

Press Release
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Paris. London.

Virunga Foundation And Aera Group Launch Carbon Certification For Renewable Energy in Democratic Republic of Congo

Virunga National Park and Aera Group, Africa's leading carbon finance group, have launched a VCS carbon certification process for Matebe hydropower plant. VCS is the world's foremost voluntary Greenhouse Gas program and this pioneering action offers the possibility for further carbon certification in DRC. This partnership, with one of the most exceptionally biodiverse places in the world, is a first in eastern DRC for Aera Group.

Matebe hydro plant is part of a wider investment plan, called the [Virunga Alliance](#), initiated by the Virunga Foundation to provide access to energy for four million people who live and work in and around the Virunga National Park. Matebe will produce more than 13.6 MW, supplying 600,000 people with clean, accessible and affordable electricity, kickstarting the green economy and bringing over 12,000 sustainable employments for those in the region of Rutshuru. Matebe avoids the use of heavy, polluting, fossil fuel generators thus saving an estimated 50,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions per year.

The carbon credits awarded for the reduced CO2 emissions will become important environmental assets which can be sold to respected corporates, individuals or States dedicated to achieving carbon neutrality. The VCS carbon certification is an effective tool to transparently track and account the CO2 performance of Virunga's clean energy projects.

Director of Virunga National Park, Emmanuel de Merode, said, "the fight against climate change is one of our key commitments. Protecting biodiversity, improving living conditions and preventing conflicts cannot be addressed without a sustainable pathway. We hope Virunga's offering will attract those with an equal commitment to clean energy and employment based on a green economy."

Alexandre Dunod, Advisory Manager at Aera Group: "Matebe is an outstanding 'run-of-river', micro-hydro project with strong impact and co-benefits. It is right in line with our portfolio policy focusing on Least Developed Countries and charismatic African stories and activities. We expect a strong demand for high quality African offsets in the years to come and we build our supply accordingly."

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Notes to Editor:

The [Virunga National Park](#) (Parc National des Virunga), in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, is 7,800-square-kilometres (3,000 sq mi) stretching from the Virunga Mountains in the South, to the Rwenzori Mountains in the North, bordering Volcanoes National Park in Rwanda and Rwenzori Mountains National Park and Queen Elizabeth National Park in Uganda. The park was established in 1925 as Africa's first national park and is a UNESCO-designated World Heritage Site since 1979. In recent years poaching and the Congo Civil War have seriously damaged its wildlife population. The park is managed by the Congolese National Park Authorities, the Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature (ICCN) and its partner the Virunga Foundation.

The [Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature \(ICCN\)](#) is a Congolese governmental partner tasked with the protection and conservation of the Virunga National Park and Kahuzi-Biega National Park, both UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Members of the ICCN are charged with the overall protection of the parks and the endangered Mountain Gorilla.

[Virunga Alliance](#)

Born of a Congolese commitment to the protection of Virunga National Park, the Virunga Alliance aims to foster peace and prosperity through the responsible economic development of natural resources for four million people who live within a day's walk of the park's borders.

Virunga Press Team - press@virunga.org

[Aera Group](#) is the leading carbon finance group in Africa with the largest carbon projects portfolio, with over 40 projects in 17 countries. They have a record number of 24 African projects registered under the UNFCCC and have the largest volume of African carbon credits traded (30 M. tons) Aera

Contact: Aurélie Lepage - a.lepage@aera-group.fr