



Developing Community-Based Tourism

Lessons Learnt from Rwanda's Destination Kivu Belt

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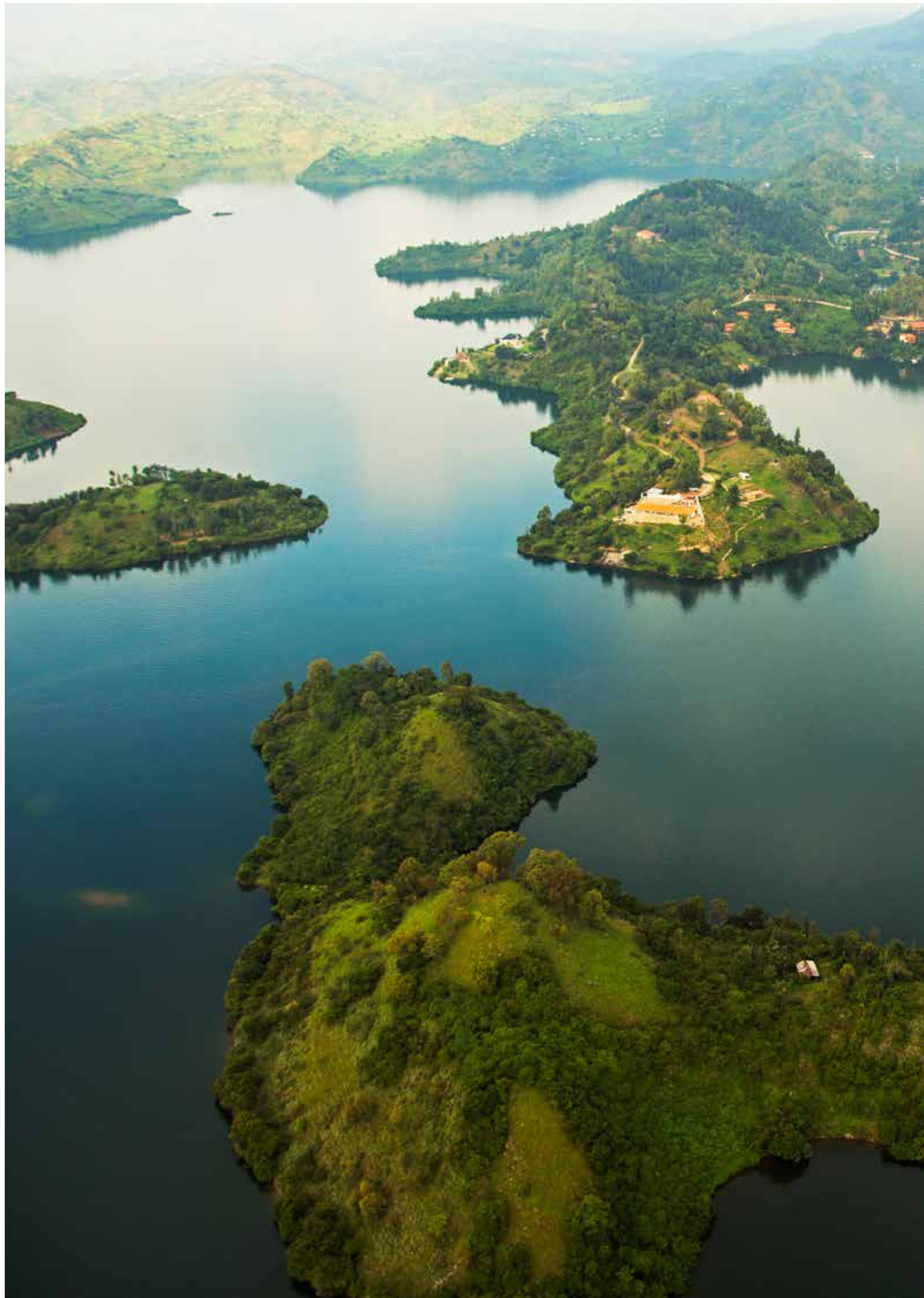
Map

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PREFACE



Dear Readers,

Community-based tourism (CBT) is undoubtedly one of the tourism sub-sectors that have a direct positive social and economic impact on local communities, particularly in rural areas.

Years ago, I had the opportunity to begin my tourism career as a guide, working primarily on CBT projects in several villages and towns of Rwanda. I remember being excited every morning before the CBT experience because I always looked forward to the tight hugs and charming smiles from the communities we visited.

Today, after extending my career to sustainable tourism development in GIZ's Promotion of Economy and Employment project (Eco-Emploi), I have a deeper understanding and increased motivation to work with communities and have received a bigger opportunity to maintain that happiness.

I believe it is wise to learn from your experiences, but it is much wiser to learn from the experiences of others. Daily practises in this career are not the only dynamics that deepened my understanding. The people I met along the way also provided me with great opportunities to learn from their experiences. And GIZ as a company promotes learning and sharing knowledge with the aim to help people learn from one another.

The drive of this publication is to convey the lessons we learnt as GIZ's Eco-Emploi project in developing CBT in Rwanda's Destination Kivu Belt. The aim is to share our experiences with other tourism actors who may need to develop or improve CBT projects in Rwanda or elsewhere in the world.

This publication elaborates on the approach used by Eco-Emploi, the opportunities and challenges identified, the intervention measures, impacts achieved, as well as key factors to the success and recommendations for future development of similar projects.

Words cannot express my gratitude for the joy, teamwork, inspiration and motivation I have received in my work, from the communities I visited as a guide to those I worked with in the sustainable development of the CBT products; the tour operators and senior tour guides who introduced me to this heavenly industry; to the colleagues, public and private partners that we work together with on a daily basis. A huge thank you to the Eco-Emploi project management for providing me with this opportunity and to the editor for making this publication possible. For me, this is a dream come true!



Martin Karezi

Tourism Expert

Eco-Emploi Project, Rwanda

INTRODUCTION





◀ Beautiful view of the Gishwati-Mukura National Park.

1.1 Role of Tourism in Expanding Economic Development in Rwanda

Rwanda's tourism sector serves as the largest source of foreign exchange and is key to employment creation and economic development. The country's National Tourism Policy (2009) and the Sustainable Tourism Master Plan (2009) consider capacity building, strong marketing and the diversification of tourism products as competitive tactics to increase its tourism revenue and upgrade the tourism value chain. Between 2009 and 2019, the country's tourism receipt experienced robust annual growth of nine per cent on average in the tourism sector with a record of 1.63 million visitors. Tourism revenue increased by 17 per cent from USD 425 million in 2018 to USD 498 million in 2019¹ and continued to be Rwanda's leading income earner.

Rwanda's tourism strongly relies on its national parks, especially the famous mountain gorillas in the Volcanoes National Park. The country has also prioritised meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions (MICE) tourism amongst its main products for economic growth. Rwanda has strategically invested significant efforts in becoming a hub of international meetings and conferences in the African region. In 2019, 25 per cent of total arrivals were for business (with MICE) purposes.²

The majority of visitors visiting Rwanda for MICE or to the national parks take the opportunity to explore other historical, natural and cultural attractions of Rwanda. These attractions include museums, biking and hiking trails, birding, and various community-based tourism activities.

^{1/2} RDB Tourism Department 2020 / RDB Annual Report 2019



Region: Central/Eastern Africa



Area: 26,338 km² (10,169 sq. mi)



Capital: Kigali



Total Population: 12,955,736 (2021)³



Human Development Index: 0.524 (2021)⁴
(HDI)



Gross Domestic Product: USD 797.9 (2020)⁵
(per capita)



Economic growth: 9.5% (2019)⁶
(per annum)



Unemployment rate: 15.2% (2019)⁷

³ www.statistics.gov.rw/publication/size-resident-population

⁴ www.minecofin.gov.rw

^{5/6} <https://data.worldbank.org/>

⁷ National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR), Labour Force Survey Annual Report 2019, April 2020.

1.2 Role of Community-Based Tourism in Rural Economic Development

Community-based tourism is defined as tourism owned and/or managed by communities and intended to deliver more comprehensive community benefits, benefiting a wider group than those employed in the initiative (Goodwin H & Santilli R, 2009). CBT initiatives directly benefit rural communities by providing income generation opportunities and creating more and better jobs. Likewise, CBT itself is a tool for the communities to manage their knowledge and cultural resources. It allows them to take part in the direct development and benefit from the tourism activities. CBT considers all aspects of social, cultural, economic, and environmental sustainability. When visitors visit local communities, they receive insights into their culture and daily lives. This form of sustainable tourism allows travellers to connect closely to the local communities they visit.

Rwanda considers community involvement in the tourism sector a fundamental strategy for developing sustainable eco-tourism in the country. Since 2005, the government has initiated the Tourism Revenue Sharing Policy, where 10 per cent of all revenues generated from wildlife tourism is directed back to the communities residing around the national parks for economic development. The policy complements efforts by the public and private sectors to create, diversify and improve CBT in the country.

Rwandan rural communities benefit from offering paid tourism experiences mainly in agro-tourism, cultural and traditional performances. Additionally, communities also gain other business opportunities like selling food, beverages and souvenirs to their visitors. This has resulted in a strong relationship between rural communities, tourism, and conservation – with poachers becoming conservationists and tourism revenues used to build facilities such as schools, roads, and health centres.

Destination Kivu Belt

The Destination Kivu Belt is home to the Nyungwe National Park, one of the oldest rainforests in Africa with a rich diversity of flora and fauna; the Gishwati-Mukura National Park, one of UNESCO's world biosphere reserves; as well as the Congo-Nile Trail, the country's most iconic trail that stretches as the destination's backbone from the north to the southern part of Rwanda's Western Province.

The Congo-Nile Trail is mainly for hikers and bikers. However, visitors can choose to drive along or take a boat ride connecting



▲ (L-R)
Cycling and Birdwatching in
Destination Kivu Belt.

different stopovers. The region comprises three Destination Management Areas (DMAs), Rubavu, Karongi and Nyungwe, interconnected by Lake Kivu and the community corridor; thus, presenting a wide range of product diversification opportunities, positioning them as a single tourism destination.

1.3 Role of Eco-Emploi Project in Tourism Development in Rwanda

The Promotion of Economy and Employment project (Eco-Emploi) is a joint Rwandan-German development cooperation project implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The project aims to create jobs and strengthen micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and cooperatives in the tourism, wood and audio-visual value chains through an integrated approach to employment promotion.

In the tourism value chain, Eco-Emploi focuses on the Destination Kivu Belt and Destination Nyanza as a targeted geographical area. The project works in partnership with public and private tourism bodies, including the Chief Tourism Office of the Rwanda Development Board (RDB, a government body whose mandate is to accelerate Rwanda's economic development) as well as the Rwanda Chamber of Tourism (RCOT, a private umbrella of all the associations engaged in tourism and hospitality business).

Emphasising the promotion of nature-based tourism such as hiking, cycling and bird watching, the Eco-Emploi project also works hand in hand with the partners mentioned above to train tourism operators to develop and market new tourism offers in Rwanda and advises community-based tourism actors on how to improve their services.

1.2 Rationale for the Publication

As a service provider with worldwide operations in the fields of international cooperation for sustainable development and international education, GIZ works with its partners to develop effective solutions that offer people better prospects and sustainably improve their living conditions. GIZ encourages knowledge sharing not only internally within the organisation but also externally with the relevant partners across the world.

This publication elaborates on the approach used by the Eco-Emploi project to support the development of the CBT initiatives in the Destination Kivu Belt of Rwanda and the lessons learnt from this process. It reveals potential CBT opportunities in the Kivu Belt, challenges, intervention measures, impacts achieved, key success indicators and recommendations for future development of similar projects. It will serve as an experience and knowledge sharing handbook for partners and other tourism actors interested in implementing CBT development projects in Rwanda or other parts of the world.

CBT INITIATIVES

IN DESTINATION KIVU BELT





◀Tea farming experience with Pfunda Tea Cooperative..

2.1 Potential Opportunities

The Destination Kivu Belt in the Western Province stretches from the vibrant town of Rubavu in the north to the Nyungwe National Park and Rusizi town in the south. Three diverse kinds of CBT experiences can be found here:

Farming Activities

The beauty of this region lies in its endless and gorgeous rolling hills covered by diverse crops, mainly bananas, cassava, sorghum and the famous tea and coffee plantations.

Tea and coffee are Rwanda's leading export revenue earning crops, widely found in the Kivu Belt region. Agro-tourism experiences, as part of CBT, offer visitors the opportunity to learn about both modern and traditional crop processing methods and techniques used by the community in planting, growing and harvesting them. In addition to the agricultural activities, interested visitors can participate in the traditional bee-keeping methods, from making beehives to taking pleasure in tasting the fresh honey collected directly from the apiary.

Culture and Rural Life

Destination Kivu Belt offers diverse experiences to visitors interested in cultural tourism, from traditional herbal healing to incredible music and dancing performances. These cultural practices include traditional handcraft works, such as pottery, basket weaving and wood carving. In addition, the Rwandan rural life experience in the Kivu Belt involves different activities in the daily lives of the local communities like farming, fetching water, cooking and other chores.

Night Fishing

For anyone visiting the Destination Kivu Belt for the first time, one of the most impressive sights is the singing fishermen canoeing in groups of three boats connected with long eucalyptus rods, ready to spend their night fishing in the lake. This night fishing experience has become one of the highlights for visitors in the region. Visitors join the fishermen at dusk, help set up the nets, light the lanterns, sing together, and participate in pulling the net with the captured Isambaza fish. Other lake activities include guided boat trips to the various islands on Lake Kivu.

2.2 Challenges

Individual Level

CBT involves direct interactions between visitors and individual members of the community. For visitors, quality customer service is one of the main foundations that shape their impression and memorable experience of the host community. Therefore, their acquaintance with people before, during and after their visit are vital to the CBT's success. Equally important is for community members to have good skills and knowledge of handling and meeting visitors' expectations. This will, in turn, be useful to attract, satisfy and retain clients, and receive recommendations.

Considering these factors, an assessment was carried out by the Eco-Emploi project to evaluate the level of skills, knowledge and barriers that hindered the tourism skills development within the community members in the Kivu Belt region. The assessment findings presented limited skills and knowledge for tourism development. One crucial challenge identified was the absence of tourism technical skills amongst community members and other stakeholders. Overcoming this challenge requires a sustainable skills development approach that focuses on human capacities as the pillar of CBT initiatives. It is pivotal to raise awareness of people's contribution to tourism development and provide technical skills to help the community actors attract, satisfy and retain their potential customers.

Organisational Level

The majority of the CBT initiatives are cooperatives and community associations, mainly involved in farming, fishing, handcraft, low and medium-income businesses, and other individual household activities that supplement their income through tourism. Therefore, in addition to generating revenue, CBT also increases the value of the culture, lifestyle and locally produced products.



"We grew up farming coffee but not drinking it, and we knew that there are people in other countries who drink coffee but have no idea how it is grown. When we began offering coffee experiences, we learnt to drink it. Visitors get excited when they practically participate in our coffee farming and traditional processing. The best part is when we share a cup of coffee with them at the end of the experience!"

PAULIN HIGANIRO

President

COOPROCAKI Coffee Cooperative





"We see the beautiful smiles of the visitors who come to our community! They actively engage in each experience, and we enjoy seeing them getting involved. We dress them just as we do, fetch water together, prepare and share food together, and teach them how to dance and make handcrafts that they take home as souvenirs."

JULIENNE BAMURANGE
Founder & Representative
Young Women Destination



"We enjoy spending the whole night on the boat, fishing. This is our way of life. All the efforts and energy we expend pays off! We are so happy and motivated when visitors join us, sing with us, put the nets in the water, and talk with us while waiting for the catch. The time we spend together is extremely valuable."

CELESTIN SIMPARINKA
President
COTRALAKI Boat and Fishing Cooperative



The introduction of tourism experiences into the community's day-to-day activities was made possible through significant efforts by different tourism and hospitality operators from the region and other parts of the country, mainly Kigali. However, while community ownership and management of CBT products are essential principles for sustainable CBT projects, operators handled these responsibilities through (in most instances) informal agreements with the communities. Due to this top-down business approach, communities lacked the competencies to run their own CBT initiatives. Hence, they were ambivalent about taking ownership and participating in the tourism developments around them.

Local people must be part of the development and decision-making processes to design, create and strengthen CBT products that benefit and are managed and owned by the community. The community must receive guidance and organisational capacity building to run their self-developed businesses sustainably.

Cooperation Level

One key success factor for determining destination competitiveness is the collaborative efforts of all stakeholders involved in and contributing to making the total tourism experience. However, achieving a successful collaboration can often be challenging as it involves diverse stakeholders with extensive opinions, different dreams and sometimes contradictory interests. These need to be harmonised and targeted to a common objective to enable a high level of motivation and cooperation.

This observed disconnection in the tourism value chain, and the absence of a cooperation system amongst the stakeholders, has been an enormous challenge to tourism development in general and, in particular, the CBT segment in the Kivu Belt.

Moreover, despite being a part of the tourism value chain, CBT initiatives around the Kivu Belt were not properly linked to other stakeholders. The majority of the tourism service providers in Rwanda and the visitors to the destination were unaware of their existence. Visitors touring in the Destination Kivu Belt were spending an average of one or two nights in Rubavu, Karongi and Rusizi towns. Similarly, they spent up to three days hiking or biking on the Congo Nile Trail. Many revealed that the destination lacked optional and diversified activities to make them stay longer. The absence of information amongst individual travellers, accommodation service providers, tour operators and freelancer guides were one of the reasons that made clients skip the CBT initiatives, therefore spending a shorter time in the destination.

Policy Level

The Rwanda Chamber of Tourism (RCOT) coordinates the tourism private sector associations in the country. RCOT is one of the ten professional chambers under the umbrella of the Private Sector Federation (PSF) in Rwanda. The country promotes and regulates tourism through the Chief Tourism Office in RDB.

However, although RCOT promotes and coordinates the tourism private sector, CBT initiatives in Rwanda were not formalised and represented. The absence of their voice resulted in the CBT initiatives being overlooked and disconnected from other tourism actors. Moreover, despite RDB's significant efforts in developing the CBT guidelines in 2006 and 2012, several gaps in the documents made it difficult to be effectively implemented. For instance, there were no well-defined measures on establishing a CBT initiative, involving different stakeholders in the development process and complying with the regulations.

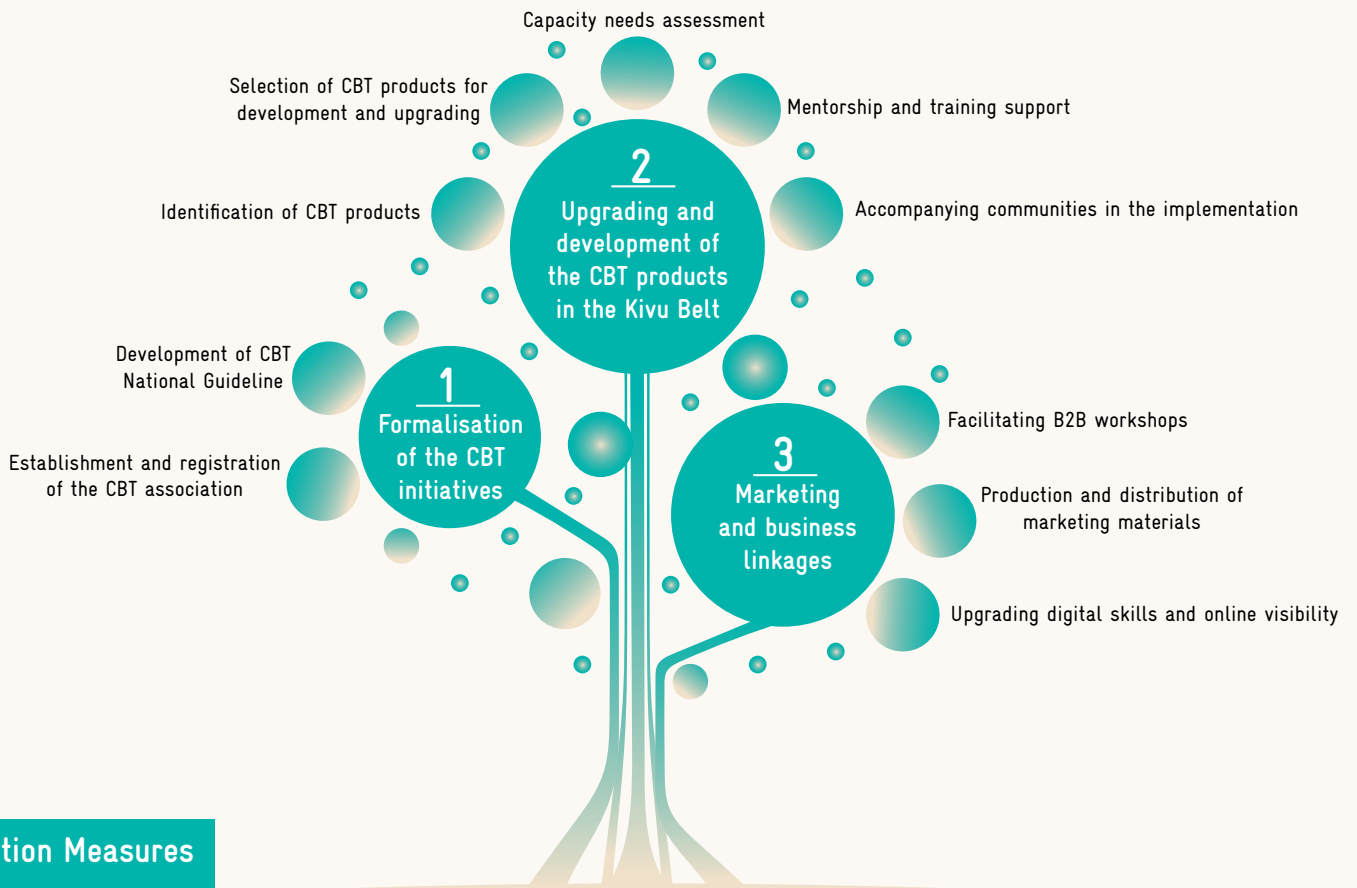
2.3 Intervention Measures

Through the project's framework, Eco-Emploi coordinated several workshops with public and private tourism stakeholders from the Kivu Belt region. The main objective was to enable stakeholders to jointly commit and take responsibility for developing and promoting the Kivu Belt region as a tourism destination and agree on collective actions that contribute to tourism growth in the region.

2.3.1 Formalisation of the CBT Initiatives

Development of National Guidelines for CBT initiatives in Rwanda

In collaboration with RDB, Eco-Emploi has been engaged in supporting the revision of the National Guidelines for CBT. The previous guidelines developed in 2012 presented several gaps and required amendment. This progress was possible through the collective engagement of all relevant public and private sector tourism stakeholders. The revised guidelines will provide information on all underlying processes and practices while considering sustainable tourism approaches for CBT initiatives. Additionally, Eco-Emploi has committed itself to facilitate the implementation of the revised guidelines in the existing CBT entities focusing on the Destination Kivu Belt.



Challenges

1. CBT initiatives not formalised and represented

2. Limited products, skills and knowledge

3. Absence of cooperation system and visibility on the market

Establishment and registration of the CBT association in the RCOT

For several years, the CBT initiatives in Rwanda functioned without an umbrella organisation, which was identified as a threat for coordinating their activities and addressing their challenges. Finally, in 2020, the CBT association was registered under the RCOT through the initiative of Rwanda's CBT stakeholders. This platform offers CBT members the opportunity to be represented in the RCOT, promote dialogues between themselves and their stakeholders, strengthen their capacity while advocating for their needs and interests and liaise with other tourism actors. A functioning association needs active members in order to perform and achieve its goals. CBT members from the Kivu Belt will be encouraged and supported to join the association and actively contribute to its success.

2.3.2 Upgrading and Development of the CBT Products in the Kivu Belt

Identification of potential CBT products

Together with the Business Development and Employment Units,⁸ the Eco-Emploi project has supported in upgrading and developing existing and new CBT initiatives in the five districts of the Kivu Belt region (Rubavu, Rutsiro, Karongi, Nyamasheke and Rusizi). Additionally, potential CBT initiatives were identified in line with the district plans and the 2012 CBT guidelines. The identification also considered experts' onsite observation of the daily activities in the communities around the Congo-Nile Trail and the national parks, and consultations with community members and other relevant tourism stakeholders: tour operators, tour guides, tourism schools, tourists and local public authorities.

⁸ A government unit in charge of business development and employment in each district of Rwanda.



▲ (L-R)
Beekeeping experience in Twitezimbere Association;
Handcraft souvenirs from COOVAKARU.

Selection of CBT products for development and upgrading

Focusing on a small group of community initiatives is more productive than dispersing energy on several initiatives with no positive results. In this framework, the Eco-Emploi project and its partners selected 15 CBT initiatives to continue with mentorship support and further developments. The selection considered sustainable tourism development methods, including the product's potential for consumption by customers, its geographical locations, especially alongside other existing tourism attractions and the communities' willingness and commitment to participate.

Capacity needs assessment

Besides identifying potential CBT products, physical meetings with the communities were jointly conducted by the project in collaboration with the local district authorities. The objective was to learn more about their activities and assess their capacity to attract visitors and host them with excellent customer service in their communities. The assessment revealed that the existing CBT initiatives needed capacity-building support from basic skills, such as packaging and offering their experience to managing their entities.

Mentorship and training support

A series of practical training sessions were carried out as part of the mentorship support to the communities, for instance, mock-ups of actual visitors and their experiences with the community members to ensure excellent service delivery. The training also comprised tourism product packaging, guiding, hygiene,

customer care, marketing, revenue sharing and organisational management. Developed CBT products were tested by different visitors and experts before marketing and selling them to the bigger domestic and international market.

Accompanying communities in the implementation

Since the sustainable development of a tourism product requires a continuous follow-up, communities are accompanied by the project and its partners during the implementation of the acquired skills. This is done by collecting feedback from different visitors visiting them to improve the products and services. The communities also have visitors' books that help them collect feedback and retain the contact details of their visitors for potential future visits.

2.3.3 Marketing and Business Linkages

Facilitating B2B workshops between communities and other tourism actors

Together with the Kivu Belt Destination Management Unit (DMU), Eco-Emploi identified potential tourism service providers who could sell or support the CBT products and organised meetings through individual visits and B2B workshops. This facilitation process brought together hotel owners, front office managers, local museums and tour operators who were briefed about the CBT products. Simultaneously, CBT representatives took the opportunity to discuss the areas of collaboration, including having special business deals.



▲ (L-R)
Basket weaving in COOVAKARU;
Traditional pottery experience in Kagano Pottery Association.

Production and distribution of marketing materials

Additionally, the 15 CBT initiatives in the Kivu Belt were supported by the project to develop marketing materials. For instance, brochures were produced and shared with various tourism actors during meetings, fairs and workshops. They were distributed in different hotels in the Kivu Belt to attract interested visitors staying in those properties.

Upgrading the digital skills and online visibility

Digitalisation and online visibility are essential in the tourism and hospitality industry, especially for CBT actors and local guides. Besides developing various products, CBT actors and local guides sought orientation on using online marketing tools. The training provided by Eco-Emploi aimed to enhance their sales and promotion skills, equip them to manage their social media pages and empower them to be self-reliant in managing email inquiries. However, until CBT actors widen their knowledge about online marketing and digital trends, they will continue to receive support from the Kivu Belt DMU to improve their visibility and manage their online business.

IMPACTS:

STORIES FROM CBT INITIATIVES





◀Traditional dance performance by Indangamuco Association.

Since 2018

15

CBT initiatives developed in Destination Kivu Belt.

2,377

Members with 45 per cent women.

2,122

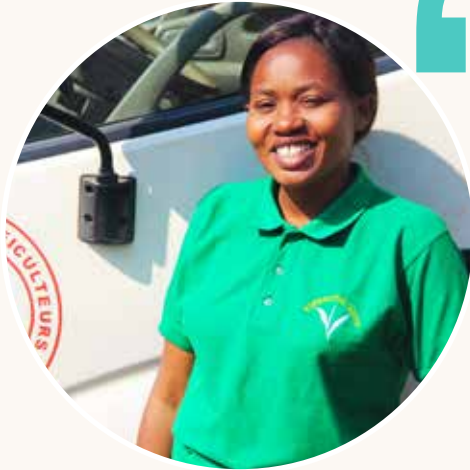
Visitors visited them between March 2019 and March 2020 as per CBT records.

RwF 11,000,000

Solely generated from CBT experiences between March 2019 to March 2020, thus adding to their income generated from regular activities, such as fishing, farming, and selling handcrafts.

30

Youths, mainly fresh school graduates from different villages and towns in the region, were trained and employed as local guides for visitors interested in CBT experiences.



“Our cooperative has 1,740 members, and all of us share the profits generated by the tea farming and processing experience offered to visitors. Since our cooperative began offering tourism experiences in 2018, our casual farmers also have rotated to welcome visitors to the farm and earn money in addition to their salaries. This motivates our farmers and improves their customer service, allowing visitors to enjoy their time with us. We are delighted to have been named Rwanda’s CBT initiative of the year 2019 by the Rwanda Chamber of Tourism.”

ESPERANCE UWIZEYIMANA

Data manager and Person-in-Charge of Tourism Activities
Pfundu Tea Cooperative



“We are happy to be part of the community-based tourism initiative as a fishing cooperative in Lake Kivu. We offer night fishing experiences and visits to the surrounding islands in Rusizi District. In the past, we established connections with various tour operators and nearby hotels through workshops and by visiting them, and now we are reaping the benefits of our hard work. We can say with certainty that the tour companies and local hotels have recommended hundred per cent of all our visitors. It’s great to be connected to the tourism and hospitality operators because they always remember to package our tourism products in other conventional tourism activities, such as visiting the Nyungwe National Park.”

JEAN DE DIEU MUHIMANYI

President
ABAGI Fishing Cooperative



“When we started our cooperative in 2009, we were 15 mothers who wove baskets and other handcraft products. Now we are 37 women, and we have also integrated the youth. In 2018, we joined the community-based tourism initiative. Since then, our revenue has enormously increased because we can sell our products to visitors coming for handcraft experience and those visiting Gishwati-Mukura National Park or driving on the Kivu Belt road. In order to sustain our families, we invest our revenues in livestock breeding and renting stands in different exhibitions like Made in Rwanda Expo.”

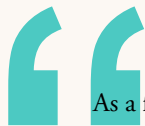
CONSOLEE MUJAWAYEZU

President
COOVAKARU cooperative



We are identical twins who own a small barbershop in Rugamba village, along the Congo Nile Trail. We used to sit for hours, merely listening to music and waiting for clients. Investing in a larger space or upgrading our equipment was difficult because we did not receive many clients. Renting a house or purchasing new shaving machines was also difficult. Since we had the opportunity to go to school and speak international languages, we were approached by the Twitezimbere beekeepers' association in our village when they began offering community-based tourism experiences. We received training on planning and guiding visitors through an authentic bee-keeping experience, from making local beehives until they collect and taste the fresh honey. We continue to run our small business, and whenever the association has visitors, we are asked to guide them. We now have an additional source of income to help us keep our barbershop booming.”

ELIAB GAKURU
Local Guide



As a fresh high school graduate, I struggled to find work in my small community in Nkora. I often saw visitors riding through our village on their bicycles or hiking but never had the chance to communicate with them. When the mentorship programme for community-based tourism initiatives began, I approached the mentor and asked if I could participate. I received the training and became a local tour guide for the traditional healers and elders who perform traditional music instruments for visitors at the Cyimbiri Guest House. Although at present there aren't many visitors due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it makes me glad that not only myself but also the local elders in my neighborhood can earn from tourism. I'm confident that things will improve in the future.”

EVODIE UWINGABIRE
Local Guide

For more details about the Destination Kivu Belt and its CBT initiatives, you can visit: www.kivubelt.travel

KEY FACTORS

FOR SUCCESS





◀Traditional coffee experience in COOPROCAKI coffee cooperative.

4.1 Assessing the Local Context

A thorough assessment of the local context is necessary to identify strengths and barriers for appropriate interventions. Tourism experts conducted assessments at the individual, organisational, cooperation and policy levels in the Destination Kivu Belt. The assessment of the local context within the CBT framework comprised strategic dialogues with Rwanda's key tourism stakeholders in the region. This identified the barriers and potentials for CBT growth at all levels, thus leading to suitable solutions.

The assessment also resulted in successful interventions, such as individual training, community involvement in the formulation and management of their own CBT initiatives, the creation of linkages between initiatives and the mainstream tourism market, and the formalisation of the CBT in general.

4.2 Collaboration Along the Value Chain

The value chain concept refers to the entire set of activities that define the value of a product or service from inception to completion, including the various stages of production, delivery to end-users and final disposal. The tourism value chain represents the process of value-adding activities when creating a tourism product, such as a CBT product. Private and public actors involved in planning, product development, bookings, transportation, lodging, tourism activities, among others, are all part of the tourism value chain.



The Eco-Emploi project applied the GIZ value chain approach in shaping the tourism value chain in the Kivu Belt. This approach entailed developing quality tourism products and offers (such as community-based tourism activities), upgrading services (such as accommodation) and their supply chains and establishing strategic linkages between all stakeholders involved in this value chain. The involved stakeholders and their interconnections were also mapped, assessed and formed in this framework.

This approach made it possible to implement a wide range of effective development initiatives such as upgrading and marketing tourism products, including CBT, and creating linkages, which has added value to the Destination Kivu Belt.

4.3 Involving Multiple Stakeholders

Stakeholder participation is a critical success factor for long-term community-based tourism development. Because it benefits all actors involved in the process, a multi-stakeholder participatory approach to tourism development is crucial to its long-term success.

In the Destination Kivu Belt, this process involved identifying private stakeholders (RCOT, local tourism and hospitality operators, guides and tourists, local community), public stakeholders (policymakers and local authorities) and consulting and connecting them to boost the development of tourism interventions. In this multi-stakeholder approach, community participation increased the effectiveness of the CBT development. The interventions comprised regular stakeholder workshops, information and knowledge exchange system, focus group discussions, and individual consultations to design answers to the challenges that existed in the CBT development.

Regular collaboration of all key stakeholders in the tourism value chain resulted in their interest in and ownership of the destination's tourism development, including developing the CBT products.

4.4 Community Empowerment and Capacity Development

Empowerment and capacity development are crucial to enabling stakeholders to accomplish their roles and ensure the



▲ Traditional wood-carving experience at Foyer Inge Baho Cooperative.

sustainability of the CBT initiatives. Therefore, it is essential to design the capacity development approach as a participatory process by involving all stakeholders to ensure that they have a strong interest in the process, take ownership and participate actively in accomplishing the change goal.

For the successful development of CBT initiatives in the Kivu Belt, communities were empowered to take ownership of their initiatives. Through mentorships and training support in product packaging, guiding, hygiene, customer care, marketing, revenue sharing and organisational management, these communities were enabled to attract, satisfy and retain a good percentage of their visitors.

To empower them, CBT initiatives will continually be facilitated and equipped to meet Rwanda's National Guidelines for CBT. Furthermore, the Kivu Belt DMU and the CBT association will continue to identify areas for capacity development and design solutions for the sustainability of the initiatives.

LESSONS LEARNT

& RECOMMENDATIONS





◀Traditional dance performance by Cyamudongo Tourism Promotion Cooperative.

CBT initiatives have great potentials to expand and provide direct income-generating opportunities and create jobs for rural communities. Like any other tourism product, CBT product development comes with various challenges during the planning and implementation stages. On the other hand, these challenges help CBT product development experts to enhance the planning and implementation of other similar initiatives in the future.

Stakeholders' involvement builds up progressively:

The active participation of stakeholders in tourism development is highly recommended. However, often their involvement builds up progressively. Stakeholders need to first learn about the benefits and then deliberate on the proposed actions. The first engaging meetings may only attract a small percentage of the invited stakeholders. Still, as they engage in dialogues and work together to develop solutions, their interest grows, thereby establishing complete ownership.

CBT product development takes time to create a visible impact:

There is no doubt that CBT boosts the local economy and contributes to the communities' welfare. However, a CBT product takes time to develop. Therefore, the stakeholders, especially the communities, should be informed about this gradual development at the very start. This will ensure



▲ Traditional canoe racing at Gihaya Island with ABAGI Fishing Cooperative.

that communities avoid setting unrealistic expectations and continue to focus on their regular activities while incrementally adopting tourism.

CBT initiatives need support and independence to make decisions for themselves:

CBT initiatives are generally found in small-scale cooperatives or community associations, which are frequently seen as dependent on more prominent tourism players. In order to maintain sustainability, initiatives should be capacitated to identify their challenges and establish their objectives. They should also be empowered and guided to take their own decision on how to achieve their objectives.

Local guides need to be capacitated with language skills:

Although many visitors understand that the community's primary language can be different from the global languages, failing

to communicate with the community leads to dissatisfaction. Since community guides play a vital role in facilitating language translations between visitors and the communities they visit, short language courses and practice materials for community guides should be made available wherever possible to help them enhance their service.

CBT initiatives need specific support to overcome their financial limitations:

Financial constraints that prevent a CBT initiative from achieving its full potential might also result in poor service delivery. Therefore, CBT initiatives should be provided with information and advice on access to finance opportunities, such as linkages to business development funds. When CBT initiatives can access funds, where possible according to sustainability practices and guidelines, it will support them to develop their products and offer quality services.



▲ (L-R)
 Handcraft souvenirs from Foyer Inge Baho Cooperative;
 Tea harvesting experience with Pfunda Tea Cooperative.

Tourism and hospitality operators need to familiarise themselves with the newly developed CBT products to start selling them:

New tourism products, by nature, are unknown on the market. Hence, there is always a need to make them visible to attract customers. However, if tourism and hospitality operators are unfamiliar with such products, it becomes challenging to convince them to integrate them into their packages. To do so, they must first test the product, trust it and then begin selling it. Therefore, CBT initiatives should be guided and supported to identify potential sellers for their tourism products, organise familiarisation trips and have business deals with them.

Think inclusive from the initiation of the CBT products:

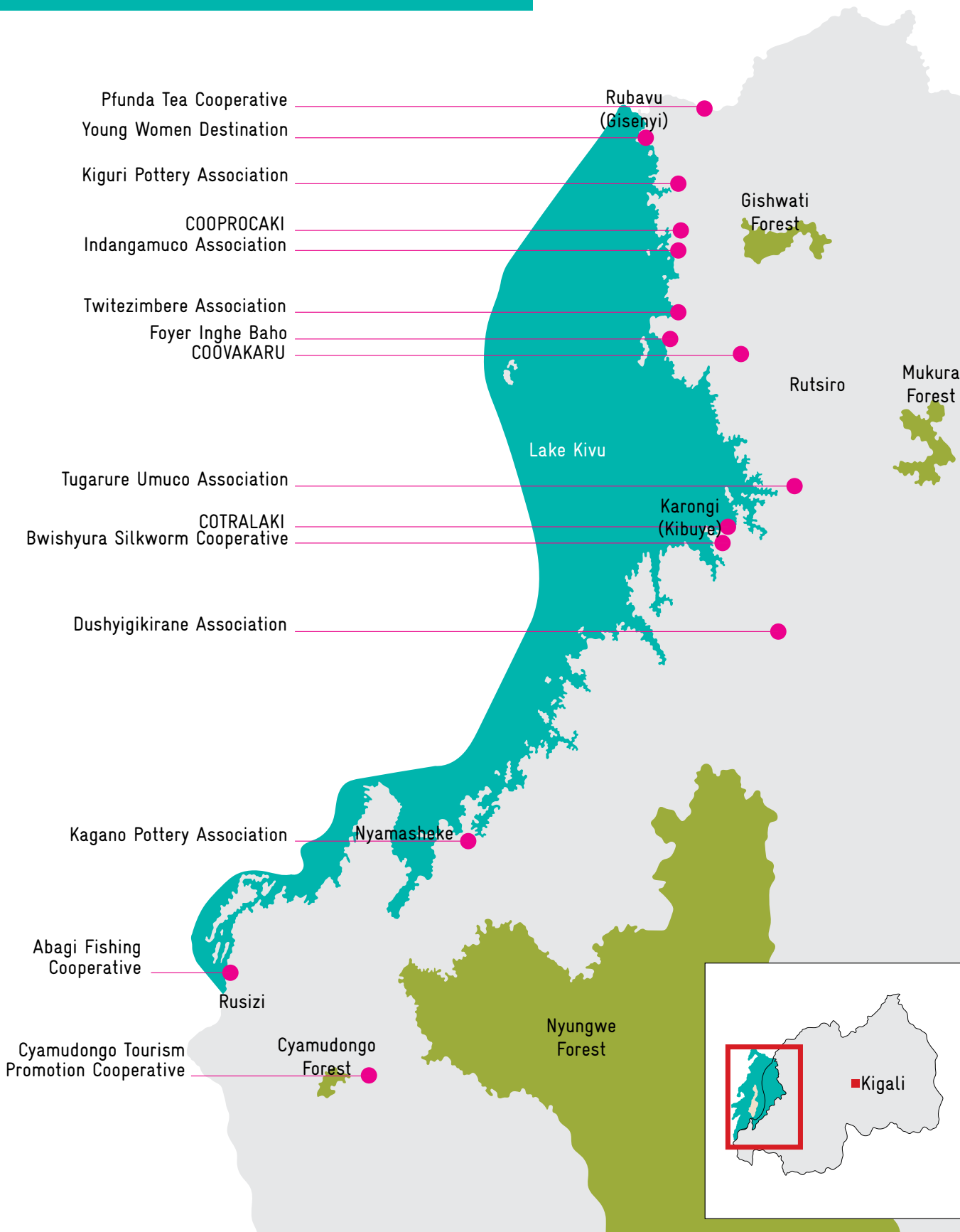
It is essential to consider making a CBT product accessible to all people, regardless of their physical fitness or disabilities, before developing it. CBT products attract an extensive range of individuals, including persons with disabilities, and their accessibility

should work in their favour. In addition, CBT initiatives should be encouraged and supported to provide persons with disabilities with income and employment opportunities.

Given the significant benefits that CBT products deliver to visitors, local communities and a diverse range of other tourism actors, promoting them through sustainable approaches is vital. Every tourism product one develops, including a CBT, offers an understanding of developing better and improving a similar product. Sharing this expertise will serve to direct the knowledge to people who need to develop or improve such products and help increase one's knowledge through researching and integrating diverse perceptions from the experiences acquired during the process.

CBT INITIATIVES:

PROFILES





ABAGI Cooperative

In the Rusizi side of Lake Kivu, the ABAGI Fishing Cooperative offers *Isambaza* night fishing and guided boat tours by fishermen who make a living from fishing. In addition to the night fishing, visitors can also tour various islands on Lake Kivu and learn about the local community's history and culture.



Bwishyura Silkworm Cooperative

The cooperative, based in Karongi District, is made up of farmers who work in sericulture. On the farm, visitors can learn about mulberry farming – from planting the saplings, cultivation, to harvesting, in order to feed the silkworms. Visitors also learn about the numerous stages and commercial species of silkworms and other activities related to silk production.



COOPROCAKI: Coffee Cooperative

Located in Rwinyoni village on the Congo-Nile Trail, the cooperative offers an agro-tourism package based on two locally grown crops, coffee and banana. Visitors get the opportunity to learn hands-on about coffee growing processes from the farmers and engage in activities such as mulching, pruning, harvesting coffee beans to sorting, peeling and roasting, amongst others. The cooperative also offers a traditional banana winemaking experience in addition to the coffee experience.



COOVAKARU: Handcrafts Cooperative

The Kavumu Weaving Cooperative (COOVAKARU) comprises women passionate about weaving and using their skills to support their families. Subsequently, they transformed their passion into a CBT experience for visitors on the Kivu Belt Road, stretching through Gishwati-Mukura National Park. The cooperative provides an authentic weaving experience by identifying the various types of weaving materials and the techniques required to prepare particular basket-weaving plants. They also sell souvenirs to the visitors visiting the park.



COTRALAKI: Water Based Transport Cooperative

The Transport Cooperative in Kivu Lake, known as COTRALAKI, comprises individuals who have pooled their boats to provide tourism services. They offer guided boat tours to the various islands on Lake Kivu and visits to the swimming cows - these are cows swimming in the lake from one land block to the next in search of grazing grass. One of their tour highlights is the night fishing experience on Lake Kivu in the resort town of Karongi district.



Cyamudongo Tourism Promotion Cooperative

The Cyamudongo Tourism Promotion Cooperative comprises women and men who have banded together to provide tourism activities and services to visitors visiting the Nyungwe National Park's Cyamudongo forest, home to the most visited chimpanzee families in Rwanda. Traditional dance, traditional milk butter churning, handcraft making experience, village tour and cave explorations are some of the activities offered by the cooperative. For visitors interested in camping in the forest, the community also provides a campsite with a refreshment canteen.



Dushyigikirane Sorghum Cooperative

Strategically located on the Congo-Nile Trail and atop Mount Karongi, Dushyigikirane Association is a community-based tourism cooperative producing and selling sorghum beer. Here visitors get practical hands-on skills from seeding to harvesting, sorting and drying sorghum, fermenting and grinding them on a stone and preparing sorghum flour, which is used to make the famed sorghum beer, ugali and porridge.



Foyer Inge Baho Cooperative

Foyer Inge Baho is a women's cooperative that allows visitors to engage with the local community by participating in woodcarving, weaving and knitting alongside the cooperative's creative women. This is primarily a community-based tourism activity for cyclists and hikers on the Congo Nile Trail, particularly those staying in Kinunu, one of the trail's stopovers.



Indangamuco Traditional Healers Association

The Indangamuco Association comprises members with indigenous skills who provide a unique and alternative experience to hikers and bikers on the Congo Nile Trail, precisely at the Cyimbiri Guest House. Visitors learn about different types of herbs used for various kinds of illnesses and also experience traditional therapeutic procedures while hiking on the traditional healing route. The association also performs traditional Rwandan dances and welcomes visitors to join in on the fun by teaching them how to play traditional musical instruments.



Kagano Pottery Association

The Kagano Pottery Association is a group of families who collaborate to create different kinds of clay products. The group manufactures exquisite gifts for visitors at the Ishara Beach Hotel in Nyamasheke, one of the stopovers on the Congo-Nile Trail and the Kivu Belt Road. They also offer the ‘ceramics experience’ for visitors who want to learn how to hand-make pottery. Individual coaches assist those interested in making innovative products by guiding and supporting them. This is followed by traditional dancing in the village, which includes song interpretation and storytelling.



Kiguri Pottery Association

The Kiguri Pottery Association, similar to the Kagano Association but located in Rubavu on the Congo-Nile Trail, provides visitors with an excellent opportunity to learn how to produce traditional household items out of clay. This is a family-friendly CBT product in which children visiting Rubavu town can engage in and enjoy themselves.



Pfunda Tea Cooperative

The Pfunda Tea Cooperative, located near Rubavu town, is a tea farmer’s cooperative that deals with tea farming and supplies tea leaves to the Pfunda tea factory. With its multi-hectare tea plantation, farmers offer tea farming experiences, ranging from nursery to delivery of tea leaves to the factory, including hands-on experience in collecting tea leaves with tea plantation workers and tea processing experience. The Pfunda Tea Cooperative was nominated Rwanda’s CBT initiative of the year in 2019 by the Rwanda Chamber of Tourism.



Tugarure Umuco Association

Tugarure umuco translates to “let us bring back the latent culture”. The group began preserving the culture in the area of Ibigabiro bya Rwabugiri, one of King Kigeri IV Rwabugiri’s several palaces between 1853 and 1895, to provide cultural experiences relating to the life of the ancient Rwandan monarchy. Visitors have hands-on experience with traditional battle preparation sceneries from the ancient Rwandan kingdom, as well as the yearly harvesting ceremony known as the *Umuganura*.



Twitezimbere Beekeepers Association

The Twitezimbere Association, located in Rugamba village on the Congo-Nile Trail, offers beekeeping as a community-based tourism experience. The experience offers visitors the opportunity to learn how to create various traditional beehives out of wood, cow dung and other materials, carry local beehives to the apiary and collect and taste the fresh (warm) honey. The association is located in Rugamba village on the Congo-Nile Trail.



Young Women Destination

Young Women Destination, a women-led initiative in Rubavu near the start of the Congo-Nile Trail, offers various rural life experiences such as handcrafting, traditional dancing courses and traditional cooking experiences to the visitors. Visitors handmade their bracelets that they take home as souvenirs, and others actively learn to cook the local meal and share the lunch with the community.

ABBREVIATIONS

ABAGI	Abarobyi bo mu murenge wa Gihundwe
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CBT	Community-Based Tourism
COOPROCAKI	Coopérative des producteurs de café de Kivumu
COOVAKARU	Coopérative de vannerie de Kavumu/Ruhango
COTRALAKI	Coopérative de Transport dans Le Lac Kivu
DMA	Destination Management Area
DMU	Destination Management Unit
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
MICE	Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions
PSF	Private Sector Federation
RCOT	Rwanda Chamber of Tourism
RDB	Rwanda Development Board
RWF	Rwandan Franc
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USD	US Dollar

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