

CARPE ASSOCIATE AWARD

Global Bureau Leader Cooperative Agreement No. LAG-A-00-99-00046000

Semi Annual Report:

Conservation Action and Strategy for Equatorial Guinea (CASEG)

Associate Award No. AOT-A-00-00-00226-00

I. Summary of Activity Status and Progress**a. Introduction**

This report covers the second six-month period of CASEG from March 31, 2001 to September 30, 2001 for activities completed under the CARPE Associate Award.

Conservation International (CI) aims to seek partnerships with entities interested in conservation in the Equatorial Guinea. CI also aims to engage private sector actors; especially energy companies exploiting Equatorial Guinea's oil deposits, in order to investigate the possibility of forming an alliance with them to support biodiversity and environmental conservation. If this alliance is deemed feasible, CI aims to aid in designing the alliance, and to define a strategy to achieve it. There is a built in assumption that learning captured at each stage will determine plans for later stages.

During the first year of the project, CI aims to conduct the initial groundwork in order to determine implementation actions for years two and beyond. For the period of the six-month covered by this semi-annual report, significant advance has been made by building on the contacts and partnerships developed during the first six months of the project. The initial contacts with lead organizations engaged in conservation activities in Equatorial Guinea have developed into a formal partnership, and two sub-grants are already in process with Gail Hearn at Arcadia University. CI has continued dialogue with oil companies Exxon-Mobil and Chevron and the former has now expressed interest in receiving proposals for biodiversity conservation projects. In order to design activities for the remaining period of the CARPE grant, CI has determined it valuable to hold a roundtable discussion group in Bioko, in order to assess the state of knowledge on biodiversity conservation in Bioko, document ongoing activities, and to determine priority actions for the future. During the last six months, the strategy, intended participants and expected outcomes of this workshop have been determined. The Roundtable was originally programmed for November 2001, however, the unfortunate events of September 11 in the US have delayed the preparatory work for this process. We estimate that the Round Table will now happen in March 2002.

b. Highlights

- A sub-grant proposal: "**Conservation of bushmeat species in the protected areas of Bioko Island, Equatorial Guinea**" was prepared in May 2001 by the Bioko Biodiversity Protection Program (BBPP) at Arcadia University. After discussion, it has been approved and an agreement is in process.
- CI's Center for Environmental Leadership in Business (CELB) has contacted two leading oil companies working in Equatorial Guinea: Exxon-Mobil and Chevron. Exxon-Mobil Foundation has expressed interest in receiving project proposals for biodiversity conservation in Bioko, with the caveat that any project must have approval from the Government. Initial contacts have been made with Chevron and they have also indicated an interest in receiving a proposal.
- An internal concept paper for a **Bioko Biodiversity Round Table**, including objectives, preliminary contents and list of participants has been prepared and circulated within CI and to selected partners

the concept has been approved by all and preparations are underway to conduct the event in Malabo in March 2002. This Round Table will be conducted in partnership with Arcadia University and potentially with the Universidad Nacional de Guinea Ecuatorial (UNGE) (to be confirmed) and the Instituto Nacional de Areas Protegidas (INAP) (to be confirmed).

II. Detailed description of progress:

a. Key short and long-term program objectives

The overall objectives of CASEG are to:

- Seek out partnerships with entities doing conservation work in Equatorial Guinea that will serve as a foundation for collaboration during the implementation of CARPE activities
- Engage private sector-actors to determine whether an alliance to support biodiversity and environmental conservation is feasible and, if it is so, determine what type of alliance is appropriate.
- Develop a strategy for the conservation of biodiversity in Equatorial Guinea
- Further, establish a baseline of information, making it possible to monitor the impact of future conservation action.

b. Activity Descriptions:

1. Dialogue and determine possibilities for collaboration with relevant entities

Progress to Date:

Following the findings of the reconnaissance trip conducted in February 2001 by Dr. Karen Ross, continued contacts have been made with many of the identified potential partners, specifically:

- **Exxon-Mobil:** CELB has continued to cultivate the relationship with Exxon-Mobil Foundation, through contact with Monica Samper, Program Officer at ExxonMobil Foundation. CI asked the Exxon-Mobil Foundation to host a visit by CI to Bioko with the goal of discussing potential joint projects for biodiversity conservation with them. In June, Exxon-Mobil indicated that they are not willing to involve their Equatorial Guinea Business Unit staff in the definition or formulation of biodiversity projects. However, they did say that they would be willing to receive a complete proposal, as long as it has the support and approval of the Equatorial Guinea Government. The Bioko Biodiversity Round Table will provide a portfolio of potential projects. CI will continue to cultivate the relationship with Exxon-Mobil and will submit to them a portfolio of projects following this Round Table meeting.
- **Chevron:** We have also initiated contact with Chevron and they have also indicated an interest in receiving a proposal.
- **Instituto Nacional de Areas Protegidas (INAP)/CUREF:** We have continued to have discussions with Bruno Maurach, EU Technical Advisor at INAP. In August, he expressed interest in a Bioko Biodiversity Round Table and indicated that is very likely that INAP could endorse the event. If this were the possible, CI would have the opportunity to develop a portfolio of projects with the participation and buy-in of the relevant government agency. However, in September Mr. Maurach expressed his concern about the technical limitations faced by INAP, which he fears will be amplified by his departure in November as CUREF (an EU project attached to the Ministry of Forestry,

Fisheries and Environment) ends. He suggested that other partners also be identified in order to support INAP's potential role.

- **Arcadia University, Bioko Biodiversity Protection Program (BBPP):** CI invited BBPP to prepare a sub-grant proposal to implement some of the strategic activities of CASEG and in May Dr. Gail Hearn submitted "*Conservation of bushmeat species in the protected areas of Bioko Island, Equatorial Guinea.*" a one-year project to conduct research and monitoring of endangered mammals in Bioko. This project builds upon and expands significantly BBPP's previous work in the island. After several discussions and internal consultations, the proposal has been approved with a budget of \$70,560.00 and CI is currently finalizing the legal and administrative work in order for the contract to be signed and for funds to be disbursed. BBPP has excellent local contacts and logistical experience in Bioko, and CI has therefore asked them to form a partnership with us, and potentially INAP/CUREF, to organize the Bioko Biodiversity Round Table. They have agreed enthusiastically, and have offered logistical and technical support for this event.
- **Department of Anthropology, Hunter College of CUNY, New York.** We have also continued the to consult with Dr. John Oates, on issues such as our plans for a Biodiversity Round Table. Dr. Oates suggested that a Round Table would be a good opportunity to discuss the biodiversity conservation priorities for Bioko, as well as establish partnerships between the organizations with interest in working in the island. He has indicated he will participate in the event and support its organization.

Problems, Delays, Shortfalls and Proposed Solutions:

The initial reaction of ExxonMobil towards our suggestion of cooperation in biodiversity projects was very positive. However, in June, when we were in process of preparing a field visit for late July, Mrs. Samper indicated to us that their local business unit was unwilling to help organize the visit or to work with us in developing a project proposal. This was surprising, but following our inquiries Mrs. Samper reassured us the ExxonMobil Foundation is still willing to receive a fully prepared proposal, but not to participate in its preparation, as this may raise expectations and be perceived as a firm commitment to fund it. However, the rejection to help us organize the visit and to issue an invitation letter to facilitate the acquisition of visas aborted our trip.

After careful evaluation of the situation, we have realized that it is necessary that the initial plan presented to CARPE at the start of CASEG be further discussed and expanded with the participation of other organizations involved in biodiversity conservation in order to have a more strategic set of activities in which we will invest and engage. As a result of this reflection, in July we developed the concept of a round table discussion aimed at building such strategy, generate a portfolio of projects and establish the partnerships necessary to implement them. We envision a three-day meeting in Malabo, of a small group of about 15-25 participants.

The main output for this event will be a conservation strategy document for conservation of biodiversity in Bioko, providing:

- An assessment of threats to biodiversity.
- A list of geographic and biological conservation priorities.
- A list of stakeholders in biodiversity conservation (both national and international, public and private).
- A list of major strategic lines recommended addressing the threats.
- A portfolio of recommended projects, including brief description of activities, budgets and timelines.
- An action plan to implement the projects, including designation of responsibilities.

From this document, CI would then compile a set of projects to submit to USAID for approval for the use of CARPE funding. CI also plans to lead an effort to leverage further funds to raise additional support for those projects that cannot be covered by CARPE money. If it is so decided, CARPE money can be used, as matching fund for all projects and additional restricted funding will have to be raised for each one of them.

We also concluded that we need to identify a local counterpart to provide support and help the local endorsement of the Round Table, and promising discussions on this matter were initiated in August with CUREF. After the concerns aired about the capacity of INAP in September by Mr. Maurach of CUREF, we asked Dr. Gail Hearn to help facilitate an approach with UNGE (the State University of Equatorial Guinea), to recruit an additional Government agency to endorse the event, Dr. Hearn enthusiastically endorsed the idea.

The Round Table was originally planned for November 2001, but was delayed by the events of September 11 in the US. CI had planned an Africa and Madagascar strategic meeting to be held in Cape Town, South Africa on the week of September 17 this would have presented an ideal opportunity to discuss the Bioko Biodiversity Round Table and finalize agendas and logistical details, as well as organize a visit to Bioko to arrange all logistics. This CI event was also cancelled due to concerns about security concerns and the grounding of all US flights. This CI meeting has been re-scheduled this meeting to December, in Washington DC. We will discuss in our December meeting the logistics; hopefully by early next year the security concerns will be lessened and we can go on as planned. In addition Dr. Hearn has specified that the best timing for the event would be March 2002, as this would coincide with spring break and would thus allow for the participation of more academic participants. The Bioko Biodiversity Round Table is thus scheduled for March 2001.