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**VISION FOR
CENTRAL AFRICA
REGIONAL PROGRAM
FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
(CARPE)**

APPROVED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE

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CONTRACT INFORMATION

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*Front Cover: Bobangi Sunset over Ubangi River in Republic of the Congo. Credit: Bruce G. Marcot.
Back Cover: 2014 DRC Salonga. Credit: Cody Pope.*

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ACRONYMS

CAR	Central African Republic
CARPE	Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
FABS	Forest and Biodiversity Support Activity
NRM	Natural Resource Management
PA	Protected Area
ROC	Republic of the Congo
SA	Strategic Approaches
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Services



*Residents on the way back to the village of
Minwoho, Lekié, Center Region,
Cameroon. Credit: Ollivier Girard/CIFOR*



USAID'S CARPE VISION

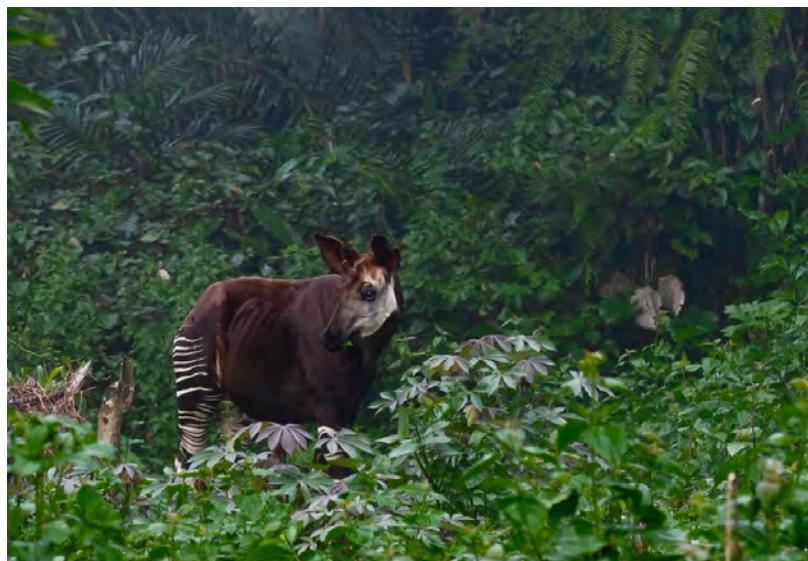
*Afro*mosia plot and phenology observation
by INERA technician in Yangambi, Democratic
Republic of Congo. Credit: Axel Fassio/CIFOR

A CONGO BASIN WITH HEALTHY ECOSYSTEMS AND DYNAMIC LOCAL LEADERSHIP THAT SUPPORTS STABILITY AND PROSPERITY IN COMMUNITIES

A VIBRANT AND DIVERSE LANDSCAPE

Central Africa's Congo Basin ecosystem is critical to the health, livelihoods, and security of more than 80 million people. Dense tropical forests and peatlands regulate the regional climate, providing rainfall and clean water across Africa and affecting weather patterns around the globe. These ecosystems also trap millions of tons of carbon and help mitigate global climate change. The peatlands of the lowland Cuvette Centrale, the central part of the Congo Basin, form one of the most carbon-rich ecosystems on the planet and are estimated to store 30 billion tons of carbon, equivalent to almost a year's worth of global emissions from fossil fuels. The Congo River, second longest in the world, delivers fresh water to people and wildlife, is a major fishery, and forms the backbone of the region's transportation system. Endangered wildlife species, such as forest elephants, chimpanzees, bonobos, and lowland and mountain gorillas, inhabit the forests of the Congo Basin, while a mosaic of woodland savannas provide habitat for lions, antelopes, buffalo, giraffes, savanna elephants, and many other species. Together, these terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems serve as habitat for more than 10,000 species of plants, 400 species of mammals, 1,000 species of birds, and 700 species of fish. The region is irreplaceable: 30 percent of its plant species and 80 percent of fish species are found nowhere else in the world.

The Congo Basin is a region of change, opportunity, and uncertainty. The environment and its many benefits are increasingly under threat. Damage to this ecosystem spells disaster for its people, plants,



An Okapi in the Okapi Wildlife Reserve, DRC. Credit: Hani Gué/WCS

and animals. Without the services rendered by the Congo Basin's forests, communities in the region would experience more extreme weather events, have higher incidence of disease, and struggle to find clean water, food, and fuel. The lives of the

Congo Basin's Indigenous People are particularly intertwined with their ancestral forest homes, and as a result they are among the most vulnerable to the impacts of forest and biodiversity loss.

Timber extraction, bushmeat hunting, wildlife trafficking, mining, and expanding smallholder agriculture contribute to deforestation and defaunation of the region. As human activity pushes further into the forests, the increased spread of serious diseases, such as Ebola, and the loss of weather-regulating forest landscapes will be detrimental to the health and livelihoods of people in the region. A lucrative international market for wildlife and wildlife products, such as ivory and pangolin scales, attracts violence to the region,



Figure 1. CARPE focal countries in the Congo Basin

increases corruption, and funds international criminal syndicates. Uncontrolled and extractive use of natural resources—including gold and other minerals, oil, and timber—also underlies many of the conflicts in the region.

These environmental threats are driven by complex local, national, and regional dynamics, including weak governance systems, corruption, instability, limited land and resource rights for local communities, gender and other social inequalities, a growing human population, and a lack of viable and equitable economic alternatives.

As a result of these threats, there has been significant reduction in wildlife across the Congo Basin over the last 20 years. Of note, forest elephant numbers dropped by more than 60 percent between 2002 and 2011. While the globally important carbon stocks of the Congo Basin have remained relatively intact, deforestation rates—historically lower than in the Amazon and southeast Asia—are on the rise, particularly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). In 2020, DRC lost 1.31 million hectares of natural forest, equivalent to 854 million tons of CO₂ emissions.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), recognizing the global importance of the forests and ecosystems of the Congo Basin and the complexity of the threats they face, has invested in the sustainable management of the basin's forests and biodiversity for more than a quarter-century. As USAID's Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE) enters its fourth phase, this document outlines its vision and strategy. The aim is to ensure that CARPE's new phase builds on past successes and adopts new, more effective approaches to meet new challenges, ensuring the long-term success of biodiversity conservation, sustainable forest management, and human well-being in the region.

THE HISTORY OF CARPE

CARPE is a long-term USAID initiative to mitigate threats to key Central African landscapes and ensure that human and environmental well-being are mutually reinforcing. CARPE supports sustainable forest protection and management, biodiversity conservation, and climate change mitigation through partnerships that diversify and expand the constituency for environmental action while increasing local, national, and regional natural resource management (NRM) capacity.

CARPE's first phase, from 1995 to 2002, centered on gathering information on the Central African forest ecosystem, while building regional human resources and institutional capacity. By the end of Phase I, the CARPE program covered nine Central African

countries.¹ During the second phase, from 2002 to 2012, CARPE substantially scaled up operations to support sustainable NRM in the field, to strengthen protected area management, and to improve environmental governance, while continuing to improve natural resource monitoring capacity. Efforts to reduce deforestation to mitigate climate change were included in the second phase of CARPE. The program implemented systematic land-use planning in 12 landscapes to support biodiversity conservation and sustainable NRM and established partnerships and mechanisms to operationalize these plans and support policy reform. CARPE III, from 2013 to 2020, continued to focus on improved management of Protected Areas (PAs) and community-based NRM while working at national and regional levels to strengthen the regulatory and policy framework and develop the capacity of institutions responsible for forest conservation and management. To increase impact, USAID decided to concentrate CARPE's work on site-specific activities in two countries—DRC and the Republic of the Congo (ROC)—and nine carbon-rich, biologically sensitive, and diverse natural forest landscapes. During this phase, CARPE greatly expanded support to reduce deforestation and forest degradation with co-funding from the Norwegian government for climate change mitigation activities in the CARPE landscapes.

Analyses of forest and wildlife population trends across the Congo Basin show the importance of the long-term protection of key landscapes that CARPE has provided.^{2,3} Although it is difficult to prove causality, these landscapes have maintained or reduced the rate of intact forest loss compared with similar areas—securing extremely high carbon stocks and maintaining the most favorable habitats for the wildlife of the region. The PAs within CARPE landscapes have largely maintained key wildlife species—particularly apes and elephants—or significantly reduced their rate of decline compared with widespread losses across the Congo Basin as a whole. As a result, the last refuges for great apes and forest elephants in Central Africa lie within these landscapes.

¹ Countries in Central Africa comprise Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda, and São Tomé and Príncipe. The current phase of CARPE, CARPE IV, is active in a subset of these countries (see Figure 1).

² USAID (2017). Midterm Evaluation of Phase III of the USAID Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment.

³ Fiona Maisels (2019). Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment – Summary of Forest and Biodiversity Conservation Impact. Unpublished.

THE CARPE IV APPROACH

Long-term commitments to the Congo Basin are critical to institutionalizing the changes necessary to protect the region's ecosystems. In the fourth iteration of CARPE, the program will build on and improve its approach to ensure a vibrant, biodiverse ecosystem that sustainably supports resilient and healthy communities and continues to employ USAID's “do no harm” principle across the portfolio.

A performance evaluation during CARPE's third phase confirmed that the program has been instrumental in building capacity for biodiversity conservation and forest management in the region, laying the groundwork to prevent future

The “**people-centered**” approach used by CARPE focuses on actors shaping demand and decisions, and modeling the political economy to understand and address the root causes of tropical forest and biodiversity loss and to avoid potentially ineffective solutions. This approach will not only support CARPE programming going forward but will be a learning tool for USAID as a whole.

greenhouse gas emissions and protecting threatened and endangered species. Additionally, CARPE provided an opportunity for the conservation and development communities to better understand ecological processes and the effectiveness of conservation approaches through supporting multiple fora and learning opportunities such as the Congo Basin Forest Partnership. However, the evaluation emphasized the need to better integrate social dimensions, increase adaptive management and flexibility, and focus on mitigating key threats to biodiversity and forests whether from within or outside the CARPE landscapes.

CARPE is strengthening its approach by addressing these areas of improvement. Its new vision, described in detail below, centers on ensuring that the management of land and forests reduces threats to biodiversity and carbon emissions, for instance through the enforcement of wildlife and environmental laws. To increase social engagement and benefit, CARPE is helping Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) advocate effectively for the environment and is investing in green industries that build prosperity while reducing dependence on extraction of natural resources. Cutting across these themes, CARPE's multi-sectoral efforts aim to transform PAs into anchors for sustainable development. CARPE IV prioritizes private sector and citizen engagement and collaboration with local communities, as well as building on its long-term partnerships with PA authorities, international organizations, and other key stakeholders. CARPE IV is adding flexibility by diversifying partners and

conservation goals. CARPE IV strengthens locally led development to foster sustainable results, for example through funding national and local NGOs and CSOs and supporting local communities to secure land and community forest rights to sustainably manage their own forest resources.

Diversity, Equality, and Social Inclusion

Many of the rural communities that CARPE works with suffer from conflict, isolation, and lack of basic services. CARPE seeks to understand and engage whole communities, often encompassing multiple ethnic groups, and identify, develop, and implement programming to meet the needs of Indigenous Peoples, women, youth, and other marginalized groups. This holistic approach involves working with other sectors, such as democracy, rights and governance, agriculture, economic growth, education, and health, to support targeted services including trauma healing from gender-based violence (GBV), advancing the rights of Indigenous Peoples through advocacy and legal assistance, improving food security and access to markets for women farmers, and scholarships for youth, especially targeting indigenous youth.

CARPE's approach to Diversity, Equality, and Social Inclusion (DEI) is grounded in long-term experience, analysis, and consultation. In 2013, CARPE undertook a gender analysis that identified opportunities for strengthening women's engagement in and benefits from CARPE projects. Subsequently, many CARPE sites undertook tailored gender analyses and programming. In addition, the 2017 CARPE midterm evaluation called for enhanced collaboration with Indigenous Peoples. In response, in 2018 the CARPE gender analysis was updated with a survey of partner progress in advancing DEI, incorporating a section on Indigenous Peoples. CARPE IV takes a systematic approach to ensuring gender equality considerations are factored into all activities, to provide opportunities for women, to avoid exacerbating gender-inequalities, and to reduce gender discrimination and GBV in biodiversity and forest management. CARPE IV will also ensure women and gender equality-focused CSOs are actively engaged in decision-making and implementation and their leadership enhanced.



Chief at land use plan meeting in Mbou Mon Tour Village, DRC. Credit: Jordan Kimball

approaches and deploying an array of funding mechanisms and partnerships, including contracts, cooperative agreements, co-designed multi-sectoral alliances, and small grants to leverage existing and new partners and align with USAID's move toward "localization." Several new partnerships incorporate the private sector's adaptability and ability to catalyze investment to mobilize market forces for

In developing CARPE IV, USAID carried out assessments of how to engage with Indigenous Peoples, whose lives are intricately connected to their ancestral forests. Indigenous Peoples are often marginalized in conservation and development efforts, and the CARPE assessment resulted in a practical guide for partners to ensure these local communities are engaged in effective and equitable ways. This guide covers how to undertake Free, Prior, and Informed Consent and set up a Grievance

and Redress Mechanism for work in PAs within the context of a rights-based approach, as called for in the USAID Policy on Promoting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The focus on Indigenous Peoples and gender has accelerated with new programming that will bring targeted services and technical assistance identified in culturally appropriate, gender-sensitive workshops. Furthermore, CARPE IV will actively engage Indigenous Peoples organizations and leaders to help ensure Indigenous Peoples' rights are respected.

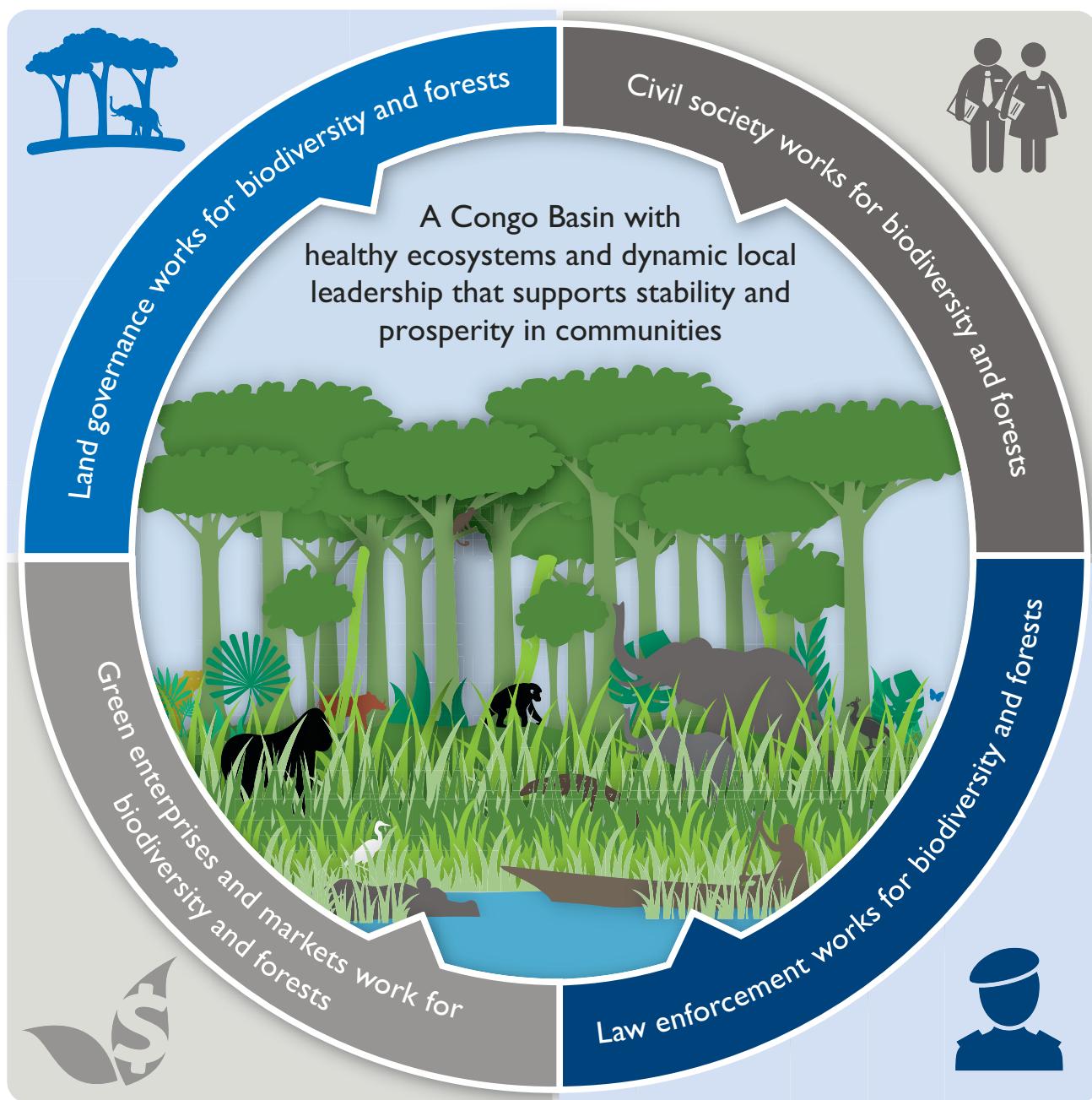


Figure 2. CARPE Vision themes

CARPE VISION

The activities pursued through CARPE IV support a common vision: *A Congo Basin with healthy ecosystems and dynamic local leadership that supports stability and prosperity in communities.*

The CARPE program posits that this vision can be realized when the four key themes of green enterprises and market systems, law enforcement, civil society strengthening, and land governance work together to support a vibrant and resilient environment. Figure 3 summarizes CARPE's theory of change (TOC) for how this vision will

be achieved, showing areas of interlinkage and support across its four themes. The TOC identifies seven strategic approaches within CARPE IV's four themes that together will achieve the vision (Table I). The following sections describe the themes, their strategic approaches, a theme-specific TOC, and CARPE's current work related to each theme. Examples in the text describe activities that use each strategic approach, and an overview of all current CARPE activities and the themes and strategic approaches to which they contribute, are provided in Annexes 1 and 2.

Table I: CARPE Vision themes and strategic approaches

THEMES	STRATEGIC APPROACHES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">I. Land governance works for biodiversity and forests<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Invest in PAs as hubs of biodiversity, peace, security, and green growth investment• Mobilize innovative, international sustainable financing for forest management and biodiversity conservation• Build institutional and community capacity to implement and monitor conservation-minded provincial and local land use management
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">2. Civil society works for biodiversity and forests<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengthen environmental monitoring and advocacy efforts
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">3. Law enforcement works for biodiversity and forests<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengthen law enforcement capacity for combating wildlife and forest crime• Enable and strengthen regional and interagency coordination and collaboration
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">4. Green enterprises and markets work for biodiversity and forests<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support conservation-friendly enterprises and market systems as viable alternatives to extraction

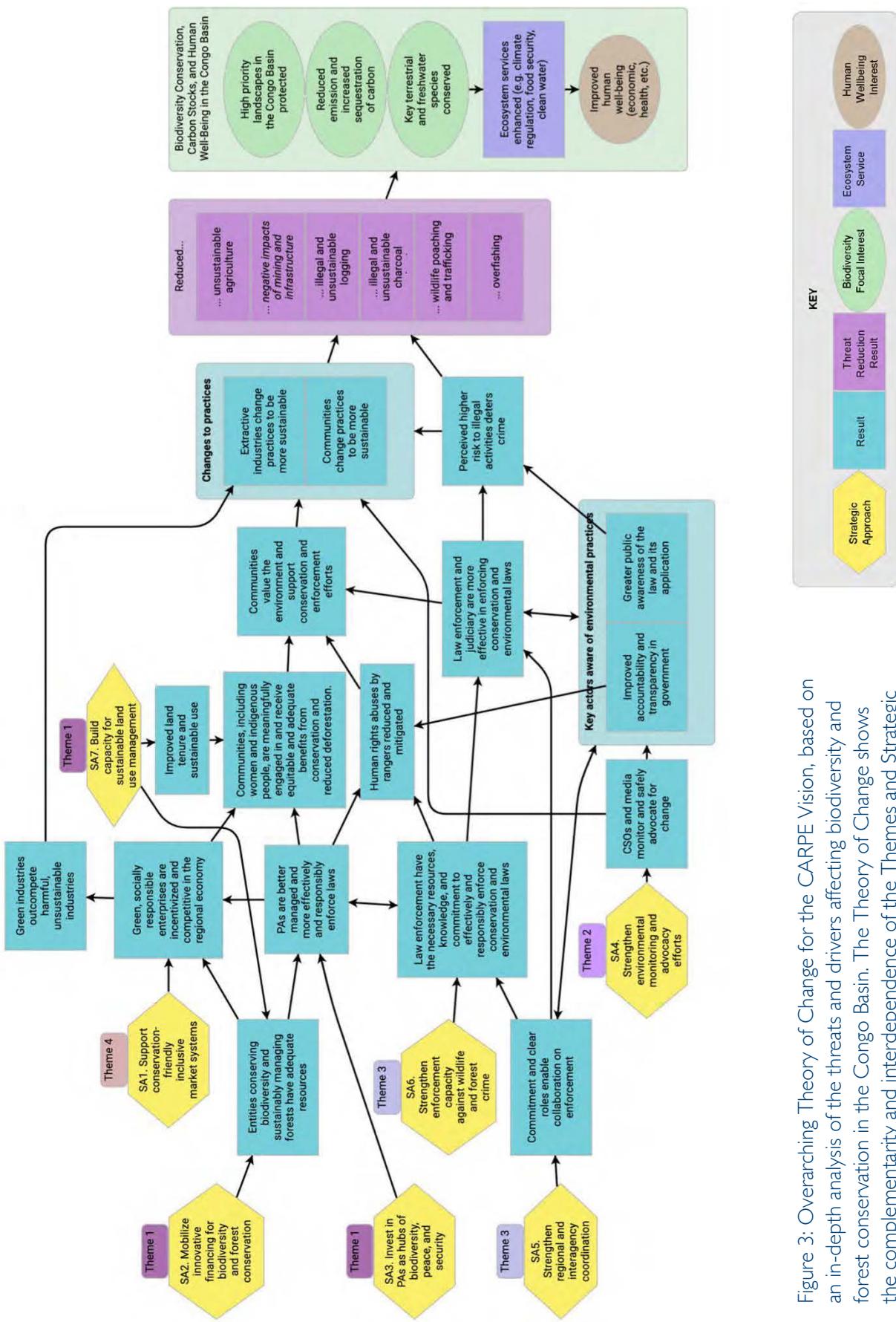


Figure 3: Overarching Theory of Change for the CARPE Vision, based on an in-depth analysis of the threats and drivers affecting biodiversity and forest conservation in the Congo Basin. The Theory of Change shows the complementarity and interdependence of the Themes and Strategic Approaches under CARPE IV.



*Forest near Ngon village, Ebolowa district,
Cameroon. Credit: Ollivier Girard/CIFOR*



LAND GOVERNANCE WORKS FOR BIODIVERSITY AND FORESTS

STRATEGIC APPROACHES FOR THEME I

Theme I centers on land governance and its role in protecting the environment and human well-being. The ways in which land is managed is fundamental both for the conservation of biodiversity and for the reduction of deforestation and forest degradation to mitigate climate change. A weak and under-resourced state, mistrust of government authorities, and poor coordination among government agencies drive weak land use planning, among other challenges. Local communities, which typically have customary but not formal rights to the land on which they depend, face numerous vulnerabilities, including losing access to their land in the interest of investors and large-scale land acquisitions. Unequal access to land and resources and insecure land tenure perpetuates gender inequality, the marginalization of Indigenous Peoples, and conflict over resources. This conflict further exacerbates regional insecurity faced by rural communities and accelerates environmental degradation.

Three approaches seek to address these complex challenges. First, **investing in PAs as hubs of peace, security, and sustainable development** improves their management and catalyzes a legitimate, inclusive, equitable, and sustainable economy. Successful PAs are managed in close collaboration with, and where appropriate by, local communities. Many of the most important PAs in the Congo Basin lie in remote regions, where armed groups illegally

exploit natural resources. In such places, PAs often provide the only effective form of government, and strong management of these PAs is critical to regional stability. This key strategic approach will harness the potential and stability of PAs to promote peace, security, and green growth investment, as well as biodiversity conservation. CARPE currently supports PA management in Garamba and Virunga National Parks as well as Okapi Wildlife Reserve in DRC, Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park in ROC, and Chinko Nature Reserve in the Central African Republic



A Mapati community in ROC displays the participatory map illustrating the lands and waters they use for survival in order to fight to continue using their customary lands. Credit: Molly Bergen/WCS/WWF/WRI

(CAR), and is developing activities focused on other key PAs in the region.

Second, **innovative financing for biodiversity and forest conservation** seeks to enable and operationalize international sources of revenue that equitably benefit communities and increase the economic value of healthy ecosystems. Such revenue sources will ensure local people benefit from their own globally important resources and ensure management costs will be covered in the long term. Significant, long-term international finance will be critical for the people and the countries of the Congo Basin to invest in both the conservation of its globally important biodiversity and the protection of forests to help mitigate climate change.

Third, **building institutional and community capacity** for equitable and inclusive land and natural resource governance aims to ensure equal access to land and resources, thereby empowering communities to protect their own forests and biodiversity and generate sustainable benefits for themselves. Land governance systems must ensure that the interests of women, Indigenous Peoples and other marginalized groups are protected. In addition to assisting specific communities with the governance of their forests, CARPE will scale up the impact of this strategic approach by improving the enabling environment at the regional, national, provincial, and

local levels, strengthening the legislative framework, building the capacity of responsible government institutions, and supporting a consultative platform to share lessons with other communities in the Congo Basin. A key CARPE activity focusing on this strategic approach is the Forest Livelihoods and Land Use Activity. This activity supports the development of community forest concessions in three areas of the DRC, strengthening governance structures, developing sustainable forest-based livelihood options, and establishing market linkages and private sector partnerships to build sustainable value chains based on forest products.

The success of strategic approaches under this theme are bolstered by efforts to improve law enforcement (Theme 3) and to build green enterprises and markets (Theme 4). As law enforcement officials are better resourced, trained, and motivated, they contribute to improved governance of PAs and more effective and responsible enforcement of laws. Conservation-friendly enterprises and market systems enable the equitable distribution of benefits from conservation to local communities when their forests sustainably generate increased revenue, further building support for conservation activities. These themes are integrated across CARPE to realize safe, resilient, and thriving local communities that sustainably benefit from healthy ecosystems.

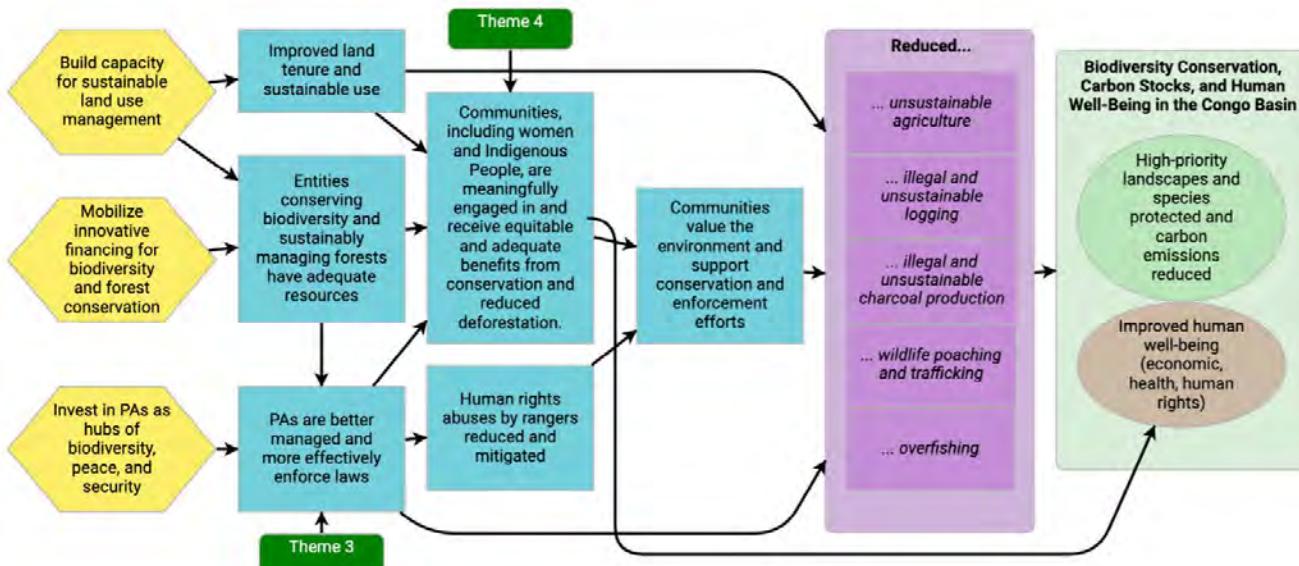


Figure 4. Theory of change for Theme 1: Land governance works for biodiversity and forests.



Scientist Francois Bapeamoni examines a African Pygmy Kingfisher (*Ispidina picta*) on Yoko forest reserve, Kisangani, Democratic Republic of Congo. Credit: Ollivier Girard/CIFOR



THEME
2

African elephant. Credit: Pixabay



CIVIL SOCIETY WORKS FOR BIODIVERSITY AND FORESTS

STRATEGIC APPROACH FOR THEME 2

Theme 2 focuses on supporting civil society's role in environmental monitoring and advocacy. Journalists and environmental defenders provide an invaluable service to society, alerting the public and authorities to illegal activities and human rights abuses. CSOs also campaign against unsustainable and destructive use of forests in illegally allocated concessions and work to ensure communities have rights to benefit from sustainable management of their own forests. They are among the strongest advocates for the rights of women, Indigenous Peoples and other marginalized groups. Unfortunately, these advocates receive little recognition for their work; indeed, they are often ignored by the agencies tasked with upholding the law and threatened or even persecuted or killed by unlawful actors.

CARPE's strategic approach for Theme 2 seeks to **strengthen and support environmental monitoring and advocacy efforts**. Improving engagement of CSOs, especially Indigenous Peoples' organizations, strengthening their capacity and helping to ensure their safety, will improve accountability and transparency of government agencies. Motivating and enabling the media to report on environmental infractions, human rights abuses, and illegal forest exploitation will also help in this regard. Government agencies will thus be motivated to strengthen the quality, implementation, and enforcement of environmental

laws, reducing threats to the environment. CARPE's Forest and Biodiversity Support Activity (FABS) addresses environmental policy and capacity, broadens participation, and provides overall support and cohesion to CARPE. Building the capacity of local organizations to shape issues at a national and regional scale in Central Africa is key to this work. FABS focuses on local organizations that are, or should be, at the forefront of policy analysis, reform, and implementation, and that are or could be providing complementary support



African grey parrots in OKAPI Wildlife Reserve in the DRC.
Credit: Reto Kuster/WCS

for forest and wildlife protection. FABS also will convene CARPE partners and other stakeholders, building political will for change.

CARPE's law enforcement and coordination strategies (Theme 3) also support efforts to strengthen CSOs and the media. Improved enforcement and prosecution of wildlife and forest

laws, while ensuring human rights are respected, are necessary accompaniments to enhanced environmental monitoring and advocacy efforts that aim to increase the perceived risk of engaging in illegal activities. This risk deters poaching, illegal deforestation, and other environmental crimes—reducing crime in local communities and strengthening local security.

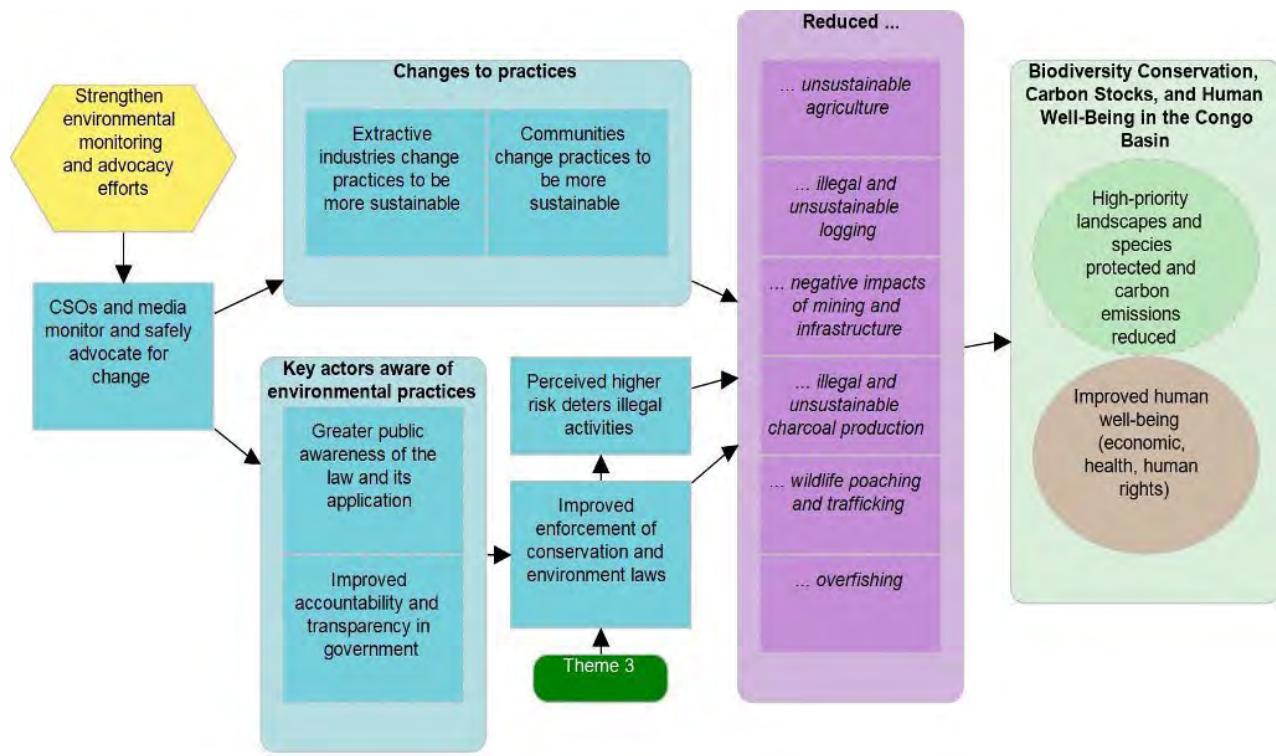


Figure 5. Theory of change for Theme 2: Civil society works for biodiversity and forests.



Hippo in River Dungu, Garamba, Democratic Republic of Congo. Credit: USAID



Tree in Yangambi, Democratic Republic
of Congo. Credit: Axel Fassio/CIFOR



LAW ENFORCEMENT WORKS FOR BIODIVERSITY AND FORESTS

STRATEGIC APPROACHES FOR THEME 3

Theme 3 focuses on building capacity, collaboration, and coordination to improve the rule of law in the Congo Basin as it relates to forests and wildlife. Historically, a weak state characterized by under-resourced agencies with opaque and overlapping jurisdictions has neglected rural areas, leading to poor application of the law. A lack of knowledge of the law and poor coordination and data sharing among law enforcement agencies also weakens the rule of law in the region. Additionally, rampant rent-seeking behavior, corruption, and human rights abuses by enforcement officers has contributed to a general mistrust of law enforcement agents by communities.

Two strategic approaches seek to address these challenges: strengthening law enforcement capacity for combating wildlife crime and improving government coordination in the area. The first aims to **strengthen law enforcement capacity for combating wildlife crime** by building skills, knowledge, and coordination across eco-guards/rangers, police, border patrol, and the judiciary, while also encouraging community trust and cooperation. Ensuring that law enforcement is carried out with respect for human rights is critical. Not only is it a moral imperative, it is also essential to ensure that local communities support conservation actors. CARPE's strategy will include development of mechanisms to help ensure that

law enforcement officials are held accountable for upholding human rights, including a zero-tolerance approach for GBV. With this support, law enforcement will in turn be more effective. Each of



Rangers perform drills in Salonga National Park in the DRC.
Credit: Molly Bergen/WCS/WWF/WRI

the CARPE activities focusing on PA management (under Theme 1) strengthens wildlife law enforcement, working with rangers, investigators, and prosecutors in their areas of operations. In addition, FABS is developing a program of capacity building and grants-under-contract for CSOs

working to support and advocate for effective and transparent wildlife law enforcement.

The second strategic approach aims to **improve government coordination** by establishing commitments to collaboration, clear roles and priorities, and data sharing among agencies within any one country, as well as regionally and internationally. Through these two strategic approaches, conservation law enforcement will be strengthened, thereby deterring future crime through an increased perception of risk. FABS also works to increase the capacity and coordination of relevant government agencies and collaborates with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to support the development of national wildlife crime strategy in DRC.

Strategic approaches in this theme integrate with those related to PA management across CARPE's other themes. The strong linkages

between PA management (Theme 1) and other law enforcement agencies are critical to overall success in ensuring that the wildlife and habitats in PAs are protected and that the risks to carrying out illegal activities and extraction within these areas are viewed as high. PAs also often collect important information that can be triangulated with other law enforcement agencies to increase the efficacy of work to counter criminal activity and networks. Additionally, civil society and the media (Theme 2) both support and are supported by stronger law enforcement. Stronger CSOs monitor and alert authorities to illegal activities and encourage them to show more commitment and transparency in ensuring conservation laws are effectively and responsibly enforced. Publicity of these efforts in the media ensures authorities have to be seen to act responsibly. Increased capacity in law enforcement authorities in turn supports CSOs' work by enforcing the laws they are fighting for and by protecting vulnerable civil society members.

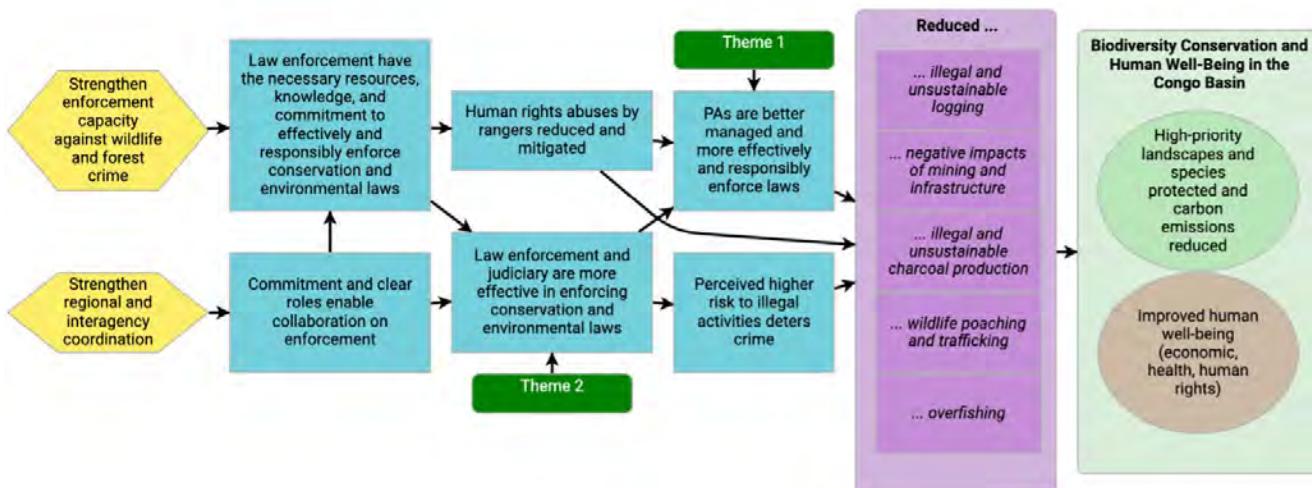


Figure 6. Theory of change for Theme 3: Law enforcement works for biodiversity and forests.



*On the river in the Republic of the Congo.
Credit: U.S. Forest Service photo by Olivia Freeman*



*Forest in Maringa Lopori Wamba landscape,
Democratic Republic of Congo. Credit: Martin Harvey*



GREEN ENTERPRISES AND MARKETS WORK FOR BIODIVERSITY AND FORESTS

STRATEGIC APPROACH FOR THEME 4

Theme 4 represents CARPE's efforts to enable inclusive and equitable economic opportunities and systems that create stable livelihoods for people and protect the environment. The Congo Basin region is one of the most difficult places in the world to do business due to lack of effective contract enforcement, policy ineffectiveness, corruption and rent-seeking, poor infrastructure, difficulty in raising capital, insecurity, and logistical challenges. Many market systems therefore remain fragmented and inefficient, with primarily small, informal enterprises that rely on cash transactions to generate short-term gains. These obstacles thus encourage extractive practices that produce little to no added value to communities, perpetuating a cycle of low incomes, disfavoring women and marginalized groups, and threatening biodiversity and forests.

USAID's strategic approach for Theme 4 seeks to **encourage private sector growth through green, socially responsible practices**. By creating an improved business environment that encourages conservation-friendly practices and viable livelihood options for local communities, enterprises can build capacity and operate more successfully, eventually reaching a scale where they significantly contribute to the sustainability of forest and wildlife management. Innovative partnerships will make the case for why business leaders should

seize on sustainable development and climate action as not only a necessity but also an opportunity to generate profit while benefiting stakeholders, with a particular focus on women, Indigenous Peoples, and other marginalized groups. The benefits and success of these green businesses encourage improved practices toward the environment, thereby reducing threats from unsustainable business practices.



An African Elephant in the Mehya drinking trough in Okapi Wildlife Reserve in Ituri, eastern DRC. Credit: Reto Kuster/WCS

Several CARPE activities support the development of enterprises with the potential to contribute positively to conservation and forest protection,

including liquid petroleum gas as an alternative to charcoal, sustainable shade-grown cocoa, and chicken production as an alternative to unsustainably harvested wild meat. In addition, both FABS and Conservation through Economic Empowerment in the Republic of the Congo are working to promote sustainable conservation-friendly industries that improve the well-being of forests, wildlife, and rural dwellers at a scale sufficient to affect large areas and diverse populations.

Programming across CARPE integrates with and supports the creation of conservation-friendly

market systems. Improved law enforcement (Theme 3) helps ensure that environmental laws are followed and that irresponsible extractive industries cannot gain unfair advantage over green industries by evading laws. A vibrant and engaged civil society (Theme 2) supports greater knowledge and adherence to environmental laws, which helps create more conservation-friendly societal practices. Well-managed PAs (Theme 1) can directly create monetary and non-monetary benefits to local communities, as well as build wider local economies that are reliant on a healthy ecosystem.

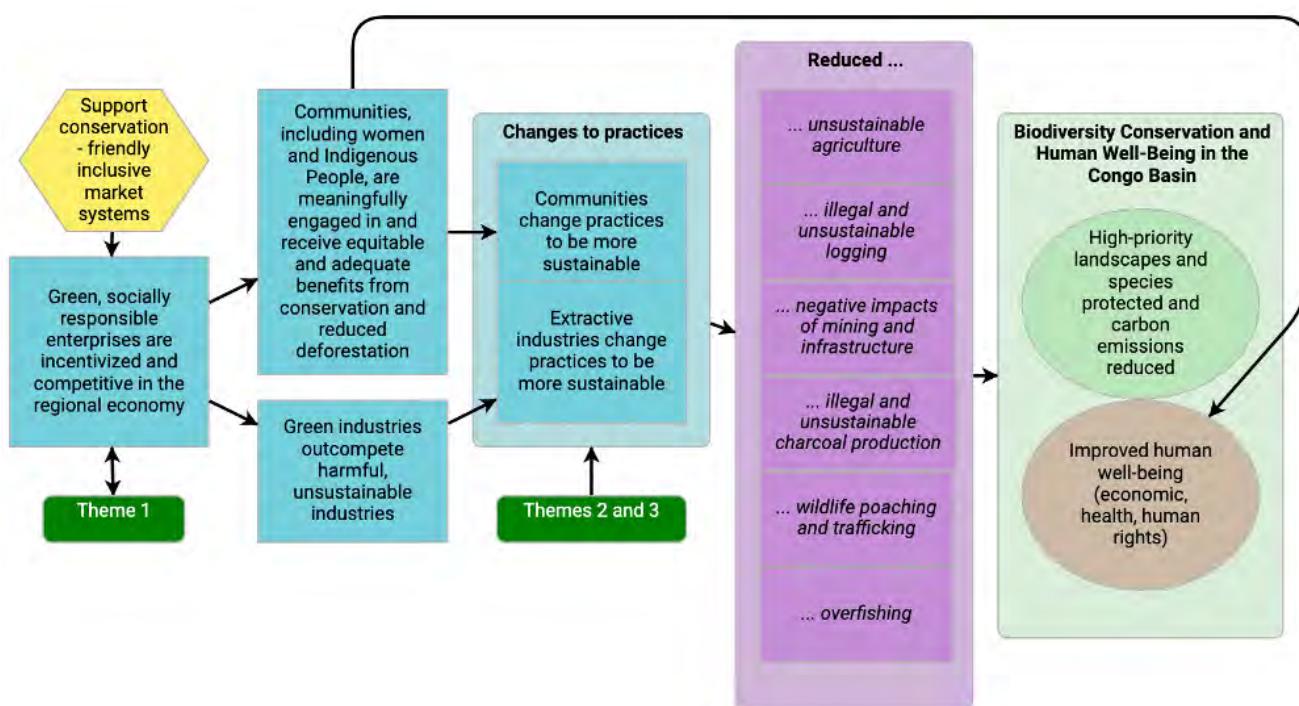


Figure 7. Theory of change for Theme 4: Green enterprises and markets work for biodiversity and forests.



Dzanga-Ndoki National Park, Central African Republic. Credit: Peter Prokosch



THE CARPE VISION

Butterflies on the Yoko Reserve in Democratic Republic of Congo. Credit: Ollivier Girard/CIFOR

MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING

In developing its approach to collaborating, learning, and adapting, CARPE will represent and promote the CARPE Vision, its themes, and contributing strategies, play a convening role in the region, identify synergies and encourage projects and activities to support regional priorities, and implement targeted, regional activities that respond to critical needs most effectively addressed at a multi-country or transboundary level. A priority of FABS is to facilitate these learning processes, not only among CARPE and its implementing partners, but across the broad range of institutions working on the conservation and sustainable management of the Congo Basin.

CARPE will develop a portfolio monitoring, evaluation, and learning plan in 2022 to ensure results are managed to achieve the best possible development outcomes. The plan will describe CARPE's monitoring, evaluation, and learning activities. All USAID biodiversity and climate change activities operating in the Congo Basin will align to the CARPE Vision and contribute to the four high-level themes presented in this document. By streamlining reporting on shared and aligned indicators, CARPE will consolidate results, report on regional progress, and promote greater synergies. As feasible, these shared indicators will be standard USAID indicators for Biodiversity and Natural Climate Solutions programming, along with selected standard indicators for other fields,

reflecting the integrated nature of much of CARPE, including gender, Indigenous Peoples, governance, economic growth, capacity building, and science and technology. The selection of indicators will be designed to test the assumptions and underlying

All USAID biodiversity and climate change activities operating in the Congo Basin will align to the CARPE Vision.

logic of CARPE's theories of change under each theme, and will incorporate custom indicators where necessary, in particular to measure achievement of CARPE's specific results that may not be quantified sufficiently by standard indicators.

The CARPE Vision is a framework for learning. A regional-scale learning agenda based on the CARPE Vision's theory of change will help improve region-wide programming by identifying and filling knowledge gaps, testing critical assumptions, and better understanding the environment in which USAID programs work.

KEY DOCUMENTS USED TO DEVELOP THE CARPE VISION

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USAID (2020) [Policy on Promoting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples \(PRO-IP\)](#).

USAID (2020) [Engaging Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities - a Guide for CARPE Staff and Partners](#).

ANNEX I: CARPE FACT SHEET

CENTRAL AFRICA REGIONAL PROGRAM FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

USAID's Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE) works to maintain the ecological integrity of the humid forest ecosystem of the Congo Basin. It strengthens forest management in priority carbon-rich, biologically sensitive, and diverse landscapes across the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the Republic of Congo (ROC), and the Central African Republic (CAR). It also works to reform environmental policy and monitor ecosystems in six Central African countries (DRC, ROC, CAR, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and Cameroon). Current USAID activities, which are implemented by non-governmental organizations, private sector partners, and U.S. Government agencies, focus on managing PAs, empowering communities, engaging the private sector, strengthening policy, and building capacity.

PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT: GARAMBA CHINKO PROTECTED AREAS ACTIVITY

African Parks Network

Oct 1, 2016–Sept 30, 2024; \$16,998,650

Garamba National Park in northeastern DRC and the Chinko Nature Reserve in southeastern CAR represent a unique ecosystem on the northern edge of the Congo Basin Forest. These PAs support rich biodiversity across a gradation of habitats, from forest to savanna, but both have suffered greatly from insecurity over the last 15 years. This project strengthens wildlife law enforcement in these PAs. This, in turn, improves security for local people. In addition, this activity builds the capacity to manage PAs and develops local and regional constituencies in support of conservation.

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES: COMMUNITY-BASED COUNTER WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING

African Parks Network

June 18, 2018–June 29, 2023; \$9,998,480

This activity focuses on conflict-vulnerable communities in northeastern DRC and southeastern CAR, where unsustainable livelihoods threaten biodiversity. The activity targets artisanal miners, pastoralists, agricultural communities, and those engaged in illegal fishing within PAs. It aims to reduce conflicts and develop sustainable livelihoods that support conservation and provide local communities with incentives to conserve biodiversity.

GESI NI NISHATI KWA KILA MTU (GAS IS AN AFFORDABLE ALTERNATIVE TO CHARCOAL) ACTIVITY

BBOXX Capital DRC

September 30, 2020–September 30, 2023; \$2,999,630

This activity promotes private sector-led solutions that decrease deforestation caused by charcoal production and greenhouse gas emissions by replacing charcoal with Liquified Petroleum Gas. This improves the health of thousands of people—primarily women—by reducing their inhalation of dangerous fumes caused by cooking with charcoal. In the south sector of Virunga National Park in eastern DRC, where charcoal production is responsible for 91 percent of deforestation, the project will provide 15,000 households and small businesses with clean and affordable cooking alternatives to avert the equivalent of 40,000 mt of carbon dioxide emissions.

ENGAGING THE PRIVATE SECTOR: TOURISM EXPANSION IN THE NOUABALÉ-NDOKI NATIONAL PARK

Wildlife Conservation Society

April 9, 2020–April 8, 2024; \$5,500,000

This activity strengthens the management of Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park and develops community constituencies to support biodiversity and forest conservation by leveraging private sector resources to promote green economic development. It will set the park on a path to sustainability while enhancing local communities' socio-economic incentives by promoting nature-based tourism, creating jobs, and diversifying livelihoods to conserve biodiversity and reduce deforestation.

TULINDE MAZINGIRA YA OKAPI, KWA MAENDELEO YETU (PROTECT THE OKAPI HABITAT) ACTIVITY

Wildlife Conservation Society

September 30, 2020–September 29, 2024; \$7,000,000

This activity strengthens security in the Okapi Wildlife Reserve, builds effective management of the reserve, strengthens the capacity of law enforcement, and establishes a secure enabling environment to protect its unique biodiversity, especially the remaining population of Okapi found only in the DRC. This activity takes a human-centered approach that empowers local communities by diversifying income sources, creating jobs, improving access to education and health services, and attracting private sector investment to sustainably manage the reserve and wider landscape. The activity has a particular focus on gender and inclusion issues, ensuring that women and the 7,500 indigenous Efe and Mbuti people, for whom the Okapi Wildlife Reserve is their ancestral home, are included in conservation efforts.

VIRUNGA DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

Virunga Foundation

July 2019–January 2027; \$16,580,894

This activity strengthens the core functions of Africa's oldest national park, expands on ongoing development projects outside the park, and contributes to peace building efforts in the region. This partnership with the Virunga Foundation aims to retain ecosystem diversity and conserve critically endangered species such as the mountain gorilla by protecting habitat and developing tailored threat-reduction strategies. A community-based approach is at the center of Virunga interventions engaging with, and providing benefits for, local communities. Virunga plays a central role in the post-conflict economic reconstruction of eastern Congo, improving livelihoods in neighboring communities through support that helps small and medium enterprises access specialized training, credit, and affordable clean energy (including at a new industrial zone).

SOSO PONA MOTO NYONSO (CHICKEN FOR EVERYONE) ACTIVITY

Wildlife Conservation Society

September 30, 2020–September 29, 2024; \$3,000,000

This activity develops local constituencies to protect wildlife in northern ROC by providing a sustainable alternative source of animal protein, creating jobs, increasing household revenues, and enhancing social and economic well-being. The activity leverages private sector resources to address the unsustainable harvesting of bushmeat—one of the major threats to biodiversity in the area. It advances the country's economic development and improves the enabling environment by increasing access to finance and markets to allow rural communities to engage in sustainable livelihoods.

POLICY AND CAPACITY BUILDING: FOREST RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

U.S. Forest Service

June 15, 2015–May 31, 2025; \$32,155,541

This activity improves sustainable forest management throughout Central Africa by supporting training, technical assistance, and policy reform, and developing and rolling out tools and best practices for effective policy-level decision-making.

USAID'S FOREST AND BIODIVERSITY SUPPORT ACTIVITY

Tetra Tech, Inc.

August 11, 2020–August 10, 2025; \$24,900,000

This activity helps environmental actors in the Congo Basin implement strategies and actions that address large-scale threats to biodiversity conservation and forest management. The activity pursues policy reforms and strengthens institutions related to conservation and forest management, while training government agencies and local organizations and providing them with tools to shape national and regional issues in Central Africa. The activity also increases private sector engagement to develop green enterprises, such as ecotourism businesses, which support biodiversity and conserve forests.

ZAMBA PONA LOBI / MSITU JUU YA KESHO (FORESTS FOR THE FUTURE) ACTIVITY

Rainforest Foundation UK

September 30, 2020–September 29, 2025; \$4,000,000

The activity works with more than 20 communities in Equateur, Maniema, and North Kivu provinces in the DRC to minimize deforestation, protect biodiversity, and provide local communities with improved benefits through Community Forest Concessions. It helps communities develop concession management plans with agreed limits to logging, sets up forest-friendly cultivation methods, such as agroforestry, and supports community monitoring of key flora and fauna. The activity will consolidate and scale up progress to strengthen the enabling institutional and policy environment, while building the capacity of stakeholders to support the Community Forest Concessions process.

USAID'S CONSERVATION THROUGH ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN THE REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Tetra Tech, Inc.

July 2021–June 2026; \$15,000,000

This activity stimulates private investment in environmentally sustainable growth, spurring the establishment of local enterprises. It ensures that local communities benefit from forest and biodiversity resources while reducing threats to biodiversity, carbon-rich forests, and peatlands in ROC. The activity also seeks to mitigate threats to biodiversity by supporting growth in conservation-friendly industries.

KAKAO ENDELUVU INALINDA OKAPI (POSITIONING SHADE-GROWN COCOA TO IMPROVE CONSERVATION AND RURAL LIVELIHOODS)

University of California, Los Angeles.

September 2021–August 2022; \$359,404 (For Phase I)

This activity seeks to conserve the biodiversity of the Okapi Wildlife Reserve in Ituri, in the northeast of the DRC by (a) limiting deforestation around the reserve while (b) promoting a sustainable shade-grown cocoa approach to that is more supportive of biodiversity than other anthropogenic land uses such as annual or perennial monoculture or livestock rearing. This activity is set up so that an initial year of research, consultation, and business modeling will yield opportunities for deeper engagement with the private sector and other relevant actors in the cocoa sector in this region.

UMOJA WA NGILIA NA KAHAWA (GORILLA COFFEE ALLIANCE ACTIVITY)

TechnoServe, Inc.

August 2021–August 2026; \$7,000,000

The Gorilla Coffee Alliance Activity is a Global Development Alliance partnership under USAID's Health, Ecosystems, and Agriculture for Resilient, Thriving Societies family of public-private partnerships that leverage cross-sectoral efforts for the well-being of people and the planet. This activity seeks to catalyze a robust organic coffee sector in South Kivu to create a virtuous cycle of conservation and community prosperity. It integrates programming for the sustainable development of coffee value chains, conservation around Kahuzi-Biega National Park and improved livelihoods through increased household income and improved health outcomes. It will partner with 8,500 farming households to improve their coffee production and sales and reduce poaching and deforestation around the park.

GARAMBA ALLIANCE ACTIVITY

Adam Smith International Ltd. (ASI)

January 2022–November 2027; \$7,702,376

The Garamba Alliance Activity is a Global Development Alliance partnership under USAID's Health, Ecosystems, and Agriculture for Resilient, Thriving Societies family. This activity will bring together both private and public sector organizations to forge a common vision and work together to ensure sustainable development and biodiversity conservation in the region. The Garamba Alliance Activity will a) increase access to economic opportunities, b) promote sustainable agriculture and livestock-based enterprises, c) strengthen the capacity and expand market opportunities, and d) strengthen the effectiveness of PA management.

STRENGTHENING CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT IN CENTRAL AFRICA

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

May 2021–May 2027; \$88,958,946

USFWS, through its Division of International Conservation, provides targeted technical and financial assistance aimed at developing capacity for improved conservation management and the protection of key wildlife populations and their habitats throughout the Congo Basin. USFWS supports programs that improve site-based wildlife conservation in priority population strongholds in Central Africa; increase individual and institutional capacity for more effective wildlife protection at the local, national, and regional level including the professionalization of PA staff; and directly address regional and emerging pressures on wildlife including the unsustainable bushmeat trade, disease, and transhumance. USFWS works in Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, the Gabonese Republic, and Republic of the Congo. Regional programming may further target the additional members of the Central Africa Forests Commission (Burundi, Chad, Rwanda, São Tomé and Príncipe).

ANNEX 2: CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN CURRENT CARPE ACTIVITIES AND CARPE VISION THEMES AND STRATEGIES

The table below shows each of the current CARPE activities and indicates the Themes and Strategic Approaches (SA) through which they are designed to have an impact on biodiversity conservation and reducing deforestation and forest degradation.

ACTIVITY NAME	SA 1 – PROTECTED AREAS	SA 2 – CONSERVATION FINANCE	THEME 1	THEME 2	THEME 3	THEME 4
			STRATEGY 3 – FOREST AND LAND USE	STRATEGY 4 – CSO AND MEDIA ADVOCACY	STRATEGY 5 – WILDLIFE LAW ENFORCEMENT	STRATEGY 6 – REGIONAL COOPERATION
Community-Based Countering Wildlife Trafficking (APN)	✗		✗		✗	✗
Garamba/Chinko Protected Areas support (APN)	✗				✗	
Nouabalé-Ndoki Tourism Expansion (WCS)	✗				✗	
LPG as Alternative to Charcoal (BBOXX)						✗
Forestry and Biodiversity Support Activity (Tetra Tech)	✗		✗	✗	✗	
Olkapi Wildlife Reserve (WCS)	✗				✗	

ANNEX 2 cont.

ACTIVITY NAME	THEME 1 SA 1 – PROTECTED AREAS	THEME 2 SA 2 – CONSERVATION FINANCE	THEME 3 STRATEGY 3 – FOREST AND LAND USE	THEME 4 STRATEGY 4 – CSO AND MEDIA ADVOCACY	THEME 5 – WILDLIFE LAW ENFORCEMENT	THEME 6 – REGIONAL COOPERATION	THEME 7 MARKET SYSTEMS
Community Forest Concessions (Rainforest Foundation UK)							
Poultry as an Alternative to Bushmeat (WCS)							
Forest Resource Management (U.S. Forest Service)	X			X			
Strengthening Conservation Management in Central Africa (USFWS)				X			
Conservation through Economic Empowerment in ROC (Tetra Tech)				X			
Shade-grown cocoa (UCLA)					X		
Virunga Development Activity (Virunga Foundation)					X		
Gorilla Coffee Alliance (Integrated with EG)	X				X		
Garamba Alliance (Integrated with EG, Edu, Health)	X				X		



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