

Central African Regional Program for the Environment



OVERVIEW

An Initiative of the
U.S. Agency for International Development

What is CARPE?

The Central African Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE) is a new USAID-supported initiative that aims, over five years, to identify and begin to establish the conditions and practices required to reduce deforestation and biodiversity loss in the Congo Basin. The expanded knowledge base, and enhanced individual and institutional capacity that result from the implementation of CARPE will serve as the essential foundation for a longer term (15-20 year) effort to sustainably manage forest resources, thus conserving the region's biodiversity and averting potentially negative changes in regional and global climate. CARPE's core philosophy is to facilitate the meaningful involvement of African partners and to ensure that African decision makers have access to and the capacity to use information critical to rational forest resource management.

USAID does not have missions within any Congo Basin country. Consequently, CARPE is being designed and implemented by a team composed of representatives of US based NGOs and government agencies (Biodiversity Support Program; National Aeronautics and Space Administration, University of Maryland, University of Virginia; Peace Corps; U.S. Department of Agriculture/Forest Service; Wildlife Conservation Society; World Learning (PVO/NGO-NRMS Project); World Resources Institute; World Wildlife Fund). CARPE will engage local NGOs, individuals and government agencies in activities to evaluate threats to forest integrity and identify and pilot opportunities for minimizing resource degradation while promoting human livelihood security.

This five year pilot program will:

- gather and disseminate baseline information on the status of the forest throughout Central Africa
- characterize and prioritize the threats to the forest in the region, and opportunities for sustainable forest management
- develop systems for monitoring the extent, state, and uses of the forest in the region
- strengthen the capacity of Central African decision makers to manage the forest and maintain the long-term ecological and economic productivity of the region.

Rationale for CARPE

Congo Basin contains the largest remaining expanse of tropical moist forest in Africa and the second largest in the world. This forest of some 170 million hectares (approximately ¼ the area of the contiguous United States) continues to sequester large quantities of carbon, and contains a carbon inventory about 1,000 times greater than current CO₂ emissions from the region. If the rate of deforestation in the Congo Basin begins to follow the trajectory of west Africa, then the Congo Basin has the potential to contribute significantly to global warming over the next 50 years.

Loss of biomass as a result of deforestation will: a) release carbon into the atmosphere thus contribute directly to global warming, and b) alter the carbon storage, capture and cycling characteristics of the forest, thus alter the forest's role as a sink for atmospheric carbon. Loss of leaf surface area as a result of deforestation will reduce the transpiration to runoff ratio thus a)

lowering the quantity of recycled rainfall that falls in the region, and b) increasing runoff-related soil erosion and nutrient export from the forest. Reduced rainfall and loss of soil nutrients will increase the likelihood that high biomass moist forest ecosystems are gradually replaced by lower biomass woody savanna and savanna systems. At the same time the environmental impacts of deforestation could significantly damage the agricultural and economic productivity of the region, and threaten the livelihoods of over 30 million people.

The Congo Basin is also critically important in terms of biodiversity, and is one of the major centers of endemism in the world. The region supports a wide range of flora and fauna, many of which have significant economic value. Furthermore, though the link between biodiversity and ecosystem function and productivity is complex and poorly understood, loss of biodiversity will undoubtedly alter the species composition and structure of the forest, may adversely impact ecosystem function and production, and will impoverish the natural world for future generations, and eliminate potentially important sources of raw materials. Lastly, loss of biodiversity may, in the long-term, alter the forest's capacity to serve as a reservoir of, and a sink for atmospheric carbon.

To ensure that the Congo Basin continues to act as a reservoir of and sink for atmospheric carbon it is vital that we identify and help establish the conditions and practices required to maintain forest cover and to maintain the biodiversity contained within these forests. Progress in achieving more sustainable use of forest lands will also contribute significantly to the prospects of sustainable economic development in the region.

A Brief History of CARPE

USAID's Environmental Strategy of June 1994 recognizes that environmental problems increasingly threaten the economic and political interests of the United States and the world at large, and specifically points out that the U.S. will not escape the effects of global climate change, biodiversity loss, and unsustainable resource depletion. The Agency's Environmental Strategy establishes two strategic goals:

- promoting sustainable economic growth locally, nationally and regionally by addressing environmental, economic and developmental practices that impede development and are unsustainable; and
- reducing long-term threats to the global environment, particularly loss of biodiversity and climate change.

CARPE is directly relevant to the attainment of both strategic goals, and follows the Agency's focus on regional approaches to resolving environmental problems that cross national borders. In addition, CARPE is a major element of USAID's Global Climate Change Strategy and has been identified as one of the U.S. Government's proposed Global Climate Change initiatives under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The CARPE project has evolved from and built on the Africa Bureau's Central African Global Climate Change Study that was carried out by BSP with substantial input from NASA, the

University of Maryland, World Resources Institute; continues and expands USAID's support of protected areas managed by national governments and WWF and WCS ; and continues the NGO capacity building efforts of the PVO-NGO/NRMS project.

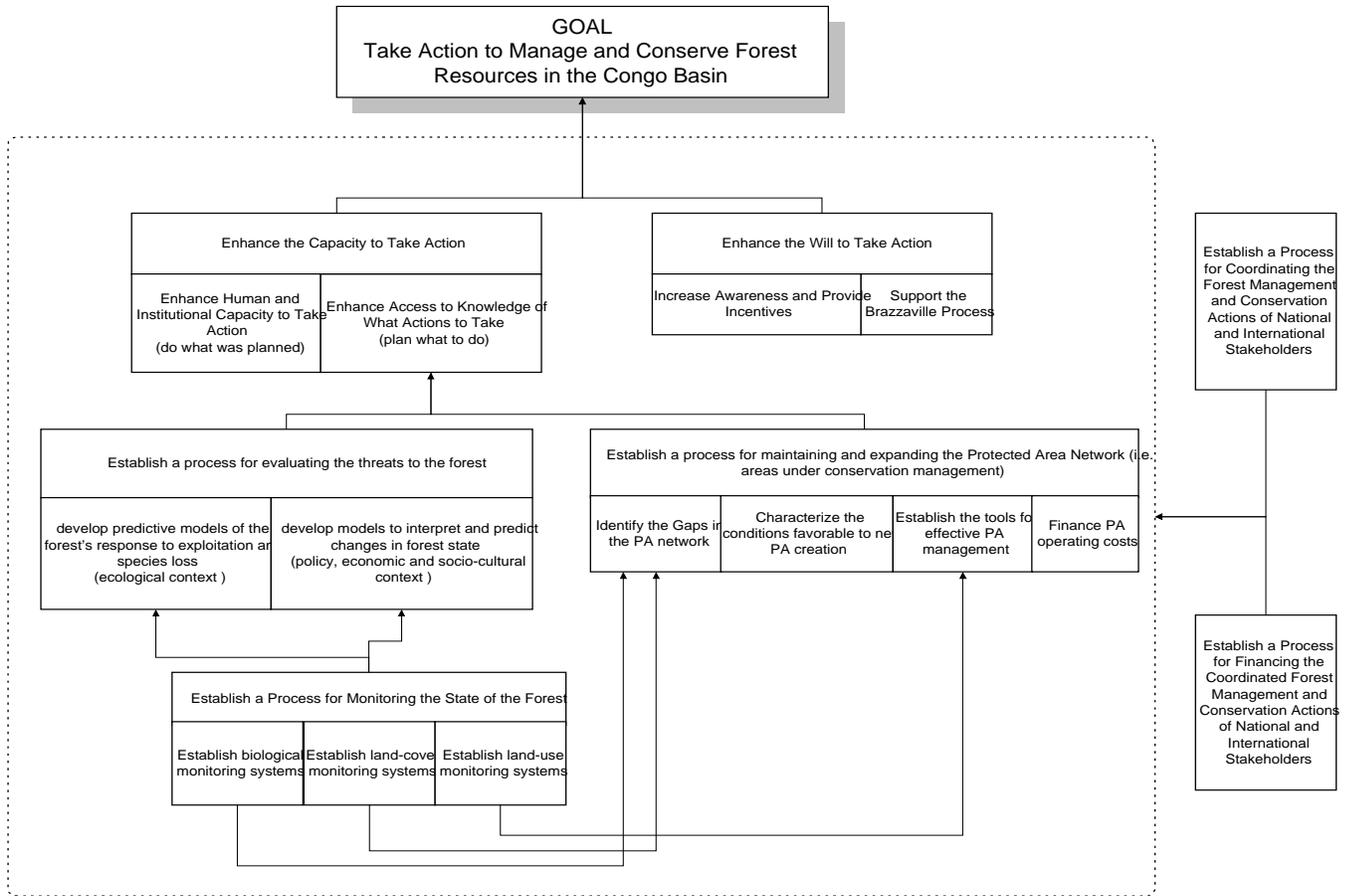
CARPE was initially funded as a set of non-competitive cooperative agreements to WWF, WCS, PCO-NGO/NRMS, and WRI; and resource support service agreements (RSSA) to NASA/UMd/UVa and Forest Service. On January 5th 1993, the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 required that all government agencies reengineer their initiatives around strategic objectives (SO) and targeted activities that will generate a set of intermediate results (IR) that are necessary and sufficient to attain the SO. As a result of this new law (PL103-62) CARPE has invested over 12 months in the reengineering process to develop a coherent strategic objective and results framework (see below). A brief introduction to reengineering is provided in an attachment.

Conceptual Framework for CARPE

At it's simplest the goal of CARPE is to "Take Action to Manage and Conserve Forest Resources in the Congo Basin". To achieve this, local, national and international decision makers must have a) the will to take action, and b) the capacity to take action. The latter requires that decision makers are able to *plan what to do*, and to *do what has been planned*.

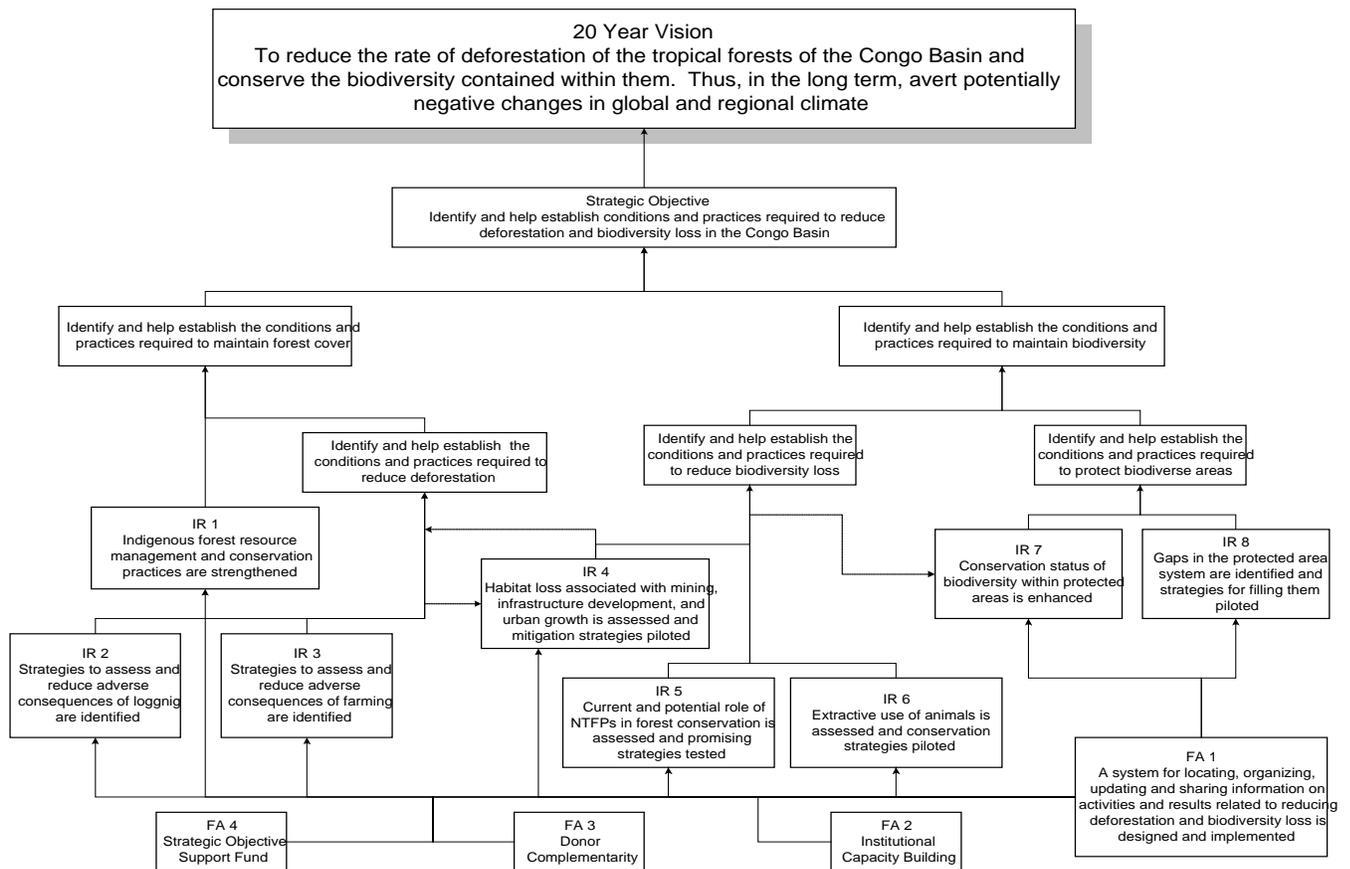
Enhancing decision makers willingness to take action requires that we identify and provide appropriate incentives to conserve forest resources. To improve our ability to plan what to do, we need to expand our knowledge of how the forest is changing, why it is changing and what actions we can take to conserve forest resources. This requires that we a) establish the capacity to monitor the changing extent, state, and uses of the forest over time, b) develop predictive models of forest conservation and degradation that help us to interpret the meaning (i.e. understand the causes) of changes in the state of the forest, and c) establish the capacity to manage protected areas effectively and identify gaps in the protected area network. To act on what has been planned, we need to enhance the financial, human and institutional capital to implement the actions needed to conserve forest resources.

Given the immense scale of the problem it is critical that CARPE coordinates its efforts with those of other donors, NGOs and national institutions, to ensure that it makes most effective use of its institutional capacity and limited funds.



Implementation Framework for CARPE

Though the conceptual framework provides a clear and logically coherent view of what CARPE hopes to achieve it is less useful for indicating what specific activities are being undertaken by CARPE partners. The implementation framework is built around eight sectoral topics (intermediate results in USAID re-engineering terminology) that were selected to a) represent the key areas where the decisions of individuals, businesses and states affect forest cover and biodiversity within the Congo Basin, b) reflect the institutional strengths of CARPE partners, and c) address the issues specified in the conceptual framework.



More detailed information on the objectives and activities of each IR is presented in the attached “Fact Sheets”. Though the eight IRs represent the topics that need to be examined and addressed to achieve the strategic objective four additional issues needed to be addressed to ensure that the IRs could be implemented effectively, with the least duplication of effort, and with transaction costs kept to a minimum.

Though not results in USAID re-engineering terms these activities function across the framework as a whole and provide essential services to assist in the implementation of each IR. The four

Framework Activities are: 1) information management and exchange; 2) institutional capacity building; 3) donor complementarity, and; 4) the strategic objective support fund. More detailed information on the objectives and activities of each FA is presented in the attached “Fact Sheets”.

Management of CARPE Implementation

This section of the framework is intended to summarize the roles and responsibilities of the various actors involved in the implementation of CARPE. As the framework was being developed, a number of management issues were identified by CARPE partners. While there has been progress in organizing and pursuing field-level activities under the auspices of CARPE since the program was approved, a number of the partners have raised questions about the respective roles of the persons and institutions responsible for the management of CARPE. The need to address these program management issues has grown in importance as the CARPE partners complete the preparation of a re-engineered results framework and concentrate their efforts on implementing the tasks outlined in the results framework. Management issues have been raised and discussed on a number of occasions over the past several months. Several proposals related to management roles and responsibilities have been presented to date, and form the basis for this section.

The following management structure is intended to facilitate collaboration and cooperation in achieving the results currently targeted by CARPE. It recognizes four types of “management” interventions in CARPE:

1. final management authority for decisions about the use of program funds, and related decision-making authority. This authority will remain with the USAID project officer and contract officer and the responsible representatives of each grantee with a cooperative agreement funded under CARPE.
2. program management bodies, organized to assume responsibility for the management of CARPE activities, to the greatest extent possible in keeping with the principles and guidelines of “re-engineering” and within the scope of the agreements and budgets approved by the authorities of AID and each cooperating institution. This would include the CARPESOT (Strategic Objective Team) and IR/FA core teams, and the proposed SOS Fund Task team.
3. operational support bodies, organized to manage tasks that need to be undertaken to insure the smooth implementation of the program. These bodies are primarily tasked with facilitating information flow, tracking and supporting decision-making processes by the responsible parties, facilitating the coordination of program implementation, and managing the day to day operations which are necessary to keep CARPE activities on target. This would include the USDA contract staff, BSP home office staff and the Gabon field office, and other technical and administrative staff of CARPE grantees (CA holders).
4. advisory groups and other supporting bodies, which are in a position to assist in the flow of information, in the oversight of program implementation and in the organization of CARPE

sponsored activities. This would include the expanded IR teams, in-country CARPE focal points, SOS Fund partners, US Embassy staff and the CARPE Advisory Group. These groups do not have direct management authority over the use of CARPE funds.

The **USAID/CARPE project officer** is a direct hire employee of USAID designated within the AFR/SD/PSGE office to fulfill USAID's management responsibilities on a part-time basis. This person is responsible for USAID administrative oversight and reporting, approval of workplans and budgets as well as the principal results and indicators developed in the framework, for liaison within the Agency on issues related to CARPE (particularly with regard to contract officers in the Global Bureau), for supervision of the USDA contract staff, and for resolution of issues which cannot be addressed by the CARPESOT.

The **grantees (CA holders)** are represented by the persons empowered to approve and sign the cooperative agreements for their respective organizations. They may delegate their decision-making authority to other management or technical staff within the organization. These persons are responsible for approving the budgets and workplans which are developed and proposed to USAID, and for meeting the obligations of the CA holders with respect to performance and achievement of results. They are represented on the CARPESOT, and generally have a designated lead role in the organization and management of the team activities for specific IR/FAs. They control the use of funds committed by USAID under a cooperative agreement (CA), and manage these funds according to the directions and decisions of the CARPESOT and IR/FA core teams.

The **CARPESOT** (CARPE Strategic Objective Team) is the focal point for decision-making related to the coordinated planning, management oversight and smooth implementation of CARPE. This team is empowered and responsible for developing a results framework for CARPE and for achieving the results identified in the framework. They should meet periodically in order to fulfill the following management functions:

- identification of key results to be achieved and associated indicators
- collaboration in program planning
- monitoring of program implementation
- quality control in program reporting
- oversight of tracking achievements vis à vis program results
- management of potential conflicts (avoidance and/or resolution)
- assessment of progress in program implementation; identification of difficulties encountered and potential solutions
- review, approval and revision (as necessary) of the CARPE framework

The **CARPE IR/FA teams** are primarily responsible for organizing, supporting, tracking and reporting on the implementation of tasks outlined in the framework in order to achieve the sub-results and results for a given topic or framework activity. To this end, they are empowered to elaborate and manage the more detailed planning and organization of team activities which are outlined in the framework.

The USAID project officer is directly assisted by the **USDA contract staff** recruited under CARPE. Their role is to serve as the primary interface between the grantees funded by CARPE, AID management and administration, and the international donor community. Two USDA contract positions are envisioned: the first would take the lead on administrative backstopping and program coordination; the second would take the lead on coordination among donors working on climate change, forestry, biodiversity and related issues in the Central Africa region. While recognizing that these two positions overlap to some degree, the principal tasks for each position could include:

AID/CARPE program coordinator:

- assist USAID project officer and contract officer in tasks related to AID administration of the cooperative agreements (reporting, billing and payments, amendments, etc);
- assist USAID project officer in preparation of periodic results reports (R4) and other documentation required by AID to track program implementation and impact;
- liaise with other USAID projects and USAID staff
- liaise with US Embassy staff and State Dept.
- maintain a close working relationship with BSP to provide effective operational support for and oversight of the work of the CARPESOT and IR/FA teams
- collaborate with BSP to convene meetings of the CARPESOT

AID/CARPE donor coordinator:

- facilitate information flow between the CARPE grantees and the international donor community and network of development assistance agencies with an interest in CARPE and related program issues.
- track and analyze the linkages between the CARPE results framework and the overall PSGE development agenda and results framework
- assist the USAID project officer in representing the US Government in communications and dialogue related to CARPE with other donors, governments and NGO/PVO community.
- periodically synthesize and relay pertinent information to the members of the CARPESOT and their respective institutions.
- assist the CARPESOT in capitalizing on opportunities for regional collaboration and common or complementary approaches to achieving the longer term goals of CARPE

The **staff of the Biodiversity Support Program (BSP)** have several important functions in coordinating and supporting the implementation of the CARPE program. The two primary roles of BSP are related to monitoring and support of program activities within the context of the framework, and management of the Strategic Objective Support (SOS) Fund.

With respect to the framework, BSP will have the responsibility for communicating with IR team leaders on a regular basis to insure that individual IR teams do not work in isolation, but instead are well informed about related activities that are being planned and organized by other IR teams. BSP will actively encourage and support the regular exchange of information among the partners, including the circulation of progress reports by each CA holder, trip reports, special study or research reports, and periodic updates on IR team activities. To the greatest extent feasible, BSP will work with the USDA contract staff to insure that this preliminary exchange of information

takes place in advance of SOT and IR team meetings, so as to facilitate discussion and inform decision-making during the course of CARPESOT and IR meetings.

BSP, in consultation with the AID program coordinator, will also take the lead in coordinating the scheduling and facilitating the organization of meetings of the CARPESOT and IR teams. BSP will play a supporting but important role in working with team leaders to help prepare the agenda for these meetings, assemble and distribute background documentation, prepare and circulate summaries of discussion points and decisions, and help to track follow-up actions.

BSP will also take the lead in critically assessing the opportunities for IR teams to collaborate on common tasks and to collectively address cross-cutting issues.

As another “service” function for the CARPE program, BSP will be responsible for updating the CARPE brochure and VU graphs as needed, and for coordinating the preparation of other materials to be used by the collaborating institutions and partners of CARPE, including information for the CARPE web site. BSP will also take the lead in working with CARPE grantees and partners to prepare and disseminate reports and other documents synthesizing the results achieved by the CARPE program.

In order to provide for field-level representation for the CARPE program, BSP, in collaboration with WWF, will staff and operate a **CARPE field office in Gabon**. The primary functions of this office will be to (1) serve as a more accessible source of information on the CARPE program for those in the region; (2) serve as a sounding board and conduit for the ideas from potential partners seeking to collaborate with CARPE, so as to bring them to the attention of BSP/Washington staff and relevant IR team leaders; (3) assist with field checking proposals from potential partners; (4) provide technical, logistical and other support to CARPE missions and field activities, to the extent possible; and (5) contribute to the achievement of specific tasks identified by the IR teams, to the extent feasible.

In the event that staff and other resources can be mobilized elsewhere in the region, the Gabon field office will be assisted in most of these tasks by a series of individual, country-level **Focal Points**. In order to support their role in the implementation of CARPE, the Gabon field office manager and other in-country focal points will be encouraged to attend CARPESOT meetings whenever possible, and be included in the distribution of pertinent information prepared for the CARPESOT.

In keeping with its original mandate, BSP will be responsible for the management of CARPE program funds allocated to the “BSP grants program” for the purposes of contributing to CARPE analytical processes, building capacity of institutions in the central Africa region, and identifying and testing field approaches aimed at achieving the program objectives. In order to contribute to the achievement of program results outlined in the new Framework, BSP will continue to act as the lead institution in the management of these funds as part of a “Strategic Objective Support Fund” (**SOS Fund**). This Fund will be used to enable IR teams to work with collaborating partner institutions by providing targeted grants that contribute directly to the achievement of IR activities and related CARPE sub-results and results. While BSP will retain its management

authority with respect to the award and disbursement of these grants, BSP will establish a **SOS Task team** to incorporate the views of IR team members in the review and selection process for grants from the SOS Fund. The members of the SOS Task team would be drawn from the CARPESOT, and BSP would provide leadership and management support for the work of this task team.

BSP will also be responsible for maintaining regular communication with the CARPE Advisory Board and serve as its secretariat. The **CARPE Advisory Board** will be convened periodically to assist with the oversight and review of CARPE activities, and serve as a source of advice and guidance to the core collaborators in the program. The Advisors should help to provide intellectual leadership in charting the direction of CARPE and help assess the quality of the results produced by CARPE. This group should also help to strengthen the regional character of the program, and help ensure that African perspectives are being adequately reflected in CARPE plans and activities. The Advisory Board is also expected to contribute to the program's outreach efforts and facilitate linkages with a wider audience of influential policy-makers, researchers and development leaders working on issues relevant to the Central African region.