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CARPE Final Report: October 1, 2003 – September 30, 2006

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Report completed by	CARPE DRC Focal Point, Véronique Tshimbalanga
Organization	World Wide Fund for Nature
Submitted by	Dr. Richard W. Carroll
Organization and contact	WWF-US; Tel: 202-778-9670; Richard.Carroll@wwfus.org

1. INTRODUCTION

DRC Country Team

DRC CARPE Focal Point: Véronique Tshimbalanga (FY06); the post was vacant in FY04 and FY05

Total Cost of Agreement:

	USAID	Cost Share	Total
WWF	373,006.00	112,764.65	485,770.65

FY04 achievements

- The focal point position based in DRC since 2000 was to supervise the implementation of the Small Grant Program in DRC as well as in Congo/Brazzaville and to develop collaboration among different CARPE partners within those two countries.
- Implementation of activities in FY04 was delayed because of the late recruitment of the DRC Focal Point. Mr. Daniel Massamba Meboya, if approved by the USAID Director, was to serve as the new CARPE Focal Point for DRC. However, Mr. Meboya was not retained for the position, and WWF held the functions of the FP.
- The small grant program was launched in Congo-Brazzaville and involved major CBFP implementers such as WWF and WCS, as well as local NGOs and the Ministry of Forestry Economy. USAID Director and CARPE Directors attended this important event.

FY05 Achievements

Because of the fact that the position of Focal Point remained vacant for most of the year, very little effort could be put in the core tasks of the program; as a consequence, much of the progress reported was that of our partners or satellite programs. Nonetheless, inroads were made towards the achievement of the year 2 benchmarks. With the recruitment of a new Focal Point well

underway and only awaiting USAID CTO approval, the prospects were better and the Country Team was confident to meet all their targets by the end of the third year.

FY06 Achievements

This remainder of this 3-year report covers the achievements of the activities launched in the third year of the project (FY06) under the coordination of the Focal Point Véronique Tshimbalanga, who was newly-confirmed in that position at the beginning of the year. It should also be noted that a FP was recruited in Congo (Brazzaville) for FY06 (separate report).

Partners

- 3 Partners received USAID funding to promote the new forestry code:
 1. Regional NGO women's network, REFADD, was given \$5,000 to train local animators in the promotion of the forestry code, to assess the local community level of knowledge of the forestry code and to sensitize/distribute to local administrative and political authorities and leaders in Lisala, LS 9 the forestry code translated into the Lingala language. The Lingala version is an updated edition of the forestry code that includes the Ministry preface both in French and Lingala.
 2. An environmental lawyers' NGO, Avocats Verts, was given \$5,890 to publish and print 300 copies of an updated collection of environmental and forestry laws, decrees, texts and international conventions.
 3. The Director of the Legal Unit of the Ministry of Environment received \$1,000 to assess the translated Lingala version of the forestry code that was distributed in LS 9 and to some partners in Kinshasa.
- One national NGO network partner, CNONGD, received \$10,000 to implement a pilot project in 2 sites in Bandundu aiming at consulting/sensitizing/involving local communities in the process of the conversion of forest titles.

Objectives and summary of accomplishments:

The FP had to fulfill 4 main tasks to promote CARPE objectives: Landscape monitoring, building capacity of the Environmental Civil Society (ECS), public relations, and reporting. In addition, the FP followed a work plan and accomplished the benchmarks set in the country performance and monitoring matrix (work plan) contributing to **CARPE Intermediate Result 2- Natural resources governance (institutions, policies, laws) strengthened** and **Intermediate Result 3 – Natural Resources Monitoring Institutionalized**. The most important FP accomplishments are summarized below.

1. **IR2.1 Promoting the new forestry code**, the FP contributed to the work of the working group that analyzed and validated the implementation decrees of the new forestry code. The FP facilitated and coordinated the preparations and planning of field missions that will be implemented by Environmental Civil Society (ECS), thus providing technical support to the Ministry of Environment for the participation of local communities in the process of conversion of forest titles while reinforcing the capacity of the ECS. Funding

support was provided to consultants to publish, disseminate and promote the Lingala translation of the forestry code and other environmental laws and texts.

2. **IR2.2 Training ECS** Advocacy training workshops were successfully organized (in collaboration with CARE) with the participation of NGOs or NGO networks, the most representative of civil society that deal with conservation/environmental issues. Practical advocacy tools were provided, and the sessions focused on current real forestry issues like the conversion of forest titles and the popularization of the new forestry code.
3. **Landscape field monitoring:** Field visits were conducted in each of the 5 LS (MLW, LT, SLS, Ituri, MTKB) to monitor progress on the ground.
4. **Networking/partnering/ coordinating donors (public relations):** working closely with the Ministry of Environment on different environmental/forestry issues; signing a partnership with SNV and ECS; working on forestry policy issues in coordination with FAO, GTZ, the French cooperation agency, the World Bank and the E.U. Relationships/discussions were initiated with the University of Kinshasa (UNIKIN) with the goal of presenting CARPE work/sessions at the university.
5. **Working in coordination with CARPE partners:** establishing CARPE country team.
Ex: advocacy work done in collaboration with CARE
6. **Communication work:** working with the media, using the resource centre and website to increase CARPE visibility

2. MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND RESULTS

Major accomplishments and results

IR2 Strengthening natural resources governance through 2 policy actions (Indicator 1)

1. CARPE support to the participation of local communities in the process of the conversion of forests titles, an important decree of the new forestry code

In June 2006, CARPE initiated a pilot project in 2 sites in the province of Bandundu and supported 2 NGO networks to implement the project. They organized consultations with communities to inform them about the process and to develop mechanisms that would help them to designate their delegates to the Inter-ministerial Commission. The Ministry of Environment and the World Bank required using the same mechanisms to extend consultations to communities in all 6 provinces where forest concessions are located, in order to involve communities in the process of the conversion of forest titles. Up to now, this has been the major gap: communities were not participating in the process. Today CARPE plays a leading role in ensuring communities are involved in this process and thus empowered in forestry management for the long-term. An agreement between CARPE and the Ministry was developed and will be signed soon by the new Minister. CARPE is coordinating (with SNV) the planning work of the field missions that will be implemented by NGO networks.

CARPE will receive the funding from the World Bank to run the project. This is the first time that the Ministry, donors and civil society are mobilized all together to address and resolve a new forestry policy issue.

This project has 3 major stakes/interests (results):

A. CARPE provides direct and significant support to the Ministry by supporting the process of conversion of forest titles;

B. CARPE reinforces the building of ECS by engaging them to work together towards a common goal using their field networks;

C. CARPE promotes, in concrete terms, community empowerment in forestry management & governance: for the first time local communities have the opportunity to participate in a major national forestry policy issue.

2. CARPE contribution to the implementation decrees of the new forestry code

In July 2006, the FP was officially designated by the Ministry of Environment as a member of the Technical Working Group through the *Arrêté ministériel n°28/CAB/MIN/ECNEF/2006 du 15 Juillet 2006 portant création du Comité de Validation Technique des textes d'application du code forestier*. This is an important step as it demonstrates active CARPE involvement in the promotion of good governance of natural resources.

However, CARPE contribution should not only be at a technical level, considering that there is a gap in supporting the meetings and consequently, a gap in funding the process of analyzing and validating all implementation decrees.

CARPE was able to print and publish/distribute 200 copies of the Lingala forestry code, of which 180 were disseminated in Lisala, located in MLW LS. In FY05, CARPE provided funding to a regional women's NGO network, REFADD, to translate the forestry code in Lingala. In FY06, CARPE hired REFADD to assess the FY05 work of the popularization of the forestry code that was done in Lisala and to evaluate the current status of knowledge of the forestry code. The evaluation indicated areas of weak knowledge of the forestry code and identified areas for focusing sensitization in the future, but found that the popularization of the Lingala forestry code has had a significant impact. The new forestry code was issued in 2002, but since little has been done to promote the forestry code in French or in national languages like Lingala, the national level of knowledge of the forestry code is still very low. The promotion of the translated version of the forestry code leads to a better understanding and application of a crucial forestry policy. The project has also demonstrated the importance of the sensitization work: REFADD succeeded in explaining and informing the local administrative and political authorities about key issues concerning the forestry code.

IR 2 – Strengthening natural resources governance through strengthening/building the capacity of national NGOs in advocacy and to participate in policy reform (Indicators 1 & 2)

1. The conversion of forest titles project brings together a wide range of national NGO networks involved in natural resources activities, Bantus and Pygmies, who are working jointly for a common purpose. In DRC, the environmental civil society is not well structured; it is divided and does not represent a real power. This project engages different competing NGO networks to join efforts and be committed to promote natural resources governance while assisting communities to know and use their rights and assisting the Ministry to implement decrees.

It is also a way to actively build or strengthen NGO capacity in forestry governance issues, in planning and implementation, management, budgeting, funding, and monitoring of projects. From June 2006 to date, weekly meetings have been organized in order to plan, budget, monitor progress, etc.

The vision is to establish a strong Environmental Civil Society (ECS) that will be a real force and a real voice for local communities in forestry and natural resources issues and playing an active role. The Inter-ministerial Commission is a first step of a long process. In the long term, ECS should be able to help communities to deal and negotiate with logging companies.

2. Advocacy initiatives: an evaluation done at the end of the workshops showed that the training has really met the needs of the civil society on advocacy. ECS does not seem to have used such an approach previously to carry forward the conservation agenda. There was a very good and active participation of most national NGOs networks that are actively involved in natural resources and forestry activities. They all have requested to continue the training as they need practical advocacy tools to influence the decision process in environmental and conservation issues.

ECS in DRC is weak, but very active and dynamic. It has a huge potential to make changes in conservation. It is the only national body or stakeholder that can easily reach out to communities and quickly mobilize, sensitize and engage communities in sustainable natural resources management. It is based in the whole vast country, and can even reach the most remote places. ECS has the energy to get things done. It is necessary to capitalize on this force to ensure that ECS plays its role for the benefit of conservation.

CARPE (CARE as well) is planning to organize other advocacy training workshops in order to offer ECS the opportunity to better impact decisions on natural resources management and governance.

3. The popularization of the forestry code (Indicator 1): Following the advocacy training workshops, a day was organized to reflect on the current status of the popularization of the forestry code and on a common action. The Director of the legal unit and the Director of sustainable development at the Ministry of Environment attended the meeting and both gave a presentation. The meeting was a very good opportunity to bring together the Ministry and the civil society (ECS) to discuss and brainstorm on forestry policy issues. ECS and the Ministry and ECS do not work together as they should.

4. A fully operational Remote Sensing and GIS laboratory has been set up at the University of Kinshasa and is currently organizing training sessions for local and sub-regional organizations. Training in GIS was provided to staff from AWF, WCS, ERAIFT, CNIAF, and the Ministry of the Environment.

Communication work to increase CARPE visibility – Cross cutting theme

Multiple efforts were made to use all communication tools in order to increase the visibility of CARPE programme.

CARPE Newsletter

A newsletter was published in July 2006 that covered CARPE activities at national and at Landscape levels for the period of January – March 2006. 200 Newsletters were produced and distributed to: all CARPE partners; the Ministry of Environment (Ministère de l'Environnement, Conservation de la Nature, Eaux et Forêts - MECNEF); the Protected Area National Authority (Institut Congolais de Conservation de la Nature - ICCN); professors of the University and higher education institutions; American, French, and Belgian cultural centers; international and national partners; donors; TV channels; and radio (See Annex 1 - a copy of the newsletter).

The plan was to produce a newsletter on a quarterly basis, but this has not been possible for the following main reasons: LS leaders delay to react, send information and feedback; the printer made mistakes and spent some time to correct the text; the funding for publications was limited.

As a result of the newsletter, ICCN sent a letter of appreciation (See Annex 2) congratulating CARPE and its partners for their active presence in DR. Congo. It is important to constantly present the global picture of CARPE intervention in DRC to government institutions since the CARPE program is implemented by a wide range of partners that have different approaches with the government.

Media

CARPE has regularly promoted its activities through different media tools achieving significant coverage in the DRC media. Some examples:

- A 45-minute CARPE TV program was broadcast on an environment-specific program on a national TV channel.
- CARPE workshops in Mbandaka (CARPE partners joint meeting) and in Kinshasa (advocacy workshops) were broadcast on TV and on radio.
- Articles were written for different newspapers, including the environmental journal of the Ministry of Environment. A consultant and 2 trainees were hired for one month to work on articles
- The FP gave several televised interviews when approached by journalists at meetings.

Public Relations Materials

200 T-shirts were produced and distributed to CARPE partners and university students during the university outreach where the FP and some partners made a presentation.

CARPE website

From March to October 2006, a success story (See Annex 3 for an example) was systematically posted every month on the website. The website is an excellent tool to disseminate information on field activities to a wider audience.

CARPE Resource Center

The Center was updated. There have been new publications. An open day, a full morning, was organized in order to officially present the center to university students. A questionnaire distributed at the end of the session documented a very positive reaction. It is planned to continue to organize additional sessions.

Partnering/networking/coordinating –Cross cutting theme

Productive partnerships were sought out, cultivated, and built with different government institutions, partners, and donors in order to work in collaboration and harmonize interventions: SNV, the French cooperation, FAO, the World Bank, etc.

A platform was created with ECS and SNV, and a formal partnership was signed (see Annex 4).

CARPE has worked closely with the Ministry, and this had helped the Ministry to really see CARPE support to their mission:

- CARPE is the lead partner with the Ministry of Environment in the participation of communities in the process of the conversion of forest titles project (see Annex 5).
- CARPE provided technical and financial support to the 2 week World Environmental Day event organized by the Ministry. CARPE received 2 certificates of gratitude and of credit or merit (see Annex 6). from the hands of the Minister.

Landscape coordination and monitoring – Cross cutting theme

Project site visits in the 5 landscapes were organized in order to monitor progress of CARPE activities on the ground. The site visit, even a short one, is much more valuable than reports: it remains the best way to get in touch with the reality and to see CARPE achievements and failures. The FP was able to see some of the realities of CARPE implementation on the ground.

The FP was able to meet CARPE local partners, discuss with them and show that CARPE is willing to provide assistance to protect biodiversity and help them in their livelihoods. The

very enthusiastic and positive reactions of the people at the sites show that such endeavors have a significant impact.

The DRC country team was established with all LS leaders, and 3 meetings were held in FY06 in order to maintain a collaborative network among CARPE partners. A communication line was kept open through emails. These initiatives enhance the communication flow between LS and ensure some level of coordination.

3 key coordinated actions were implemented with CARPE partners and LS leaders:

- For the first time, a CARPE partners joint meeting - gathering all CARPE partners involved in the 3 landscapes of the equator province - was organized in Mbandaka to present the status of CARPE program activities to the local authorities of the province and to ensure their support of the CARPE program. As a result, the governor of Equator designated a Focal Point to be the contact person at the main local authority office.
- For the first time, a CARPE partners joint presentation – bringing together the FP, WWF, AWF, OSFAC, CI, BCI, CARE, IRM - was organized at the main University of Kinshasa to sensitize the university body. A representative of the Ministry of Education and the University chief education officer attended the meeting. The FP had discussions to initiate periodic CARPE presentations/sessions at the university.
- For the first time, a CARPE partners joint interview was done on the national TV: the FP, OSFAC, WCS, AWF were able to appear together on TV to present and explain CARPE activities.

These 3 initiatives are reported as success stories on the CARPE website.

3. SUCCESS STORIES

The DRC FP has regularly (almost on a monthly basis beginning in March 2006) posted success stories on the CARPE website. The stories focus on the work done at the national level (by the FP) and at the landscape level (by CARPE partners).

4. CONCLUSIONS

The FP work has been tremendously interesting and challenging at the same time. This last year has been rich in experience and lessons learnt. The post was vacant for almost 2 years and therefore it was urgent to have a FP in the country. This year the FP had to intervene at different levels at the same time to compensate for the previous years. This has brought the FP to address multiple issues with a wide range of partners and stakeholders. A national CARPE FP is crucial for CARPE visibility at the national level and for CARPE support to the government and non-government institutions.

The landscape approach is very unique conservation approach but very complex. It is very clear that the implementation of this program should be done in a participatory and inclusive process; however, this has not been really the case.

The CARPE monitoring and work planning tools are very useful but they won't be effectively translating realities if they are not enough flexible to integrate inputs from the ground and to allow the grassroots level to reach and influence the decision-making level.

In addition, my "short" experience as a CARPE FP in DRC, a country that is going through an electoral process in a post conflict context, has showed me clearly that the landscape program can't be standardized as is currently the tendency.

. The FP position is strategic and advantageous as the FP has the opportunity to operate at different levels and with different stakeholders/partners and donors.

5. LESSONS LEARNED

- Community participation in the process of conversion of forest titles: significant lessons are drawn from being involved in an initiative that addresses (combines) different forestry issues at the same time: logging concessions, forest governance, local community empowerment, capacity building of civil society, partnership.
- Lessons learnt in the coordination work (ref: landscape coordination work)
- Rich lessons learnt from working with different international and national partners that have different and sometime opposite conservation agendas: learning to deal strategically to achieve a goal.
- Lessons learnt in monitoring (Ex: Landscape field trips)
- Lesson learnt in project planning, budgeting and implementation (Ex: preparatory meetings of the field missions related to the project of conversion of forest titles)
- Lessons learnt in working with government institutions (Ex: working closely with the Ministry of Environment in the process of conversion of forest titles)
- Lessons in working with various donors (Ex: collaborative work with SNV, the World Bank, the French Cooperation, GTZ, etc)
- Lessons learnt in working with National NGO networks and strengthening their capacity
- Lessons learnt in working and traveling in a post-conflict country that is going through a democratic electoral process for the first time in its history

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- There is a need to break the top-down approach of CARPE /USAID landscape program approach and to enable national bodies to fully integrate the program to assure its sustainability
- It is recommended to identify new mechanisms/ways to allow field executants to regularly improve the work planning and performance monitoring matrix.
- The FP should be given the right to participate in the decision-making process: the FP should be the one to prepare his/ her own budget and work plan with the support of the CARPE team, as the FP is on the ground.

- The LS monitoring system should be more field-based and not only report-based, and the CARPE team should be involved in LS monitoring as well, working with the FP.
- The DRC CARPE FP budget should be increased. It is limited considering the number (6) and the size of the LS.
- The CARPE program should consider the characteristics of each country in the Congo Basin and not be limited to standardizations
- DRC FP work should be focused on DRC only as it is a vast and complex country that had 8 years of war.
- CARPE should provide direct support to the DRC government. It is inevitable.
- The role and responsibilities of the FP should be clarified to LS leaders.
- The country team meetings should be mandatory and should include all CARPE partners.
- It is highly recommended that LS leaders be based in the LS and not in Kinshasa.
- Linkages should be formally created between the LS approach and the new forestry code: CARPE team and the FP should take the initiative, organize meetings, and lead this process.
- LS 10: TCCB is a unique and good model of conservation. CARPE support should be maintained for a few years to enable CI to cover the operational costs.