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THIS ACTION IS FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

ANNEX

of the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of a special measure in favour of an
Emergency response to the Virunga–North Kivu triple crisis

Action document for an *Emergency response to the Virunga–North Kivu triple crisis*

ANNUAL MEASURE

This document constitutes the annual work programme in the sense of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation, and measures in the sense of Article 23 of the NDICI-Global Europe Regulation.

1 SYNOPSIS

1.1 Action summary table

1. Title CRIS/OPSYS business reference Basic Act	Special measure in favour of an Emergency response to the Virunga–North Kivu triple crisis CRIS number: 2021/043-627 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (<u>NDICI-Global Europe</u>)
2. Team Europe initiative	No
3. Zone benefiting from the action	The action will be carried out in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).
4. Programming document	Not applicable (special measure)
5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives / expected results	Not applicable (special measure)
PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION	
6. Priority area(s), sectors	410 – General environment protection 311 – Agriculture
7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Main SDG: 15 – Life on Land Other significant SDGs (up to 9) and, where appropriate, targets: SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and production), SDG 13 (Climate change), SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth), SDG 16 (Peace and justice)
8 a) DAC code(s)	41030: Biodiversity – 70% 31120: Agricultural development – 30%
8 b) Main delivery channel @	Channel 1: Non-governmental organisations (NGO) and civil society – 20000

9. Targets	<input type="checkbox"/> Migration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and human development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input type="checkbox"/> Education <input type="checkbox"/> Human rights, democracy and governance			
10. Markers (from DAC form)	General policy objective @	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Trade development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, maternal, new-born and child health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Disaster risk reduction @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Inclusion of persons with disabilities @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Nutrition @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Biological diversity @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Internal markers and Tags:	Policy objectives	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Digitalisation @ Tags: digital connectivity digital governance digital entrepreneurship job creation digital skills/literacy digital services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Connectivity @ Tags: transport people2people energy digital connectivity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Migration @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	(methodology for tagging under development)			
	Reduction of inequalities (methodology for marker and tagging under development)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	COVID-19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BUDGET INFORMATION				
12. Amounts concerned	Budget line(s) (article, item): 14.020241 Total estimated cost: EUR 3 262 595.22 Total amount of EU budget contribution: EUR 3 262 595.22			
MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION				
13. Type of financing	Direct management through grants (Virunga Foundation)			

1.2 Summary of the action

The action will support the European Green Deal¹, in particular the EU Biodiversity strategy for 2030² and the Farm to Fork Strategy³. It contributes to SDG goals 15, 13, 12, 8 and 16 and the Planet, Peace and Prosperity components of the new European Consensus on Development. Sectors for intervention include general environment protection (DAC Code 410) and agriculture (DAC Code 311). The action also contributes to implementing the EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking⁴.

This action is a special measure not linked to a programming document. A nation-wide Declaration of Crisis has been granted in the DRC between 1 July 2021 and 30 June 2022. In North Kivu province, where the proposed action is situated, a triple crisis is affecting the local population: a sanitary crisis (Ebola and COVID), a security crisis (increase in massacres by militias), and a long-lasting humanitarian crisis further deteriorated by the 22 May volcanic eruption of Mount Nyiragongo. These have also affected the Virunga National Park, which plays a significant role in upholding the rule of law locally, sustaining green jobs and providing basic services to the neighbouring populations (e.g. emergency restoration of electrical connections and water supply to the city of Goma).

The overall objective of this action is to support the recovery of Virunga National Park and North Kivu province, fostering a sustainable green and transformative economy in the region. The specific objectives of the action are: i) to strengthen law enforcement and stability in and around the park; ii) to reduce pressure on forest resources and mountain gorilla habitats; and iii) to accelerate green economic development through entrepreneurship and agricultural value chains.

The expected results are:

- strengthened capacity of Virunga rangers;
- strengthened community resilience, including through reducing their dependence on charcoal and encouraging agricultural production and transformation.

The action will be implemented in and around Virunga National Park, in North Kivu province in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Key stakeholders include public institutions in charge of natural resource management, conservation and humanitarian non-profit organisations, the private sector and the EU. The final beneficiaries are the local communities living from forest and biodiversity resources.

A contribution of EUR 3 262 595.22 will be made to the Virunga Foundation through a direct grant.

¹ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:b828d165-1c22-11ea-8c1f-01aa75ed71a1.0002.02/DOC_1&format=PDF

² https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:a3c806a6-9ab3-11ea-9d2d-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC_1&format=PDF

³ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:ea0f9f73-9ab2-11ea-9d2d-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC_1&format=PDF

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/environment/cites/pdf/WAP_EN_WEB.PDF

2 RATIONALE

2.1 Context

The action will support the European Green Deal⁵, in particular the EU Biodiversity strategy for 2030⁶ and the Farm to Fork Strategy⁷. It contributes to SDG goals 15, 13, 12, 8 and 16 and the Planet, Peace and Prosperity components of the new European Consensus on Development. The sectors of intervention include general environment protection (DAC Code 410) and agriculture (DAC Code 311). The action also contributes to implementing the EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking⁸ and the priorities identified in the study ‘Larger than elephants: inputs for an EU strategic approach to wildlife conservation in Africa’.

This action is in line with an EU flagship initiative, Biodiversity for Life (B4Life), which contributes to halting the loss of biodiversity and to reducing poverty. It advocates a transversal, innovative approach that integrates biodiversity and ecosystem conservation to promote socio-economic development and eradication of poverty.

The ‘Virunga Alliance’ is a public-private partnership signed in 2015 between the *Institut Congolais de Conservation de la Nature* (ICCN) and the Virunga Foundation. The Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development establishes the roles and responsibilities of each party and the sovereign powers remain the exclusive responsibility of the ICCN (the park rangers). This regulatory framework allows the creation of affiliated legal entities for the implementation of specific programmes.

The Virunga Alliance pursues three strategic objectives, conservation, poverty reduction and stabilisation, reflecting the main challenges facing Virunga National Park and the province of North Kivu. It takes an integrated approach that places the park at the heart of a green and politically virtuous economy: protect and sustainably use the park’s ecosystems; pursue a policy of economic recovery and transformation (poverty reduction); and make the park a vector of peace and stability. The public-private partnership represented by the Virunga Alliance is a model in several respects: in its scope, in the major achievements it has already delivered in record time, and in the permanent consultation that it nurtures with stakeholders in civil society and the private sector.

Various actions in support of the Virunga National Park have been financed by the EDF, and further support is planned under the NDICI. The proposed action will take into consideration lessons learnt from former initiatives and in close coordination with upcoming interventions.

2.2 Problem analysis

Short problem analysis:

The province of North Kivu, where Virunga National Park lies, has suffered from poor governance for the past 30 years. Militia groups have continued to exploit natural resources illegally (forests, fish and agricultural value chains such as cocoa and coffee) and to ransom the local population, kidnapping and killing with impunity. This has weakened the economic infrastructure and the succession of the Ebola epidemic and COVID-19 pandemic has compounded the situation.

Weaknesses in state authority have also led to increased insecurity tied to the armed groups accused of war crimes, resulting in thousands of civilian deaths over the past few months in the Beni region (one of the three urban economic centres of North Kivu) and since recent months expanded in Ituri Province (bordering Uganda). These groups have stepped up a terror campaign which began in 2015, and in recent months have attacked vulnerable rural populations on a daily basis.

Armed groups use Virunga National Park’s northern rainforests as a refuge. Their crimes come in addition to the killings perpetrated by other armed groups such as the *Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda* (FDLR), an ethnic Hutu group formed in the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide and located south of the province (near Goma). This insecurity is also putting Virunga National Park under huge pressure from illegal exploitation of natural resources. The park’s ability to enforce the law in these regions is central to the restoration of peace and stability, not only for North Kivu province. The goal remains to cut militias from their base camps and prevent

⁵ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:b828d165-1c22-11ea-8c1f-01aa75ed71a1.0002.02/DOC_1&format=PDF

⁶ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:a3c806a6-9ab3-11ea-9d2d-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC_1&format=PDF

⁷ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:ea0f9f73-9ab2-11ea-9d2d-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC_1&format=PDF

⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/environment/cites/pdf/WAP_EN_WEB.PDF

them from illegally exporting natural resources that are financing their armed action.

The dramatic increase in insecurity by the ADF around Beni has prompted the current President of the DRC to declare a state of emergency in North Kivu, effectively militarising the entire provincial administration. However, recent assessments (e.g. by the Congo Research Group in June 2021) indicate that the new military administration lacks the technical and political experience to manage the conflicting interests that exist in the province. The increased security threats, and poor delivery of state services to a region that has great potential for inclusive green economic development, is undermining the basis for improved wellbeing.

In addition, the unforeseen volcanic eruption in May destroyed most of the electricity and water distribution to Goma, with disastrous consequences for public health, administration and the economic functioning of the region. The seismic activity forced the military governor to order the evacuation of large parts of Goma's population; over half a million people were displaced and over 3 000 homes were demolished. The lava flow has affected the poorest residential areas of the city and many households have seen their livelihoods destroyed. This is compounded by disease outbreaks, including a new localised wave of COVID and a rise in cases of cholera, amplified by a combination of destroyed water infrastructure and overstretched health services. All this has left an already vulnerable population in an even more precarious situation.

The destruction of the electricity distribution lines also resulted in sharp losses of electricity sales and tourism revenues, the financial lifelines of Virunga National Park. In addition, tourism cannot be resumed until the current outbreak of COVID in Goma is under control and until the security is restored. Thanks to a small grant under the EU-Re:Wild's Rapid Rescue Programme, the park has temporarily re-established electricity distribution. The park has also helped restore part of the water supply to Goma. This was all done within a month following the eruption and is a result of the continued support from the EU to reinforce the park's management and financial capacities. However, the park had to dig into depleted financial reserves to help the population of Goma.

This has had two consequences:

1. The economic downturn is amplifying people's dependence on trafficking networks controlled by illegal armed groups such as the FDLR and the ADF. This situation leads to the depletion of forest resources, in particular charcoal for cooking and boiling water, increasing deforestation and the smuggling of cocoa and coffee to neighbouring countries.
2. The loss of significant revenues from electricity sales and tourism, which has become a major challenge for Virunga National Park in its role to uphold the rule of law and as an economic driver for the province.

Identification of main stakeholders and corresponding institutional and/or organisational issues (mandates, potential roles, and capacities) to be covered by the action:

Multiple target groups and beneficiaries are concerned by this action:

- rural and forest-dependent communities living near wildlife-rich areas are negatively affected by criminal trafficking networks and armed militias. This particularly affects social groups such as young people, women, and people living in vulnerable situations;
- displaced persons in natural resource-rich areas who need food security, physical security and opportunities for environmentally sustainable livelihoods;
- national wildlife and environmental authorities and decision makers responsible for protecting the environment and managing natural resources, including protected areas;
- rangers in protected areas;
- former fighters diverted from armed groups and enrolled in green, decent jobs;
- civil society organisations involved in environmental protection, support for displaced persons, protection of human rights, and good governance.

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1 Objectives and expected outputs

The **overall objective (impact)** of this action is to support the recovery of Virunga National Park and North Kivu province, fostering a sustainable green and transformative economy in the region.

The **specific objectives (outcomes)** of this action are to

SO 1: Strengthen law enforcement and stability in and around the park

SO 2: Reduce pressure on natural resources, including mountain gorilla habitats

SO 3: Accelerate green economic development

The outputs to be delivered by this action, which contribute to the corresponding specific objectives (outcomes) are:

Output 1.1: Strengthened capacity of Virunga rangers

Output 2.1: Strengthened community resilience

3.2 Indicative activities

Activities related to Output 1.1

- Training and mentoring of rangers
- Medical costs of rangers
- Aerial observation
- Ground transportation support
- Communication support (VHF radios and VSAT)

Activities related to Output 2.1:

- Goma region: training of local entrepreneurs and construction of facilities for SMEs in the Goma industrial park
- Goma region: promotion of alternative cooking techniques (efficient electricity cookers) for poor households
- Beni region: support for agricultural value chains (cocoa, coffee, tea...)
- Beni region: community-led civilian protection

3.3 Mainstreaming

Environmental protection & climate change

The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening concluded that no further action was required. The EIA (Environment Impact Assessment) screening classified the action as Category C (no need for further assessment). The Climate Risk Assessment (CRA) screening concluded that this action is no or low risk (no need for further assessment).

The main objective of the action focuses on biodiversity (Rio Marker 2) and aid to the environment (DAC Marker), as well as climate mitigation through reduction of pressure on forest resources and increased access to clean energy and clean cooking (Rio Marker 2).

Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls

As per the OECD Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as G1. Women are generally key players in the exploitation of natural resources and are considered to be among the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. The full integration of women as actors and beneficiaries and the promotion of gender mainstreaming will be reflected in the procedures and practices of the implementing partner. Gender awareness will be enhanced by promoting gender balance issues among target groups and beneficiaries responsible for implementing the project.

Human rights

A human rights-based approach will be integrated throughout the action, observing its key principles of: a) applying all human rights for all; b) meaningful and inclusive participation and access to decision-making; c) non-discrimination and equality; d) accountability and rule of law for all; and e) transparency and access to information supported by disaggregated data.

There will be a particular focus on inclusive policies targeting women and persons living in vulnerable situations such as indigenous peoples and people with disabilities. Specific attention should be paid to the right to free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) for indigenous peoples and to their involvement in the protection of forests, which is often related to the territories where they live or that they traditionally occupy and use, and biodiversity, which is an integral part of their culture and livelihoods.

Disability

As per the OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D0. This implies that the action is not considered relevant for the inclusion of people with disabilities.

Democracy

Not relevant

Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience

The action aims to strengthen law enforcement and stability in and around the park through support for its rangers. Its implications in terms of the 'do no harm' principle should be considered with respect to human rights and environmental and social impacts, as well as its repercussions on illicit and/or conflict economies.

Disaster risk reduction

Not relevant

3.4 Risks and lessons learnt

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low)	Impact (High/ Medium/ Low)	Mitigating measures
1 – External environment	Degradation of the security context	Medium	High	The Virunga Foundation has proven that it can remain operational in situations of armed conflict, and the action is adaptable to adverse developments.
1 – External environment	Local political destabilisation	Medium	High	The strategic vision of the Virunga Alliance is now increasingly shared by political actors in North Kivu.
1 – External environment	Worsening of the social crisis	Medium	High	The establishment in the sub-region of stable, legal and remunerative sectors has been underway for several years within the framework of several European and international funding programmes.

Lessons learnt:

The comprehensive approach implemented by the Virunga Foundation at Virunga National Park is a key element for the sustainability of the action. The combination of rule of law activities and large-scale development programmes provides leverage with state institutions, local communities and the private sector.

Values-driven interventions, including respect for human rights, the promotion of gender equality and a clear stance in rejecting any sort of corruption is essential for the sustainability of the interventions.

The structural difficulties encountered by the Congolese State in funding parts of its core missions (i.e. the salaries

and operations of ICCN rangers) requires the setting up of alternative funding mechanisms that jointly provide legal security for donors/investors while respecting the sovereign competences of the State.

3.5 Intervention logic

The underlying intervention logic for this action is that improved security, access to sustainable basic services and decent employment opportunities are a precondition for human development and nature conservation alike. Assuming that the unique environmental value of the Virunga National Park region continues to be recognised, promoted and defended by the international community, achieving SO 1 (*Strengthen law enforcement and stability in and around the park*), SO2 (*Reduce pressure on natural resources, including mountain gorilla habitats*) and SO 3 (*Accelerate green economic development*) is expected to contribute to the overall objective of the action to *support the recovery of Virunga National Park and North Kivu province, within the long-term vision of developing a green and transformative economy in the region.*

The indicative activities mentioned above respond to the security and development situation described in section 2.2.

Assuming that the current instability does not degenerate into a generalised and uncontrolled situation on a broader scale, achieving the activities described in section 3.2 and output 1 (*Strengthened capacity of Virunga rangers*) is expected to contribute to SO 1 (*Strengthen law enforcement and stability in and around the park*).

Assuming that the good relations with provincial and city authorities allow them to avoid harassment from other state services when importing necessary equipment, and that the formal economy and support for the governance of legal sectors are not stifled by the weight of local and regional trafficking of natural resources, achieving the activities described in output 2 (*Strengthened community resilience*) is expected to contribute to SO2 (*Reduce pressure on natural resources, including mountain gorilla habitats*) and SO3 (*Accelerate green economic development*).

3.6 Logical framework matrix

This indicative logframe constitutes the basis for the monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the intervention. On the basis of this logframe matrix, a more detailed logframe (or several) may be developed during the contracting phase.

If baselines and targets are not available for the action, they should be provided for each indicator at the time of signing the contract(s) linked to this action document, or in the first progress report at the latest. New columns may be added to set intermediary targets (milestones) for the output and outcome indicators whenever it is relevant.

- At inception, the first progress report should include the complete logframe (e.g. including baselines/targets).
- Progress reports should provide an updated logframe with current values for each indicator.
- The final report should enclose the logframe with baseline and final values for each indicator.

The indicative logical framework matrix may evolve during the lifetime of the action depending on the different implementation modalities for this action.

The activities, expected outputs and related indicators, targets and baselines included in the logframe matrix may be updated during the implementation of the action, with no amendment being required to the Financing Decision.

Logical framework matrix

Results	Results chain (@): Main expected results (maximum 10)	Indicators (@): (at least one indicator per expected result)	Baselines (values and years)	Targets (values and years)	Sources of data	Assumptions
Impact	OO. To support the recovery of Virunga National Park and North Kivu province, fostering a sustainable green and transformative economy in the region	1. Number of individuals from the great emblematic fauna of the Park (mountain gorillas and elephants) 2. Number of park-induced jobs and average household income around the Park	1. 330 mountain gorillas and 700 savannah elephants in June 2021 2. ** jobs in SMEs connected to the Park-owned electricity grid with an average income of ** USD/month (tbd during first year)	1. +10% 2. + 10%	1. Wildlife inventories by ICCN 2. Field surveys by the M&E team	<i>Not applicable</i>
Outcomes	SO 1. Strengthened law enforcement and stability in and around the park	1. Number of attacks/kidnappings prevented by rangers on the Park territory 2. Number of former fighters diverted from armed groups and enrolled in green, decent jobs	1. ** for the first 6 months of 2021 (tbd during first year) 2. ** (tbd during first year)	1. – 15% 2. (tbd)	1. ICCN field reports and ACLED (Kivu Security Tracker) 2. Data collected by the M&E team	No degeneration into uncontrolled instability
	SO 2. Reduced pressure on natural resources, including mountain gorilla habitats	1. Number of logging or carbonisation activities in the park (patrols and aerial observation) 2. Number of bags of charcoal replaced by the use of alternative cooking tools (efficient cookers)	1. Average of 1.81 ovens or dry embers encountered per 100km of patrol (2020) 2. ** (tbd during first year)	1. – 15% 2. (tbd)	1. Foot patrols and aerial observations by thermos cameras 2. Household surveys and smart grid data (Virunga Energies)	Continued recognition of the unique environmental value of the park
	SO 3. Accelerated green economic development	1. Number of households benefiting from increased revenues through the development of agricultural value chains 2. Number of jobs created in the SMEs connected to the electricity grid	1. ** (tbd during first year) 2. ** (tbd during first year)	1. + 15% 2. + 15%	1. Field surveys by the M&E team 2. Field surveys by the M&E team	Not outcompeted by illegal trafficking
Outputs	Output 1.1. Strengthened capacity of Virunga rangers	1. Number of rangers trained and mentored (disaggregated by gender) 2. Number of rangers benefiting from medical support	1. ** (tbd during first year) 2. ** (tbd during first year)	1. + 10% 2. Stable	1. Data collected by the M&E team 2. Data collected by the M&E team	No degeneration into uncontrolled instability

	<p>Output 2.1. Strengthened community resilience</p>	<p>1. Number SMEs hosted in the Goma industrial park and number of entrepreneurs receiving training and financial support (disaggregated by gender)</p> <p>2. Number of households benefitting from alternative cooking tools</p>	<p>1. ** (tbd during first year)</p> <p>2. ** (tbd during first year)</p>	<p>1. + 40%</p> <p>2. (tbd)</p>	<p>1. Data collected by the M&E team</p> <p>2. Data collected by the M&E team</p>	<p>Not outcompeted by illegal trafficking</p>
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4 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Financing agreement

To implement this action, it is not envisaged to conclude a financing agreement with the partner country.

4.2 Indicative implementation period

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section 3 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is 36 months from the date of adoption by the Commission of this Financing Decision.

Extensions of the implementation period may be agreed by the Commission's responsible authorising officer by amending this Financing Decision and the relevant contracts and agreements.

4.3 Implementation modalities

The Commission will ensure that the appropriate EU rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and that the action complies with restrictive EU measures⁹.

4.3.1 Direct management (grants)

Grants: (direct management)

(a) Purpose of the grant(s)

The direct grant award will focus on the recovery of Virunga National Park and North Kivu province, through strengthened law enforcement and stability in and around the park, reduced pressure on natural resources and green economic development through agricultural value chains.

(b) Type of applicants targeted

Virunga Foundation.

(c) Justification of a direct grant

Under the responsibility of the Commission's responsible authorising officer, the grant may be awarded without a call for proposals to the Virunga Foundation.

Under the responsibility of the Commission's responsible authorising officer, the recourse to an award of a grant without a call for proposals, in line with Article 195 of the Financing Regulation, is justified because the Democratic Republic of the Congo is in a crisis situation as referred to in Article 2(21) of the Financial Regulation at the date of this Financing Decision. Furthermore, the entity is in a 'de jure and de facto' monopoly for the management of Virunga National Park following the signature of a public-private-partnership with the ICCN in 2015.

⁹ The list of EU restrictive measure (sanctions) is reflected in the www.sanctionsmap.eu. Note that the sanctions map is an IT tool for identifying the sanctions regimes. The Official Journal of the European Union is the official source of European Union law and, in case of conflict, its content prevails over that of the Sanctions Map.

4.4 Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants

The criteria for geographical eligibility, in terms of the place of establishment for participating in procurement and grant award procedures and of the origin of supplies purchased, that are established in the basic act and set out in the relevant contractual documents shall apply.

The Commission’s responsible authorising officer may extend the geographical eligibility on the basis of urgency or of unavailability of services in the markets of the countries or territories concerned, or in other duly substantiated cases where application of the eligibility rules would make the realisation of this action impossible or exceedingly difficult (Article 28(10) NDICI-Global Europe Regulation).

4.5 Indicative budget

Indicative budget components¹⁰	EU contribution (amount in EUR)
Emergency response to the Virunga-North Kivu triple crisis, composed of:	
Grants – total envelope under section 4.3.1	3 262 595.22
Evaluation – cf. section 5.2 Audit – cf. section 5.3	Included in the component
Contingencies	N.A.
Totals	3 262 595.22

4.6 Organisational set-up and responsibilities

ICCN staff and Virunga Foundation employees (approximately 700 ICCN rangers and 700 civilian staff) work under the authority of a single management entity in the field. The park’s headquarters are located in Rumangabo, North Kivu. Activities take place across various locations inside and outside the park’s territory. Departments are structured in four categories: management, security, development and support. Continuous efforts are made to strengthen the management’s capabilities across its operating areas, including through the recruitment and training of skilled managers from DRC.

The Virunga Foundation’s registered address is in London, UK. One employee works at the headquarters.

A Steering Committee will be established and will be responsible for the general oversight, policy guidance and monitoring of the programme. The Commission and the selected implementing partners are members of the Steering Committee. The main responsibilities of the Steering Committee are to: i) provide strategic direction on the operations of the programmes; ii) receive information and give feedback on monitoring and evaluation exercises with regard to progress in meeting the objectives; iii) review and approve the annual progress and financial reports; iv) review and approve forecast budgets and work plans; v) provide guidance on operations.

As part of its prerogative relating to budget implementation, and to safeguard the financial interests of the Union, the Commission may participate in the above governance structures set up to govern implementation of

¹⁰ N.B: The final text on audit/verification depends on the outcome of ongoing discussions on pooling of funding in (one or a limited number of) Decision(s) and the subsequent financial management, i.e. for the conclusion of audit contracts and payments.

the action.

4.7 Pre-conditions

No pre-conditions are envisaged for this action.

5 PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

5.1 Monitoring and reporting

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this action will be a continuous process, and part of the implementing partner's responsibilities. To this end, the implementing partner shall establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the action and produce regular progress reports (no less than annually) and final reports. Every report shall provide an accurate account of the implementation of the action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced, and the degree of achievement of its results (outputs and direct outcomes) as measured by corresponding indicators, using the logframe matrix (for project modality) as the reference.

The Commission may undertake additional project monitoring visits both through its own staff and through independent consultants recruited directly by the Commission for independent monitoring reviews (or recruited by the responsible agent contracted by the Commission to implement such reviews).

Roles and responsibilities for data collection, analysis and monitoring:

The Virunga Foundation has permanent structures and appropriate administrative and financial management procedures (human resources department, administrative and financial department, audit department, logistics and transport department). Together, they run all park-led operations: conservation, law enforcement and development programmes (tourism, electricity and agriculture). The management framework makes it possible to deploy the action in strict accordance with the European procedures in force.

As regards the monitoring of activities and the 'steering' of the action's logical framework, the monitoring-evaluation framework that will be used will be compatible with the 'integrated planning-monitoring-evaluation system' promoted by the EU for all national parks in the DRC. This system measures the activities, impact and financial efficiency of all programmes run by the Virunga Alliance against its three major strategic objectives (conservation, poverty reduction and stabilisation).

Measurement tools include household surveys, guard patrols, animal censuses, aerial and satellite analysis (in collaboration with the Copernicus programme of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre) or the use of data produced by external organisations (for example, the United Nations World Food Programme for the food consumption score).

5.2 Evaluation

Having regard to the nature of the action, an evaluation will not be carried out for this action or its components.

If an evaluation is not planned, the Commission may, during implementation, decide to undertake such an

evaluation for duly justified reasons either on its own initiative or on the initiative of the partner. The evaluation reports shall be shared with the partner country and other key stakeholders following the best practice of evaluation dissemination¹¹. The implementing partner and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, in agreement with the partner country, jointly decide on the follow-up actions to be taken and any adjustments necessary, including, if indicated, reorientation of the project.

5.3 Audit and verifications

Without prejudice to the obligations applicable to contracts concluded for implementing this action, the Commission may, on the basis of a risk assessment, contract independent audit or verification assignments for one or several contracts or agreements.

6 STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

The 2021-2027 programming cycle will adopt a new approach to pooling, programming and deploying strategic communication and public diplomacy resources.

It will remain a contractual obligation for all entities implementing EU-funded external actions to inform the relevant audiences of the Union's support for their work by displaying the EU emblem and a short funding statement, as appropriate, on all communication materials related to the actions concerned. This obligation will continue to apply equally, regardless of whether the actions concerned are implemented by the Commission, partner countries, service providers, grant beneficiaries or entrusted or delegated entities such as UN agencies, international financial institutions or agencies of EU Member States.

However, action documents for specific sector programmes are, in principle, no longer required to include a provision for communication and visibility actions promoting the programmes concerned. These resources will instead be consolidated in Cooperation Facilities established by support measure action documents, allowing Delegations to plan and execute multiannual strategic communication and public diplomacy actions with sufficient critical mass to be effective on a national scale.

¹¹ See best [practice of evaluation dissemination](#).

Appendix 1 REPORTING IN OPSYS

An intervention (also generally called a project/programme) is the operational entity associated with a coherent set of activities and results structured in a logical framework aiming to deliver development change or progress. Interventions are the most effective (hence, optimal) entities for the operational follow-up by the Commission of its external development operations. As such, interventions constitute the base unit for managing operational implementations, assessing performance, monitoring, evaluation, internal and external communication, reporting and aggregation.

Primary interventions are those contracts or groups of contracts bearing reportable results and respecting the following business rule: ‘a given contract can only contribute to one primary intervention and not more than one’. An individual contract that does not produce direct reportable results and cannot be logically grouped with other result-reportable contracts is considered to be a ‘support entities’ contract. The addition of all primary interventions and support entities is equivalent to the full development portfolio of the institution.

The current action identifies as:

Action level		
Group of actions level		
Contract level		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 1	EUR 3 262 595.22 with Virunga Foundation