

## IBI FOR GROWTH POLES AND DEVELOPMENT CORRIDORS

IBI's expertise in identifying growth poles and development corridors combines science and people in a unique planning model that optimizes the use of land, coastal, and ocean regions for social, environmental, and economic development.

Most development projects seek to incrementally build upon the resources, infrastructure, and livelihoods they find in place. IBI's analytic model helps planners and citizens see a world of fresh possibilities--what *could* be done to gain the maximum sustainable benefit from known resources, as well as stranded or previously unknown ones. The results are often startling and provide innovative ideas that can transform a region in ways never previously contemplated. We are using this approach to help mining sectors in Gabon and Liberia plan for their countries' futures.

Using Geographic Information Systems and spatial development strategies, we analyze the most salient issues from the perspectives of natural resources (soil, minerals, climate); infrastructure (roads, ports, airports, water, energy, information and communications technology, agricultural markets); and socioeconomic circumstances (poverty, literacy, education, population growth rates).

The initial analysis identifies new growth poles and corridors with special growth potential. Mines and ports are typically the anchors of development corridors, as mines are often the only investments capable of financing the necessary infrastructure. The development corridor approach identifies complementary value-chains whose growth potential might otherwise be obvious. Where infrastructure can serve multiple users it can reduce costs for a single user. The idea is to get the overarching strategy right before moving forward with detailed land use, structure, layout, and complementary investment scoping. For this reason, citizens, business people, and civil authorities help lead this planning process; indeed, the success of this approach requires full participation through local and regional committees that assist in data collection, enrich the initial GIS data analysis with the on-the-ground knowledge, and formulate plans that reflect the aspirations of local populations. This process is about change, and change accelerates as leaders and investors are empowered by a new shared vision.

Once the growth poles are identified, IBI prepares multi-sectoral, multi-year growth strategies for the coordinated development of these sub-regions including planning for infrastructure, services, institutions, legal and policy reform. The strategy generates an investment plan detailing the cost for the development of the identified sectors, evaluating alternative development strategies in quantitative economic terms, and establishing a framework for coordinating private, government, and NGO investments.

