



Gorongosa Project Mission and Strategy. 2022



1. We co-manage Gorongosa National Park with the Government of Mozambique. This fact is our guiding principle as we decide who we are, what we do and where we do it. We use a dual approach of Human Development and Conservation, which are implemented simultaneously in a mutually reinforcing manner.

We are trying to protect one of the most important biodiversity reservoirs in the world, the southern end of Africa's Great Rift Valley -- from the Zambezi River to the Pungue River -- including Mt. Gorongosa and the eastern and western shoulders of the Rift. This biodiversity-rich region is a world-treasure and when we restore it and save it -- it will benefit humans for centuries and millennia to come.

The intact ecosystem will moderate climate change, (absorb water in a flood and retain moisture in a drought). It will clean air and water. Gorongosa provides employment to Mozambicans; inspiration and knowledge to the entire world. The Park flora and fauna preserve cultural and spiritual values of the local people. Many of our species can be found nowhere else in the world, and the Park serves as a refuge to thousands of species that are threatened or extirpated elsewhere on the continent. Our wildlife populations help restock other protected areas in Mozambique with native animals.

We want to create the best scientific infrastructure of any national park in the world and generate cutting-edge scientific knowledge -- to advise our own management of the Park's ecosystems and to advance biodiversity, ecological, and paleontological knowledge broadly. We aim for Gorongosa to become the leading scientific hub in Africa for research and education in nature conservation, ecology, and climate science. We already produce cutting-edge, peer-reviewed research of the highest international visibility.

We are a source of nature-based economic development for the communities who share the greater ecosystem of the Park and we are a model for sustainable development in Africa.

We want to catalyze activities that enable our neighbors to lift themselves out of poverty.

We engage in this sustainable development because:

- a. It is the right thing to do.
- b. If the people have adequate employment, farms, education, healthcare, and opportunities for a dignified life -- they will not need to exploit resources within the national park boundaries. But they *will* be able to use those resources as a source of employment, information, inspiration, and recreation.

We want to educate and empower Mozambicans to become scientists, conservationists, and professionals engaged in a green economy. We are training a generation of young Mozambicans to carry this work forward for the coming 50 years and beyond. In turn, these young people will continue this mission by training the generations that follow them. Our impact is not limited to the greater Gorongosa region. Mozambican scientists trained by our Project are making contributions throughout the country now.

We are inclusive. We ensure that women receive the same opportunities as men. We aim to have 50% of our employees and beneficiaries be women. There is ample research demonstrating that a community is only as strong as its women. We prioritize the hiring of Mozambicans and provide training and mentorship.

Our employees subscribe to an ethical code of conduct. We lead with integrity and transparency. We approach interactions with positivity and compassion.

2. We are two organizations working side-by-side that share the name and brand of Gorongosa: the Gorongosa Project (non-profit) and the Gorongosa Trust (for-profit). The Gorongosa Project has six departments: Conservation, Science, Operations, Finance & Administration, Communications and Human Development. The Gorongosa Trust creates for-profit businesses that utilize the land and brand of the national park. The Trust companies have no shareholders. They deliver all their profits to the Gorongosa Project.
3. We seek to connect a mosaic of land-use types:
 - a. The Gorongosa National Park. We may expand the boundaries in critical areas, such as former hunting concession 12 and/or the Vunduzi River corridor that connects Mt. Gorongosa (which is national park) with the core Park.
 - b. Community Conservancies. These may be co-managed by a Trust company and the community.
 - c. Forest Concessions. These may be owned by a Trust company or by a separate company that collaborates with our objectives.
 - d. Agricultural lands. We will help our neighbors employ regenerative, sustainable agricultural practices.

We believe that soon wildlife will be able to traverse all the connected land areas listed above. We will deploy methods to protect the farms from wildlife, such as enclosures or natural methods such as beehive fences / chili pepper fences. This network of conservancies will create the perfect habitat for not only the large and iconic species but for all elements of the Mozambican flora and fauna, many of which provide critical ecosystem services for the natural and human environments.

Our Project has a defined Area. We don't seek indefinite expansion. We will work with our partner -- the Government of Mozambique -- to define the goals for categories a, b, c, and d above to complete their legal and ownership status by the year 2043, when our co-management agreement ends.

4. The success of our Project will continue beyond 2043 through the:
 - a. Continued involvement of a highly competent team of Mozambican conservationists, natural resource managers, rural development experts, engineers, education specialists, accountants, logistics specialists, etc., who are currently being trained and are gaining practical experience.
 - b. The legal status of the land-use types.
 - c. The financial contribution of the Gorongosa Trust for-profit companies.
 - d. Trusting, cooperative relationships with local communities.
5. The Gorongosa Trust companies will create for-profit companies that (as mentioned above) utilize the land and brand of the national park. These include:
 - a. Tourism. Conducted in the core Park and on the Mountain and in community conservancies when applicable. We offer innovative approaches to African tourism that highlight the unique aspects of Gorongosa, such as our successful restoration strategies and exceptionally rich assemblages of animals and plants.
 - b. Coffee. This is the ideal strategy to restore the native forest on Mt. Gorongosa while providing an income to local farmers.
 - c. Honey. This product not only provides supplemental income to farm families, it promotes pollinators who benefit the entire ecosystem.
 - d. Carbon. It now seems likely that responsible enterprises throughout the world will pay to restore and protect native forests.

It is our goal that the Trust companies will be the largest donor to the Gorongosa Project by 2030.

6. We provide socio-economic support to the communities that share the greater ecosystem of the Park.
 - a. Education. Pre-school through high school, with some support for university scholarships. We build schools, train teachers, and provide after-school clubs for girls and boys, with an extra focus provided to girls who are vulnerable to child marriage. Together with several Mozambican institutions of higher learning, we have created the world's only graduate program that leads to a M.Sc. degree in conservation biology, conducted entirely within the borders of a national park. Our alumni complete the program fully prepared to take on leadership roles in the management of other protected areas in Mozambique. We do this in collaboration with the Government of Mozambique Ministry of Education.

- b. Health care. We work hand-in-hand with the Government of Mozambique Ministry of Health to provide fixed and mobile health clinics, and to train and support the full complement of health-care workers and volunteers.
 - c. Community Relations. We respect the traditional governmental structures of the local communities. We help them create Natural Resource Committees that manage their land in a sustainable fashion.
 - d. We support local farm families with the “Livelihoods” sector within our Human Development Department. We help farmers get a greater yield on their crops and help them sell their output for a fair price in the market. We provide training, inputs -- and when appropriate -- we aggregate their products to gain better negotiating leverage in the selling process. The affiliated Gorongosa companies (Project and Trust) are now the largest employer in Sofala Province. However, we recognize that local society will be more resilient if there are many successful companies, owned by local entrepreneurs. Through our Livelihoods sector, we will support the creation of small and medium sized businesses.
 - e. We will create a Model City with the Municipality of Vila Gorongosa that focuses on better service delivery, sustainability and climate resilience. We recognize that many people would prefer to select a lifestyle other than subsistence farming. Cities provide education and health access, financial services, employment, markets and entertainment. As farms expand in the communities near the Park (fewer farmers, larger farms) and a portion of the people choose to live in the Municipality, pressure on natural resources in rural areas will be reduced. Women have more equitable access to education and employment when living in an urban area.
 - f. We believe that our collective activities will contribute to lasting peace in our region. We conduct “Peace Clubs” to help former combatants successfully re-integrate into society.
 - g. Our economic activities nested within the Gorongosa Trust will support conservation and development by providing equitable, high-quality employment based on ecosystem services.
7. In Summary: we love Mozambique, Mozambicans, and the landscape of greater Gorongosa. We are creating a model of integrated conservation and human development that can be replicated elsewhere. We are helping local people obtain the aspirations of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals.

Gorongosa is living proof that an ecosystem devastated by humanity’s worst tendencies can be rehabilitated by people exemplifying humanity’s best tendencies; we are leading a transformative shift away from purely preservationist thinking and towards a hopeful model of resilience and renewal at the interface of wilderness and society. By continuing to implement this unique Gorongosa model, we will create and sustain a biodiversity reservoir of inestimable value in the southern end of Africa’s Great Rift Valley, where our own species began.