

Technology and innovation to save gorillas: TUI Care Foundation and African Wildlife Foundation join forces to advance community-led conservation in Rwanda

- *TUI Wildlife Rwanda strengthens biodiversity science in Volcanoes National Park through the introduction of innovative eDNA technology*
- *The project empowers local communities by training 100 of their members in wildlife monitoring and engaging 200 students in conservation activities*
- *Programme is launched as part of TUI Care Foundation's Tourism for Development September, which focuses on projects that empower Least Developed Countries through sustainable tourism initiatives*

Berlin, 10 September 2025. *The African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) and the TUI Care Foundation have launched a pioneering initiative to support community-driven conservation and biodiversity science in Rwanda's renowned Volcanoes National Park. The two-year TUI Wildlife Programme Rwanda aims to strengthen biodiversity monitoring and foster greater youth and community engagement in conservation.*

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Home to the iconic mountain gorilla, Volcanoes National Park represents one of Africa's most critical conservation landscapes. Thanks to decades of protection efforts, gorilla numbers have steadily increased. But with the park's limited size and mounting pressures from surrounding human development and climate change, new conservation tools and partnerships are urgently needed. Through this initiative, cutting-edge environmental DNA technology (eDNA) will be introduced to the park for the first time. By collecting genetic material from soil and water, eDNA enables scientists to monitor species and ecosystem health more accurately - laying the foundation for smarter, data-driven conservation decisions. These insights will be combined with satellite imagery and on-the-ground reporting to inform future planning and park management.

The second pillar of the project is local capacity building. Community members living near the park will be trained and equipped to support wildlife and habitat monitoring. Their work will help track changes in biodiversity, habitat quality, and human-wildlife interactions, feeding into a cloud-based platform to inform real-time conservation responses. The project will also ignite a passion for conservation amongst young people. 200 students from ten local schools will participate in educational park visits, debates and writing competitions. In partnership with the University of Rwanda, young professionals will be trained in eDNA sampling and analysis - building Rwanda's next generation of highly qualified conservation scientists.

This work is delivered in collaboration with key national and regional institutions, including the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund, the Rwanda Development Board, the University of Rwanda's Center for Biodiversity, and the International Gorilla Conservation Programme. It also directly contributes to Rwanda's national conservation strategy and supports global commitments under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. The partnership builds on a successful collaboration between African Wildlife Foundation and the TUI Care Foundation in Kenya's Tsavo landscape. In both

regions, the shared goal is clear: invest in local people, scientific innovation and sustainable conservation that benefits both nature and communities.

The TUI Care Foundation's 'Tourism for Development Month' is a month of activities dedicated to projects set in Least Developed Countries. Through a series of project launches and educational activities, it focuses on how sustainable tourism can increase the capacity of destination communities and empower them to improve their livelihoods, conserve and regenerate nature, and create market-based solutions that benefit tourism destinations. The projects are supported through the TUI Care Foundation's Tourism for Development Fund, which commits €10 million by 2030 to empower Least Developed Countries, a joint pledge of TUI Care Foundation and UN Tourism.

About the TUI Care Foundation

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Building on the potential of tourism as a force for good, the TUI Care Foundation supports and initiates projects which create new opportunities and contribute to thriving communities in tourism destinations all over the world. Connecting holidaymakers to good causes, it supports education and training opportunities for young people; drives the protection of natural habitats and the marine environment; and helps local communities to thrive sustainably and benefit from tourism. The TUI Care Foundation builds on strong partnerships with local and international organisations to create meaningful and long-lasting impact. The independent charitable organisation was founded by TUI, one of the world's leading tourism businesses, and is based in the Netherlands. Website: www.tuicarefoundation.com

About African Wildlife Foundation

The African Wildlife Foundation is Africa's leading conservation organization, working to ensure wildlife and wild lands thrive as part of the continent's future. Founded in 1961, AWF combines science, policy, education, and on-the-ground programs to promote a uniquely African conservation vision—where development and biodiversity go hand in hand. Website: www.awf.org

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