



## Request for Information

**Subject:** Central Africa regional initiative to advance biodiversity, conservation, forest management and climate change mitigation objectives across the Congo Basin.

**RFI Number:** 72066025RFI0001

**Issuance Date:** December 6, 2024

**Closing Date/Time:** January 6, 2025, at 5:30 PM Kinshasa local time

**Response Email:** [drcoaa@usaid.gov](mailto:drcoaa@usaid.gov) and [cnchangu@usaid.gov](mailto:cnchangu@usaid.gov)

USAID/Democratic Republic of the Congo's (DRC) Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE) is considering a new Central Africa regional initiative to advance its biodiversity conservation, forest management and climate change mitigation objectives across the Congo Basin. The new activity would support USAID and its partners by bringing in additional expertise, innovation, and resources to ensure that the combined impact of CARPE's programming in biodiversity conservation and forest protection are maximized.

The purpose of this communication is to obtain industry comment on the attached RFI. To that end, information obtained through this RFI will be held in confidence and will not be disclosed to the public unless specifically requested by responding sources. This RFI is open for comments from any interested party.

USAID's work in the Congo Basin region continues to face many challenges. Numerous threats and drivers impact biodiversity and forests, including armed conflicts, displacement of people, poor governance, poverty, artisanal mining, transhumance, unsustainable land use practices, shifting agriculture, charcoal production, and wildlife poaching and trafficking, among others. Coupled with the negative impacts of climate change, these challenges accelerate the rates of biodiversity and forest loss.

Current USAID activities, which are implemented by NGOs, private sector partners, and U.S. Government agencies, focus on managing protected areas, empowering communities, engaging the private sector, strengthening policy, and building capacity. For more details, please see the [CARPE Vision](#) document. The CARPE's [factsheet](#) summarizes current activities and achievements. However, the many complex challenges facing biodiversity and forests in this region require innovation and learning across CARPE's programs, and target policy interventions at a national and regional level. A well-planned and coordinated strategic approach is needed if we are going to achieve our objectives.

The new proposed activity aims to strengthen the implementation of the CARPE Vision in mitigating the drivers and threats of biodiversity and forest loss in Central Africa. It will focus on enhancing communications, highlighting progress and achievements, supporting rigorous monitoring, evaluation, and learning efforts, and facilitating coordination on essential regional processes in the Congo Basin (e.g.

mitigating climate change and countering wildlife trafficking). USAID will prioritize innovative approaches that support green enterprises, markets, and value chains, driving economic growth and increasing livelihood opportunities that align with our conservation goals.

A draft results framework has been developed for the proposed new activity (Table 1).

By issuing this RFI, USAID would like to solicit responses to the questions in Attachment 1 from a broad community of organizations. Your comments will be used to develop a design document that is clear, maximizes efficient coordination, and aligns with USAID/DRC and CARPE priorities. Not responding to this request does not preclude participation in any future solicitation.

This announcement is a Request for Information (RFI), not a Request for Proposals (RFP) or a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). Issuance of this RFI does not constitute any obligation on the part of the Government to procure supplies or services or to issue a solicitation. Further, the RFI does not represent any award commitment on the part of the Government or obligate the Government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of any response. USAID has no obligation to incorporate any information provided in response to this RFI into any future design.

Please send responses to this RFI via email to [drcoaa@usaid.gov](mailto:drcoaa@usaid.gov) and [cnchangu@usaid.gov](mailto:cnchangu@usaid.gov) with the subject title "Request for Information (RFI): "Central Africa regional initiative to advance biodiversity", no later than the date/time stated above. You will only receive an electronic confirmation acknowledging receipt of your response. No feedback will be provided on comments received.

Thank you for your interest and engagement in USAID programming.

Sincerely,

Jamie Lewis  
Agreement/Contracting Officer

**Attachments:**

ATTACHMENT 1: RFI Questions

ATTACHMENT 2: Charcoal Financial and Economic Assessment

ATTACHMENT 3: Ecotourism Assessment\_Cameroon

ATTACHMENT 4: Ecotourism Assessment\_Central African Republic

ATTACHMENT 5: Ecotourism Assessment\_DRC

ATTACHMENT 6: Ecotourism Assessment\_Gabon

ATTACHMENT 7: Ecotourism Assessment\_Republic of Congo

ATTACHMENT 8: Public GESI Analysis

ATTACHMENT 9: Regional Network Assessment of Civil Society

## ATTACHMENT 1: RFI Questions

Respondents can choose to answer all or some of the questions below. USAID appreciates brief and concise responses that will help inform activity planning. Please restrict the number of pages for responses to ten (10) pages maximum.

**Table 1. Draft Results Framework**

<b>Objective: Strengthen the implementation of the CARPE Vision in mitigating the drivers and threats of biodiversity and forest loss in Central Africa.</b>			
<i>IR 1. CARPE's results and achievements strengthened, quantified, and effectively communicated (across all CARPE Themes and Strategic Approaches)</i>	<i>IR 2. Increased civil society capacity and private sector investment to promote equitable forest and wildlife conservation and local community development (supports CARPE Themes 2 and 4)</i>	<i>IR 3. Effectiveness of Combating Wildlife Trafficking at national and regional levels improved (supports CARPE Theme 3)</i>	<i>IR 4. Sustainable finance mechanisms for forest and wildlife conservation developed (supports CARPE Theme 1)</i>
<p>Sub-IR 1.1 Collaboration, learning and adaptation applied to strengthen implementation of CARPE activities (including promoting implementation of recommendations of CARPE Political Economy, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion and other analyses as appropriate).</p> <p>Sub-IR 1.2 Monitoring of CARPE impacts at scale across the Congo Basin strengthened, including coordination of monitoring</p>	<p>Sub-IR 2.1 Civil society sectors and organizations which are most representative of target communities and sectors identified.</p> <p>Sub-IR 2.2 Capacity of civil society organizations to advocate for and implement programs strengthened.</p> <p>Sub-IR 2.3 Green enterprises and value chains with potential to contribute to forest and wildlife conservation identified.</p>	<p>Sub-IR 3.1 Strengthened participation of Central African governments in regional law enforcement networks such as the Lusaka Agreement Task Force (LATF).</p> <p>Sub-IR 3.2 International partner agencies (INTERPOL, UNODC, USFWS, others) supported to strengthen CWT in the region.</p> <p>Sub-IR 3.3 Non-governmental and civil society organizations</p>	<p>Sub-IR 4.1 Countries assisted in the development and implementation framework for their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).</p> <p>Sub-IR 4.2 Innovative sustainable finance mechanisms for biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation identified, developed and tested in the Congo Basin.</p> <p>Sub-IR 4.3 Increased climate financial resources mobilized and</p>

<p>activities and carrying out specific data collection as required.</p> <p>Sub-IR 1.3 Communications improved across CARPE, including strengthening investigative and good news journalism, website and internet presence, and political visibility.</p>	<p>Sub-IR 2.4 Policy environment improved to create incentives for green enterprises and value chains.</p> <p>Sub-IR 2.5 Grants awarded to facilitate civil society and private sector actors targeted at developing sustainable and scalable solutions for forest and wildlife conservation and local community development.</p>	<p>supported to catalyze government CWT actions.</p>	<p>community-based financing structures supported.</p>
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## General

1. Will the activity as outlined by the results framework in Table 1 significantly strengthen CARPE's impact? What additions or modifications may strengthen approaches taken by this activity?
2. Is it feasible to achieve each of the results included in this framework within a five year time frame?
3. What other results would need to be added (or revised) in order to achieve the overall objective?
4. How can CARPE most effectively learn from and implement the findings of recent analyses covering Gender, Countering Wildlife Trafficking, civil society engagement, ecotourism, and other topics? Refer to the attachments for copies of recent analyses and relevant reports. How can these findings best be integrated into this results framework?

## IR 1. CARPE's results and achievements strengthened, quantified, and effectively communicated (across all CARPE Themes and Strategic Approaches)

5. How can a diverse array of implementing partners, with differing expertise, approaches to conservation and forest management issues, and national and regional mandates be brought together most effectively to ensure learning of lessons and institutionalization of experience and capacity across the Congo Basin? How can this be done to contribute to the overall effectiveness and sustainability of CARPE's programming?
6. How can CARPE ensure that new research findings and the development of international best practices are incorporated into the implementation of Activity interventions?
7. How can CARPE most effectively measure its overall impact across the Congo Basin, ensuring that partners collect data in a comparable way and that broad-scale trends in biodiversity, carbon-emissions, and human well-being are monitored in relation to CARPE's programming?
8. What other approaches could be incorporated into this upcoming activity to strengthen the effectiveness of CARPE's programming?

**IR 2. Increased civil society capacity and private sector investment to promote equitable forest and wildlife conservation and local community development (supports CARPE Themes 2 and 4)**

9. How can USAID identify civil society organizations that genuinely represent and fight for the interests of forest dependent communities in key areas of the Congo Basin? How can USAID support capacity building for these organizations to increase the impact of their work?
10. This Activity will operate in a region with one of the most difficult political and economic environments in the world. This operating environment is a particular challenge for responsible, law-abiding private sector partners. How can businesses and private sector partners of all sizes and types be best encouraged to develop green value chains which support biodiversity conservation and sustainable forest management?

**IR 3. Effectiveness of Combating Wildlife Trafficking at national and regional levels improved (supports CARPE Theme 3)**

11. Beyond well managed protected areas, how can wildlife law enforcement be more effective nationally and across borders in Central Africa? What is the best approach to encourage and facilitate this?

**IR 4. Sustainable finance mechanisms for forest and wildlife conservation developed (supports CARPE Theme 1)**

12. How can CARPE best support countries to implement NDCs which will both attract significant global investment and result in major reductions in deforestation and carbon emissions?

13. What new and innovative financial mechanisms could CARPE use to provide long-term support for biodiversity conservation and low-emission development in the Congo Basin?
14. Who are the key stakeholders that can contribute to developing sustainable finance mechanisms and how can indigenous and local communities be included in the development and implementation of these mechanisms?