



**IUCN REGIONAL OFFICE FOR CENTRAL AND WEST AFRICA
(PACO)**

**IUCN Small Grants Policy and Procedure Manual to Strengthen
Civil Society for Biodiversity Conservation and Climate Change
Mitigation in Central Africa**

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

IUCN-PACO

September 2011



Foreword:

The main purpose of reviewing and/or updating the Small Grants Policy and Procedures Manual is in two folds: a) Respond to the CARPE II evaluation report that calls for using the small grant to build civil society capacity to lobby for laws and policy reform that foster CARPE results framework such as the CBNRM law and subsequent implementing decree and b) CARPE III will not mainly be a biodiversity focus program but will include an important component on Climate change mitigation (REDD+) hence activities under the small grant should be expanded accordingly.

I - Introduction

This document describes the implementation strategy to Strengthen Civil Society for Biodiversity Conservation and Climate Change Mitigation in the Congo Basin funded by USAID/CARPE for 2012-2020.

The implementation strategy of this project specifies in details the activities that fulfil the mandate. It provides guidance to the steering committee on priorities for screening and funding. It also plans to organize an open and transparent process to the grant applicants.

II - Background and context

IUCN's experience in small grants management is appreciated by most conservation and development partners in the Congo Basin. It actually started with small grants for civil society organizations within the framework of the Support Project for Central African Moist Forest Ecosystems (CEFDHAC) (2000-2005) and, later, the project on the conservation and sustainable management of the Guinean Low Forest Project in Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea. These projects were funded respectively by the Government of the Netherlands and the MacArthur Foundation.

However, the most promising experience was acquired during the Phase 2b of the CARPE Program were IUCN-PACO, through the ***Support Program for Civil Society Strengthening for Biodiversity conservation in the Congo Basin***, supported, through funds from USAID/CARPE (October 2006 to September 2011), civil society organizations in all Nine Countries covered by the Program (Cameroon, Gabon, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Sao tome and Principe, Burundi, Rwanda and Central African Republic) to conceive, elaborate and monitor their small grants projects. The average fund for small grants Projects per year was approximately 500,000 USD. Under this program a robust lessons learned initiative on the management and use of small grants by civil society organizations was elaborated and disseminated in order to avoid the pitfalls of the past

and capitalized on successes. Also, the capacities of civil society organizations were strengthened because IUCN believes that long term sustainability of conservation efforts lack constituency without strong empowerment of the civil society.

IUCN small grants program using CARPE funds have two intertwined objectives a) strengthening civil society capacity for conservation as an essential requisite to reach sustainable forest management in Central Africa; b) enhancing the capacity of Central African Civil Society to implement REDD+ processes to mitigate Climate change; a worldwide concern. Detailed objectives of this program are as follows:

- a) strengthening civil society capacity for conservation as an essential requisite to reach sustainable forest management in Central Africa
 1. Promote and build a constituency for conservation among civil society
 2. Foster partnerships between landscapes consortia and local NGOs/community based organization in the field
 3. Fill gaps in conservation's analytical agenda such as designing a suitable mechanism to provide feedback to local communities on conservation strategies, exchanges of field experiences and success stories between and within landscapes.
 4. Facilitate the participation of Central African institutions and governments in CARPE activities in order to ensure host country "buy-in" of conservation initiatives.
 5. Build and/or reinforce institutional development and strategic planning as a prerequisite for sustaining CARPE activities and objectives in the region in the long term.
 6. Effectively integrate CARPE activities in the field with host country institutions. The ultimate success of the landscape land use management planning process will depend upon national and local governments' and communities' active participation in the process and subsequent acceptance of management plans.
 7. Identify Natural Resources Management policies that require country team advocacy for policy reform or development.
 8. Raise local, national and regional awareness of CARPE objectives and therefore provide knowledge and support for the program objectives.
 9. Foster gender equity through the promotion of female-based community organizations and associations and networks of NGOs run by women.
- b) enhancing the capacity of Central African Civil Society to implement REDD+ processes to mitigate Climate change

- 1- Support the enhancement of network of civil society organizations to lobby and serve as watchdog for tenure right, human right and equity in climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- 2- Support civil society organizations to contribute to the development, implementation and monitoring of REDD readiness processes (including policy and legislative frameworks) in Central African Countries;
- 3- Give technical, strategic and financial support to Civil Society to facilitate the elaboration and implementation of a robust REDD+ advocacy mechanism and strategy for benefitsharing among communities;
- 4- Build civil society capacity to serve as missing link between Government official, international NGO and local community for information sharing, training and communications on climate change, REDD+ and other form of Payment for Ecosystem Services;

To meet the objectives of this program, the following domain of intervention will be given priorities

- Climate change mitigation and adaptation (REDD+ readiness, PES, etc);
- Capacity Building (Training, study tour etc...)
- Natural Resources Management Policy,
- Natural Resources Management governance,
- Capitalization and sharing of lessons learned
- Gender equity
- Landscape issues related to policy and to build constituency for its sustainable management
- Bush meat management in term of Policy and regulation to set forth for advocacy

III- Who would be involved with and affected by the project?

Target groups of this project are notably:

- Local NGOs;
- Communities based organizations and associations;
- Local populations;
- Central African institutions;
- National and local governments

IV- PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT AND SUBMISSION

A- PROPOSAL FORMAT

All proposals must be in two folds and conform to the following format and can be submitted in English, French, or Spanish. A proposal must not exceed 20 pages.

TECHNICAL

1- The cover page (2 pages)

Please list the following on a

Cover sheet page 1:

- a) Title of proposed grant (must not exceed 20 words)
- b) Name of organization (and acronym, if applicable)
- c) Estimated total project costs in Francs CFA or US Dollars with specification of the level of support requested from IUCN, and the level of matching fund from the applicant organizations.
- d) Duration (in months and not more than one year)
- e) Proposed period for starting and ending of the project activity
- f) Name of organization's chief executive officer
- g) Organization's address (Please include both mailing address and, if different, an address for courier delivery)
- h) Organization's telephone number
- i) Organization's fax number
- j) Organization's e-mail address
- k) Name of contact person for the proposal
- l) Contact person's address (postal, telephone number, fax number, email address...)
- m) IUCN Tracking Number (If previously assigned)

Cover sheet page 2:

- n) List of three (3) references stating the name, position and contact details of each of the three referees you proposed.
- o) A one paragraph description of proposed work
- p) Is the organization a branch of a parent organization? If so, please indicate the name of the parent.
- q) If a grant is approved we will send a "Grant Award Letter," which is a legal document indicating detailed information about the grant to be made. Please indicate the name and address of the person that such a letter should be addressed to.

2- Title of the proposal

It must be concise and straight to the point and must provide an indication of the geographic situation of the site of the project (not more than twenty (20) words).

3- Abstract or executive summary of the project: (two pages maximum).

It should include the objective of the project, activities to be carried out and specifically state how the project will contribute to the CARPE Results-based Management Framework for CARPEII.

4- Background and Justification (1page)

The proposal shall mention the management structures, all programmes and projects linked with biodiversity conservation in the area concerned. Justification shall include and expose a clear analysis of the problems or needs indicating, historical aspects, constraints, key opportunities and others efforts to solve the problem. It is important to emphasise on key factors and other important elements such as:

- Target group (s)
- Geographical location (map inclusive) of where the project will be executed.

5- Objectives and expected outputs (1 page)

Describe what the project aims at achieving and justify the importance with regards to the sustainable use of the biodiversity.

The expected results have to be expressed in terms of output generated by the project.

Concrete results have to be obtained in order to seek solutions to the problems in the management of forest resources. The result obtained can be used as an indicator for the progress of the ongoing project. There should be a relationship between the project results and the objectives, and also the link must be established between the expected outcomes and CARPE IRs or sub IRs.

6- Activities and Methods (5 pages)

Describe the activities planned to achieve project results. Each result requires a series of specific activities.

Describe the methodologies that would be used to implement these activities and explain the *raison d'être* of these methodologies.

Explain who or what will benefit from the activities, how the results will be applied to nation/regional identified priorities.

7- Logical Framework

The proposal must provide a logical framework of the project with clearly defined Indicators, sources of verification and hypothesis.

8- Sustainability of the project (1 paragraph)

The proposal must mention how the project will achieve sustainability. It will also present some multiplier effect, by describing the possibility for replication and extension of the project outcomes.

9- Implementation Plan (1 page)

It must describe how the project would be organised and managed, and indicate who will be responsible for each activity. It must indicate who will be responsible for the financial management of the project and for the

measuring of the progress made towards reaching project activities. It must also state the nature of proposed collaboration with other organizations if any. Executing plan should provide the project duration and briefly describe the different implementation phases including planned activities and time frame (Chronogram of activities).

10- Monitoring and Evaluation Data management plan (1-2 pages).

They should communicate information on indicator of performance of progress and establish the planning of a mid term, internal or end of project evaluation. It will also describe how to involve project implementers and stakeholders in the monitoring and evaluation of the project. Indicate how the monitoring and evaluation of the progress made towards reaching project objectives will be done and how the results will be reported.

Describe which products will be generated by the project and detail how these products will be made available to CARPE partners.

Describe how the products of this project will contribute to individual IRs and help CARPE partners to attain the Strategic Objectives.

11- Gender issues (1 paragraph)

Explain how the project will consider gender issues and promote gender equity in forest conservation and especially climate change.

12- Environmental Risk Assessment

USAID and IUCN require that unintended negative environmental consequences be anticipated so that mitigating and environmental consequences be incorporated in the development process early in the proposal and activities planning stages. Therefore each proposal submitted should include a matrix on Environmental Risk Assessment below.

Environmental Risk Assessment Matrix				
Sector/Activity	Potential Impacts	Negative	Causes	Mitigation Measures

Also, USAID and IUCN would need to know the type of measures they will take to address some unintended problems that might hinder the implementation of some (or all) project activities.

13- Expertise and operational capacity (1 page)

The proposal will clearly present the experience of the applicant and its partner's organizations in the issues to be addressed and in project management

14- Grant duration

Activities under each grant have to last for **one year** maximum. Beyond this, an amendment has to be granted by the IUCN-CARPE Program Manager.

15- Deadline for applications

Which deadline are you applying for? (Please note that proposals are solicited once a year with deadlines at January 15).

FINANCIAL

16- Budget

The maximum amount per grant award will be \$30.000 and applicant should provide a detail budgetary estimate comprising the following:

- Salaries and benefits
- Travel (Airfare)/travel (per diem)
- Consultant/contract services
- Audit fees
- Other direct costs (Communication products preparation, equipment and supplies, publications and reports, other expenses)
- Other functioning expenses
- Administrative cost (if applicable)

Include a budget notes that explains the various costs indicated in the budget. Specify who will have the spending authority and how funds will be accounted for. In case of co-funding, please specify in a column, level of contribution per item for other donors.

17- Bank Address

All application must include the address of the bank where funds would be transferred in case of selection of the project, with the following specifications:

- Bank Name
- Bank address
- Bank account name
- Bank account number
- Swift code;
- Etc.

NB: Proprietary or privileged information

Patentable ideas, privileged or confidential information that disclosure can lead to prosecution are to be included in the proposal only when such information is obligatory to convey an understanding of the proposed project. Such information must be clearly marked in the proposal and be appropriately labelled with a legend such as, "The following is (proprietary

or confidential) information that (name of proposing organization) requests not be released to persons outside IUCN, except for purposes of review and evaluation."

B- WHO MAY SUBMIT PROPOSALS

In general, Non profit organizations (NPO) with sort of legal recognition such as Local NGO, Community based organization, Local associations, and Non Governmental Research Centres, Independent researchers, university students, Women and minor groups are especially welcomed.

Legal recognition refers to being officially registered with certified receipt from official source or; have a country agreement with the host country where the NPO operates.

C- WHEN TO SUBMIT PROPOSALS

Proposals are accepted periodically following established deadlines (See deadline above) as per solicitations, to allow time for their consideration by review panels that meet periodically. Proposals must be received by the specified date. If the deadline date falls on a weekend or on a holiday, it will be extended to the following Monday or the following business day. Applicants should allow up to three months for programmatic review and processing. Only proposals that are time sensitive (Workshops, conference, travel) will be accepted for review in an ad hoc basis by the National Focal Points and IUCN Program Manager. Whether solicited or unsolicited, until an award is made, IUCN is not responsible for any costs incurred by the applicant.

D- WHERE TO SUBMIT PROPOSALS?

Full proposals must be submitted electronically to IUCN CARPE Focal Points in Cameroon, Gabon, Congo and DRC, Burundi, Rwanda, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Equatorial Guinea and Central African Republic together with applicant's CV, personal references, exhibits and other supporting information/documents by the established deadlines, who will now send them to the Program Manager in IUCN.

Applicants are encouraged to submit electronic version and to the extent possible hard copies.

NB: Proposals that contain high-resolution graphics or other graphics where exact colour representations are required for proper interpretation by the reviewer, please submit four hard copies. This submission is in addition to, not in lieu of the electronic version.

Please note that a proposal needs to be submitted only once to IUCN CARPE FP even if the applicant envisions review by several IUCN partners. Submission of duplicate or substantially similar proposals concurrently for review by IUCN or more than one IUCN partners prior to IUCN approval will result in the return of the redundant proposals. Once the proposal is submitted, IUCN CARPE FP will acknowledge receipt within five working days. If not, applicants should enquiry the status of their proposals.

Communications about the proposal should be addressed to The Program Manager at IUCN.

V- SELECTION PROCESS AND APPROVAL OF SMALL GRANT PROPOSALS

A- Screening processes

The screening will be done at two levels:

The First screening (to make sure proposals meet the format) of proposal is done at the IUCN CARPE Focal Points level in collaboration with the Program Manager by a national steering committee composed of voluntary members from the NGO/CBO sector.

After the first screening, eligible proposals are sent to the Program Manager, who then organizes a Regional steering committee to analyse the technical content of the project taking into account all requirements objectives and the domain of intervention before the final decision is made.

B- Criteria for Final Approval

To be approved, Proposals should respond to a number of criteria that include:

- All grantees should have an agreed organization structure as set forth in (IV- B) above.
- The proposal should have a result-based monitoring and evaluation plans;
- The proposal must have an integrated approach to local society capacity building;
- The activities initiated under this project are sustainable, and grantee should be effectively dealing with forest management and biodiversity conservation;
- The entire small grant proposal should be **results oriented**. The proposal should be addressing any of the thematic areas and clearly have explicit link to one or more CARPE PMP indicators e.g on good governance (Policy reform, advocacy) or Monitoring and evaluation of forest resources;
- The project would have linkages with other initiatives in the region
- The activities should have a **national and regional implications** (focused in CARPE geographic area and landscapes);
- Partnering with other CARPE international partners that demonstrate a value added to strengthen oversight, mentoring and leveraging is a bonus
- The proposal must foster partnership among civil society and promote transparency and promote gender equity in forest conservation

- The **time limit** of the project proposals will depend on the nature of the activities and outputs required from the activities to contribute to the program objectives, but it must not exceed one year;
- A proposal will be required to have a **monitoring and evaluation plan**, which indicates benchmarks and impact indicators. The plan will indicate how information will be collected to measure the impact indicators;
- Environmental risks should be well reviewed and mitigating action well documented
- **Reports** will be submitted quarterly depending upon the nature of the activity;
- **Counterpart contribution if applicable** will be agreed upon and endorsed in the grant agreement.

C- Grant approval

The program management team will use the existing networks to reach out to target groups. IUCN CARPE Focal Points or Program Team has to inform organizations about the approval or non approval of their proposals.

Correspondence phase: After the second screening the program team will start communicating with the project executing organization (NGO, etc.) about the proposed project. If necessary, further information from the region will be sought. After this, negotiations on the terms of reference for the Grant agreement and the detailed budget will take place.

Signing the contract: A French, English or Spanish Grant agreement will be signed between the executing organization and IUCN-PACO, stating the obligations of the two parties, the conditions, the reporting schedule etc.

In the grant agreement, IUCN will encourage the recipient to raise funds to finance future activities of conservation. The program team will assist NGOs in the fundraising with other NGOs. After the first phase of funding, beneficiary institutions will be considered as part of the potential institutions susceptible of receiving funds from other better-established donors.

VI- PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

A- TECHNICAL

During the implementation period of the project the executing organization will report regularly (technically and financially). Based on these reports, the program team decides if a next installment will be transferred.

Monitoring: The program team will do Spot check monitoring.

Evaluation plan: There will be a mid-term operational review and an end-of-project evaluation. A detailed evaluation framework will be developed during the first phase. The mid-term review will assess the need for resources reallocation in the remaining period of the project, including redistribution among the four components in order to maximize overall project performance. It will also examine indicators and methods to be used for data collection.

An end of project evaluation will:

- Assess project effectiveness, especially regarding the degree of achievement of the project objectives;
 - Investigate specific aspects of the project which had been recommended for analysis in the previous assessment;
 - Assess the project impact in terms of achievement;
 - Make recommendations regarding future projects of a similar nature or an extension to another phase.
-
- Who will do the evaluation?

The program management team will be responsible for evaluation. However an independent program evaluation could be carried out on request.

- How will the results of evaluation be used?

The results of internal and external evaluations will be used to improve partnerships between various stakeholders involved in the landscape planning. It will notably contribute to improve IUCN and CBFP networking approach, policy analysis and filling the gaps noticed in the capacity building and in the implementation of the project.

The results of evaluation will guide the need for specific researches to be launched through a competitive grant process for the completion of relevant data gathering.

Finalization and evaluation of the project: After successful ending of the project the executing organization can be supported by the program team (or its partners) with fund raising in order to interest other donors. If necessary (for example in the case of an innovative pilot project, or when further funding is considered) the program will have an evaluation carried out, and request for an external audit.

a- Interim report

Before reporting, the grantee should go back and re-read the original proposal and the AGREEMENT or acceptance letter from IUCN-PACO, which is the basis upon which the funds were given.

For an interim report, a good structure would be something like:

- Title page
- Executive summary (approximately one page)
- Table of contents
- Introduction (short)
- Objectives during the period under review
- Progress towards objectives (main section of the report)
- Lessons learnt (if any already)
- Conclusion (short)
- Objectives and work plan for the next reporting period
- List of available reports produced during the period under review
- Financial report, with justification of budget line variances as necessary
- Budget and cash flow projection for the next reporting period, with justifications as necessary.

b- Final Report or End-of-Phase Report

The end-of-phase is the most important part of the permanent IUCN and CARPE/USAID record of the project, so time and thoughtfulness should be exercised in its preparation. End-of-phase reports are introspective and analytical reports of the activities and achievements of the project with respect to attaining the overall project goal and objectives. Lessons learned from the projects should contribute to keeping IUCN and CARPE/USAID on the cutting edge of conservation and sustainable development, and it is intended that they should be published for national, regional and global consideration. As such, the report should be professionally prepared and include references, which are necessary for follow-up or verification of any of the information presented. The CARPE Focal Points will provide assistance both in the editing of the text, the lay out of text and diagrams cover design, and final production, if requested. End-of-phase reports should be a high professional standard, inclusive of comments from all project participants and stakeholders so that it will be as objective as possible. An end-of-phase report is not a personal report from the grantee technical advisor about his/her accomplishments and perceived accomplishments of the project. The end-of-phase report should encourage all those involved to stop and reflect on every aspect of the project from the goals and objectives, to the specific activities. Were the activities successful-did they help to accomplish the objectives of the project and lead to reaching the conservation and sustainable development goals that were envisioned? If so, what were the secrets to the success? If not, why not? How can it be done better? Was this project phase a step in the right direction? Most importantly, it must highlight lessons learnt.

The draft of the End-of-phase reports should be submitted by the grantee to IUCN CARPE Focal Points for onward transmission to the Program Manager for comments before being finalized.

It should include a technical section, as outlined below, and a management component, detailing the status of project infrastructure (buildings, vehicles, office equipment, etc.) and its disposal, and an overview of the status of project finances. Where required, the financial statement produced by the grantee will be audited separately.

The technical section of the report should include:

- An introductory summary of project goals and objectives, with a broad overview of project achievements. If appropriate, include the work plan, as performed-compared to the work plan the project document envisioned,
- A presentation of each project objective with an outline of activities undertaken, an analysis of their contribution towards achieving the objective including both positive and negative aspects of the activities and the program, and a discussion of the difficulties encountered in achieving long-term sustainability of the program. Recommendations of alternatives approaches should be included.
- An evaluation of the progress made toward reaching the overall project goals. Recommendations on changing objectives, activities, institutional arrangements, personnel, allocations etc., should be made, whether as advice for preparation of another project phase, or as advice to the grantee for carrying on independently.
- Recommendations on the realistic long-term sustainability of project efforts. What will be needed in the future to institutionalize the conservation of resources and sustainable development that the project has promoted?

Fund management and advance liquidation

B- Financial

Upon receipt of a signed copy of the grant agreement from the grantee, IUCN financial administrator will then initiate cash disbursement.

a- Liquidating cash

- Cash disbursement

Each Proposal is required to have payment provision incorporated in the grant award agreement and IUCN has two options open for this purpose

1- For NGO based in cities with access to banking systems, IUCN will transfer money using the banking information included in the grant proposal (Please note that this is the NGO nominal account) in to different installments.

a- 80 % of the total grant budget upon receipt of signed copy of the grant agreement from the NGO

c- 20 % of the total grant budget upon completion of all activities including the disposal plan of project assets and approval of the final report by IUCN Program Manager.

2- However, to foster the small grants spirit and objectives building grassroots capacity and constituency for forest conservation, IUCN will device ingenious means to get the cash on the ground to remote NGO with no access to normal banking systems such as placing a very little amount (One thousand dollars) in village community saving system (Tontine) for progressive disbursement to the NGO. Upon progressive satisfaction, IUCN will refill this account during field visit.

b- Accounting

- IUCN Financial Department

It's important to provide technical support to local NGO preparing and submitting reasonable financial reports. Therefore, IUCN financial officer will have primary responsibility to monitor and evaluate local NGO financial and managerial capacities to ensure proper accounting. In some cases training will be required to enhance local NGO financial and managerial capacities. In such case IUCN financial officer has to develop terms of reference.

- Grantees

IUCN does not have a standard template for financial accounting however a sample template is attached below for consideration. Please note that photocopies of each receipt should be attached to the template but originals kept into grantees records for any cross checking and audit by IUCN financial Officer.

- Sample template

Voucher No	Budget line	Activity description	Amount	Total advanced	Total approved	Balance due
Total						

c- Closing Project Accounts

On finalization of the project, the grantee should sit together with its Finance and Administration Department to review the status of project finances and to make clear decisions as to the fate of any remaining project balances or deficits. In the case of balances, it will usually be necessary to consult IUCN and other collaborating organizations to agree on the allocation of remaining funds. In the case of deficits, it may be possible to make a case to IUCN. Whatever action is decided upon, it is vital that action be taken and that deficits or balances are not allowed to remain on the grantee's books without further management action. As with other aspects of overseeing project implementation, the IUCN Program manager retains responsibility for resolving such difficulties until the account of the project is eventually closed.

In the case of project field accounts, these should also be closed unless it is known that another project, or a new phase of the same project, will be in position to use the account soon thereafter.

d- Disposal of Assets

The Grant Agreements will specify arrangements for the disposal of project assets on completion of the project activities.

e- Required information to be attached as annexes

Note that we request this information in order to be able to efficiently make a grant award if your proposal is selected for funding.

- 1) Is your organization based in the area where you are proposing to work? If not, please provide documentation that represents endorsement of the work by an appropriate local counterpart. If such endorsement is not necessary, please explain why.
- 2) A copy of your organization's annual financial statements for the last two years If possible.

CHART OF GRANT AWARD AND MONITORING PROCEDURE

