

Expression of Interest

USAID Uganda Biodiversity for Resilience Activity

Assignment Title:	Community Conservancy Co-Management and EcoTourism Development in Kidepo Valley Landscape
Result:	Result 1.1: Conservation Enterprises Supported
Activity:	Activity 1.2.4 Engage with tourism sector in each landscape to generate conservancy support
Consultant Name:	TBD
Country:	Uganda
Location:	Kidepo Valley Landscape (KKAKKA CWA)
Period of Performance:	October 2023 – February 2024
Submit Proposal to:	sif@ugandabiodiversity.rti.org .
Date of Issue of EOI:	July 24, 2023
Date Questions from Supplier Due:	August 4, 2023
Date Proposal Due:	August 15, 2023, by 17:00 hrs East African Time
Consultant Point of Contact:	Jennifer Talbot, B4R Chief of Party

1. Introduction

The goal of the 5-year (2020-2025) USAID/Uganda Biodiversity for Resilience (B4R) Activity, implemented by RTI International, is to assist communities, the Government of Uganda (GOU), and the private sector to conserve and manage biodiversity in target ecosystems for lasting environmental and economic sustainability and increased community and household resilience. The Activity supports community wildlife conservancies and protected area management while promoting market-based solutions, including nature-based tourism and other conservation enterprises, to improve stewardship of the natural resources necessary to sustain Uganda’s economic development.

Additional cross-cutting activities include promotion of resiliency strategies; inclusion of women, youth, and other marginalized people; private sector engagement; capacity building; and deliberate use of collaborating, learning, and adapting techniques.

B4R Activity provides direct financial support in the form of sub-awards from its Strategic Investment Fund (SIF) to private sector and other community-based enterprises towards achieving biodiversity conservation objectives in Kidepo Valley, Murchison Falls, Lake Mburo, and Budongo Forest landscapes. The B4R SIF aims to stimulate investment in nature-based economies in target landscapes.

2. Background

The community conservancy model is new in Uganda and requires partnerships and innovative financing mechanisms for their successful management and financial sustainability. In collaboration with Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), B4R has been supporting communities through relevant stakeholders (KKAKKA Community Wildlife Association) in conservancy establishment in Kidepo Valley Landscape, which covers parts of six-district areas of Karenga, Kaabong, Abim, Kotido, Kitgum, and Agago.

The process of establishment is ongoing following the “conservancy roadmap” methodology adopted by the project to bring conservancies from establishment phase to self-sufficient organizations and following the conservancy business plans which were completed in September 2022.

The second phase of implementation will include focus on the priority enterprise projects and management models identified during Phase I. **B4R seeks to partner with qualified organizations to develop upscale ecotourism activities, conservancy co-management, and monetize innovative funding mechanisms such as ecosystem services.**

With increasing tourism development in and around Kidepo Valley National Park in recent years, adoption and implementation of the conservancy model is envisaged to expand habitat for wildlife and support alternative revenue streams for communities as an incentive for co-existing with wildlife.

3. Objectives of Project / Assignment:

B4R is seeking an EOI from suitable private sector partners who have pioneered successful Private Community Partnerships under a community conservancy model within East or Southern Africa. The selected operator(s) would have exclusive use of a defined area of land within the KKAKKA CWA area for ecotourism and associated activities. Several target areas for this type of investment exist and could be between 60-300 km², with operators having the option to develop a low impact accommodation facility, establish game tracks, develop tourism experiences, and co-manage the conservancy area with the aim to restore wildlife. Targeted communities working with KKAKKA CWA and the B4R activities in the area will be equitable partners for these ecotourism projects; they will be fully aware of the benefits they may receive, rights and responsibilities, and they will be active participants in the project implementation.

The project aims to develop and operationalize a successful and financial sustainable community conservancy based on the co-management model. The selected partner(s) will be expected to:

- Partner with a target community in the landscape and with KKAKKA CWA to co-manage the community conservancy. The conservancy area will be delineated following the existing customary land ownership.
- Develop and manage a premier eco-tourism facility and activities in the target area, which would provide core funding for the community beneficiaries and conservancy management.
- Develop and successfully launch and monetize additional innovative conservation finance mechanisms suitable in the area, such as the biodiversity credits and soil carbon credits.
- RTI International, under its USAID/B4R Activity, will offer the successful implementing firm both financial and technical assistance to implement this project (community mobilization and stakeholder engagement, planning, agreement structuring and relevant services).

4. Activities / Scope of Services

The implementing firm is expected to fully develop and implement all planned projects and activities as follows:

- Develop and finalize the agreement with the community and other stakeholders (KKAKKA CWA) for the co-management of the community conservancy in the target area. The envisioned mechanism should follow applicable best practices for conservancy management and benefit sharing in sub-Saharan Africa and is expected to continue beyond the B4R Activity implementation.
- Develop and operationalize a premier ecotourism facility in the target area, in line with ecotourism best practices for lodge design, operations; and the project’s community benefits and engagement.
- Assess and develop additional revenue streams monetizing innovative conservation finance mechanisms such as biodiversity credits and soil carbon. The proposed mechanisms should optimally be ready for revenue generation by the end of the assignment.

5. Deliverable and Deadlines

Detailed deliverables and outputs will be developed during the assignment.

Technical Direction, Management & Communication

The USAID B4R COP together will provide overall technical direction, with support from other USAID B4R personnel.

6. Required Experience

The firm is expected to have primarily long-term implementation experience in conservancy management and premier ecotourism facility management in East or Southern Africa, with specifics as follows:

- Experience on conservation management such as ecological monitoring, human-wildlife conflict mitigation, law enforcement, and community conservation.
- Successful track record in delivering outstanding community benefits from ecotourism and/or conservancy projects
- Successful track record in revitalizing wildlife in the similar ecosystems and community conservation projects
- Experience in implementing innovative conservation finance initiatives such as biodiversity credits and soil carbon.

7. Period and Place of Performance

The period of performance is about 18 months, expecting to commence around **October 15, 2023**, and ending around **February 28, 2025**. The period of performance is somewhat flexible.

8. Application Guidelines

The applicants shall submit the following:

- Concept Proposal (2-4 pages) outlining the proposed project vision, approach, and business model. This should include the description of the planned ecotourism activities, approach to engaging community members, and timelines for implementation and results
- Company profile highlighting the applicant background and required experience
- Proposed investment summary

The concept proposals should be submitted by 17:00 hrs East African Time, August 15, 2023; to sif@ugandabiodiversity.rti.org, with the subject "Kidepo Co-Management". All concept notes will be treated in confidence. Selected applicants will be invited to co-develop detailed project proposals.

Any questions can be emailed to Juraj Ujházy, CFA, jujhazy@rti.org

9. Supplementary Information

a. Landscape Profile

The Kidepo Valley Landscape is located in the extreme north-eastern part of Uganda, bordering South Sudan to the North and Kenya to the east. The landscape is comprised of the Kidepo Valley National Park with about 20+ Forest Reserves in the landscape, and the community land throughout anchored by its Karenga Community Wildlife Area. Broader Kidepo Critical Landscape (10,700 km²), of which 5,775 km² is under some form of conservation management.

The landscape also links to the Kidepo Game Reserve in Southern Sudan (WSC, n.d.). The Kidepo Valley National Park was proclaimed in 1962 and it covers 1,442 km² and includes two valleys that make up the upper Kidepo and Narus Valley. Topographic and seasonal variations have created a variety of habitats from closed mountain forest to short-grass savannah. This wide variety of habitats supports a diverse range of wildlife species.

The Karenga Community Wildlife Area (KCWA) is the core (although not all) of the KKAKKA CWA lands and is located south of Kidepo Valley National Park and covers an area of 956 km². At its narrowest point, it comprises a 6-km wide strip along the Kawalakol river, stretching south to the southern end from the Napore Hills, joining the Kapeta River adjacent to the Rom Forest Reserve.

The Uganda Wildlife Act empowers local communities living in the area to manage and control the use of KCWA land in ways that do not adversely affect the wildlife and ecosystems found there. This area acts as a buffer for wildlife moving from the park in search of pasture and water, especially in the dry seasons. Although the community own and can utilize the land, the Uganda Wildlife Authority also has management oversight of the KCWA landscape.

The northern end of the KCWA is bordered by more significant areas of farmland and settlements, but this area is also critical for maintaining wildlife dispersal south of KVNP along the Kawalakol river. The southern end of the conservancy has less pressure from farm and settlement activities. Some encroachment or unplanned land use into the KCWA has already occurred, such as the location of a government prison in Kitgum and some settlements in Kotido District.

Adjoining the different protected areas in the landscape are 'wildlife corridors,' such as the KCWA, or the lands where lodges are being developed in the north western part of the conservancy that connect Kidepo National Park and Nyangea-Napore Central Forest Reserve (see Figure 1). These comprise of land tracks previously designated as community hunting areas but presently interspersed with human settlements and utilized for agriculture as well as hunting. These corridors provide important buffers that play a key role in the functioning of the KCL ecosystem and in wildlife conservation efforts. They provide connectivity important for species dispersal and the movement of animals during periods of water or food scarcity. These corridors are however under threat from increasing human populations and intensifying land utilization for agriculture and other economic activities (charcoal, mining, etc.).

The Kidepo Critical Landscape (KCL) is one of the most biodiverse landscapes in Uganda with many endemic and globally endangered species. Kidepo Valley National Park is home to a high diversity of mammals, 28 of the 86 species of mammals in the park were not found in any of Uganda's other national parks. Some of these included the striped hyena, aardwolf, caracal, cheetah, greater and lesser kudu, klipspringer, dikdik, Bright's gazelle, Chandler's Mountain reedbuck, African Wild Dogs (recently seen in 2023). Many of the other large mammals found elsewhere in Uganda such as elephant, zebra, buffalo, eland, waterbuck, Jackson's hartebeest, lion, leopard, and both black backed and side-striped jackal, are found in the park, as well as reintroduced Nubian giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis*).

Kidepo Valley National Park possesses high conservation values and other park benefits such as unique fauna, unique crocodile species, multiple habitat types, support endemic plants and animal species, beautiful landscape, and water catchment area. Therefore, this area attracts tourism to the country. For instance, Kidepo is one of the best places for birdwatching with 475 bird species. Common Ostriches can be found in Kidepo Valley National Park and also in the southern end of the landscape in the community area.

Target community land is mostly south/southeast of the park, with wildlife dispersal areas reaching radius of up to 100 km from the park boundary. The community land is anchored at the center by Karenga Community Wildlife Area (956 sq km). While the wildlife density in the area is less than in the national park, the wildlife census in 2019 confirmed increase in species sighting compared to 2015, with the following species present/sighted during the survey: elephants, buffalo, Bohor's Reedbuck, duiker, hartebeests, oribis, warthogs, bushbuck, Lesser kudu, ostrich, jackal, hyaena, dik-dik, zebra, Aardvark and waterbuck. Wildlife is often found also in other parts of the community land. In the recent decade, there has been increasing human-wildlife conflict (primarily crop damage) in the region primarily due to elephants and buffaloes. The community land vegetation ranges from tropical / semi-arid savannah characterized by woodland and shrub cover as well as a grass layer.

Despite the growing threats (agricultural expansion, tree cutting for charcoal, woodfuel, construction), vegetation in the majority of the landscape is still relatively intact. The density of wildlife (compared to the park) is though much lower due to persistent pressure of illegal hunting. Improved management is thus likely result in quick wildlife recovery due to suitable habitat present.

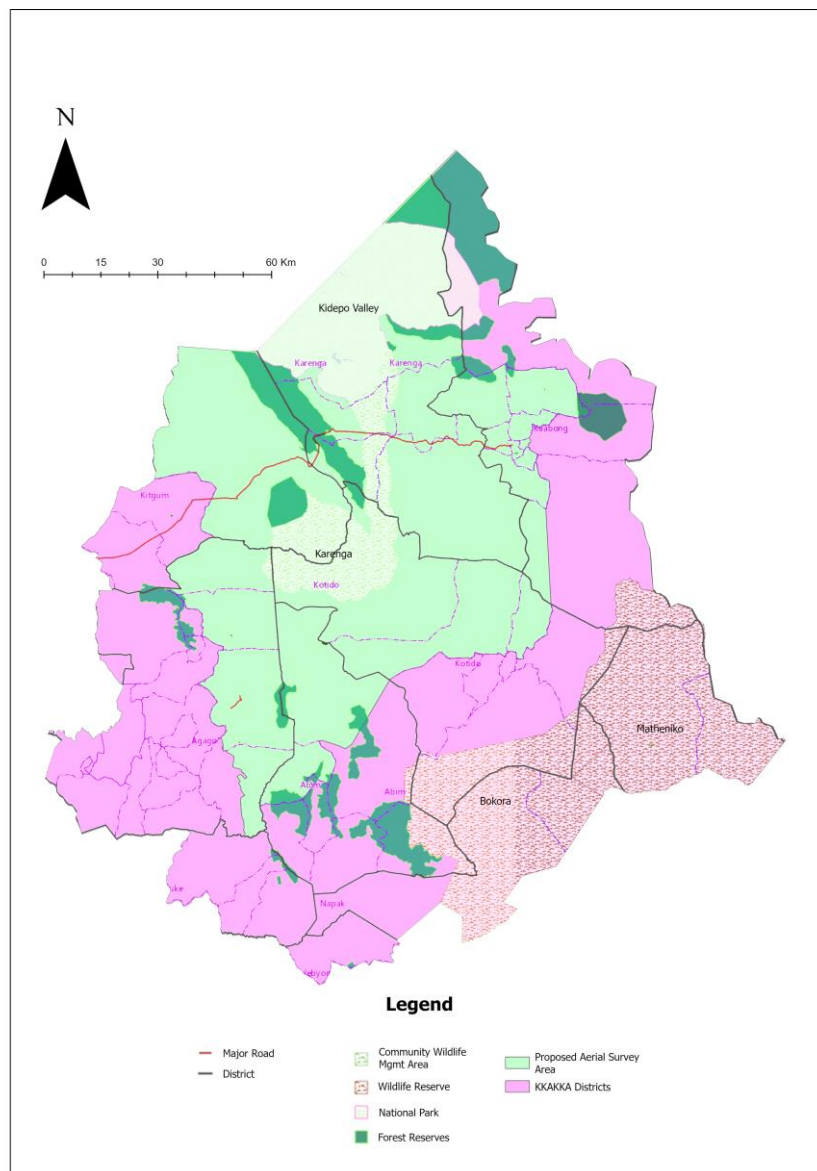


Figure. KKAKKA CWA constituency area (in green) which the proposed projects could target.

b. Stakeholder Profile

KKAKKA Community Wildlife Association

The KKAKKA Community Wildlife Association (CWA) is a community-run organization with the mission to promote community-led conservation by fostering peaceful and harmonious co-existence of wildlife and community through the development of programs that address socio-economic transformation. This includes conservation-focused community development and the protection of natural resources, wildlife and the regional landscape.

The geographic scope of KKAKKA CWA includes the Karenga Community Wildlife Area (KCWA) and surrounding community lands (total of 35 subcounties) within the districts of Karenga, Kaabong, Abim, Kotido, Kitgum and Agago. The first letter of each district forms the name KKAKKA.

In addition to the lands within the KCWA, the KKAKKA CWA also covers community land around KCWA, extending further along the southern border of Kidepo Valley National Park (KVMP) as well as the lands south around the KCWA borders. The KKAKKA CWA landscape is approximately delineated by the dotted lines in the map above.

The KKAKKA Community Wildlife Association aims to promote community-led conservation by fostering peaceful and harmonious co-existence of wildlife and community through the development of programs that address socio-economic transformation.

To achieve this mission, KKAKKA developed a set of strategic objectives that were recently updated, that include:

- Reinvest in the land and tackle poverty through increased job opportunities, enterprise activities, etc.
- Promote ecotourism and diversify economic activities to face unplanned events (such as COVID-19)
- Improve agricultural techniques and food production without encroaching and threatening wildlife or the natural environment
- Enhance understanding of conservation objectives and the importance of the natural landscape/wildlife for people in the region in the short, medium and long term.
- Increase partnerships with private, public and non-profit organizations to support conservation
- Reduce human-wildlife conflict
- Influence and inform community mindset on the purpose and role of KKAKKA through clear communications and information at the village level
- Make KKAKKA a gateway to the community – bridging private sectors relationships with communities

The proposed community conservancy will be in partnership with one of the target communities, related to KKAKKA CWA through a formal relationship such as membership.

c. Demographics and Economic Profile

The Project Area cuts across two sub-regions in Acholi (Kitgum and Agago districts), Karamoja (Abim, Karenga, Kaabong, and Kotido Districts). The districts of Abim, Karenga, Kaabong, and Kotido districts are mostly inhabited by the Karamojong - an umbrella term consisting of a number of ethnic groups or sub-tribes such as the Dodoth (North), the Jie (Central) and the Bokora, Matheniko, and Pian (South), and smaller ethnic groups such as the Tepeth, Nyakwe, Ik, Ngipore and Ethur. The Karamojong are recognized in the international human rights community as part of the Indigenous People of Uganda. Unlike other Indigenous groups in Uganda who are minority groups with smaller populations, the Karamojong constitute the majority of Karamoja's population, with smaller minority sub-groups (e.g., the IK) under the Karamajong umbrella.

The communities in Kitgum and Agago predominantly constitute one tribe (the Acholi) and are part of Luo-speaking Nilotic people of East Africa covering the districts of Agago, Amuru, Gulu, Kitgum, Nwoya, Lamwo,

and Pader; and Magwe County in South Sudan and northwestern Kenya. In terms of cultural setting, both the Luo /Acholi in Agago and Kitgum; and the Karamajong in Abim, Karenga, Kaabong, and Kotido districts are historically characterized by the formation of chiefdoms headed by clan leaders.

According to the 2014 population census, the population density in the districts that make up KKAKKA CWA area is approximately 45 persons/km², of whom 52% were female and 48%, male. The average household size was about 6 persons per household. About ~100,000 households reside in the greater region.

The main economic activities in the region at the present time are subsistence cultivation, livestock, charcoal production as well as small-scale merchandise/retail shops and traders. Crops grown include cassava, millet, sorghum, sim sim, sunflower, maize, beans, cotton, ground nuts, sweet potatoes and vegetables, mainly for local markets. Some mining, honey collection and hunting (sports hunting and for wild meat) and other commercial activities also occurring at a small scale in the landscape. Table 1 show the relative importance of economic activities in the landscape during the last census, however it should be noted that since the census Kaabong has be divided into two districts (Kaabong and Karenga), both of which are part of the conservancy.

Livelihood activities	Ranking according to importance*						Average
	Kitgum	Kaabong	Kotido	Abim	Agago	Otuke	
Crop cultivation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1.0
Livestock rearing	3	2	2	2	2	2	2.2
Charcoal burning	2	4	3	4	-	3	3.2
Trade	-	-	-	3	3	4	3.3
Mining	5	3	7	5	-	5	5.0
Apiary/Honey collection	4	6	6	6	5	6	5.5
Firewood business	6	5	5	-	-	8	6.0
Hunting	7	-	4	7	4	9	6.2
Fishing	-	-	8	-	6	7	7.0
Craft making	-	-	-	-	7	-	7.0
Fruit harvesting	-	7	-	-	-	-	7.0
Timber business	8	-	-	-	-	-	8.0

10. *Rankings generated during focused group discussions with district technical staff in each district.

Table 1: Relative importance of economic activities in the Kidepo Critical Landscape (Management Plan for Wildlife Dispersal Corridors in the Kidepo Critical Landscape 2018-2027)

Tourism is also a part of the local economy and has the potential for significant growth given the abundance of natural resources and improving infrastructure, but is currently very nascent in the region. Kidepo Valley National Park is the main tourism attraction, drawing approximately 12,000 non-student visitors in 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, which reduced visitation considerably. Interviews with lodges and tourism professionals operating in the region indicate that tourism numbers rebounded in 2022, with expectations are that 2023 visitor numbers will exceed 2019 levels in the region. The park is the only major tourism attraction in the region that attracts significant tourism volumes and can therefore be used as a benchmark for tourism in the overall region.

Although photographic tourism visitation to the region, even before the pandemic, was limited, tourism investment has grown significantly. In 2012/13 tourism accommodation facilities in the area include Apoka Lodge (high end facility), UWA banda's/campsites (budget), and one other operating lodge/camp (budget/mid-level) on the edge of the park (Nga'moru Wilderness Camp).

By 2022 more lodges/camps have been built, or are in some stage of planning or development in the park and outside. The total number of lodging facilities operational, or soon to be operational, is estimated to be at least 12 facilities. Most of the new construction was within the last 5 years.

A limiting factor for tourism in the region previously was very restricted availability of accommodations. This increase in accommodation facilities has addressed this limitation and will likely promote a growth in tourism to the region. The communities and KKAKKA CWA is well positioned to leverage this growth in tourism through direct involvement in new investments as well as through the provision of services to visitors coming to the area.

Although the community area south of the Kidepo Valley NP has good potential for non-consumptive wildlife tourism, access is limited, and it is very remote. It requires significant investment to operationalize this more remote parts of the area for tourism. Large parts of this landscape is therefore well suited for high-end exclusive use tourism facilities as they are able to finance the investment requirement for development as well as attract a market that is willing to pay for exclusive nature-based experiences. Such an investment can be coupled by the conservancy co-management model and additional revenue streams such as carbon and biodiversity credits.

Within KVNP:

- Apoka Lodge
- Apoka UWA Bandas/campsites
- New lodge in the Rhinome track
- New lodge near Kalokudo gate

Outside of KVNP:

- Nga'moru Lodge
- Kidepo Savannah Lodge
- Adere Lodge
- Karamoja Safari Camp (opening late 2023)
- Mara Safari Lodge
- Zebra Safari Lodge