



## **Call for expression of interest for Developing and operation of a canopy walk in Kibale National Park.**

### **Introduction**

Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) is mandated to manage the wildlife Protected Areas (PA's) that include all the national parks and wildlife reserves in Uganda. As part of this management responsibility UWA is responsible for managing and developing tourism within the protected areas.

UWA has identified the need for development of a canopy walk tourism product in the protected areas as part of the strategy to diversify product offering and enrich visitor experiences in Uganda. In 2009, a feasibility study was conducted for development of canopy walk ways or zips lines in Uganda National Parks and identified two potential sites; one in Buhoma of Bwindi Impenetrable National Park and the other in Mainaro of Kibale National Park.

Later Management agreed to put this development in Sebitole in Kibale National park because of more suitable conditions in this location.

Uganda Wildlife Authority now wishes to invite interested investors to forward their proposals for development and operation of canopy walk in Uganda

### **Kibale National Park**

Kibale National Park is mainly a medium altitude transitional moist evergreen forest with characteristics of both dry and wet tropical rain forests. Trees rise to over 55 metres and exhibit a semi-closed canopy of stratified tree crowns.

It has got over 351 recorded tree species, about 70 mammal species including 13 primate species, the largest concentration in the world and over 370 species of birds. Both flora and fauna contain an overlap of E. African and West/Central African species, creating a unique ecosystem, important for ecological, environmental and evolutionary reasons and attractive to both tourists and researchers.

The rain forest canopy is the richest, least explored and most threatened habitat on the surface of the earth. Recent research shows that the rain forest canopy, high above our heads is bursting with 40% of the plant and animal life and may be at the heart of some of the earth's most biotic regulatory systems.

It is estimated that about 3-30 million species of plants and animals could be living there all existing in an incredibly complex web of life that is almost completely unstudied. The canopy is the primary interface between life (biosphere) and the atmosphere for 90% of the earth's biomass. The human desire for adventure and discovery can provide a new and exciting opportunity for the Kibale forest conservation.

### **Visitor statistics**

The visitor statistics to Kibale National Park is as follows:

<b>Park</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
Kibale National Park and Katonga	7,741	8,440	7,733	8247	9,482	7,530	10,372

### **Canopy Walks**

A canopy walkway is a structure which facilitates access to the forest canopy. It is made of a series of standard suspension bridges strung between trees of a suitable type and interconnected by a series of wooden tree based platforms. It is a new concept and tourism product in Uganda but has been in existence in other countries such as Ghana, Malaysia, Madagascar, Borneo, Panama, India, S.Africa and recently in Rwanda where it has been launched.



## **Proposed Project Area**

Sebitoli Forest camp is located on the northern part of the forest, about 13kms along Fort Portal –Kampala highway. Tourism activities are limited to forest nature walks, birding around the camp and a few day excursions. All the activities on this site are low-key in nature because the site lacks a key and popular tourism activity like the chimp viewing as it is in Kanyancu. Moreover all other activities at Sebitoli are all offered at Kanyancu.

Most of the visitors to Kibale National Park come to Kanyancu for chimp viewing and on average most spend only one day/night, that is; tracking in the morning and Bigodi wetland in the afternoon or vice versa. Yet there are many potential recreational activities that can keep them longer in the park thus bringing in more revenue and more enriched tourist experience and one of them is the canopy walkway.

## **Scope of work**

The competent firm is expected to forward a detailed proposal for development and operation of the canopy walk. The proposal should include proposed designs, interpretation themes, type of materials and cost for construction of the canopy, operation and management of the canopy project as well as proposed concessions fees to UWA.

The investor is expected to highlight how this project will operate in safe and environmentally friendly manner.

## **Terms of Reference**

The prospective investor is expected to develop and operate the canopy walk way, on the land so concessioned by UWA, for the purpose of operationalising the canopy project:

The investor is expected among others to:

- a) Carry out own assessment and feasibility of the canopy project in this areas and develop a business plan to be shared with UWA
- b) Conduct an EIA for this project in this location and follow all the environmental regulation and guidelines by NEMA, UWA and all applicable laws.
- c) Source for and provide funding for the canopy project
- d) Identify and develop the necessary infrastructure to facilitate the project as will be deemed necessary and agreed with UWA.
- e) Develop and operate the canopy walk, in the most eco friendly manner and view of minimizing impact to the environment, while adapting use of materials and facilities that reflect sensitivity to and support sustainability of good conservation
- f) Promote and market the canopy walk project to internal and international markets
- g) Develop the related tourism activities/facilities i.e. observation and rest points, toilets, restaurants, walking paths and trails, support rails and other relates facilities that will enhance the enjoyment and safety of the canopy walk experience.

- h) Work with UWA to carry out programmes aimed at enhancing community benefits from the Area. Such programmes include but are not limited to:
- i. Assisting the communities to develop community based tourism enterprises.
  - ii. Developing access routes and other social amenities in the Area for community use as part of corporate social responsibility.
  - iii. Providing employment while giving the resident local community members a priority.
- Carry out periodic maintenance and repairs on the canopy
  - Ensure visitor safety during the canopy walk. Have an emergency response plan.
  - Pay the concession fees and other fees as agreed in the contract from time to time.
  - Carrying out capacity building of staff and other partner key staff.
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- The investor shall comply with the laws of Uganda and local institutions governing the Area, and any rules, regulations, policies, guidelines and instructions promulgated under such laws, whether they are in effect now or become effective after execution of this Agreement. These regulations and policies include, but are not limited to Republic of Uganda's Public Health, Labor and Safety requirements, regulations, guidelines and instructions promulgated and associated with protected area visitor safety and health, regulations, guidelines and instructions promulgated and associated with sport hunting.

### **Concession Agreement**

UWA will sign a concession agreement with the best evaluated bidder for this investment, which will cover among others:

- Duration of the Concession
- Investor and UWA obligations
- General Terms of the Concession

### **Selection Criteria for Prospective Investors**

Prospective investors should have demonstrated levels of expertise and experience in development and operation of canopy walks around the world with high standard of safety.

The investor should have proof of sufficient funds or ability to mobilize funds to implement the canopy project.

The investor should have proof of project management skills (ability to deliver project objective, accountability mechanisms and sound financial management skills).

### **Submission details:**

Interested investors should forward their proposals, clearly marked "**Expression of interest for development and operation of canopy walk at Kibale National Park**" by 11:00 am, Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2013, addressed to the following

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