

USFS-CARPE III

5 Year Strategy

This 5-year strategy is centered around the USAID/CARPE program and USFS activities planned as part of support to the CARPE CAFEC and EMAPS programs. The below activities represent not only CARPE funded activities implemented by USFS, but also additional USFS activities from complementary USAID and US State Dept funding for the SilvaCarbon (National Monitoring Reporting and Verification (MRV) systems in DRC, RoC and Cameroon) and CBREDD programs (climate change and REDD capacity building) respectively in the region. The strategy thus makes an effort to integrate the totality of these funds within the CARPE Intermediate Results Framework to effectively communicate and coordinate the activities and reporting.

Background

The US Forest Service (USFS), through the Office of International Programs, is an implementing partner in the US Agency for International Development's (USAID) Central African Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE), providing targeted technical and capacity building assistance aimed at improving forest management in the Congo Basin.

USFS has supported CARPE and CARPE partners since the beginning of CARPE Phase I in a variety of technical disciplines, but primarily focused on land-use planning, forest zoning, forest inventory, and fire management. This has manifested itself through a diverse array of training workshops, short-term technical assistance, long-term technical experts, and the elaboration of guidance and best practices for partners in the Congo Basin Region.

USFS CARPE Strategy

In CARPE 3, USFS proposes to build on past USFS activities in the region, as well as expand into some new areas:

- in support of CARPE partners (CAFEC) in COMIFAC priority landscapes;
- in response to requests from USAID and US Embassies in the region; and
- in alignment and coordination with national climate change strategies:
 - Cameroon: Support will be given to MINFOF, MINEPED and the National REDD+ steering committee in support of component 4 (NFI and MRV) of their RPP.
 - DRC: Support to CNREDD, MECNT and partners to implement the seven pillars of the national REDD strategy, focusing on the pillars of Land-use Planning, Governance and Forests.
 - ROC: Support will be given to CN-REDD, CNIAF, and ACFAP in support of components 2 (REDD+ Strategy Preparation: Assessment and Options) and 4 (NFI and MRV) of the RPP.

The overall strategy of USFS within CARPE can be categorized into three (3) areas, related to the CARPE intermediate results:

- 1) **IR 1 and 2: Targeted forest landscapes sustainably managed / Biodiversity threats in targeted forest landscapes mitigated**
 - a. Supporting the CAFEC partners through the provision of USFS technical expertise to implement the landscape management plans in the eight (8) CARPE supported COMIFAC priority landscapes for sustainable forest management and biodiversity conservation results.
 - b. Supporting CAFEC partners to link to regional and national institutions and the implementation of activities and communication/ownership of results in the landscapes.
- 2) **IR 3: Policy and regulatory framework supporting sustainable forest and biodiversity conservation**
 - a. Building the capacity of national and regional institutions to execute their mandates in sustainable forest management and biodiversity conservation.
 - b. Building the capacity of national and regional institutions to have more integrated roles in the implementation of activities and ownership of results from the CARPE supported COMIFAC priority landscapes.
- 3) **IR 4: Capacity increased and strengthened at regional, national and local level to monitor forest cover change, greenhouse gas emissions and biodiversity**
 - a. Building the capacity of national institutions to design and implement their NFI and MRV systems
 - b. Building the capacity of CAFEC partners to establish MRV systems
 - c. Building the technical capacity of regional and national stakeholders surrounding REDD+ and MRV issues

IR 1 & 2 - Targeted forest landscapes sustainably managed / Biodiversity threats in targeted forest landscapes mitigated

Supporting the CAFEC partners through the provision of USFS technical expertise

USFS aims to establish strong partnerships in each of the eight (8) CARPE supported COMIFAC priority landscapes. CAFEC CARPE partners will have the lead in the overall direction of CARPE activities in the landscape and work with USFS to identify targeted areas of technical assistance. USFS technical assistance will seek to support the overall implementation of the landscape management plans as well as build local institutional and community capacity to do so themselves.

In years 1-2, FY14-15, USFS will work with CAFEC partners to design and implement initial technical assistance missions. Certain COMIFAC priority landscapes, like Lac Tumba and MLW, already have ongoing collaborations with USFS, so these will continue. Many other landscapes will require detailed consultations with CAFEC partners to define the objectives and specific technical areas of support. By the end of FY15, USFS hopes to have clearly defined objectives and technical support areas in each of the eight (8) CARPE supported COMIFAC priority landscapes. Initial technical support missions will have been carried out and longer-term capacity building strategies developed.

In years 3-5, FY16-18, follow-on monitoring, capacity building and more advanced technical trainings will be pursued.

2-year Expected Result: USFS has defined objectives and technical areas of support in each of the eight (8) CARPE supported COMIFAC priority landscapes, with initial missions executed.

5-year Expected Result: USFS has built local capacity in each of the eight (8) CARPE supported COMIFAC priority landscapes to the level where local stakeholders can execute activities in the targeted technical area with minimal assistance.

5-year Expected Result: Local stakeholders in each of the eight (8) CARPE supported COMIFAC priority landscapes understand why new or adapted technical methodologies that USFS works with them on are important to the sustainable management of the landscape.

Supporting CAFEC partners to link to regional and national institutions

USFS has established government to government partnerships with several national and regional institutions. USFS is working to build these institutions' capacity to execute their mandate (IRs 3 and 4). As such USFS can also strengthen linkages between these institutions and CAFEC activities in COMIFAC priority landscapes, within the context of the capacity that USFS is trying to build.

Because USFS has representatives already based or planned to be based within these institutions, USFS can help facilitate linkages and understanding of CAFEC activities. This would be closely coordinated with the CARPE SCAEMPS program.

3-year Expected Result: National representatives of the national zoning and planning institutions (DIAF and CNIAC/ACFAP) have visited all eight (8) of the COMIFAC priority landscapes where the CAFEC program is active to better understand CARPE partner activities.

5-year Expected Result: National zoning and planning institutions (DIAF and CNIAC/ACFAP) validate four (4) sub-national land-use plans that are supported by CAFEC partners.

5-year Expected Result: COMIFAC representatives have visited all eight (8) of the CAFEC landscapes to better understand CARPE partner field activities.

IR3 – Policy and regulatory framework supporting sustainable forest and biodiversity conservation

Building the capacity of national and regional institutions to execute their mandates

and

Building the capacity of national and regional institutions to link to landscape activities

USFS has a comparative advantage as a US Government land management agency to work alongside partner government land management agencies, building long-term partnerships and strengthening technical capacity. Government institutions in the Congo Basin lack comprehensive technical capacity at the human and institutional level to execute their mandated responsibilities in natural resource

management. As CARPE 3 moves towards implementation, it is imperative to have strong linkages and ownership of the work by national institutions. Through the provision of long-term advisors and recurring short and medium term experts, USFS will work with the below government institutions to build their capacity to be able to have integral roles in CARPE activity implementation, management and monitoring.

Democratic Republic of Congo – CARPE has supported USFS to work closely with the Forest Inventory and Zoning Department (DIAF) within the Ministry of Environment (MECNT) on forest zoning and inventory issues. Since 2009, USFS has supplied recurring medium-term advisors to DIAF, and since 2012, a full-time advisor based in the DIAF office. USFS supports DIAF to chair the National Zoning committee (CNPZ), as well as author guidelines on macro and micro zoning. A capable and involved DIAF in the national and landscape zoning processes is key to sustainability of CARPE investments in the landscapes.

USFS works closely with the UNREDD and FAO program to help DRC establish a functioning national forest inventory (NFI) program and monitoring, reporting and verification system (MRV). USFS will continue to support DIAF to design, develop and implement their NFI and MRV systems. (see also IR 4)

3-year Expected Result: National DIAF representatives have visited all five (5) DRC CAFEC landscapes to better understand CARPE partner field activities.

5-year Expected Result: DIAF has validated the landscape land-use (zoning) plans of three (3) DRC CAFEC landscapes.

5-year Expected Result: The DIAF macro and micro-zoning guides are used regularly as resources by government and civil society actors in at least 3 provinces.

5-year Expected Result: The CNPZ meets regularly and autonomously to make decisions on national zoning issues.

Republic of Congo – As CARPE 3 focuses its landscape interventions in DRC and RoC, USFS also proposes to focus capacity building on RoC institutions. The new RoC wildlife and protected area agency (ACFAP) has many technical and administrative capacity needs. USFS will work with ACFAP to define a similar longer-term role for USFS technical assistance to ACFAP, with a strong emphasis on strengthening their involvement in landscape activities, such as protected area management plan elaboration and implementation. USFS will work with WCS to build ACFAPs capacity especially surrounding the proposed protected areas in the Bateke and TNS landscapes.

The RoC forest zoning and inventory center (CNIAF) has similar responsibilities to DIAF. USFS will work with UNREDD to develop their NFI and MRV systems. Unlike DRC, UNREDD and FAO support does not currently plan to have a strong remote sensing component, so USFS and other USG agencies like USGS will especially support this aspect of capacity building, coordinating strongly with other CARPE partners like the University of Maryland and OSFAC.

3-year Expected Result: National CNIAF and ACFAP representatives have visited all three (3) RoC CAFEC landscapes to better understand CARPE partner field activities.

3-year Proposed Result¹: ACFAP has validated a standardized process for the elaboration of a protected area management plans.

5-year Expected Result: ACFAP has formally validated three (3) additional protected area management plans.

Regional – COMIFAC is a key regional actor, created by the regional Heads of State in 2004 in follow up to the 1999 Yaoundé Declaration to come together to protect the forests of the Congo Basin. With limited capacity to execute their mandate, USFS has supported COMIFAC through the CARPE program with a full-time advisor since 2012, focusing on regional policy harmonization and climate change issues. In CARPE 3, USFS will continue this support with additional focus on wildlife trafficking. In FY14 and FY15, the USFS advisor to COMIFAC will also collaborate with the US Dept of State on the Facilitation of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP).

RAPAC is a sub-organization of COMIFAC that has a regional harmonization role for protected area best practices and technical support. USFS has a strong partnership with RAPAC already through its land-use planning work, and will continue to support RAPAC to build their own capacity and work with national protected area agencies in the Congo Basin to build theirs in targeted issues, specifically focusing on protected area management planning.

3-year Expected Result: The COMIFAC Convergence Plan and Operational Plan is revised and validated to include wildlife trafficking and climate change issues.

5-year Expected Result: COMIFAC representatives have visited all eight (8) of the CAFEC landscapes to better understand CARPE partner field activities.

5-year Expected Result: The COMIFAC Executive Secretariat is significantly and regularly aware of the annual CARPE 3 program activities and results and able to effectively communicate them to the national forest ministries.

5-year Expected Result: A Heads of State Summit is held in the Congo Basin.²

5-year Expected Result: RAPAC has built capacity with national protected area agencies to elaborate and execute protected area management plans in at least five (5) Congo Basin countries.

5-year Expected Result: RAPAC is recognized as a regional protected area management resource institution.

¹ This is a proposed result. Actual results will depend on collaborative assessment of ACFAPs needs and capacity to be undertaken in FY2014.

² This assumes that the Congo Basin Country governments are supportive of such a summit.

Gabon – USFS has a strong partnership with the National Parks Agency in Gabon, ANPN, through past CARPE and USAID activities. ANPN currently has strong support from the Gabonese President to implement their mandate effectively and transparently, so a rare opportunity must be taken advantage of to establish functional park management capacity. Under CARPE 2, USFS supported ANPN to revamp their protected area management planning process, and will work with ANPN in CARPE 3 to better implement these management plans. Per ANPN’s request, there will be a focus on interpretive program development and implementation.

5-year Expected Result: At least four (4) Gabonese National Parks have interpretive programs designed and under implementation.

5-year Expected Result: ANPN has the technical capacity to implement interpretive programs at a national and park level.

Cameroon – USFS has strong international expertise on timber tracking. Cameroon is a key country for transit timber in the Congo Basin. USFS will explore working with the Cameroonian Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife to strengthen their capacity to effectively monitor and regulate timber trade.

5-year Expected Result: TBD based on initial assessment³

Other land management agencies - Through COMIFAC, USFS will potentially engage other forestry and protected area management agencies in other Congo Basin countries. Technical support could take many forms, but would likely be similar to other support programs listed above. This additional engagement will be dependent on direction and support from CARPE leadership.

5-year Expected Result: TBD based CARPE direction

IR4 - Capacity increased and strengthened at regional, national and local level to monitor forest cover change, greenhouse gas emissions and biodiversity

The activities below show how SilvaCarbon and CBREDD⁴ programs integrate with that of CARPE.

Building the capacity of national institutions to design and implement their NFI and MRV systems

As described above, USFS will work DIAF and CNIAF to design and implement the DRC and RoC NFI and MRV systems through the provision of recurring technical assistance, capacity building, remote technical reviews, and field implementation support. USFS will work closely with UNREDD/FAO and other supporting programs to ensure a complementary support coordinated closely with the National REDD+ Coordination (CNREDD). USFS will work closely with UMD, OSFAC and WRI.

³ It is possible that USFS does not intervene in this area in Cameroon, pending the results of an assessment undertaken in FY14.

⁴ The US State Dept (DoS) has funded USFS to implement a 2 year climate change capacity building program named CBREDD, and associated with SilvaCarbon. The focus is on regional and bilateral institutional capacity building on subjects related to REDD+, including working with educational institutions, students, as well as national ministry staff.

5-year Expected Result: DRC has a comprehensive NFI and MRV system designed and the core technical capacity to execute it.

5-year Expected Result: RoC has a comprehensive NFI and MRV system designed and the core technical capacity to execute it.

5-year Proposed Result⁵: CNIAF has a functioning and operational remote sensing laboratory to support the implementation of the NFI and MRV system, with a strong capacity building relationship with OSFAC.

Building the capacity of CAFEC partners to establish MRV systems

Because USFS is working with DIAF and CNIAF at the national levels, it is important that USFS support these institutions to also make linkages to sub-national MRV systems being designed and implemented by other CARPE partners. The two primary areas that currently hold potential are to work with WWF and Wildlife Works in the Mai N'Dombe REDD Pilot Program (Lac Tumba) and with AWF in the MLW landscape. In both areas, a close collaboration with Wildlife Works will also be necessary. Another possibility is to work with WCS in the Bateke landscape. USFS can support the CAFEC partners design MRV systems and support the national REDD institutions to effectively integrate this subnational MRV data to national databases and analyses.

5-year Expected Result: At least two (2) sub-national REDD+ MRV projects in CAFEC landscapes are integrated in their data management and methodology to national MRV systems.

USFS Staffing Strategy

USFS activities in the region will be implemented through a combination of long-term staff based in the region, short-term missions, trainings, and workshops, and DC-based coordination and management.

Regional and Cameroon: USFS will staff a key personnel as Regional Advisor to COMIFAC and Cameroon Country Coordinator. He/she will be seated with COMIFAC or COMIFAC partners and supported by at least one (1) technical and administrative assistant. Both will be based in Yaounde, with frequent travel to regional meetings. They will also support the CARPE core team as additional eyes and ears on the ground and coordinate with the SCAEMPS implementer.

DRC: USFS will staff a key personnel as DRC Country Coordinator. He/she will be seated in the DIAF office and supported by at least one (1) technical and administrative assistant. Both will be based in Kinshasa with occasional travel in the region. They will also support the CARPE core team as additional eyes and ears on the ground and coordinate with the SCAEMPS implementer.

Republic of Congo (RoC): USFS will staff a local activity coordinator to assist with program implementation. He/she will be based in the WCS office in Brazzaville. Additionally, with cofounding

⁵ This proposed result is a product of initial discussions with CNIAF and is dependent on more comprehensive assessment of the situation and needs.

from SilvaCarbon USFS could staff a 2 year or more position to support the CNIAF remote sensing laboratory.⁶

Gabon: USFS will share a part-time activity coordinator and ANPN liaison with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) based in ANPN.

Washington, DC: USFS will staff a Central Africa program manager to coordinate regional activities, coordinate with other CARPE partner Chief of Parties (COP) and act as primary point of contact for USAID. He/she will be supported by additional DC-based staff as needed.

⁶ See above note on initial discussions.