

**FORMAT FOR THE SUBMISSION OF  
STATE OF CONSERVATION REPORTS  
BY THE STATES PARTIES**

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**(in compliance with Paragraph 169 of the *Operational Guidelines*)**

**Nyungwe National Park (Republic of Rwanda) (45 COM 8B.26)**

**1. Executive Summary of the report**

Nyungwe National Park, designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in September 2023, has made significant progress in implementing conservation measures in line with the recommendations of the World Heritage Committee. This report outlines the advancements and ongoing initiatives that address key management issues, including the regulation of buffer zones, the reduction of road traffic, and compliance with the updated General Management Plan (2023–2032).

Rwanda has enacted Law No 001/2023 of 13/01/2023 governing national parks and nature reserves and corresponding ministerial orders to formalize the management of national parks and buffer zones. Significant attention is given to agreements with tea plantation owners, whose plantations form a natural barrier between the park and external activities. Consultations with stakeholders, including the National Agriculture Export Board (NAEB) and tea companies, aim to solidify the role of these plantations in maintaining the buffer zone. Collaborative efforts were reinforced during park stakeholders' meetings in 2024, focusing on combating illegal activities and mitigating forest fires.

Efforts to reduce traffic through Nyungwe are progressing with the upgrading of an alternative road via Nyamasheke, Karongi, and Muhanga, which is nearing completion. This alternative, preferred by travellers for its reduced distance and scenic views, has already decreased park traffic. Meanwhile, regulatory measures to mitigate wildlife roadkill—spiking from 231 cases in 2023 to 528 cases in 2024—include speed limits (40 km/h), signage, enhanced patrols, and public amenities to address overspeeding concerns. An annual awareness campaign targeting road users and transport companies is scheduled for December 2024.

Nyungwe National Park is managed under a Public-Private Partnership with African Parks Network, guided by an updated General Management Plan. A five-year business plan (2023–2026) aligns with Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), which are actively monitored. Restoration efforts under the new “Congo Nile Divide” project include reforesting 4,500 hectares of degraded land and improving community livelihoods surrounding the park.

Nyungwe National Park demonstrates an effective conservation strategy through strong legal frameworks, collaborative stakeholder engagement, and sustainable management practices. These initiatives aim to preserve the park's ecological integrity while promoting community involvement and sustainable development.

**2. Response to the Decision of the World Heritage Committee**

***2.1 Implement the provisions of the Law Governing National Parks and Nature reserves with regards to the management of buffer zones, with a special focus on agreements with Tea estates owners in the buffer zone,***

To implement the Law No 001/2023 of 13/01/2023 governing national parks and nature reserves, especially in its Article 8, the Ministerial Order N° 003/MoE/24 of 25/10/2024 relating to Akagera, Nyungwe, Volcanoes and Gishwati-Mukura National Parks, replacing the Laws creating national Parks, was recently published in the Official Gazette N° Special of 25/10/2024. Article 4 of the Order gives the location and surface area of Nyungwe National Park while Article 8 provides for the buffer zone of Nyungwe National Park. Articles 12 and 16 refer to the boundaries (coordinates) of Nyungwe National Park and its buffer zone and Article 16 refers to the official map of Nyungwe National Park.

Parallely, in the Official Gazette n° Special Bis of 25/10/2024, the following Ministerial Orders were published:

- The Ministerial Order n° 005/MOE/24 of 25/10/2024 determining the size and management of a national park or nature reserve buffer zone

This Order relates to the Determination of the size of a buffer zone and the criteria thereto, the management of a buffer zone, permitted activities, the management plan and rights on a property located in the buffer zone

Part of the area surrounding Nyungwe National Park is covered by tea plantations and these are believed to make a buffer between the park and other private activities. In the strategic plan of the National Agriculture Export Board (NAEB) these areas are expected to expand to other uncovered zones, hence making the buffer area more significant. Some of the plantations have been in place for more than 40 years and the lifespan of tea plantations can vary up to 200 years. Tea being a cash crop contributing to the national economy, one can believe that those in place and the others to come will play their buffer role for a long period. The relevant authority has initiated consultations with NAEB for a formal agreement to keep the tea plantations as part of the official buffer zone of Nyungwe National Park. Moreover, the four annual park stakeholders meetings held in August 2024 were attended by the representatives from Tea Companies and buffer zone concessionaires and took resolutions of investing joint efforts in combating illegal activities and threats that originate from the buffer zone into the park (especially forest fires)

- The Ministerial Order n° 006/MOE/24 of 25/10/2024 governing the Community Committee for a national park or state-owned nature reserve

To ensure a proper and sustainable management of National Parks, the community committees will play a support role to the management teams.

This Order determines the organisation, functioning and responsibilities of a community committee established for each national park or State-owned nature reserve, hereinafter referred to as “Committee”.

The responsibilities of the committee are directed at environmental protection and management, education and engagement of the local community, organisation of voluntary activities, and collaboration with the management of the national park.

The Committee provides opinion on a decision to be taken by the management of the Authority, or national park that directly or indirectly affects the local community and its interests.

It is provided that the committee is established within six months from the establishment of a national park or State-owned nature reserve, or within six months following the publication of this Order in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Rwanda for existing national parks or State-owned nature reserves. This means that the Community Committee for Nyungwe is expected to be in place by April 2025.

## *2.2 Ensure traffic on roads crossing the property is reduced following the upgrade of an alternative road to the north of the property,*

The works to upgrade the alternative road passing through Nyamasheke and Karongi to Muhanga have progressed and they are estimated to reach the target, with only 22 km remaining to be fully fixed

There is a reduction of buses passing by the Park as half of the main transport agencies use the alternative route, which in addition is 30 km shorter.

Once the alternative road is fixed, the other reasons for its choice compared to the original route are, apart from the reduced distance and the subsequent cost, travellers find it friendlier due to the altitudinal gradient which is more moderate. Also, some will prefer an open space, with a view of the lake rather than the canopy of the forest if they are not tourists.

Those having to go by Huye, Nyamagabe or Bweyeye will still have to use the route of Nyungwe.

The Management Authority, Rwanda Development Board has approached the National Police and the National Transport Development Authority for a tougher regulation of the speed on the roads crossing the Park and it is expected that soon an additional signage will be installed to limit the speed to 40 Km/h. It is expected that the speed reduction will imply the reduction of wildlife roadkills, whose amplitude has increased from 231 cases in 2023 to 528 cases in the first 10 months of 2024. The increase is majorly due to the 32 newly built tarmac road from Pindura to Bweyeye which was not monitored in 2023 but monitored in 2024.

The issue of roadkills and possible mitigation measures was discussed in the park stakeholders' meetings held in August 2024 and it was stressed that a closer collaboration with transport companies and a sustained awareness among travellers would have a more positive impact.

The Park management has put in place mechanisms to address the issue of overspeeding in the Park and these include enhanced patrolling on the roads and the installation of public toilets (at Uwinka and Pindura stops) as one of the explanations for the speeding was to cross the forest in the shortest time to reach places equipped with toilets. Moreover, an annual awareness campaign for road users, community and transport companies is planned in the first two weeks of December 2024.

### 2.3 Fully implement the updated General Management Plan (2023-2032);

Nyungwe National Park is managed under a Public-Private Partnership, following an agreement signed between the Government of Rwanda and African Parks Network. The Managing entity is implementing the updated management plan (2023-2032) where it derives a 5-year business plan reviewed every year. The managing entity has been given by the Government Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the first 5 years ending in 2026. The current performance on the KPIs is reflected in the progress report accessible at [https://bit.ly/Nyungwe\\_KPIs\\_3Bhehnw](https://bit.ly/Nyungwe_KPIs_3Bhehnw)

The Government of Rwanda has secured financial support for the implementation of the "Building Resilience of Vulnerable Communities to Climate Variability in Rwanda's Congo Nile Divide Region through Forest and Landscape Restoration (CND) project. As part of the project's implementation, there is a restoration of 4,500 hectares of the degraded parts of Nyungwe forest, as well as community livelihood support in the surroundings of the Park.

3. Other current conservation issues identified by the State(s) Party(ies) which may have an impact on the property's Outstanding Universal Value

*None*

4. In conformity with Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*, describe any potential major restorations, alterations and/or new construction(s) intended within the property, the buffer zone(s) and/or corridors or other areas, where such developments may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, including authenticity and integrity.

None

5. Public access to the state of conservation report

*The State Party has no objection to public access to the report*

6. Signature of the Authority

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