

Reviewing Ruyigi Communal Plan for Community Development: an opportunity for ABN and SSGs to influence local policy

Title

The [Association Burundaise pour la protection de la Nature \(ABN\)](#), the BirdLife partner in Burundi, is working with Serukubeze, the Mpungwe Mountain Chain Site Support Group (SSG), in Ruyigi Province in the East of Burundi near the [Ruvubu National Park](#), towards the development of a Community Development Plan. The Community Plan is being developed through a participatory process in which the SSG works together with the BirdLife Partner in identifying local, and relevant national, challenges and opportunities, related to the management of natural resources, and in formulating a strategy for local sustainable development. The Community Plan will hence assist communities in managing their resources more sustainably, and while offering a strong basis and starting point for improved communication between the community and relevant decision-makers at local, national, regional and international level.



In Burundi, a key entry point for the SSGs to influence local policy is the drafting of the 5-year Communal Plans for Community Development (PCDC) by the decentralized local government. The first PCDCs were developed in April 2009 and currently it is a time to review the PCDC. The development of the new PCDC is a participatory and collaborative process and involves a variety of stake-holders e.g. local government and local government agencies, local communities, community groups, NGOs, donors.

The process commenced in November 2013 with an inception meeting in Ruyigi launching the PCDC development process. This was followed by the installation of the planning and coordination team, the training and sensitization of and training of local administrators, and the collection of data that feeds into the PCDC in collaboration with the local communities. The following fourth step is a crucial one because at this stage stakeholders are invited to review and provide input on the draft policies which are formulated around 5 key policy areas: good governance, education, health, agriculture and livestock, and environment.



ABN and Serukubeze SSG are actively engaged in the development of the new PCDC and are stressing the importance of prioritizing the development of and support for the sustainable livelihoods, sustainable natural resource management, the integration of climate change adaptation in policy, and the designation of the Mpungwe Mountain Chain as a protected area as part of a network of protected areas in Burundi.

The development of the Community Action Plans is part of the ongoing work under the UK Government's Darwin Initiative funded [Ecosystem Based Adaptation Project](#) and the Aage V. Jensen Charity Foundation [Lake Victoria Basin Project](#).

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