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USAID FOREST AND BIODIVERSITY SUPPORT ACTIVITY

QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT: FY2022 QUARTER I

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COVER PHOTO: US Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Marion Ekpuk awards the prize to the winning team of the Zoonhackathon event in Kinshasa. Photo Courtesy of Kinshasa Digital.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

APS	Annual Program Statement
AWF	African Wildlife Foundation
AWP	Annual Work Plan
C&O	Communications and Outreach
CAR	Central African Republic
CARPE	Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment
CBNRM	Community-Based Natural Resource Management
CBSG	Capacity-Building and Small Grant Lead
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CLA	Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting
COP	Chief of Party
CoP	Conference of Parties
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CWT	Combating Wildlife Trafficking
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
DGF	<i>Direction de la Gestion Forestière</i>
DGFOR	<i>Direction Générale des Forêts</i>
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
FY	Fiscal Year
GUC	Grants under Contract
GVP	Gender and Vulnerable Peoples
HO	Home Office
Hub UJN	<i>Hub un jour nouveau</i>
ICCN	<i>Institut Congolais de la Conservation de la Nature</i>
IP	Implementing Partner
IR	Intermediate Result
LPG	Liquified Petroleum Gas
MEDD	Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development

MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
OCAT	Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool
PICAL	Participatory Institutional Capacity Assessment and Learning
REC	Review and Evaluation Committee
RFA	Request for Applications
ROC	Republic of Congo
STTA	Short-Term Technical Assistance
UMD	University of Maryland
UNODC	United Nations Office on Crime and Drugs
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USFS	United States Forest Service
USG	United States Government

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On August 11, 2020, USAID awarded Tetra Tech the Forest and Biodiversity Support Activity contract to support USAID's Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE) in its development objective to maintain the ecological integrity of the humid forest ecosystem of Central Africa. This Quarterly Report covers the activities undertaken from October 1 to December 31, 2021.

Highlights:

Theme 1: Improved forest, biodiversity, and land management

- Completed draft analysis of regional environmental platforms and networks in Central Africa and selected case studies for field visits in Cameroon and DRC.
- Building on ongoing discussions with USAID as well as private sector and the government of DRC on alternatives to charcoal, prepared a draft Request for Applications (RFA) on promoting improved efficiency or alternatives to charcoal.
- Reviewed and selected first round of grantees for RFA-001 on accelerating market systems approaches for community forests and launched pre-award due diligence.

Theme 2: Effective enforcement of forest and wildlife crime

- Reviewed over 100 concept notes received in response to the Annual Program Statement (APS) on Combating Wildlife Trafficking (CWT) and selected 23 concept notes to proceed to full application.
- Convened technical discussions and workshop with the Congolese Institute of Nature Conservation (ICCN) to define collaborations on the national wildlife crime strategy and support to strengthening systems for inventory, supervision and management of seizures of wildlife crime products.
- In collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), finalized the roadmap to support the development of a national strategy to combat wildlife and forest crime in DRC.
- In collaboration with the State Department, organized two Zoohackathon events in Kinshasa and Brazzaville to develop technologies to educate and raise public awareness on wildlife crime. Three hundred ninety-six (396) people responded to the calls in the two countries and a winning team was selected in each country.

Theme 3: Inclusive markets and sustainable finance for conservation and forest management

- Convened private sector engagement workshops in Katanga and North Kivu and identified priority partnerships for follow-up.
- Completed root cause analysis of over 90 financial instruments or models for financing sustainable forest or protected area management to understand key market dynamics and binding constraints, narrowed promising options to undertake rapid market assessment, and carried out stakeholder engagement to identify and refine a shortlist of sustainable finance pilots.

Crosscutting

- Advanced CARPE communications including review and development of recommendations for the CARPE website update, pending discussions with the University of Maryland (UMD) on next

steps, developing an updated version of the CARPE Communications Strategy (submitted in early Q2), and preparatory work for drafting the next CARPE newsletter and organizing the January quarterly meeting.

- Strengthened media engagement; for example, through participation in Digital Congo Radio's programming on emerging developments at the Conference of Parties (CoP) 26 including Government of DRC engagement on fighting tropical deforestation and climate change.
- Established WhatsApp learning group on combating wildlife trafficking (CWT). One hundred and forty people, including representatives from the Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation's (ICCN) Unit in charge of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and conservators are participating regularly sharing information, analysis, and insights on current challenges for CWT in the region.

I.0 INTRODUCTION

I.1 ACTIVITY PURPOSE AND APPROACH

The goal of USAID’s Forest and Biodiversity Support Activity is to assist the Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE) and other environmental stakeholders in Central Africa to implement strategies and actions that address the large-scale threats to biodiversity conservation and forest management. The Activity focuses on three interconnected Intermediate Results (IRs):

1. Leadership and participation of diverse local organizations and private sector strengthened;
2. Policy, regulatory, and enabling environment improved; and
3. Innovative and evidence-based approaches adopted and institutionalized within conservation and forest sectors.

Throughout implementation, the Activity will engage closely with a broad network of institutions including civil society, private sector, government, and other conservation and development practitioners across the Congo Basin to build sustainable local institutions with the capacity to generate new analysis and evidence to support policy reforms and implement innovative conservation approaches. Underpinning these objectives will be the Activity’s collaborating, learning, and adapting (CLA) approach that will improve knowledge sharing, communications, and learning across conservation networks in the Congo Basin.

I.2 DELIVERABLES AND SERVICES

In Q1 of 2022, the Forest and Biodiversity Support Activity implementation team submitted the following contractual deliverables (in bold) and technical products.

TABLE 1: LIST OF DELIVERABLES AND SERVICES

Submitted Deliverables	Submission Date
Revised Private Sector Engagement Strategy	October 8
FY 2021 Q4 Financial Report	October 14
Revised FY 2022 Annual Work Plan	October 25; December 1; December 16
Annual Inventory Report	October 29
Activity Grants Strategy	October 29
Annual Performance Report	November 9
Geographic prioritization report	November 9
Evidence-based analysis report	November 9
Policy gap analysis report	November 9
Stakeholder and institutional capacity assessment report	November 9
Roadmap for the development of a national wildlife crime strategy for DRC	November 9
Submission of Ethan Miller (Resonance) and Amanda Muncil (Tt Home Office Grants) STTA Reports	December 6
FY 2022 Q1 Accrual Report	December 9

2.0 ACTIVITY PROGRESS THIS QUARTER

The sections below summarize the progress accomplished under each Theme delineated by Activity and Sub-Activity as set out in the second Annual Work Plan (AWP). Annex 1 presents the quarterly financial report and Annex 2 presents the deliverables/milestones tracker for the first quarter.

THEME I: IMPROVED FOREST, BIODIVERSITY AND LAND MANAGEMENT

I.1 BUILD THE INSTITUTIONAL AND TECHNICAL CAPACITY OF LOCAL, NATIONAL, AND REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS TO ADDRESS THREATS TO FOREST AND BIODIVERSITY

I.1.1. Strengthen the technical and institutional capacity of provincial administrations.

To support capacity building needs expressed in exchanges with Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, the Activity will pilot technical and institutional capacity building of the provincial coordination offices of environment and sustainable development. Activity support will focus on strengthening the capacity of provincial staff to monitor community forest initiatives, as well as identify other areas for future support such as law enforcement and regulation of forest extraction (e.g., artisanal logging, charcoal production).

The Activity has selected Equateur as first province to launch this capacity-building process given the importance of the community forest initiatives under implementation in the province. The Policy Advisor has initiated communication with the new Provincial Coordinator of the Environment and Sustainable Development (CPEDD) in Equateur, as well as the community forestry focal point to define next steps for effective monitoring and accompaniment of the community forestry process. A mission to Equateur is planned for Q2; the Activity will continue to coordinate with the United States Forest Service (USFS) to link to their ongoing capacity-building work with the central administration and foster improved coordination between central and provincial units.

I.1.2. Support civil society engagement on transparency and accountability in the forest and conservation sectors.

During the reporting period, the Activity launched an analysis of regional environmental platforms and networks. The Activity engaged a consultant who developed an action plan, reviewed background literature, and categorized existing platforms and networks at the regional and national levels in Cameroon, Gabon, DRC, Republic of Congo (ROC), and the Central African Republic (CAR). In December 2021, the consultant submitted a preliminary report summarizing the design of the analysis (definition of networks, criteria to categorize networks and platforms) and preliminary results (including a list of networks/platforms identified at the regional and national levels); and proposed a select number of networks for case studies. Proposed case studies are the Eco-Activists for Governance and Law Enforcement (EAGLE) network and civil society networks in DRC such as the *Réseau pour la conservation et la réhabilitation des écosystèmes forestiers* (CREF), the *Coalition des femmes leaders pour l'environnement et le développement durable* (CFLEDD), and the *Dynamique des groupes de peuples autochtones* (DGPA). These case studies will be completed, and a final report submitted in Q2.

I.2 STRENGTHEN DESIGN OF POLICIES, STANDARDS, AND PLANS TO SUPPORT MORE EFFECTIVE AND EQUITABLE CONSERVATION AND FOREST MANAGEMENT

I.2.1. Collaborate with Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MEDD) to support policy development at the national and regional level.

Following the identification and analysis of the existing regulatory and policy gaps in the various environmental regulations in Year 1, the Activity initiated discussions with the Directorate General of

Forestry (DGFOR) to organize working sessions to review policy priorities and design a road map for developing regulations and measures to fill the policy gaps that correspond to the objectives of the Activity. However, during the last few weeks of December, contacts with DGFOR have not been successful. The team has decided to go through the Secretary General of the MEDD during the next quarter to plan and facilitate these working sessions.

1.2.2. Carry out analysis of land and resource tenure models.

During Q1, the Policy Advisor—supported by the home office (HO) Project Manager—finalized the method and scope of the tenure analysis. The comparative analysis that first identifies formal and informal tenure models related to securing rights over forests, land, or environmental services in DRC and other Congo Basin countries has been developed. The Policy Advisor and Project Manager will then assess the quality and scope of rights conferred, administrative and eligibility requirements, fiscal obligations, and oversight and management requirements. The comparative analysis incorporates an assessment of how existing models address specific challenges including women’s rights to land and forest resources, as well as how emerging new laws and policies, including the land tenure reform and land use planning reform process, may impact natural resource governance and tenure.

During Q2, the Activity will complete the desk review and select two case studies to generate evidence to inform strategies for strengthening policies that support secure tenure that promotes sustainable resource management as well as more secure economic well-being. As part of the process of identifying case studies, the Activity Policy Advisor will reach out to CARPE implementing partners (IPs) to discuss strengths and weaknesses of past and current approaches, including previous efforts to support community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) and community reserves, as well as engage with other practitioners. The Activity will also ensure that the analysis takes into account learning from engagement with private sector partners and scoping of opportunities for climate finance related to land-based investments to understand the extent to which the legal framework for current tenure models addresses critical issues of carbon rights, regulation, and benefit sharing.

1.2.3. Improve the fiscal framework to promote alternatives to charcoal.

Building on roundtable discussions held in Goma in Q4 of FY 2021, the Activity continued to engage with government and private sector stakeholders on fiscal incentives for charcoal alternatives. For example, the Activity engaged with liquid petroleum gas (LPG) companies regarding their negotiated incentives and compiled a list to understand the current situation and develop policy recommendations, including suggestions on potential content of a draft decree to be shared with the Congolese Agency for Ecological Transition (ACTED). While early engagement has emphasized engagement with LPG operators, during Q2 the Activity will expand this analysis and engagement to other charcoal alternatives to compile incentives for other charcoal alternatives to be integrated into the draft policy recommendations and shared with government partners.

In Q2, the Activity will hire a consultant to prepare a white paper discussing more comprehensive alternatives to charcoal including economic, fiscal, social, and climate implications of different options and feasibility in DRC and other countries. This analysis will include a review of information on existing incentive models in other sectors in the DRC and in other countries to promote these alternatives to charcoal, and a consultation with key Congolese government stakeholders such as the Congolese Environmental Agency (ACE) and the *Direction de Réglementation et des Contentieux Environnementaux* (DRCE) to gather their views and recommendations on the regulatory framework to be put in place to encourage investment and the promotion of alternatives.

I.3 STRENGTHEN DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF FOREST AND CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

I.3.1. Support the design and implementation of innovative management practices to improve forest management and conservation.

The Government of the DRC has committed to 1) reduce the use of charcoal by 50% by 2023; 2) promote new charcoal-making techniques and improved stoves; 3) ban tree cutting, encourage reforestation, and promote alternative energies (micro power plants, solar energy, wind power, economic embers through waste processing); and 4) develop clean energy sources in rural areas. Building on this commitment of Government of DRC for energy transition and the outcomes of the charcoal roundtable organized by the Activity in Goma in FY 2021, the Activity developed a Request for Application (RFA) on the promotion of alternatives to charcoal whose objective is to identify and support activities that contribute to the following objectives:

- Promotion of improved techniques that reduce the environmental impact of charcoal burning;
- Promote alternatives to charcoal use; and
- Strengthen the enabling environment that supports the adoption of alternatives, including improving knowledge about the use of charcoal alternatives and barriers to adoption.

As of the writing of this report, the Activity is integrating USAID's comments, and the RFA will be submitted for revision and launched during Q2.

I.3.2. Support market systems strengthening for community forests.

In September 2021, the Activity launched RFA-001 for grants to support organizations working on community forests to improve links to market systems and ensure economic viability of local community forest concessions. On October 13, 2021, the Activity held a question-and-answer session with 47 interested organizations to provide an overview of the grant objectives as well as explain eligibility requirements, evaluation criteria, and expectations for US government (USG) rules and regulations for grants.

The Activity received 105 grant applications, predominantly from local organizations. After completing the initial eligibility screening, the Activity convened a Review and Evaluation Committee (REC) of technical staff with expertise in governance, community forests, and market systems to review and select the grantees. Six applicants were selected to proceed to the pre-award due diligence and were informed in December 2021. The pre-award survey was completed for one grantee in December 2021 and at the time of writing this report, due-diligence is complete or underway for the remaining five grantees, to be followed by milestone and budget negotiations and preparation of grant packages. During Q2, due diligence and grant negotiations will be completed for all grantees and grants packages submitted to USAID for approval.

THEME 2: EFFECTIVE ENFORCEMENT OF FOREST AND WILDLIFE CRIME

2.1 STRENGTHEN INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY FOR FOREST AND WILDLIFE CRIME LAW ENFORCEMENT

2.1.1. Support institutional capacity development for law enforcement and judicial system strengthening.

After the launch of APS-001 on reducing wildlife crime in Central Africa, the Activity organized an information session in October 2021. The first APS application deadline ended on October 15; the Activity received over 100 concept notes which were screened for eligibility and reviewed by three technical experts to select concept notes to advance to a full application cycle. Twenty-three concepts

were selected to proceed to the full application phase and successful organizations informed of the full application requirements and deadline set for January 2022.

Based on applications reviewed to date, concepts include a range of activities that can support law enforcement and judicial system strengthening. Indicative examples include:

- Facilitating law enforcement, particularly through investigations, support for seizures and arrests, and judicial follow-up with respect to wildlife crimes;
- Strengthening the capacity of key actors including airport (N'djili) and port (Matadi and Boma) authorities to seize illegal wildlife products and prosecute offenders;
- Contributing to the improvement of the legal framework, particularly the environmental framework, by helping to finalize certain measures for the implementation of existing legislation and develop complementary texts in support of the environmental legislation, including a draft law on specialized investigation techniques;
- Strengthening the contribution of civil society organizations (CSOs), Indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) to improve transparency and accountability in forest and wildlife law enforcement; and
- Testing the establishment of an independent observatory for the hunting and sale of protected and unprotected wildlife species to reduce wildlife crime.

Full applications will be reviewed and grantees selected in Q2 of FY 2022.

2.2 STRENGTHEN THE POLICY, INSTITUTIONAL, AND ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

2.2.1. Support the development of the national wildlife and forest crime strategy.

Building on discussions with United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) on joint support to development of a national wildlife and forest crime strategy, the Activity completed the roadmap (Figure 1) and presented it to the Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation (ICCN) during an October 2021 workshop. The roadmap calls for the establishment of a working group composed of representatives of national entities (ICCN, MEDD, Customs, Justice, Defense, Tourism, Transport, Finance) involved in the fight against wildlife and forest crime and the recruitment of two consultants to support strategy development. The Activity worked with ICCN to plan a workshop to convene discussions with other agencies and discuss options to reactivate a previously created task force that contributed to drafting of conservation texts for the 2014 conservation law. The workshop planned for December 15 was postponed due to the significant increase in COVID-19 cases including several cases among Activity staff, and will be rescheduled for Q2. In the meantime, the Activity continues to coordinate with UNODC; the Activity team reviewed the terms of reference for proposed consultants and UNODC is completing the recruitment. The Activity will continue to take the lead on DRC government engagement and process facilitation, supported by UNODC and consultants to bring additional technical assistance.

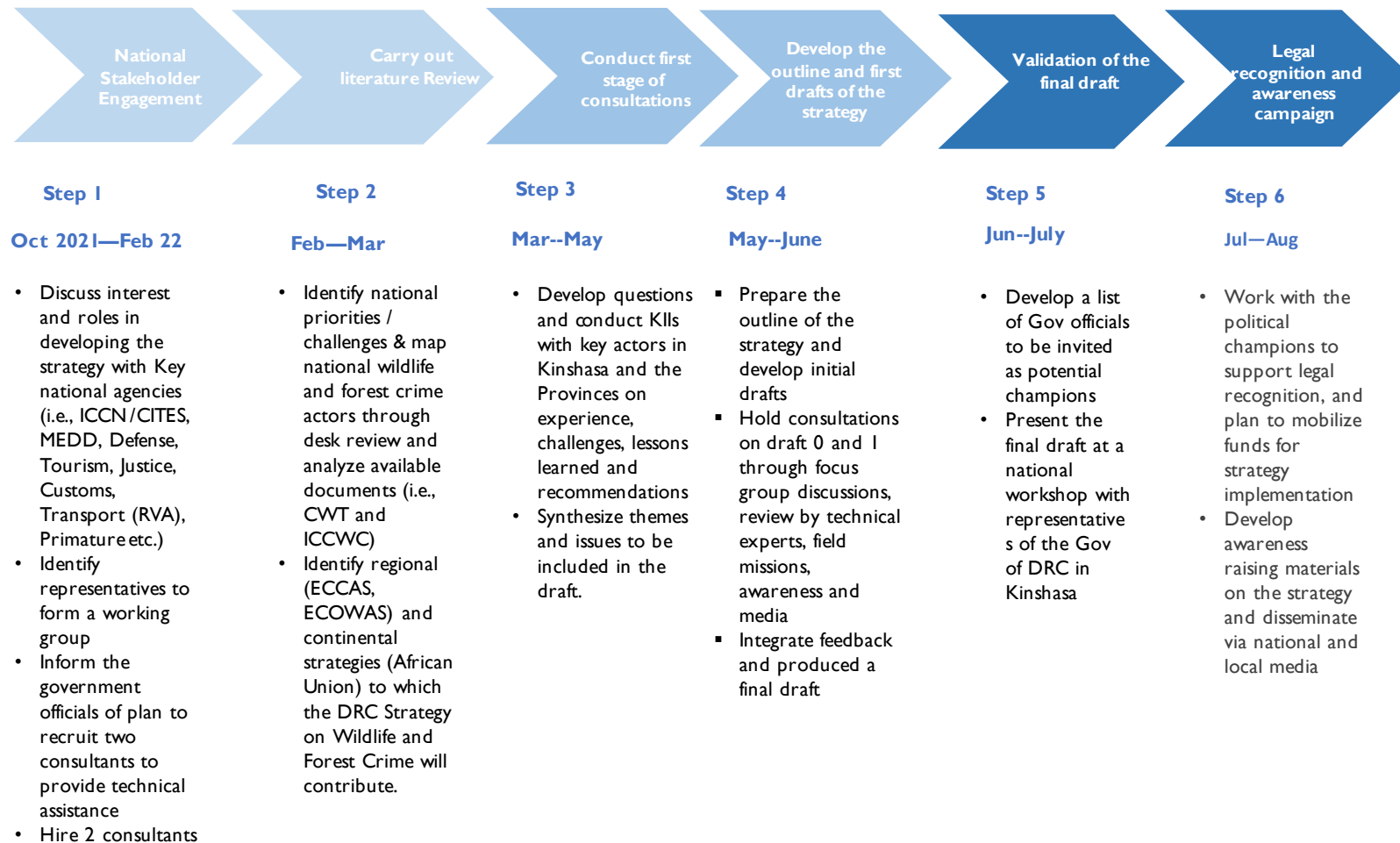


FIGURE I. TIMELINE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY TO COMBAT WILDLIFE AND FOREST CRIME

2.2.2. Support strengthening interagency cooperation at the regional level for combating wildlife trafficking (CWT).

Strengthening coordination for CWT, including among law enforcement agencies, is a theme for the APS launched in September 2022. As described in Section 2.1.1, full applications are currently under review and will identify promising approaches to strengthening regional CWT efforts.

In addition, the Activity's ongoing work with ICCN supports improved coordination at the national level in DRC, specifically on generating buy-in for the national wildlife and forest crime strategy process through engagement with ICCN and organization of discussions to engage other law enforcement agencies in the process.

2.2.3. Develop a conservation booklet to facilitate capacity building, outreach, and access to relevant texts by stakeholders.

Development of a conservation booklet to facilitate greater awareness of current conservation, wildlife, hunting, and related legislation emerged from the Y1 scoping missions as a recommendation from many environment officers operating in the provinces. The terms of reference for a consultant has been developed, and recruitment will begin in Q2 to compile and organize the documentation for the booklet. The booklet will be distributed in electronic formats as well as posted on the updated CARPE website.

2.3 CATALYZE IMPLEMENTATION OF TOOLS, BEST PRACTICES, AND TECHNOLOGIES

2.3.1. Support tools development or technologies to improve monitoring and enforcement of wildlife.

The Activity undertook two approaches to support the development of tools or technologies to improve monitoring and law enforcement to combat wildlife and forest crime.

As discussed in Section 2.1.1, the APS on wildlife crime included development of tools, technologies, or other innovation approaches as a core area for support. Based on review and selection of the 23 concept notes to proceed to full application, the Activity anticipates supporting several awards that would incorporate testing or scaling of technologies to support wildlife trafficking. Examples include:

- Improve collaboration and information exchange between the main stakeholders (Ministry of Justice, ICCN, Department of Nature Conservation, Congolese National Police (*Police Nationale Congolais*, PNC), the Congolese Office of Control (*Office Congolaise de Contrôle*, OCC) through the use of AFRICA-TWIX Application.
- Use mobile cinema to project green videos and short documentaries with educational content.
- Develop a community-based monitoring and alert system using a networking approach with digital technologies.

In addition, the Activity organized the Zoonhackathon in collaboration with the United States Department of State. The Zoonhackathon brought together coders, IT specialists, engineers, and other specialists to develop prototypes for technological applications that educate and engage the public in combating wildlife and forest crimes. The Activity is working with the winning team in DRC and partner Kinshasa Digital to develop a support strategy to further develop the ideas that emerged from the event. More details on the Zoonhackathon event and next steps with the winning and other participating teams are provided in Section 2.3.3.

2.3.2. Support the inventory, supervision and management of seizures of wildlife crime products.

DRC is currently on the CITES blacklist due to the non-publication of inventory reports of ivory stocks present and/or confiscated around the country; the difference in status reserved for elephants in the

DRC (CITES Appendix 1) and that of other South African Development Community (SADC) countries (Appendix 2). Acknowledging this situation, the Activity engaged with ICCN to define next steps on technical assistance and implement a comprehensive approach that would allow the DRC to fulfill its CITES obligations in order to be removed from the blacklist, and establish system for the inventory and management of the seized wildlife products. A working session with ICCN planned for December to advance on clarification of next steps and terms of reference for developing an inventory system was postponed due to the increase in COVID-19 cases and will be rescheduled for Q2. While ICCN has agreed to work together, availability of key technical and decision-makers within ICCN has created some implementation delays.

2.3.3. Organize the Zoohackathon for Kinshasa and Brazzaville.

In this past quarter, the Activity, in collaboration with the State Department and the US Embassy in Kinshasa, organized the Zoohackathon in Kinshasa and Brazzaville. The two Zoohackathon events were aimed at developing technological solutions to CWT challenges in DRC and the Republic of the Congo. These events brought together coders, developers, universities, information technology specialists and subject matter experts to develop the prototype of IT application to support efforts on CWT. The Activity contracted local incubators Kinshasa Digital in Kinshasa and Yekolab in Brazzaville to support event organization. Key activities to design and launch the Zoohackathon events include:

- *Defining the theme of the challenge:* The Activity developed three themes including digital tools for wildlife seizure and inventory management; crowdsourcing timber and wildlife trafficking; and raising public awareness, education, and demand for action on wildlife and forest crime.
- *Identification and contact with partners:* The Activity mobilized a range of partners to participate in the event including mentors and technical experts from the CARPE network: African Parks Foundation, African Wildlife Foundation, Wildlife Conservation Society; government agencies: ICCN, MEDD, *Ministère du Numérique*; and other corporate or financial sponsors: Fond Okapi, Vodacom and Airtel.
- *The selection of the challenge:* Kinshasa Digital organized a workshop, during which the Activity and its partners, notably ICCN, African Parks Foundation, African Wildlife Foundation (AWF), Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), and representatives of the national media choose the third challenge focused on public awareness and engagement in responding to wildlife and forest crime. This theme was shared with the State Department and the Brazzaville team, which adopted the same theme.
- *Development of communication tools:* The Activity developed an event banner, flyer, and press release; the Activity's incubator partners created web pages to launch the Zoohackathon call and challenge as well as receive applications.
- *Applicant selection:* Applicants in Kinshasa were selected and regrouped into six teams; Applicants in Brazzaville were regrouped into ten teams.
- *Coaching:* Specialists representing the Activity, African Park, WCS, the Ministry of Digital and Kinshasa Digital provided coaching during the event.
- *Judges:* Representatives of the Activity, UNODC, USAID and Fond Okapi were chosen as judges.

In November 2021, the Activity organized the events simultaneously in the two countries. The first part of the hackathon included sessions grouping applicants into teams according to the different solutions proposed, orientation on the theme, the technical approach and working method, and the development of their applications. In Kinshasa, 330 people responded to the call to participate. Finalists were selected and grouped in six teams of six people who competed over two days to design and present the best solution to the challenge of raising public awareness and understanding of wildlife trafficking. Teams presented their applications to a panel of judges who selected Team DUNIA's YEBA PE BATELA (Learn and Protect) solution as the winner for the Kinshasa Zoohackathon. Their multi-faceted design

integrated a web-based monitoring application managed by the ICCN as well as mobile, desktop, and offline capabilities that allow users to alert authorities of illegal activities.



**FIGURE 2: PRESENTATION OF THE APP BY ONE OF THE TEAMS IN KINSHASA.
CREDIT: KINSHASA DIGITAL**

In Brazzaville, 66 people responded to the call and 10 teams were selected to compete. The winning team developed an application called "ZooApp" that educates users on environmental and social safeguards in the implementation of conservation activities in general and in respect to wildlife law.

**FIGURE 3: MEMBER OF THE WINNING TEAM IN BRAZZAVILLE.
PHOTO CREDIT: YEKOLAB**

Following the competition in Kinshasa, the Activity organized a working session with the winning team from DRC and Kinshasa Digital on December 10 to discuss the application and explore opportunities for further developing the application in partnership with telecommunications companies, ICCN, and CARPE IPs. After presenting their application, the Dunia team was requested to develop an action plan outlining priorities for support. During Q2 the Activity will convene similar discussions with several other applications presented during the event and continue discussions with Kinshasa Digital on potential to provide a package of incubation support to one or more applications.

Finally, the winning team in Kinshasa, Dunia, participated in the global Zoohackathon, which entered the winners from all country events into a global challenge; the YEBA PE BATELA application tied for second place globally.

THEME 3: INCLUSIVE MARKETS AND SUSTAINABLE FINANCE FOR CONSERVATION AND FOREST MANAGEMENT

3.1 SUPPORT ANALYSIS, TESTING, AND SCALING OF INNOVATIVE MARKET SYSTEMS APPROACHES AND PARTNERSHIPS

3.1.1. Refine market systems prioritization and develop conservation-oriented partnerships.

The Activity organized two provincial workshops to generate interest in conservation-based partnerships, identify opportunities for collaboration, and refine partnership priorities established in the scoping missions and Private Sector Engagement Strategy designed in YI. The two workshops conducted during the reporting period were held in Lubumbashi (November 15, 2021) and Goma (December 15, 2021) with a third planned for Bukavu which was delayed to January due to COVID-19 concerns. During the workshops and follow-up conversations, the Activity refined its list of priority partners and market systems to engage within the two geographies. These partners were identified through an evaluation of interest, alignment, market-oriented and conservation impact, and sustainability.

In total, for the two workshops conducted, there were 45 participants including 33 men and 12 women from various CSOs and private companies, along with representatives of state services, and farmers' cooperatives. At the end of the provincial workshops, the Activity identified and selected several high-priority partnerships for further development. In the next quarter, the Partnership Engagement Specialist will continue to facilitate refinement of the partnership opportunities and move the actors toward formal agreements. The priority partnerships, based on location, include:

Katanga Province

- Establish a sustainable fishery on Lake Tshangalele, which could provide an alternative source of income for communities and reduce overexploitation of wildlife resources. The targeted partners are Mbeko Shamba, ICCN, Forgotten Parks Foundation, and the University of Lubumbashi (UNILU).
- Strengthen CBNRM and restoration of miombo woodlands by facilitating funding of such activities through corporate social responsibility programs of mining companies (Trafigura, Ivanhoe mines, MMG Kisevere).

North Kivu

- Develop sustainable agricultural value chains for coffee, specialty cocoa, and food crops for the communities bordering the Virunga Park as alternative livelihoods to deforestation. Actors in this potential partnership include Rikolto, Virunga Coffee, Gorilla Coffee Alliance, Virunga Chocolate, Chocolaterie de Lowa, ICCN, Virunga Development, the *Projet d'Appui au Secteur Agricole du Nord Kivu, financé par le Fond de Développement International (PASA NK/FIDA)*, the

Coopérative Centrale du Nord Kivu (COOCENKI), the Syndicat pour la Défense des Intérêts paysans (SYDIP) and the Ligue des Organisations de Femmes Paysannes du Congo (LOFEPACO).

One ongoing challenge of the private sector engagement workstream is the enabling environment in Central Africa: many private sector companies already present in the region do not see the value in engaging in conservation-oriented activities. Relationship building requirements time and repeated engagement to build trust over time and identify entry points linked to private sector priorities. During the next quarter, the Activity will host a provincial workshop in Bukavu (January) and Central Kongo (February) with private sector actors, CSOs, and other key stakeholders interested in conservation. The Activity will also continue to engage prospective partners to advance formalization of partnerships. Finally, the Activity drafted an APS on inclusive market systems that will be finalized in Q2 and shared widely with private sector contacts to encourage innovative approaches to strengthening market systems that shift threats to forests and biodiversity indirectly as well as conservation-oriented market systems.

3.2 ENHANCE DIALOGUE, CAPACITY, AND BUSINESS ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

3.2.1 Develop a package of information and build private sector capacity to access climate or carbon finance.

Informed by the private sector workshops, stakeholder engagement through the sustainable finance workstream (Activity 3.3), as well as informal consultations, several themes emerged to guide finalization of the scope of work to issue a Request for Quotations (RFQ) to support private sector engagement and analysis for accessing carbon or other climate finance. Key considerations for the analysis include:

- *Eligibility criteria:* Private sector operators interested in accessing carbon finance indicated the need for more information on carbon credit eligibility and on what terms to guide their decision making.
- *Ecological considerations:* Several operators noted questions regarding optimal species for carbon sequestration. Beyond this, there is a critical need to ensure that environmental safeguards are integrated into private sector efforts to access carbon finance to minimize ecological risk.
- *Finance and return on investment.*
- *Land tenure and carbon rights:* While few operators raised this issue, the question of land ownership and type of rights conferred is critical to the question of how benefits from sale of carbon credits will be taxed or otherwise regulated by the government, which may impact overall return on investment for operators seeking to benefit from conservation set asides, restoration, or other activities that maintain or enhance carbon stocks.

A scope of work outlining key tasks for a package of private sector support on climate finance will be finalized in Q2 and a firm hired to support this work. Several companies have expressed interest in further engagement and receiving support on feasibility studies for accessing carbon credits for tree planting, conservation, and other activities. Key challenges for this work include managing expectations of private sector operators and ensuring that requests for support are aligned with the contract scope of work, budget feasibility, and USG rules and regulations.

3.2.2. Strengthen local institutions providing training and business development services.

In this reporting period, during the provincial workshops on partnership development with private sector actors in Katanga (Center for Innovation in Lubumbashi) and North Kivu (Kivu Entrepreneurs, *Hub Un Jour Nouveau*--Hub UJN—and Kivu Green), the Activity confirmed the interest of these incubators/accelerators in collaborating with the Activity to strengthen their capacity to support local start-ups that evolve in sectors such as solar energy; recycling of waste to make bricks, tiles, and paving stones; and environmental education. In the next quarter, the Activity will select some incubators among

those mentioned above to facilitate and support the development of partnerships between them and local start-ups to promote some sustainable solutions.

In addition, following the Zoonhackathon organized by the Activity last November, the Activity plans to work with Kinshasa Digital to develop an incubation program for promising applications developed during the Zoonhackathon that could further contribute to support to law enforcement as well as raising public awareness on CWT.

3.2.3. Strengthen understanding of market systems for conservation audiences.

During the first quarter of Year 2, the Activity disseminated a survey to all CARPE partners to gauge their understanding of and interest in market systems for conservation. The Activity disseminated this survey to all of the CARPE IPs and received two responses; the low response rate from CARPE partners on the market systems survey presents a challenge for building linkages on market systems and conservation across the network, and may suggest either the lack of prioritization or clear offer such engagement presents for conservation organizations or the challenge of competing priorities. The Activity will relaunch the survey in Q2 and carry out focused, individual outreach with IPs including new awards more focused on markets such as the Gorilla Coffee Alliance and the Garamba Alliance, as well as UCLA's work on shade-grown cocoa. Building on this engagement, the Activity will continue to engage with partners to identify training needs, share thinking and learning on market systems, and foster networking between IP staff.

3.2.4. Share knowledge and promote dialogue on market systems for conservation in relevant business forums.

Planned engagement in the Makutano forum during Q1 was cancelled due to the lack of sessions related to environment, climate change, or sustainability. The Activity will continue to explore opportunities to co-organize forums with CARPE partners and other programs interested in market systems and conservation to foster experience sharing, as well as target external private-sector events such as Mining Week and the Market Systems Symposium.

3.3 PILOT INNOVATIVE MECHANISMS FOR SUSTAINABLE FINANCING

3.3.1. Conduct root causes analysis to understand key market dynamics and binding constraints.

During the reporting period, the Activity compiled and analyzed current and past financing mechanisms for sustainable forest management and protected areas that have taken place in the last 10 years in DRC and other Central African countries. Led by subcontractor Resonance's Innovative Finance team and STTA support, the root cause analysis was conducted to understand key market dynamics and binding constraints to unlocking more finance opportunities in line with Activity objectives and shortlist potential financial instruments. In total, 92 examples of financial transactions or vehicles were reviewed and analyzed. While the DRC produced the largest number of financial examples (29), the team incorporated additional geographic areas, prioritizing examples from sub-Saharan Africa along with a few high-profile mechanisms from Southeast Asia and Latin America.

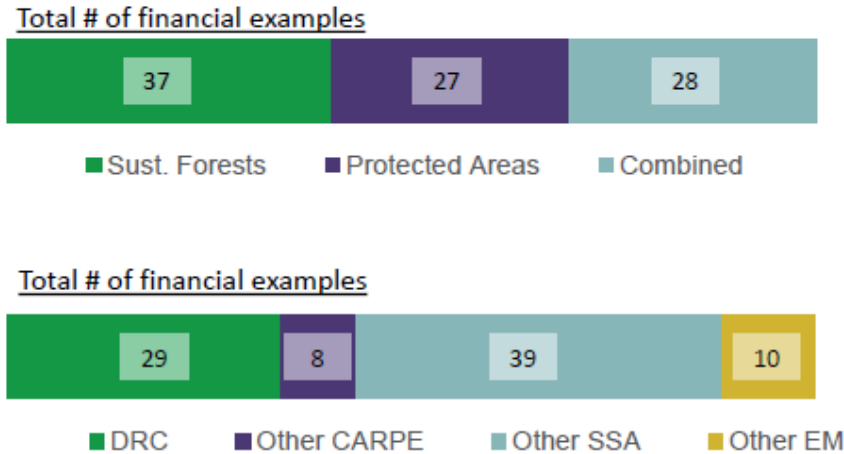


FIGURE 4: TYPES AND GEOGRAPHIES OF FINANCIAL EXAMPLES ANALYZED UNDER 3.3.1

Using the United Nations Development Program BIOFIN Financing Solutions typology, the 92 examples were classified by type of financial mechanism (e.g., payments for ecosystem services, carbon markets, green microfinance, conservation trust funds, debt-for-nature swaps, impact bonds, offsets, impact investment). The analysis identified 54 financial mechanisms across the 92 examples and identify a subset of 31 mechanisms with examples relevant to the Activity’s objectives. The analysis then excluded an additional 17 mechanisms due to lack of a relevant existing example in Central Africa or lack of suitability for the legal and operational context of the DRC. The remaining 14 examples, which included biodiversity offsets, private protected areas, trust funds, biodiversity offsets, carbon markets, corporate supply chain management, and both public and private grants) were screened based on the criteria below to determine the top mechanisms best suited for the DRC and the Activity.

- Financial: Potential funding size, predictability, cost/time to fundraise, and long-term sustainability;
- Operations: Ease to execute as determined by availability of local technical solutions and expertise, and implementation partners;
- Legal: Receptive legal framework that allows for the implementation of the financing opportunities;
- Local support: Support from key local stakeholders, including affected local communities; and
- Impact: Alignment with the Activity Theory of Change and potential total impact.

From this process the team identified 10 mechanisms that met the minimal level of feasibility criteria, and five opportunities emerged within three mechanisms. These five opportunities were prioritized for the feasibility and market assessment. These included:

- Corporate finance/supply chains: There is an opportunity to investigate two project finance or supply chain finance mechanisms. It is expected that at least one supply chain will include a conservation or protected area. Options include mining, timber, rubber, and palm oil.
- Community-based opportunities: The team is interested in two financial mechanisms including coffee production and community forests.
- Carbon market opportunity: The analysis recommended exploring at least one opportunity that could be developed related to carbon credits in the DRC.

There are key DRC-specific constraints that limit the range of potential financial mechanisms for the Activity. These include primarily policy and enforcement of legal contracts and land tenure, and

uncertainty of the legal environment. It is anticipated that weak transport systems and energy infrastructure will present a risk for any supply chain finance mechanism. Finally, lack of government support for forest protection and sustainability could present challenges to community-based and carbon market opportunities.

3.3.2. Undertake a rapid market assessment against feasibility criteria.

During the reporting period, the Activity initiated a rapid market assessment to understand specific markets (including regions, countries, protected areas, and value chains) against the feasibility criteria and shortlisted mechanisms highlighted in the screening criteria used in 3.3.1. As a first step, the team identified and connected with private sector corporations and partners that may have a need for corporate financial mechanisms and identified national and international financiers prior to traveling to the DRC for the rapid assessment. The Sustainable Finance Team from subcontractor Resonance traveled in December 2021 to meet with relevant partners, corporations, and stakeholders, initiate conversations around potential partnerships, identify priority sectors and approaches for corporate support, and collect information related to grant funding needs and opportunities.

Under this assessment it was expected that the team would present at the Makutano Forum to collect feedback and assess support for financing opportunities, identify additional financing partners, and raise awareness for the Activity. However, as noted above, the Makutano Forum did not include a session on green business nor investment, and as a result it was determined, in consultation with the Activity leadership and USAID representatives, that it was not the best use of the Sustainable Finance Team's time during their trip to participate in the forum. In the next quarter, the Activity will finalize the feasibility analysis and share the report with USAID, which will include a mapping of potential partners and a shortlist of one to three high potential financing opportunities for the design of a "financing pilot," including any identified local supporting partners.

3.3.3. Assess and prioritize potential innovative financing solutions for the design of sustainable finance pilots.

As noted in the AWP, the above feasibility assessment will be completed in the next quarter. This assessment will include recommendations and guidelines for one to three financial blueprints for the shortlisted opportunities identified under 3.3.2. The Activity is on track to complete the detailed design and strategy to pilot one to three innovative financing blueprints in Q3.

3.3.4. Map potential financing partners.

This sub-component will be implemented in parallel with the design of the financing blueprints discussed in the previous section and is expected to be completed in Q3 of FY 2022. The Activity has held some preliminary discussions with financing partners such as Verdant Capital and New Island Capital to understand their interest and priorities to ensure that pilot selection is informed by the opportunity to link to other funding sources.

CROSSCUTTING ACTIVITIES

4.1 DEVELOP INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO INSTITUTIONALIZING TRAINING, EDUCATION, AND CAPACITY BUILDING

4.1.1. Engage and support academic and educational institutions.

During the scoping missions, discussions with universities and research centers focused on providing funding support to strengthen existing university curricula to fill programmatic gaps related to environmental themes and promote applied research. The Activity team drafted an RFA on educational partnerships during the reporting period. The Activity team is currently revising the RFA to integrate more innovative opportunities to engage groups such as Schoolap and Eteyelo, or private sector

operators who have expressed interest through consultations regarding sustainable finance in supporting educational structures.

4.2 IMPLEMENT THE ACTIVITY GRANTS PROGRAM

During Q4 of FY 2021, the Activity team launched its first solicitations under its Grants Under Contract (GUC) portfolio including an APS on CWT and an RFA on accelerating a market systems approach for community forests. During Q1 of FY 2022, the Activity implemented information sessions, conducted reviews of the first rounds of concepts and applications, and launched due diligence for applicants selected for RFA-001. The table below in 4.2.1 summarizes progress as well as next steps.

4.2.1. Manage grants pipeline including solicitation launch and review.

Grant Types	Completed activities during Q1	Results	Next steps
Annual Program Statement on combatting wildlife and forest crime—APS 001 Cycle 1:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The virtual information session for potential Round 1 bidders held on October 7, 2021. Concept notes received and screened for eligibility Technical review of the 66 eligible concept notes Organizations selected by the REC notified and called to present the Full Applications for Cycle 1. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 62 organizations participated in the virtual information session. 112 concept notes received (2 for the CAR, 1 for Gabon, 4 for Cameroon, 3 for Congo and 102 for the DRC). 66 concept notes selected by the Review and Evaluation Committee and 46 notes not reviewed based on eligibility screening. Three reviewers designated and 66 notes reviewed. The committee assessed the strengths and weaknesses of each note and produced a list of recommendations for the notes retained for full application. The REC selected 23 concept notes to submit Full Applications (deadline January 21, 2022). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> APS 001-cycle 1: Select and organize the REC of the 23 full proposals that will be submitted by the selected organizations (REC selection planned for February 2022) APS 001-cycle 2: Select and organize the REC of the Concept Notes.
Request for Application for accelerating inclusive market system approach in community forest—RFA 001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The solicitation was launched, and a virtual Information session held on October 13, 2021. 108 project proposals received and screened for eligibility. The REC met on November 29, 2021 and submitted recommendations. Pre-award risk assessment work begun. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 72 organizations interested in this opportunity participated in the virtual information session. 108 project proposals received. 32 projects sent to the REC; 76 projects were rejected for non-compliance (including lack of alignment with solicitation scope) Consensus was reached among the REC members to select 4 local organizations and 2 international organizations for the next stage. Due Diligence with one prospective grantee was held from December 16 to 18, 2021 in Goma, North Kivu. Due diligence with the remaining organizations will be conducted during the next quarter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RFA 001: Finalize the Pre-award risk assessment work with the 6 organizations retained during the evaluation. Present the Negotiation Memo for each organization retained after the Pre-Award risk assessment sessions.

Grant Types	Completed activities during Q1	Results	Next steps
Request for Application on charcoal—RFA-002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft RFA submitted to USAID. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First draft of the RFA reviewed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate USAID comments. Launch the RFA. Convene REC.
Request for Application on Education—RFA--003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First draft of the RFA developed by the Activity team and submitted to the COP for review. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First draft of the RFA developed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review to be completed during the next quarter and submitted to USAID as planned in the AWP.
Annual Program Statement on Inclusive Market System—APS--002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft of the APS was developed and reviewed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First and second drafts of the APS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review to be completed during the next quarter and submitted to USAID as planned in the AWP

4.2.2. Support capacity assessments and action plans for selected grantees.

The Activity team is drafting the training modules for each theme related to the technical, organizational, and financial capacity building of grantees who will sign agreements in the next quarter. The Activity will use the Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT) to support identification of organizational capacity gaps and build operational and financial capacity of grantees. The Activity has also developed simplified guidance on indicator reporting to support grantees to report on progress and achievements based on the Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Plan.

4.3 SUPPORT CARPE COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH

4.3.1. Support convening and information-sharing across the CARPE network.

During the reporting period the Activity carried out several strategies and activities to support convening and information sharing:

- *Third Quarterly meeting of the CARPE IPs:* The Activity team prepared the preliminary agenda for the next CARPE IP Quarterly Meeting to be held in January 2022.
- *CARPE Newsletter:* The Activity reached out to CARPE IPs to request topics and inputs for the newsletter. Only the USFS, AWF, and Bboxx responded and agreed to provide inputs. At the time of writing this report, the Activity has received inputs from these organizations, drafted the articles and undergoing final edits and formatting.
- *USAID Social Media:* For this reporting period, the Activity developed six Facebook posts that were shared with and approved by the CARPE team. Of those, four (4) were posted on the USAID Facebook page, including the two announcements of the grant solicitation (APS—001 and RFA—001), one post to announce the Zoohackathon and one post about the Activity’s participation in the roundtable discussion on community forest organized by RFUK. One (1) post was reviewed and approved by CARPE but ultimately not posted.

The Activity continued to face challenges in playing a convening role to support communication, collaboration, and exchange of experience with CARPE partners, which included receiving limited responses from CARPE partners regarding proposals or requests discussed and agreed upon with the USAID CARPE team. As an example, the Activity circulated a survey on market systems development in conservation to CARPE partners and only two partners responded to the questionnaire. As noted

above, the Activity also received few responses from IPs to provide content for the CARPE newsletter; however, seeing as how this was the first newsletter, the Activity anticipates improved engagement as time goes on. The USAID CARPE team's continued support to the Activity is necessary to encourage responsiveness from the IPs to foster exchange and enhance communication among partners through the Activity.

The Activity team has identified several actions that can continue to strengthen communication through both passive and active dissemination channels. These include creation of a dedicated space for CARPE partners to share communications materials and upload documentation; creation of a shared CARPE calendar for sharing news and events (to be shared in Q2); and continued outreach to include CARPE experts in relevant events, such as the Zoonhackathon, themed webinars, and other strategic events.

4.3.2. Support updating of the CARPE website.

The Activity Communications Team completed an initial review of the current CARPE website and developed a summary of key needs and content changes along with a phased approach to update content and review functionality. The specific objectives of the website review were (a) to make an inventory of the functioning of the CARPE website, (b) to propose a list of items to update, and (c) to define a timeline with the partners involved (USFS, UMD, and the Activity). The Activity will complete the review and submit initial suggestions to USAID early in Q2. Following the proposed phased approach, the Activity proposes that CARPE website updates first focus on updating current content including the list of IPs and contact information, which can be accomplished rapidly. A next phase would focus on updating the structure of the site to update priorities for landing pages, draft new content that summarizes the new CARPE strategy and vision, and create space for dynamic updating of information including news, success stories, reports, and other relevant communications materials.

During Q2, the Activity will work with UMD and USFS to confirm these priorities and launch the updated website. The Activity will also seek to organize working sessions with interested IPs to solicit feedback on proposed design changes and priority features to be built into the new site.

4.3.3. Generate strategic content highlighting CARPE impacts and successes.

During the reporting period, the Activity continued to revise the CARPE Communications Strategy; a draft was submitted after the close of the reporting period but at time of writing is currently under review by USAID. During Q2, the Activity will advance generation of new CARPE content including success stories or organization of events designed to highlight CARPE work on key themes such as combating wildlife trafficking, gender and indigenous peoples engagement in conservation, or the role of technology in supporting natural resource management.

4.3.4. Support visibility of CARPE in media and regional and national forums.

Media engagement

- The Zoonhackathon, organized from November 19-21, 2021, received national media coverage from B-one, Télé 50, Univers Group, Top Congo, Kin 24, and INTERKINOIS. The TV and radio reports were broadcasted at least three times a day from November 19-22.
- On December 9, 2021, the Activity was invited to send a guest speaker to a radio and television program on the Digital Congo radio television to discuss the issues and benefits of CoP 26. The Activity's Research Analyst -- Natural Resources Governance participated as a guest expert: <https://youtu.be/FTAu6HQM4ic>.
- Following this broadcast, the Activity held a virtual meeting with Digital Congo on December 2 to discuss collaboration. At the request of Digital Congo, the Activity provided a list of nine topics related to the Activity's themes for future programming. At the same time, the Activity developed a list that identifies thematic experts related to CARPE's themes who could be mobilized and contacted by the media to share expertise and information on ongoing CARPE-

supported work. In the next quarter, the Activity will work with Digital Congo to schedule additional programs.

Participation in national and regional events

- *Participation in thematic round table discussions:* As part of the USAID-funded Forests of the Future project activities, the Activity Policy Advisor participated in the Rainforest UK-led consortium Multi-Stakeholder Roundtable on Community Forestry in the DRC from October 12-14, 2021. This meeting set out eight priority actions to enable community forests to be a concrete and scalable forest management option in DRC. These actions emphasize supporting local initiatives; documenting their impact in terms of economic and environmental viability; inter-ministerial coordination, institutional capacity building and reforms key to scale-up community forestry; and enhancing procedures to be more accessible to all communities.
- *Participation in CIFOR thematic forums:* On November 22, 2021, the Policy Advisor participated in a working session with community forestry stakeholders and actors. Organized by the Community Forestry Division, with technical and financial support from CIFOR, the purpose of this meeting was to harmonize legal guidelines to enable the development of the community forestry process within the framework of CIFOR's interventions in Tshopo Province.
- *Co-Organization of and Aperio-bio:* On December 2, 2021, the Activity and Fond Okapi co-organized an *Aperio-Bio* event, conceived as an informal gathering to bring together donors, private sector, government, and practitioners in an informal setting to network on opportunities in the business and environmental sectors.

4.4 SUPPORT COLLABORATION, LEARNING, AND ADAPTATION IN SUPPORT OF CARPE KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

4.4.1. Support identification and public sharing of best practices.

During the quarter, 140 people from the public administration, including the CITES/ICCN Unit and conservators, joined the WhatsApp group on combatting wildlife crime in the DRC, which was established by the Activity team. The forum is active daily, with participants regularly sharing information, insights, and information from their programs. Five documents were distributed to the group to support the discussions on the prevention of crimes relating to CWT. The below links lead to websites containing some background information related to the topic.

- <https://mg.co.za/environment/2021-12-03-following-the-wildlife-traffickers-money/>
- <https://www.fauna-flora.org/news/illegal-wildlife-trade-is-there-a-better-way-to-solve-this-problem/>
- <https://www.fauna-flora.org/approaches/species-and-habitats/combating-illegal-wildlife-trade/situational-crime-prevention/>
- <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-021-01109-5>

In December 2021, discussions focused on the strategies to reduce the demand for bushmeat, especially during the end-of-year holiday season. The exchanges identified several cultural, economic, and political reasons that sustain the demand for bushmeat. It was identified that a first level of change requires a better understanding of the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of stakeholders to address the bushmeat issue. Then, actions on the regulatory framework, alternatives, and supervision of the bushmeat sector should be addressed. In the next quarter, while the forum is still proceeding, the Activity team will develop a synthesis report of the discussions to share within the CARPE network.

4.4.2. Convene CARPE Thematic working groups

The CLA Lead is working on the development of a CLA agenda document on CWT. This synthesis document will enable the Activity to support CARPE and IPs in generating, collecting, synthesizing, and

disseminating evidence and lessons, and facilitating their use to inform how USAID/CARPE, through the Activity, supports the countries of Central Africa in terms of forests and land management and biodiversity conservation. The development of this document responds to the need to establish, facilitate, and support information sharing on best practices and lessons learned and facilitate stakeholder's engagement. The document will be submitted to the management team for internal review in late January and shared with USAID in February for validation and sharing with CARPE IPs.

3.0 PROGRESS ON ACTIVITY INDICATORS

No.	Indicators	Disaggregates	Data sources	Frequency	Baseline	Y2 Target	Q1 Actual	Life of Activity Target	Comments
Objective: Strategies & actions addressing large-scale threats to biodiversity conservation & forest management implemented by key stakeholders to achieve long-term results									
0.1	Number of hectares of biologically significant areas under improved natural resource management as a result of USG assistance (EG.10.2-2/ Outcome)	Landscape	Project, partner, and grantee records	Annual	0	TBD	0	TBD	Annual targets will be refined in Q2 as milestones for the Activity's first group of grantees are finalized
IR1: Leadership & participation of diverse local organizations and the private sector strengthened									
1.1	Number of new partners mobilized under USAID's Forest and Biodiversity Support Activity (Custom/ Output)	CSO, private sector, govt	Project and grants records	Annual	0	20	3	50	The Activity and UNODC developed a roadmap to jointly develop a national wildlife strategy. the scope of the partnership is described, as well as any expected outputs, outcomes, or goals.
1.2	Number of institutions with improved capacity to address sustainable landscape issues as supported by USG assistance. (EG.13-2 /Output)	Level, technical area	Grantee capacity assessment	Annual	0	5	0	20	Capacity assessments will be conducted in Q2/Q3 for new grantees as well as the Provincial Environment Coordination in Equateur
1.3	Number of joint civil society and private sector partnerships (Custom/ Output)	Training, concepts, pilots, advocacy	Project records	Annual	0	5	0	30	Three partnerships between CSO and private sectors are planned in 2022.
IR2: Policy, regulatory and enabling environment improved									
2.1	Number of laws, policies, or regulations that address biodiversity conservation and/or other environmental themes officially proposed, adopted, or implemented as a result of USG assistance (EG.10.2-5/ Output)	Stage, conservation law compliance category	Project records	Annual	0	3	0	15	

No.	Indicators	Disaggregates	Data sources	Frequency	Baseline	Y2 Target	Q1 Actual	Life of Activity Target	Comments
2.2	Number of laws, policies, regulations, or standards addressing sustainable landscapes formally proposed, adopted, or implemented as supported by USG assistance (EG.13-3/ Output)	Stage, level	Project records	Annual	0	2	0	10	
2.3	Number of data-driven analyses or evidence-driven analyzes, assessments or advocacy agendas shared with CARPE stakeholders and partners (Custom/ Output)	None	Project records	Quarterly	0	4	0	15	
IR3: Innovative and evidence-based approaches adopted and institutionalized within conservation and forest management sectors									
3.1	Number of sustainable financing approaches piloted (Custom /Outcome)	None	Project records	Annual	0	1	0	3	
3.2	Number of sessions/meetings that result in learning and adapting (Custom/ Output)	Technical area	Project records	Quarterly	0	10	0	50	
3.3	Number of communications, outreach, and knowledge products produced (Custom/ Output)	Type of product	Project records	Quarterly	0	20	11	100	A radio--TV program on the post COP-26 was organized; 6 Facebook posts produced and approved by USAID; 3 press releases video on Zoohackathon
3.4	Number of solutions or concepts tested/piloted or scaled (Custom/ Outcome)	Technical area	Project records	Annual	0	10	0	30	Design of support to Zoohackathon applications, grantee selection for community forest and CWT awards and private sector/sustainable finance partnership development underway to ramp up testing and scaling in Q2 and 3
Cross-Cutting: Increased regional learning and knowledge sharing to replicate successful approaches									
C.1	Number of best practices and approaches identified, implemented, and/or adopted as a result of USG assistance (Custom/ Outcome)	Technical area	Project records	Annual	0	3	0	10	
C.2	Number of people trained in sustainable natural resources management and/or biodiversity conservation as a result of USG assistance (EG.10.2-4/ Output)	Sex, Conservation Law Compliance Category	Project training records	Annual	0	200	0	1,000	

4.0 CONTRACT MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

4.1 CONDITIONS IMPACTING AWARD OBJECTIVES

- *COVID-19.* The rapid increase in COVID-19 cases in DRC in December impacted several Activity events and plans including a workshop with ICCN and law enforcement agencies in to discuss the national wildlife crime strategy process and inventory for wildlife seizures, a private sector workshop in Bukavu, and internal pause-and-reflect sessions. The Activity continues to shift activities and discussions online when possible, but workstreams that require travel and convening (particularly in relation to policy engagement) may be delayed if the COVID-19 situation does not improve or if the government imposes additional restrictions on gatherings. Several members of the Activity implementation team were also impacted by COVID-19, and the office was closed and staff on remote work through the end of December. The Activity implementation team will continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation in collaboration with Tetra Tech's Project Management Team and Travel and Security team and follow internal protocols regarding office closure and event safety. In addition, the Activity will continue to keep USAID informed of how the COVID-19 situation is impacting implementation and strategize on how to maintain momentum.
- *Staffing.* The Activity is reviewing staffing plan to better align with the priorities of the program and discussed these priorities with USAID during the PM's December mission. Interviews are underway for a senior Technical Advisor as well as a replacement for the Capacity Building and Small Grants Lead position. The Activity is also actively recruiting for a new Chief of Party as the current COP is leaving the project for personal reasons.
- *Coordination and facilitation.* The Activity continued to face challenges in playing a convening role to support communication, collaboration, and exchange of experience with CARPE partners, which included receiving limited responses from CARPE partners regarding requests discussed and agreed upon with the USAID CARPE team. To address this challenge, the Activity will continue to ramp up proactive outreach to promote regular lines of communication between technical experts as well as project leaders across the CARPE network. There is a need for more regular, informal exchange with CARPE partners both in terms of identifying strategic opportunities for the Activity to provide support or document learning, as well as to incorporate CARPE network expertise into Activity interventions such as work on the national wildlife crime strategy. The Zoohackathon event convened in Q1 effectively engaged expertise from across the CARPE network around a common objective that leveraged strengths of multiple partners; this type of focused engagement serves as a model on which the Activity can continue to build.
- *Engagement of government.* While the Activity has made progress in clarifying collaboration priorities with ICCN, policy work is at times slowed or stalled by lack of availability of key government counterparts and decision-makers. There is a need to accelerate policy engagement to capitalize on momentum from commitments made by the DRC during COP 26 and ensure that the scope of collaboration with key government institutions is well defined. The Activity is planning follow-up engagement with high-level ICCN and MEDD officials in Q2 to ensure that policy priorities can advance; if necessary, the Activity will develop MOU, collaboration agreement, or roadmap that is more formally recognized by the government of DRC decision-makers and frames both short and medium-term support priorities. Such agreements should form the basis for the Activity's ongoing engagement with these institutions throughout the life of the Activity, with a defined process for engaging government counterparts in annual work

planning to ensure that objectives are aligned and policy partnerships can proceed more efficiently.

- *Aligning the approved budget with implementation priorities.* The Activity supported by its Project Management team is committed to compliant contract management including effective cost control and careful monitoring of the Activity budget against the cost categories outlined in Section B.4 of its contract. Based on discussions to ensure the Activity incorporates sufficient STTA as well as supporting direct implementation of some workstreams as a complement to managing the Activity's \$6.5 million Grants Under Contract portfolio, the Activity continues to face challenges reconciling current needs with the current Activity budget and has requested a consolidation of cost categories that will enable greater flexibility to manage labor and STTA needs.

4.2 GENDER AND VULNERABLE PEOPLES

The Activity continues to promote the inclusion of considerations for gender and vulnerable peoples in activity implementation. Grant solicitations including the APS on wildlife crime and RFA on inclusive market systems and community forestry all required applicants to address how their proposed interventions would integrate gender and vulnerable peoples. To date, not only have the selected applications integrated these considerations into their applications; several prospective grants in the negotiation pipeline are to organizations focused on supporting women, youth, and indigenous populations. As proposed in the AWP, the Activity also anticipates issuing a grant opportunity targeted to local civil society organizations that will incorporate themes on improving research, analysis, and advocacy that improves outcomes for women, indigenous peoples, or other marginalized groups.

4.3 ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

The Annual Work Plan defines the Activity's environmental management approach in detail and screened proposed activities for level of environmental risk. During the reporting period, no actions requiring additional environmental mitigation measures were identified; however, the Activity anticipates that many proposed grant activities may require environmental monitoring and potentially mitigation measures. Environmental and climate risk screening is part of the pre-award due diligence process and will be conducted for all grantees whose activities fall under a negative determination with conditions.

4.4 FINANCIAL STATUS

Annex I presents details of the quarterly financial report, submitted to USAID on January 13, 2022, including a summary of budget expenditures and available funding. There are no high unit costs or cost overruns to report during the period of implementation.

4.5 AUDITS

No audits were conducted during the period.

5.0 ANTICIPATED APPROVALS, ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

5.1 UPCOMING ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

Request	Anticipated Date	Comments
CARPE Implementing Partner meeting	January 20	
Workshop with ICCN to advance national wildlife crime strategy task force discussions	2 nd week of February	
Apéro Bio event	End of February	Theme TBD in collaboration with Fond Okapi
Grant information session on RFA-002 on Charcoal	Late February/early March	Timing will be adjusted based on solicitation release date following USAID approval
Private sector partnership workshop in Kongo Central	Mid-February	

5.2 UPCOMING APPROVALS, AWARDS, WAIVERS, OR DEVIATIONS

5.2.1 APPROVALS

The following requests for approvals are anticipated for Q2:

Request	Anticipated Date	Comments
HO Graphic Design Support Approval	January 4	Approved January 18
Approval of FY 2022 Q1 Quarterly Performance Report	January 30	
International Travel Request – Regional Network Assessment Consultant	Feb 2	
Approval of COP demobilization expenses	Mid-February	
Key Personnel Approval – COP replacement	Mid-February	
Key Personnel Approval – Capacity Building and Small Grants Lead replacement	end of February	
Request for approvals – selected community forest grants	February/March	

5.2.1 AWARDS, WAIVERS, OR DEVIATIONS FROM AWP

There are no waivers, or deviations anticipated for Q2; the Activity expects to issue several grant awards as described in Section 4.2 pending USAID approval.

ANNEX I: QUARTERLY FINANCIAL REPORT

Not included in this report.

ANNEX 2: TRACKER OF DELIVERABLES AND MILESTONES

ACTIVITIES/SUB-ACTIVITIES	DELIVERABLES/MILESTONES	SUMMARY STATUS
THEME 1: IMPROVED FOREST, LAND AND BIODIVERSITY MANAGEMENT		
1.1 Build the institutional and technical capacity of local, national, and regional institutions to address threats to forest and biodiversity		
1.1.1 Strengthen the technical and institutional capacity of provincial and territorial administrations	- DRC provincial capacity assessment report	TDRs of mission drafted and activity to be conducted in Q2.
1.1.2 Support civil society engagement and transparency and accountability in the forest and conservation sectors	- Analysis of regional platforms and network drafted - RFA: Civil society: advocacy, monitoring, and accountability released	- Interim report submitted, field missions to DRC planned for next quarter. - RFA to be drafted into Q2.
1.2. Strengthen design of policies, standards, and plans to support more effective and equitable conservation and forest management		
1.2.1 Collaborate with MEDD to support policy development at the national and regional levels	- MEDD/FABS Action Plan - Summary of engagement in ongoing policy processes and analysis of policy	Planned in Q2
1.2.2 Carry out analysis of land and resource tenure models	- Comparative analysis of land and resources tenure models drafted - Case studies completed	Identification matrix and an inventory of models developed.
1.2.3 Improve the fiscal framework to promote alternatives to charcoal	- White paper discussing alternatives to charcoal including economic, fiscal, social, and climate implications of different options and feasibility - Policy recommendations on incentives for charcoal alternatives	Planned in Q2
1.3 Strengthen the implementation of forest and conservation management practices		
1.3.1 Support the design and implementation of innovative management practices to improve forest management and conservation	- Charcoal RFA drafted - Charcoal grant launched - Grants signed and implementation launched	RFA drafted and under second review to be launched in Q2.
1.3.2 Support market systems strengthening for community forests	- REC review report and grantee selection - Grants signed - Grants capacity development plan	REC report submitted and due diligence activity conducted in Goma
THEME 2: EFFECTIVE ENFORCEMENT OF FOREST AND WILDLIFE CRIME		
2.1 Strengthen institutional capacity for forest and wildlife crime law enforcement		

ACTIVITIES/SUB-ACTIVITIES	DELIVERABLES/MILESTONES	SUMMARY STATUS
2.1.1 Support institutional capacity development for law enforcement and judicial system strengthening	- Grants signed and implementation launched	Partners pre-selected and notified for APS-CWT first round.
2.2 Strengthen the policy, institutional, and enabling environment for law enforcement		
2.2.1 Support the development of the national wildlife and forest crime strategy	- Draft national wildlife crime strategy - Summary of stakeholder consultations	Roadmap drafted and shared with ICCN. Plan underway to set up the working group and hire consultants.
2.2.2 Support strengthening interagency cooperation at the regional level for CWT	- Grants signed and implementation launched	Partners selected for the first round were notified to advance to full application.
2.2.3 Develop a conservation booklet to facilitate building, outreach, and access to relevant texts by stakeholders	- Consultant terms of reference - Inventory of existing text and outline - Conservation booklet produced and distributed in hard copy and electronic format	TDRs for recruiting consultant drafted.
2.3 Catalyze implementation of tools, best practices, and technologies		
2.3.1 Support tools development or technologies to improve monitoring and enforcement of wildlife	- Support to Zoohackathon applications to raise public awareness on wildlife and forest crime developed - Grants signed	Digital applications developed by Dunia in Kinshasa and ZooApp in Brazzaville teams were selected as winners; report of the events completed.
2.3.2 Support the supervision and management of seizures of wildlife crime products	- Inventory and management methodology drafted and validated - Testing model for inventory and management of seized wildlife products launched in 1-2 provinces	Term of References and hiring of the consultant to design and implement the inventory and management to be completed in Q2.
2.3.3 Organize the Zoohackathon for Kinshasa and Brazzaville	- Zoohackathon events organized in Kinshasa and Brazzaville - Summary report	Completed
THEME 3: INCLUSIVE MARKETS AND SUSTAINABLE FINANCE FOR CONSERVATION AND FOREST MANAGEMENT		
3.1 Support Analysis, Testing, and Scaling of Innovative Market Systems Approaches and partnership		
3.1.1 Refine market systems prioritization and develop conservation-oriented partnerships	- Priority market system and engagement opportunities selected and launched - Provincial engagement workshops convened - APS launched - Signed grants	Two provincial workshops were held for finalizing actors mapping for markets systems partnership.
3.2. Enhance Dialogue, Capacity, and Business Enabling Environment		
3.2.1 Develop a package of information and build private	- Report summarizing state of knowledge and current concerns on carbon finance.	

ACTIVITIES/SUB-ACTIVITIES	DELIVERABLES/MILESTONES	SUMMARY STATUS
sector capacity to access climate finance	- Slide deck presentation	
3.2.2 Strengthen local institutions providing training and business development services	- RFA issued - Partnerships with incubators established through grants, MoU, or in-kind support	The Activity is working with Kinshasa Digital to finance an incubation session for the winning team of the Zoonhackathon to develop an application on CWT.
3.2.3 Strengthen understanding of market systems for conservation audiences	- Slide deck on market system. - Webinar training tools	In Q2, the Activity will relaunch the survey on inclusive market systems to better understand partners' priorities for integrating market systems approaches into their activities. This will allow the Activity to update the slide deck to better meet the knowledge sharing needs of these partners.
3.2.4 Share knowledge and promote dialogue on market systems for conservation in relevant business forum	- Terms of reference and reports summarizing engagement in business forums	The Activity will explore co-organizing forums with both CARPE IPs and other programs interested in market systems and conservation. The Activity will also participate and contribute to the market system symposium of 2022.
3.3 Pilot innovative mechanisms for sustainable financing		
3.3.1 Conduct root causes analysis to understand key market dynamics and binding constraints	- Slide deck and annex summarizing key findings	Slide deck submitted to USAID.
3.3.2 Undertake a rapid market assessment against feasibility criteria	- Map of potential financing partners; Report of feasibility study of financing opportunities	Map of potential financing partners identified, and next steps are ongoing.
3.3.3 Assess and prioritize potential innovative financing solutions for the design of sustainable finance pilots	- Financial blueprint identified Strategy to pilot - Financial blueprints/pilot developed	Field visit of the sustainable finance team is guiding prioritization of the solutions.
3.3.4 Map potential financing partners	- Potential financing partners identified	List of potential financing partners being firmed.
CROSSCUTTING ACTIVITIES		
4.1 Develop innovative approaches to institutionalizing training, education, and capacity building		
4.1.1 Engage and support academic and educational institutions	- Grant call drafted and launched - At least 2 partnerships established	RFA drafted and shared with COP for review.
4.2 Implement Activity Grant Program		

ACTIVITIES/SUB-ACTIVITIES	DELIVERABLES/MILESTONES	SUMMARY STATUS
4.2.1 Manage grants pipeline including solicitation launch and review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Solicitations launched and communication plan implemented - Application review and selection process - Pre-Award Responsibility Determination conducted - Grants packages submitted 	Applications for RFA-001 (Community forestry) selected after REC and APS-001 ongoing process for the second round.
4.2.2 Support capacity assessments and action plans for selected grantees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capacity baselines established - Capacity building tools and plans developed and implemented 	Modules for MEL and grants capacity building developed.
4.3 Support CARPE communications and outreach		
4.3.1 Support convening and information sharing across the CARPE network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4 Newsletters developed - 4 CARPE IP meetings held. - 10 Facebook posts in USAID website 	Facebook posts shared with the CARPE team
4.3.2 Supporting updating of the CARPE website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Website revision concept note - New content drafted and posted to CARPE website 	CARPE website reviewed, and analysis prepared
4.3.3 Generate strategic content highlighting CARPE impacts and success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 Success stories or articles produced. - 1 article on policy analysis produced 	Planned in Q2
4.3.4 Support CARPE visibility through media and regional and national forums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3 radio or TV discussions 	One Radio broadcast produced about CoP 26.
4.4 Support collaboration, learning, and adaptation in support of CARPE knowledge management		
4.4.1 Support identification of best practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Suite of best practices reviewed and shared 	Planned in Q3
4.4.2 Convene CARPE Thematic working groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 communities of practice with learning agendas established 	One WhatsApp group on combatting wildlife crime set up and operational.

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