and develop management plans. Overall, as a result of the holistic approach that targets the problem from many angles, the result will be an increase in biodiversity and an increase in the population of Grey Crowned Cranes at Rugezi Marsh which will be a good indicator of the health of the ecosystem.

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The project Enhancing the role of local communities in the protection of Rugezi Marsh and its iconic Grey Crowned Cranes is financed by the European Union and the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States through the Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management (BIOPAMA) Programme.

BIOPAMA assists the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries to address their priorities for improved management and governance of biodiversity and natural resources. BIOPAMA provides a variety of tools, services and funding to conservation actors in the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. The BIOPAMA grant-making facility is managed by IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) and supports projects on the ground to strengthen the management and governance of protected and conserved areas, with a total budget of 21 million Euros.

