

CARPE Communications Strategy – Draft Document

INTRODUCTION

This strategy has been developed to ensure that CARPE communications goals are tied into the program's programmatic goals, that CARPE has a frame of reference for its communications program and that all the actions taken and decisions made in this respect concur with predefined and agreed-upon programmatic goals.

CARPE's goals are to reduce the pattern of biodiversity loss and deforestation in the Congo Basin and to avert the negative impacts of the global climate change. To that end, CARPE works to identify and prioritize threats to the integrity of the region's forests, and to ensure that African decision-makers have access to information about natural resources and the ability to use this information to secure Central African livelihoods.

The work of the Communications Program is to help CARPE and its partners achieve these goals. Through a series of questions, the strategy addresses the issue of communications for CARPE at both the internal and external levels. It does so in identifying the goals, the key audiences, the changes, and actions/reactions expected, the key messages, the channels and products, and the responsibilities of all the parties involved in its implementation.

The approach behind the strategy is to have a long-term vision while working on short-term phases. These phases have been or will be attributed programmatic objectives to which the corresponding communications objectives will be tied. Just as the objectives of these periods are set for the attainment of the final programmatic goals, then the communications objectives corresponding to these periods are steps towards the achievement of the final communications goals. These intermediary objectives, in other words, are milestones along the road.

WHY DO WE COMMUNICATE?

CARPE COMMUNICATIONS GOAL...

In documenting this strategy and developing a communications program, CARPE is trying to achieve two goals:

1. Promote, disseminate and share the information CARPE and its partners in the United States and in the region have gathered or will certainly gather through the course of current and future CARPE phases.

2. Develop, through a series of products and other opportunities, an identity for CARPE as a distinct and recognizable umbrella entity that is working to preserve the integrity of forest resources in Central Africa.

CARPE and its local and international partners have gathered and will continue to gather information critical to both the Congo Basin region (deforestation, biodiversity loss) and the world at large (climate change). This information needs to be made available to the interested parties and decision-makers if we are to:

- Raise awareness;
- Engender greater accountability;
- Maximize the number of people participating in CARPE's process, efforts and activities; and
- Increase the likelihood of achieving CARPE's goals

Furthermore, while complex in its organizational structure, CARPE was designed in way that ensures that a certain level of coherence is maintained among its different components. Thus, though CARPE emanates from a multitude of organizations, these organizations have engendered a distinct and new entity that is not merely the sum of their parts. CARPE's identity can be promoted without interfering with the identity of its partner organizations. Instead, promoting CARPE should be envisioned as an opportunity for promoting its partners as well – international as well as local.

Accordingly, the role of the Communications Program is to:

- Promote CARPE's and CARPE partners' products, messages, and activities;
- Provide Central African decision-makers and other stakeholders with information about forest resources in Central Africa;
- Provide researchers and practitioners with information about biodiversity conservation in the Congo Basin; and
- Ensure that information flows at all levels within the CARPE structure and network.

Indicators to that accomplishment will be that:

- Environmentally sound policies are adopted by national governments;
- A network of collaboration is developed and widened among practitioners and researchers in Central Africa;
- Civil society and local communities are more involved and take responsibility for the sustainable use of natural resources;
- Information is willingly and regularly circulated within CARPE; and
- CARPE identity is developed.

WITH WHOM DO WE WANT TO COMMUNICATE?

CARPE TARGET AUDIENCES...

While the information gathered by CARPE and its partners might be of interest to a wide range of audiences, the following categories have been identified as key audiences for CARPE:

- Officials in governments (Executive, Legislative, Judiciary, Diplomatic)
- USAID (Global, Africa, regional/national missions)
- Other donors
- Technical community (Projects/Programs, Ministries, Universities, NGOs, etc.)
- Private sector
- General Public (Local urban and rural communities, kids, etc.)

The above is not a closed or hierarchically-arranged list.

WHAT DO WE COMMUNICATE?

CARPE KEY MESSAGES...

Over the past years, CARPE has developed a resource base of information that is expected to expand as long as the program is implemented. Nevertheless, not all these elements of information are in and of themselves messages, and the relationship between the two is similar to the one between raw material and finished product. To become a message, the information should be tailored to target an audience and a result. The key message, then, is the one, among a wide variety of messages, most likely to reach and motivate a specific audience to adopt the change or take the (re)action desired.

CARPE will use the lessons that will come out of its different phases as "gold mines" for its messages. CARPE will determine, in each of its four themes, the messages most likely to have the greatest impact on its target audiences and produce the expected outcomes. For CARPE phase I the briefing sheets key concepts will be used as key messages. These messages and the original sources from which they derive – including but not limited to reports by grantees, reports by thematic groups, studies and research papers published by CARPE or CARPE-related persons – must be made available to the Communications staff.

CARPE COMMUNICATIONS CHANNELS AND PRODUCTS...

CARPE Communications staff and CARPE partners will identify and profitably use the opportunities offered to them to make more available what CARPE and the partners have learned about biodiversity conservation and climate change in Central Africa. They will identify and profitably use the most appropriate channels and intermediaries, and develop suitable and cost-effective products for doing this. The channels will be modern as well as traditional and the products will be electronic, printed, and visual, as well as events. [See Appendix 1, Communications Products and Appendix 2, Channels and Intermediaries].

WHO DOES WHAT?

RESPONSIBILITIES...

CARPE Communications staff in Libreville and Washington will manage the Communications Program and work closely with CARPE partners for its implementation. They will ensure that the spirit of this strategy is kept up and that all decisions and actions with regard to communications fit within the approved strategy. The Communications staff will benefit from the collaboration and assistance of all participants in the CARPE network.

The Communications Officer in Washington will:

- Manage and implement the Communications Program at the Headquarters Office;
- Maintain and develop communications with CARPE international partners;
- Make more available in Washington information about CARPE and CARPE partners; and
- Coordinate activities between the Headquarters in Washington, the Field Office in Libreville, and the Focal Points in the region.

The Communications Officer in Libreville will:

- Manage and implement the Communications Program at the Regional Office
- Maintain and develop communications with local partners; and
- Make more available in the region the information about CARPE and CARPE partners.

BSP Communications Director will:

- Act as a strategic consultant to the overall CARPE Communications Program;
- Maintain capacity building for the CARPE Communications team; and
- Oversee production activities for all communication products.

The CARPE Partners will:

- Collaborate with the communications team to:
 - ✓ Develop and disseminate products
 - ✓ Provide the Communications staff with necessary information (reports, publications, projects of communications, etc.) and resources (financial, logistical, informational, technical, etc.) for the implementation of the strategy.

The Focal Points will:

- Assist the communications team in the implementation of the program by:
 - ✓ Facilitating and developing communications with partners in their countries
 - ✓ Making more available locally what CARPE and its partners have learned about doing conservation in the Congo Basin
 - ✓ Providing the communications team with the necessary information (reports, plans and opportunities of communications, etc.).

Conclusion

This strategy provides the guiding framework. Its implementation will be accomplished through the development of action plans that will clearly articulate and tie together activities, responsibilities, and resources for given and agreed-upon time frames.

This strategy is the articulation of priorities, needs and opportunities in terms of communications as they appear at the current state of development of CARPE. Other elements can be incorporated throughout the implementation of next phases based on priorities and resources identified throughout the CARPE network.

Appendix 1 – Communication Products

- Issue Briefs (HQ Briefing Sheets)
- Regional Project Briefs (FO Briefing Sheets)
- Reports
 - ✓ SOT Reports
 - ✓ Local Grantee Reports
 - ✓ Workshops/Meetings Proceedings
- ✓ Studies/Publications
 - ✓ Masters and PhDs Theses
 - ✓ Local Grantee studies
 - ✓ SOT studies and publications
- Posters
- Calendars
- CARPE Infos Newsletter
- Articles in peer-reviewed journals and newspapers
- Events
 - ✓ Brown bags
 - ✓ National Conferences
 - ✓ Seminars
 - ✓ Workshops
 - ✓ Meetings

- Press releases
- Video documentaries
- CDRoms

Appendix 2 – Channels and Intermediaries

Direct

- Electronic communications
 - ✓ CARPE website
 - ✓ Partners websites (create links)
 - ✓ Listservs
- Direct interaction
 - ✓ Meetings
 - ✓ Workshops
 - ✓ Brown bags
 - ✓ One-on-one discussions

Indirect

- Environmental education programs
- Traditional village communications channels & urban equivalent
- Media
 - ✓ TVs
 - ✓ Radios
 - ✓ Newspapers
- Companies, associations, etc.
- Public events

CARPE Communications Action Plan

Activities	RESPONSIBILITIES	DEADLINE	AUDIENCES	BUDGET
CARPE Infos Vol.1 N°4	F.O.	15 May 2000	Officials in governments Technical community Private sector General public	
CARPE Infos Vol.2 N°1	F.O.	15 October 2000	Officials in governments Technical community Private sector General public	
Calendar 2001	F.O. Design, Pictures, Print, Dissemination F.P. Pictures, Dissemination H.Q. Dissemination Ptns Pictures, Dissemination	30 November 2000	Officials in governments Technical community Private sector General public	
Issue Briefs	H.Q. Select activities/grantees Review items Coordinate translation Print L.P. Prepare and contribute items	December 2000	Officials in governments Donors Technical community Private sector General public	
Regional Briefs	F.O. Select activities/grantees Review items Print L.P. Prepare and contribute items H.Q. Consultative role	December 2000	Officials in governments Technical community Private sector General public	

CARPE Communications Action Plan

Activities	RESPONSIBILITIES	DEADLINE	AUDIENCES	BUDGET
Brown bags Yaoundé Libreville DC	H.Q./FO: Select activities/grantees Logistical & financial arrangements LP : Prepare & contribute papers	Starting May 2000 (see schedule)	Technical community General public	
3rd CEFDHAC Meeting	3 papers to be presented by CARPE partners CARPE storyline by USAID/BSP	June 5, 2000	Officials in governments Technical community Donors Private sector Local communities	
NTFP restitution workshop in Limbé	USFS and BSP	July 2000	Grantees, Practitioners	
CD-ROMs	H.Q.: Coordinate conversion of Synthesis document and technical reports	December 2000	Technical community Private sector	
Posters	F.O. Design, Pictures, Print, Dissemination F.P. Pictures, Dissemination H.Q. Dissemination Ptns Pictures, Dissemination	?	Officials in governments Technical community Private sector General public	
CARPE partners Grantee Reports	H.Q/F.O: Dissemination to CARPE webmaster for posting on website	Ongoing	Technical community Private sector	
Advisors Meetings	H.Q: Logistical & financial arrangements	October 2000		

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Activities	RESPONSIBILITIES	DEADLINE	AUDIENCES	BUDGET
Articles in (peer-reviewed) journals and newspapers	CARPE partners	Ongoing	Technical community	
National Conferences Cameroon Gabon	FO/HQ: Select activities Logistical & financial arrangmts	May 2001	Officials in governments Technical community Private sector Donors	

Legend:

FO: CARPE Regional Field Office in Gabon
 FP: CARPE Focal Points – Cameroon and DRC
 HQ: CARPE Staff in Washington, DC