

Terms of Reference: Needs assessment for the development of a dedicated Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) Counter Wildlife Trafficking (CTW) capacity in Uganda, including support for Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) and WCS anti-poaching efforts in Queen Elizabeth Protect Area.

Background

Often referred to as the “pearl of Africa”, Uganda contains globally important biodiversity that sustains key sectors such as tourism, agriculture, water, and energy, providing direct and indirect employment for the country’s population of 45,905,417 (45.9 million people)¹. Uganda’s biodiversity, however, faces enormous threats from wildlife crimes such as illegal wildlife trafficking (IWT) and poaching due to the country’s porous borders, weak law enforcement, corruption, low capacity of wildlife authorities, and persistent insecurity in neighboring countries such as South Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Over the past several years, the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) has collaborated with the Government of Uganda—particularly the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), the agency responsible for managing the country’s national parks, wildlife reserves, and wildlife—in combatting wildlife crime (CWC). WCS continues to build on this long-term partnership with UWA to strengthen the agency’s ability to combat wildlife trafficking, including poaching at both the park level—focusing on the Queen Elizabeth Protected Area (QEPA).

WCS has proposed a new game-changing collaborative management partnership (CMP) with UWA in QEPA for Ishasha sector. The proposed new site engagement focuses initially on securing Ishasha as the most viable source site of lions for the wider QEPA and transboundary area but will have longer-term wide-reaching positive impacts on QEPA’s species and ecosystems.

WCS and UWA have co-designed a co-management approach for Ishasha that will innovate governance and management, enhance flexibility and adaptability, strengthen partnerships and collaboration, invest in long-term capacity and unlock additional financing opportunities. The proposed CMP will implement comprehensive species recovery, habitat management, community engagement and tourism enhancement initiatives that will restore the park’s ecological integrity and help transform relationships between local communities and the park.

The CMP will be for a duration of twenty years, split into five-year strategic periods. The goal of the CMP is: ‘To protect Ishasha’s globally important ecosystems and iconic tree-climbing lions through collaborative and innovative conservation efforts in partnership with local stakeholders’.

Under the CMP, Strategic Objective three will focus on enhancement of wildlife protection and Law Enforcement (LE) in Ishasha sector, QEPA. A LE robust strategy development will be informed by reliable data. It will be managed adaptively based on a continuous flow of information between

¹ <https://www.ubos.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/National-Population-and-Housing-Census-2024-Final-Report-Volume-1-Main.pdf>

rangers and management. The law enforcement strategy will be grounded in a strong understanding of the situation in the field, such as poaching hotspots, seasonality and timing of illegal activities, and key park access points. UWA rangers have an intimate understanding of these factors, and this will be utilized to inform strategy development in the first six months of the CMP. WCS will provide support to UWA in the implementation and monitoring of the strategy. Specifically, data collection will be improved: on-the-ground information used for LE strategy and adaptation begins with UWA's eyes and ears: rangers in the field. They collect crucial information about the location, timing, nature, and intensity of illegal activities; confiscations of contraband; arrests or other human contacts; key species sightings; and duration and coverage of patrols. Under the CMP we would implement a program of long-term, hands-on training to build rangers' skills in data collection and to expose them to the kind of reports and analyses to which their data contributes. Greater understanding of how their day-to-day activities can lead to more effective patrol planning and improved protection of the park will motivate rangers to better use SMART which will, in turn, provide better data on which to base the LE strategy. This training will be park-wide across QEPA, not restricted to Ishasha. Additionally, law enforcement monitoring data guides patrols will be guided by law enforcement monitoring data and strategies developed. WCS will support UWA to deploy targeted patrols in Ishasha. These will include overnight patrols, de-snaring missions, intelligence-led operations, transboundary engagement with Virunga Foundation rangers, and other-directed initiatives. Patrols will focus on deterring crimes and intercepting individuals before crimes have taken place, to minimize the harm to wildlife and habitats.

The aim of this consultancy is to support the establishment of a dedicated WCS CWT capacity in Uganda that demonstrates excellence in the collection, management and analysis of information that directly informs antipoaching efforts in QEPA and counter wildlife trafficking operations across Uganda.

Scope of Work

WCS is seeking a consultant to:

Support WCS deliver a comprehensive needs assessment and recommendations for the establishment and continued development of a dedicated WCS CWT capacity in Uganda that supports WCS' efforts to undertake the following activities:

- Embed prevention focused practices towards the management of wildlife crime problems in Ishasha.
- Increase the ability of UWA to conduct targeted patrols in search of, and removal of snares (de-snaring) in QEPA and,
- Develop a long-term 'hands-on' training program to build UWA's capacity to collect and process information that enhances patrols efforts across QEPA and counter wildlife trafficking operations in Uganda.

Deliverables will be in the form of:

- 1) A report (co-authored with WCS) detailing the results of the needs assessment including recommendations for resourcing, training and routine integration of analysis outcomes with patrol planning and in-field operations.

Delivery

Milestone Description	Date
1. Execution of Contract	TBD
2. Inception Report (fact finding plan)	
2. Needs assessment fact finding mission in Uganda	
4. Final Report (co-authored with WCS)	

Requirements

- Experience working on wildlife crime problems in Uganda and demonstrated knowledge and understanding of poaching and snaring in Queen Elizabeth National Park.
- Formal qualifications in Crime Science/Environmental Criminology applied to environmental crime problems.
- Strong project management skills, including the ability to develop and execute strategic plans.
- Exceptional communication and interpersonal skills to effectively collaborate with diverse field programs, stakeholders, and internal teams.
- Excellent English language verbal and written communication skills.
- Ability to travel to Uganda and Queen Elizabeth National Park and conduct interviews with relevant stakeholders.
- This role can be delivered from any location and therefore the applicant must have their own reliable internet connection (strong enough to join regular video calls and handle transfer of large files).

Application procedure

1. Submission of the technical proposal and budget for conducting this service not exceeding seven pages, including references.
2. Submission of the current CV of the applicant with at least two referees.
3. Submit the application documents to **wcsuganda@wcs.org** and copy to **snampindo@wcs.org** and **dweekers@wcs.org**
4. WCS will not cover application costs
5. Deadline for submission of application is **April 14, 2026**.