

Scope of Work

Project Name:	USAID Forest and Biodiversity Support Activity
Contract No.:	72060520C00001
Consultant Title:	Specialist for regional situation assessment on combating wildlife trafficking in Central Africa

USAID’s Forest and Biodiversity Support Activity (FABS) is calling for proposals from qualified individuals/organizations to produce situation assessments on combating wildlife trafficking (CWT) in Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Gabon, and the Republic of the Congo.

1.0 Background

USAID’s Forest and Biodiversity Support Activity

The goal of USAID’s Forest and Biodiversity Support Activity (FABS) is to assist the Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE) and other environmental stakeholders in Central Africa to implement strategies and actions that address the large-scale threats to biodiversity conservation and forest management. The Activity focuses on three interconnected Intermediate Results (IRs):

1. Leadership and participation of diverse local organizations and private sector strengthened;
2. Policy, regulatory, and enabling environment improved; and
3. Innovative and evidence-based approaches adopted and institutionalized within conservation and forest sectors.

FABS engages closely with a broad network of institutions including civil society, private sector, government, and other conservation and development practitioners across the Congo Basin to build sustainable local institutions with the capacity to generate new analysis and evidence to support policy reforms and implement innovative conservation approaches. Underpinning these objectives is the Activity’s collaborating, learning, and adapting (CLA) approach to improve knowledge sharing, communications, and learning across conservation networks in the Congo Basin.

Wildlife trafficking in the Congo Basin

Central Africa’s Congo Basin is one of the most biodiverse regions in the world, its terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems serving as habitat for more than 10,000 species of plants, 400 species of mammals, 1,000 species of birds, and 700 species of fish.¹ The forests of the Congo Basin are home to numerous endangered wildlife species, some of which are endemic to the region, including forest elephants, lowland and mountain gorillas, chimpanzees, bonobos, pangolins and okapis. Its savannas also provide habitat for antelopes, buffalo, giraffes, lions, savanna elephants, and many other species.

The region’s wildlife is threatened by bushmeat hunting and wildlife trafficking, as well as habitat loss resulting from expanding smallholder agriculture, timber extraction, mining and infrastructure. Wildlife and wildlife products, such as ivory and pangolin scales, are trafficked on a lucrative international market which attracts violence to the region, increases corruption, and funds criminal syndicates. The region’s growing bushmeat trade represents a major threat to its forest ecosystems and the livelihoods of millions

¹ USAID / Environmental Incentives (2022), Vision for Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE)

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of people in rural communities. The wildlife in approximately 75 per cent of Central Africa's forests are under some level of pressure from village hunting, and estimates of the harvest rates of terrestrial vertebrate in Central Africa range between 1.6 and 11.8 million tons of meat per year.²

Across the region, these environmental threats are driven widespread poverty, recurring conflict and instability, weak governance, corruption, population growth, gender and other social inequalities, and economic dependence on natural resource extraction. These dynamics occur and interact at the local, national and regional levels, further complexified by unregulated cross-border trade, population movements between the countries, and overlapping institutional mandates of the agencies responsible for nature conservation and law enforcement.

At the regional level, the Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC), created by treaty in 2005, is the main body responsible for coordinating and promoting the harmonization of national forest and environmental policies and actions. Its work is guided by the COMIFAC Plan of Convergence, 2015-2025, and Phase Two of the Sub-regional action plan to strengthen the application of national wildlife legislation, 2022-2025 (PAPECALF II). COMIFAC is recognized as a specialized body of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), which also has responsibility for promoting sustainable natural resource management and the transition to a green and blue economy under its Indicative Medium Term Strategic Plan, 2021-2025.

The efforts of regional and national government bodies to combat wildlife trafficking are supported and complemented by a diversity of donors, non-government organizations, and civil society actors such as the Eco Activists for Governance and Law Enforcement (EAGLE) network. USAID has invested in the sustainable management of the basin's forests and biodiversity for nearly three decades. Under CARPE, now in its fourth phase, USAID's priorities include building capacity, collaboration, and coordination to improve the rule of law in the Congo Basin as it relates to forests and wildlife.

To inform its strategy in this area, USAID, through CARPE, commissioned a situation assessment on combating wildlife trafficking in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which was published in 2020. The present work will build upon this by producing comparable situation assessments for other countries in the region, as well as a regional assessment that synthesizes the national assessments and includes an analysis of key regional or cross-border issues.

2.0 Objective

The overall objective of this work is to produce situation assessments on combating wildlife trafficking in Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Gabon, and the Republic of the Congo (hereafter, the 'target countries'). The situation assessments will cover the actors involved in, and enabling environment for, combatting wildlife crime and trade in each country, as well as regional or cross-border issues such as regional trade and CWT mechanisms relevant to all countries in the Congo Basin region of Central Africa. In support of USAID CARPE's Collaborating, Learning and Adapting (CLA) objectives, the assessment will consolidate existing knowledge, and provide analysis and recommendations of strategic

² Petrozzi et al (2016). Ecology of the bushmeat trade in West and Central Africa; Ziegler et al. (2016). Mapping bushmeat hunting pressure in Central Africa; CIFOR (2019). Towards a sustainable, participatory and inclusive wild meat sector.

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options for strengthening efforts in combating wildlife trafficking in the region. The target audiences of the assessment include USAID and other US Government services, implementing partners, and other environmental stakeholders in Central Africa. The assessments will be disseminated widely to share the findings and encourage uptake of the recommendations.

The assessment should include relevant contextual information on each country and the region as a whole, including the physical geography, demographics and level of biodiversity; threats to wildlife, including the levels and forms of wildlife crime and trade; and current understanding of associated zoonotic risks. It should also include a mapping and preliminary capacity assessment of the stakeholders (including government agencies, civil society organizations and private sector operators) and government or non-government initiatives/projects relevant to wildlife crime and trade.

Building on this, the assessment should then present an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses or gaps or constraints, and opportunities in relation to the below thematic areas, followed by recommendations for actions or measures to strengthen capacity or improve the enabling environment in relation to each area. In addition to considering the technical capacity, tools and resources available to the institutions involved in the above areas, the assessment will encompass political economy analysis to better understand the power dynamics and governance challenges involved; to identify, as far as possible, corrupt practices which undermine effective CWT; and to highlight potential entry points and institutional champions for strengthening CWT.

Thematic areas for analysis:

1. **Legal framework:** Analysis of the legal framework for wildlife protection and wildlife crimes, including an assessment of the relevant legislation, implementing regulations and other legal measures, and their degree of enforcement, as well as the institutional roles, responsibilities and coordination mechanisms involved. This should take into account the existence and recency of national CWT strategies or action plans.
2. **Government agencies:** Analysis of the government agencies responsible for wildlife protection and the enforcement of wildlife protection laws, including each country's relevant ministry and/or agency and CITES management authorities.
3. **Judiciary:** Analysis of the judiciary services responsible for prosecuting and administering justice in relation to wildlife crimes.
4. **Border controls:** Analysis of the effectiveness of border controls at major airports, ports and land crossing points.
5. **Civil society:** Analysis of the role and capacity of local and international civil society organizations, or other non-government organizations, in monitoring, detecting and preventing wildlife crimes; advocating for policy reforms or other government action; promoting public education or behavior change in relation to wildlife crime and trade, in particular to reduce demand for wildmeat and other wildlife products.
6. **Regional and international cooperation:** Analysis of current channels or mechanisms for cooperation between the Congo Basin countries and internationally, both in theory and in practice. This should include existing and potential collaboration in relation to the Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the World Customs Organization (WCO), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC), and the Lusaka Agreement Task Force (LATF).

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3.0 Tasks

Task 1: Develop the assessment methodology

The offeror will meet with the FABS team and USAID to review priorities to inform the development of a robust methodology for the assessment that is consistent with USAID CARPE and FABS objectives. Based on these discussions, the offeror will propose a detailed work plan and research methodology, including data collection and analysis tools, and a list of key informants, including government, private sector (e.g., financial institutions, transport/logistics companies), other donors, NGOs, and civil society. The research methodology is expected to envisage an iterative approach to data collection and analysis, drawing on existing tools and best practices such as the ICCWC Indicator Frameworks. The offeror and FABS team will also agree on appropriate channels and timing of communication to enable the parties to jointly track progress, address any challenges or risk in a timely manner, and shares insights and perspectives to feed into the assessment.

Task 2: Conduct data collection and analysis including fieldwork in the target countries

The offeror will collect and analyze qualitative and quantitative data for the assessment, following the agreed research methodology. The offeror will conduct a desk review and synthesis of existing literature (government documents, policy papers, journals, studies, and news), and preliminary key informant interviews (conducted remotely). Building on this, the offeror will conduct in-country data collection in the target countries, including further key informant interviews, focus groups, workshops and site visits as appropriate. The offeror will analyze the data collected in an iterative manner, identifying and addressing data gaps or potential strategic entry points or opportunities throughout the process.

Task 3: Produce the assessment report

In adherence with USAID branding guidelines, the offeror will produce a clear, informative, and credible report (up to 80 pages, including an executive summary of no more than two pages) containing the individual country situation assessments and the regional synthesis, each section presenting the context and findings and recommendations organized by thematic area. Additional details and analysis should be placed in an appendix. The recommendations should focus on concrete actions to strengthen capacity or improve the enabling environment, and should be divided into short-term and medium/long-term opportunities. Each recommendation should have clearly identified entry point(s) and target audience(s).

The offeror will submit a draft version of the report for review and will facilitate workshops to share and validate the assessment findings and recommendations with relevant stakeholders (to be agreed with FABS). It will then integrate feedback received from FABS, USAID and other stakeholders to produce a final report.

Task 4: Produce the accompanying communications outputs

In adherence with USAID branding guidelines, the offeror will draft the following communications outputs to accompany the assessment report:

1. Four country issue briefs that summarize the national context, findings and recommendations for each target country: Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Gabon, and the Republic of the Congo.
2. A regional issue brief providing a synthesis of the country-level assessments, as well as findings and recommendations in relation to the cross-border and regional aspects of the thematic areas.

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3. A policy brief summarizing the recommendations for national and regional stakeholders including policymakers, private sector, and donors.

The offeror will submit draft versions of the above outputs for review, then produce final versions integrating feedback received from FABS and USAID, as relevant.

4.0 Deliverables

No.		Due date
1	Detailed work plan	TBD
2	Research methodology, including data collection and analysis tools Preliminary list of key informants	TBD
3	Draft report	TBD
4	Validation workshop presentation (slide deck) and summary report	TBD
5	Final report	TBD
6	Draft communications outputs: four country issue briefs; one regional issue brief; one policy brief	TBD
7	Final communications outputs: four country issue briefs; one regional issue brief; one policy brief	TBD

5.0 Qualifications

- Advanced degree or equivalent in social science, political science, environmental law or other relevant degree;
- At least ten years of professional experience;
- Demonstrated prior experience conducting regional analyses focused on providing action-oriented recommendations;
- Experience working to strengthen policy, institutions, and governance practices in Central Africa's counter wildlife trafficking sector;
- Strong analytical skills and experience using social science research methods;
- Ability to write concise, clear, and well-founded project descriptions and technical justifications;
- Proven interpersonal and communication skills, both oral and written;
- Fluency in written and spoken French and professional English.

6.0 Application Process

Interested candidates are requested to submit an updated Curriculum Vitae (CV), a proposed methodology (not to exceed 3 pages) including period of performance, level of effort, and associated budget to ard.fabs.info@tetrattech.com. Please submit your application no later than December 15th. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. Applications in French are also accepted.