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

Project / Sub-Project No.	CONGO BASIN FOREST PARTNERSHIP
Agreement	Cooperative Agreement 623-A-00-03-00064-00 under leader with Associate Award LAG-A-00-99-00048-00
Sub-Project Title	Lac Tele Lac Tumba Landscape, DRC Segment
Reporting Period	1 October, 2003 –30 September 2006
Date submitted	15 November 2006
Report completed by	Bila-Isia Inogwabini
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### 1. INTRODUCTION

*Name of landscape segment leader:* Bila-Isia Inogwabini (WWF)

*Landscape segment partners:* Bonobo Conservation Initiative (BCI)  
Innovative Resources Management (IRM)

*Total cost of agreement:*

	WWF	BCI	IRM	Total Agreement
USAID Funds	\$709,068.93	\$495,005.00	\$664,766.00	\$1,868,839.90
Cost Share	\$44,309.54	\$252,861.09	-	\$297,170.63
Total	\$753,378.47	\$747,866.09	\$664,766.00	\$2,166,010.50

### Objectives and Summary of Achievements

Zone	3Yr Benchmark	Achievements
Intermediate Result 1: Natural resources managed sustainably		
Indicator 1.1 Number of landscapes and other focal areas covered by land use plans		
LS	ROC & DRC: LU Planning Process Convened	Strategy document
DRC	50% of LUP design completed – (macro-zoning & drafted strategic plan)	Strategy Document 50% achieved including: [1] bio survey results from the remaining 50% of the LS [2] Socioecon survey final results [3] Macro-zoning map of LS: with different proposed LUZ demarcated [4] draft of a written strategy for the LUP, identifying key actors and actions necessary to curb the degradation of the biodiversity in the landscape.
Indicator 1.2 Number of different use zones (e.g., parks and Pas; CBNRM areas; forestry concessions; plantations) within landscapes with sustainable land use plans		
Mabli Scientific Reserve &	PLANNING PROCESS CONVENED AND 60% OF	Achieved: [1] Map of the Mabali reserve with demarcated

Adjacent Area	LAND USE PLAN DESIGN COMPLETED (Zoning of the Reserve, and draft interim management plan) Written Proposition for the extension of the Mabali Reserve (EXTENDED BY 21000ha)	limits, [2] participatory map of the proposed extension zone [3] socioecon report outlining: (a) local populations land needs, (b) defining local constituencies [4] written strategic plan for the extension zone [5] sensitization material (VCDs with a conservation message targeting special issue)
Bikoro-Itipo CBNRM	75% LUP DESIGN COMPLETED [Zoning of the CBNRM and interim management plan]	Strategic document 75% achieved including: [1] Bio and threats assessment report of the CBNRM [2] local-level meeting reports with agreed upon map of the CBNRM [3] a written strategic plan outlining steps towards the development of land use plan [4] maps of the CBNRM outlining local land use patterns, locally defined zones of important animal and plant species
Ngombe CBNRM	75% LUP DESIGN COMPLETED [Zoning of the CBNRM and interim management plan]	Strategic document 75% achieved including: [1] Bio and threats assessment report of the CBNRM [2] local-level meeting reports with agreed upon map of the CBNRM [3] a written strategic plan outlining steps towards the development of land use plan [4] maps of the CBNRM outlining local land use patterns, locally defined zones of important animal and plant species [5] Land rights assessment report
Bobangi CBNRM	75% LUP DESIGN COMPLETED [Zoning of the CBNRM and interim management plan]	Strategic document with notation to indicate 75% achieved. For this 75% tranche that includes: [1] Bio and threats assessment report of the CBNRM [2] local-level meeting reports with agreed upon map of the CBNRM [3] a written strategic plan outlining steps towards the development of land use plan [4] maps of the CBNRM outlining local land use patterns, locally defined zones of important animal and plant species [5] Land rights assessment report

**2. MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND RESULTS**

The overall landscape benchmark was *LU PLANNING PROCESS CONVENED in the ROC and LU PLANNING PROCESS CONVENED and 50% LUP DESIGN COMPLETED in the DRC segment*. Because there was little data available, the Lac Tumba segment began by collecting biological, bio-physical and socio-economic data to inform the LUP, particularly in assigning biological and other use functions for each piece of land. The project also conducted an assessment of local needs through numerous stakeholders meetings. Major achievements of this three-year exercise were:

1. Partners together completed a segment-wide biological survey including the assessment of habitat quality, large mammal inventories, and fish stock assessment.

2. Partners also completed segment-wide socio-economic surveys, including a stakeholder assessment, economic assets, economic potential, perceived threats and opportunities for biodiversity conservation.
3. Results of these socio-economic and biological surveys helped:
  - i. Assess and document threats and populations of large mammals across the landscape segment, discovering new populations of bonobos, elephants and forest buffaloes where they were either thought to have disappeared or totally absent.
  - ii. Identify and sketch the map of an important biodiversity zone, the proposed Lac Tumba IUCN Category VI Reserve, totaling 750,000 ha. The process of creating the reserve was initiated.
  - iii. Identify and delineate three proposed CBNRMs (Bobangi, Bikoro-Itipo, and Ngombe) totaling 277,425 ha. Functions were attributed to each proposed CBNRM using a participatory approach during the mapping, the attribution of functions to each micro-zone, and defining strategies for the future.
  - iv. Identify and delineate 8 proposed locally managed fishing basins over the segment, totaling 630,000 ha and 4 proposed seasonal conservation zones in the Lake Tumba itself, totaling 480.3 ha or 0.63% of the lake.
  - v. Identify and delineate 2 community-conservation zones: the Malebo zone in the southern part and Botuali-Mbie-Mokele/Motaka and Nkoso near Lake Tumba using a participatory approach. The Malebo community-conservation zone is not included in the proposed reserve scheme whereas the Botuali-Bosango zone is included in the proposed zone. The same zone also greatly overlapped with the proposed Ngombe CBNRM.
4. Partners have developed strategy documents for each of the proposed zones, indicating next steps and potential partners to carry out identified priorities for the management of natural resources in these zones.
5. CBFP partners also trained a number of Congolese researchers both in biological techniques as well as in socio-economic research. Minimal equipment, infrastructure support, and new research opportunities were also provided along with various training sessions for personnel of NGOs and national institutions, including the Universities of Kinshasa and Kisangani, SPIAF, CREF, and ICCN. In particular, great effort was devoted to helping to revitalize CREF, the only research institution located in the segment, to establish Mabali Reserve/Research Center as a management station for CBRs and to conduct on-going conservation work in the region. Local communities were trained in different legal procedures to reclaim their rights to natural resources and in management techniques for small grants and micro-credits they received from CBFP partners.

6. Media, sensitization and social mobilization outreach activities were also carried out to engage local communities in the land use planning process and to become more responsive to the plight facing their natural resources. Accomplishments included several stakeholder meetings to designate CBNRMs, translating the Forestry Code into Lingala, TV broadcasting sessions, radio emissions, national and international media including journals and television. These activities generated impacts both in this landscape and beyond and mobilized cooperation between provincial, national authorities, law enforcement officials, local populations and the CARPE partners.
7. Livelihood activities were implemented to help local populations find alternative sources of monetary incomes as well as sustainable natural resource management activities. The project disbursed funds for 18 small grants to support traditional fishing, agriculture and fish farming activities. A sustainable agriculture program was also implemented by BCI in coordination with SECID at Botuali and Mabali.

<b>3. SUCCESS STORY(IES)</b>
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In November 2005, WWF teams, led by the segment leader Bila-Isia Inogwabini, discovered what may be the largest population of bonobos ever recorded. During an 8-month biological survey across the Lac Tumba Landscape in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), WWF scientists made some of the most significant discoveries in the history of this species. The discovery of this population is real success for the biodiversity conservation since this population contains the highest density and largest group size of bonobos ever recorded. The bonobos were also found farther south in a habitat completely different from that in which other populations have been known to live. This discovery provides a new insight into a species about which little was previously known. The results could mean that bonobos prefer mixed gallery forest/savanna habitat to the dense rainforest in which they were previously known. One reason for their success in the forest/savanna habitat could be that there are fruits available year round, instead of just seasonal fruits in the dense forest. Also, being the closest human relatives, bonobos often walk upright. One theory as to why they prefer this forest/savanna habitat may be that it gives them much more opportunity to walk upright than in dense tropical forest where they must travel from tree to tree.

A second reason why the discovery of this population is a real success is that the newly discovered population lives on a private cattle ranch run by a Belgian. The ranch is not in a protected area, but the rancher has signed a letter of intent to pursue a joint tourism venture with the local community, provided that WWF raises complementary funding, including a proposal for GDA that might benefit from the US Agency for International Development (USAID). The ranch features a guest house and the only airstrip in the area; a visitor's center is also being built.

A third reason that makes of this discovery a success story is that the '*discovered*' population of bonobos is in a region that has a strong traditional authority power, which has been protecting the bonobos for years due to traditional taboos that consider bonobos

as their long lost ancestor. The Bateke of Bolobo, Bandundu, are in one of very few areas in the DRC where a traditional chief holds strong traditional authority, directly linked to the historical times of King Makoko who signed the agreement with Henry Morton Stanley. This is a rare place where traditional authority is combined with politico-administrative constitutional power in the hands of one single individual, making of the Chief of Bateke the single strongest authority in the region. People in the Chiefdom of Bateke Plateaux have mythical ties with their traditional hierarchy and comply with traditional chief's guidance, advice and orders. Upon discovering the bonobos, a new population of elephants and forest buffaloes in the region, WWF has started a community conservation program to protect the bonobos in the remaining gallery forests, using the traditional authority power rather than going through the conventional conservation schemes that would, in such cases, bring in armed guards and other patrol personnel. The local chiefs, both traditional and the administrative hierarchy, publicly announced their commitment to support sustainable resource management and protect charismatic species such as bonobos and forest elephants. Therefore, in implementing this project, WWF is building on the historical will of the local populations to protect their heritage and their wildlife and other natural resources from over-harvesting and on the commitment shown by these populations to improve their livelihood by using sustainable techniques, if these become available.

However, all is not rosy and there is still more work to protect this fragile habitat system. The survey discovered that gallery forests in the Malebo region (26,520 km<sup>2</sup>) have been heavily logged in the last 25 years, and conflicts between industrial and/or anarchical artisanal timber exploitation have created a strong feeling that disasters might occur when forests are cut and washed away. This sole factor has sharpened the conscience of rural populations who voiced their will to be part of all negotiations and discussions concerning their natural resources. The main success of the community conservation program will be in implementing conservation activities which are planned and executed by local communities. WWF is assisting only with technical inputs.

Although it's not a formal protected area, the area is protected from cattle rustling, so the bonobo groups are not hunted for bush meat, the primary reason for bonobo declines elsewhere. Other threats to the species include slash-and-burn agriculture, logging, war, fragmented populations and slow reproductive rate, human migration, and hunting for medicinal and magical purposes.

Although the planned community conservation program deviates from the mainstream conservation philosophy and the forest is not a formal protected area, WWF believes that local support is critical in saving wildlife and other biodiversity fragments all over the world. The objectives of the Malebo Community Conservation Project can be reasonably reached, provided that the local populations are shown sustainable ways in which they can earn a livelihood. Without alternatives for sustainable livelihoods every conservation project is doomed to failure.



The Bateke Traditional Chiefs making a speech welcoming the community-conservation program in their land and dancing to celebrate the agreement reached with the WWF DRC Program (*Photo: WWF Lac Tumba*)





The CARPE and WWF teams also celebrating the agreement with the traditional chiefs of the Bateke Plateaux for the community-conservation activities centered on the bonobo and elephant conservation

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The project had a slow start because WWF was not present on the ground but operated through its sub-grantees. In those early days, even though the CARPE strategic objective was clearly stated many people had no clear understanding of what was expected of them. This led to difficulties in implementing the initial work plan on a timely basis and to some confusion as to what role each partner would play in the overall segment activities. Implementing NGOs concentrated in zones that clearly were in their interest while leaving out other important zones. Despite these difficulties and hard logistical conditions for working in this landscape and the challenges in building local capacity, significant progress has been achieved toward CARPE goals. This progress will result in substantial gains for conservation and more sustainable NRM—*if and only if* the work in progress continues to receive adequate support and the institutional capacities of the DRC are built and become strong. The overall CARPE process will be successful only when all the national governance structure, including the provincial and local levels is empowered to enforce regulations and engage local communities to bear their share of responsibilities. Therefore, the people-centered approach to biodiversity conservation which has demonstrated in the Lac Tumba segment its potential for mobilizing and organizing communities to conduct landscape land use planning as the basis for sustainable biodiversity conservation should be expanded to the entire landscape segment and be implemented by other CARPE partners and stakeholders.

#### 5. LESSONS LEARNED

Three important lessons were:

1. National capacities to undertake the tasks that lead to the LUP are, at very best, minimal and there is a great need for all projects to invest a great portion of their

- resources in training and local capacity building if they hope to have any legacy in sound management of natural resources.
2. Building trusting partnerships with local communities is the *sine qua non* condition, yet a difficult one, for achieving LUP. It is, therefore, essential to continue sustained sensitization, information sharing and negotiations with local communities at all the stages of the development process, from the planning through the implementation and evaluation.
  3. Our small grant and micro-credit experiences demonstrated that only when people find alternative ways to earn a living will they will buy in to conserving the biological diversity and natural resources in their territories.
  4. In conjunction with the above point, our experience both in Malebo and the Botuali areas indicated that there are alternatives to the known conservation approaches and that one of these is through the existing communities traditional hierarchy and cultural roots.

<b>6. RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
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After three years of the program implementation, there is a set of recommendations that are necessary to increase the program effectiveness:

1. Despite changes in partnership agreements, there is a great need to continue with the work already started in the region aligning this support to the drafted strategy documents for each use zone. This will not only achieve the benefits of the investment made thus far but increase our chances of success.
2. There is a greater need to harmonize efforts (i.e. creation of Type VI PA) to avoid sending conflicting messages to local communities and provide a clear direction for different activities. This is not only for CARPE partners but should include other stakeholders, including different state agencies.
3. CARPE should play a great role at the early stage of the second phase in setting objectives and expected products, rather than waiting until later stages.
4. There needs to be better communication among partners and true, supportive partnership, with more technical support from each partner and concerted co-fundraising efforts.
5. CARPE has been evolving in parallel with different states. We will only be successful if different governments of the central African countries feel that this program is in their national interests. There should be more attention paid to political visibility of the program and, in some cases, ministerial agencies should be given some role in implementing activities that only their institutions can actually implement, with material support from USAID.