

# **USAID/Central Africa Regional**

## **Annual Report**

**FY 2004**

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USAID Development Experience Clearinghouse  
8403 Colesville Road, Suite 210  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
Telephone: (301) 562-0641  
Fax: (301) 588-7787  
Email: [docorder@dec.cdie.org](mailto:docorder@dec.cdie.org)  
Internet: <http://www.dec.org>

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## Central Africa Regional

### Performance:

#### Program Performance Summary

**Background:** The Congo Basin contains the second largest area of contiguous moist tropical forest in the world. Central Africa's tropical forests (of all types) cover approximately 2 million square kilometers; the Congo Basin's moist deciduous forests cover approximately 1.14 million square kilometers, nearly 20% of the world's remaining area of this biome. Tropical rainforest covers parts of Cameroon, the Central African Republic, and DRC, and most of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, and Gabon. These forests form the catchment basin of the Congo River, a watershed of local, regional and global significance. The forests provide valuable ecological services by controlling and buffering climate at a regional scale, and by absorbing and storing excess carbon dioxide released from the burning of fossil fuels, thereby helping to slow the rate of global climate warming.

Of the more than 60 million people live in the region, about 22 million are located in urban areas. Given present rates of population growth, the region is expected to contain 150 million people by the year 2025. Population density is on the whole quite low, with a regional average of 14 persons per square kilometer. There is considerable variation within the region, however, ranging from 4.5 persons/km<sup>2</sup> in Gabon, to 25.4 persons/km<sup>2</sup> in Cameroon. While much of the landscape remains sparsely populated, rapid urbanization has created severe localized pressures on forests and other natural resources. Recent deforestation trends have been troubling, and population and economic pressures are building which could further accelerate forest loss in the region.

Most of the countries of Central Africa are relatively poorer now than they were when CARPE Phase I began in 1995. Rural poverty in forest communities, as elsewhere, has not been reduced. Oil and mineral revenues for some countries have been declining (Gabon, Congo and Cameroon, for example), while for others they have started to increase (Equatorial Guinea, most notably). Governments and private commercial interests have meanwhile been turning more energetically to the forest as a revenue source, in some cases to compensate for lower oil and mineral revenues, and in others as a response to global demand for tropical timber products.

Violent conflict has raged throughout many of the Congo Basin countries over the past several years. The sources of the conflict are complex and historic, but are often fueled by rivalry over natural resources including minerals and forest products. This conflict has had a devastating effect on both human and wildlife populations over large areas. Despite these extraordinarily difficult circumstances, national conservation staff supported in most cases by international NGOs have managed to protect many key parks and protected areas. In the past few years, several Congo Basin countries have enacted and published new and modern forestry codes as well. These laws provide a framework for conservation and management of the vast tropical forests of the region.

After seven years of operation, CARPE has shifted its strategic focus and changed the location of its management functions. In its first phase, CARPE's partners focused on increasing the knowledge of Central African forests and biodiversity, and building institutional and human resources capacity. In the next thirteen years, however, CARPE partners aim to apply and implement sustainable natural resources management practices in the field, improve environmental governance in the region, and strengthen natural resources monitoring capacity.

It is in the self-interest of the United States Government to support the rational and sustainable development of this region, and at the same time address global environmental concerns. The complex

political and economic situation in the region limits USAID's ability to address these important development and environmental challenges on a bilateral basis, because USAID works in only a few countries in the region. For this reason, a regional approach was taken in implementing CARPE beginning in 1995. This program was designed to provide: (1) a mechanism to support conservation and sustainable management of natural resources in the tropical forests of Central Africa; and (2) a flexible instrument to carry out an analytical agenda and foster regional coordination in dealing with environmental issues. During this initial phase, African capacity has been enhanced; African institutions supported and African civil society strengthened. This groundwork has created the conditions for more intensive USAID support.

CARPE management, in response to the 2002 USAID reorganization plan, was shifted during 2003 from Washington D.C. to Kinshasa Democratic Republic of Congo. A new Strategic Plan was approved in January 2003 and placed under the authority of the USAID/Kinshasa Operating Unit. CARPE now operates as a Central Africa regional Strategic Objective in the environment sector. The Strategic Objective of CARPE is to reduce the rate of forest degradation and loss of biodiversity through increased local, national, and regional natural resource management capacity. In support of the broad goals and interests of the U.S. Government, CARPE's Strategic Objective will contribute to economic development and the alleviation of poverty throughout Central Africa. This effort will benefit not only the people and countries of the region, but also U.S. citizens and the global community as well. It will do so by helping to conserve the forests and other biological resources that are essential for economic development in the region. It will also contribute to slowing global climate change and conserving the species and genetic resources of the Congo Basin.

Prominent within this new phase is the role CARPE will play in the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP) Presidential Initiative. The CBFP is an international partnership among governments, NGOs, and the private sector that was announced at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development. The U.S. goal for the partnership is to promote economic development, poverty alleviation, improved governance, and natural resources conservation through support for a network of national parks and protected areas, well-managed forestry concessions, and assistance to communities who depend upon the conservation of the outstanding forest and wildlife resources of eleven key landscapes in six Central African countries. CARPE is the primary means through which the U.S. supports the CBFP. An Interagency Board provides advice and recommendations to CARPE related to CBFP activities.

Donor Relations: The CBFP partners comprise 29 members including all six Central African countries, multilateral donors including the World Bank, a number of major bilateral donors including the European Union, France, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Japan and others plus a number of research organizations and international conservation non-governmental organizations. CARPE is the principal US program supporting the CBFP. While CARPE management plays a supporting role to the US Department of State who currently chairs the CBFP with France, CARPE fosters strong collaboration with the multitude of partners in the field.

Challenges: By design, CARPE works through a number of partners throughout the nine Central African countries without the benefit of bilateral USAID missions in most partner countries. With CARPE management located in Central Africa, coordination, oversight and collaboration is much improved. Most CARPE funding supports international NGOs operating in the region, and a principal challenge for CARPE is to improve the coherence and targeting of the disparate NGO programs consistent with the CARPE strategic plan and the objectives of the CBFP. U.S. embassies play an important role in their respective countries in the absence of USAID missions. CARPE management must support the regional embassies to play a constructive role not only in the CBFP, but also in interacting with CARPE partners active in their respective countries.

Key Achievements: Principal achievements in 2003 were the approval of the CARPE strategic plan, the establishment of the CARPE office in USAID/Kinshasa, a major CARPE partner planning workshop in Kinshasa, the award of the first round of funding to the CARPE partners, development of the first year implementation work plans, and related start-up activities such as CARPE partners strengthening their presence and links with local partners in the targeted Central African landscapes. All of these

achievements have set the stage for strong program implementation in FY 2004.

**Country Close and Graduation:**

Country CloseOut and Graduation: Not Applicable

## **Results Framework**

**605-001 Reduce the Rate of Forest Degradation and Loss of Biodiversity through Increased Local, National, and Regional Natural Resource Management Capacity**