CALL FOR TENDERS
Deadline for proposals: 21 August 2023

CONSULTANCY
Midterm review of the project “Forests for the Future” on community forests in the Democratic Republic of Congo

1. The Rainforest Foundation UK

Founded in 1989, the mission of the Rainforest Foundation UK (RFUK) is to support indigenous peoples and traditional populations of the world's rainforest to:

- Secure and control the natural resources necessary for their long-term wellbeing and managing these resources in ways which do not harm their environment, violate their culture or compromise their future.
- Develop means to protect their individual and collective rights and to obtain, shape and control basic services from the state.

We work in Africa and South America, and our projects are structured around the following areas:

- Promoting community land rights, community-based forest management and land use planning
- Community based forest monitoring to promote good forest governance and denounce and human rights abuses
- Crosscutting use of technology, particularly mapping and the use of digital applications, to empower communities to manage their forests and advocate for change
- Policy and campaigning with a special focus on human rights and conservation, threats of extractive activities on forests and global climate markets and their impacts

2. Project background

The adoption of the Community Forests Decree in 2014 and its main bylaw in 2016 in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is arguably the most significant legal reform related to tropical forests and forest peoples’ rights in recent years. This framework could impact as many as 40 million forest-dependent people and with tens of millions of hectares potentially available to develop pro-poor, community models of forest management.

Since its creation, RFUK has been continuously advocating and supporting the development of community-based forest management in the Congo Basin – something that is now widely recognised as being key to delivering strong conservation and development outcomes. Under a DFID (now FCDO)
funded project (2016-2019), RFUK headed a consortium of Congolese and international NGOs that played a central role in laying the foundations for community forestry in DRC. The project facilitated the development and adoption of the National Strategy for Community Forestry; consolidated the Multi-stakeholder Roundtable for Community Forestry as a deliberative policy making body; accompanied nine communities to apply for their community forest concessions; trained and built capacities among civil society and government officials at all levels; and produced a ground-breaking body of resources, studies and tools to inform best practice in DRC and beyond.

Multiple donors, including USAID and Norad – through Norway’s International Climate and Forest Initiative (NICFI) – are now supporting RFUK and our consortium partners to build on these efforts to trigger a new phase of development of community forestry in DRC. The “Forests for the Future” project, which will run from September 2020 to September 2025, has the central objective to consolidate community forests as a viable forest use model that enhances livelihoods while protecting forests. To this end, the project is structured around the following goals and results:

**Project purpose:** By 2025, community forests drive improvements in forest communities’ wellbeing and reduced deforestation and biodiversity protection in target areas in DRC, providing a scalable model for nationwide implementation.

- **Result 1.** Community forests prove to be a scalable model to improve local communities’ wellbeing in DRC
- **Result 2.** Community forest pilots contribute to reduce deforestation and protect biodiversity
- **Result 3.** The national legal and policy framework supports community forests according to the central principles of the National Strategy (community rights, inclusion, customary governance, decentralisation and capacity building)
- **Result 4.** An enabling institutional environment sustained in adequate capacity is in place to effectively implement this model of CFCL

In DRC, activities are implemented by a consortium of Congolese NGOs based in Kinshasa, Goma, Butembo, Mbandaka and Kindu. See section 7 below for more details.

3. **Objectives of the review**

- To assess the relevance of the project design and implementation in relation with its intended impacts.
- To evaluate the project’s contribution to NICFI’s 2021-2025 civil society grant programme, following NICFI’s guidance for midterm reviews.
- To provide recommendations for improvement and adaptation, particularly to inform the second half of the five year project, as well as potential future interventions.

4. **Review questions**

The evaluation will seek to address the following themes and respond to the following questions:

A. **Conception of the project/ Relevance:**

- Relevance and appropriateness; context of the project in relation to local and national experience of community forestry; details of the project’s significance with respect to specific needs and its relevance to the priorities of the communities involved.
• How does the project spur or employ innovative working methods, context analyses, partnership models, or similar innovations?

B. **Internal and external coherence**

Providing a separate assessment for each project outcome or by geographic area of the intervention on the following:

• Internal coherence: To what extent does RFUK work with or in coordination with other initiatives funded by NICFI? What are the learning points?
• External coherence: To what degree does RFUK seek to create alliances and foster synergies with civil society organisations and other partners, national or international, to ensure harmonisation of interventions in the given contexts?

C. **Effectiveness:**

• To what extent is the project successful in achieving desired results? Please provide a separate assessment according to each project-level outcome found in the results framework.
• In terms of internal project adjustments, if any, what concrete recommendations do you propose to the consortium for the remainder of the project cycle? (this can be addressed in the “recommendations” section of the report)
• To what extent can the project experience be meaningfully replicated and scaled up in similar contexts? What specific innovative aspects of the project could be replicated? If so, what would be the added value?

D. **Participation, empowerment and equity:**

• To what extent has the project empowered communities to take part in the decision making and policy processes?
• Discussion of social differentiation (with particular emphasis on women and indigenous people) and the extent to which the project has made positive impacts on the more disadvantaged within forest communities as well as on national civil society.
• More specifically, what are the impacts of the project, positive or negative, on women and gender equality? What are the lessons learned?

E. **Sustainability:**

• Potential for the continuation of the impact achieved and of the delivery mechanisms, beyond the project funding.

F. **Risks**

• To what extent has the project effectively analysed and mitigated risks and assumptions.

G. **Contribution to NICFI outcomes**

---

1 For more details please refer to [https://www.nicfi.no/how-do-we-work/](https://www.nicfi.no/how-do-we-work/)
Outcome I. Approved and implemented policies for sustainable forest and land use in tropical forest countries and jurisdictions

- How does the project contribute to (1) ensuring implementation of forest conservation within specific sectoral policies, and (2) integrating forest conservation as cross-sectoral issue in governmental policies?
- How does the project lead to implementation of national or state/regional/provincial level area planning policies that promote forest-friendly rural development?

Outcome II. Improved rights and livelihoods for indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLC) in tropical forest countries

- How does the project lead to the protection of the forest and land rights of IPLCs? Relevant activities may include:
  0) Securing collective land rights.
  1) participation in relevant processes,
  2) reports to relevant international legal mechanisms and instruments and
  3) the exercise of free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC).
  Please provide concrete examples.
- To what degree does the project contribute to integrating sustainable forest use by IPLCs into legal frameworks, area plans, and development strategies? Please provide concrete examples.
- How does the project strengthen IPLC capacities for sustainable management and livelihood activities? Please provide concrete examples where applicable.
- To what extent does the project contribute to poverty reduction, directly or indirectly? How is this measured and monitored?

Outcome VII. Reduced forest crime

- Has the project lead to an increased number of (criminal) convictions related to forest crime, or any other law enforcement, political or community measure to prevent or address illegal exploitation of forest resources? Explain.

5. Scope

- Temporal scope: September 2020 to date. Evaluators might also wish to consider the previous phases of RFUK’s work to evaluate respective impact.
- Geographic scope: the evaluation will look at the impact of the project at the national level as well as in its target areas in three provinces: Equateur, Maniema and North Kivu.
- Activity scope: the evaluation will consider the full breadth of project activities under the four expected results stated above.

6. Main users and stakeholders

---

2 For RFUK, this includes community led conservation approaches, such as conservation areas within community forest land use plans.

3 In particular the previous Community Forests project that took place from 2016 to 2019. The final evaluation for this project is available here: [https://www.rainforestfoundationuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/RFUK-Evaluation-Report-FPI-FINAL.pdf](https://www.rainforestfoundationuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/RFUK-Evaluation-Report-FPI-FINAL.pdf)
The main users of this review will be RFUK and other Forests for the Future consortium partners:

The Centre d’Appui à la Gestion Durable des Forêts Tropicales (CAGDFT) is an NGO based in Kinshasa. Under this project, CAGDFT have led the establishment and coordination of the national Roundtable on community forests, as well as facilitating trainings and other capacity building initiatives for the DRC administration and consortium partners.

Groupe d’action pour sauver l’homme et son environnement (GASHE) is located in Mbandaka, Equateur Province and is responsible for the development of simple management plans, sustainable livelihood activities and monitoring systems in eight target community forests.

Réseau pour la Conservation et la Réhabilitation des Ecosystèmes Forestiers (Réseau CREF) is a coalition of around 30 local organisations based in North Kivu Province. With its sub-partner, l’Association Paysanne pour la Réhabilitation et la Protection des Pygmées (PREPPYG), they lead the identification and establishment of new community forests in the province as well as the development of simple management plans.

GeoFirst Development is an organisation based in Kinshasa and Kindu and they have a similar role to Réseau CREF and PREPPYG, but in the province of Maniema. GeoFirst also leads on policy advocacy related primarily to land use planning.

Association pour la Protection des Peuples et des Espèces Menacés (APEM) is based in Kinshasa. Their role is to build capacity among different stakeholders, to document threats to community forests, to support the DRC government to run the national Community Forests Database and to lead on certain policy advocacy processes, including the interphase between community forests and the climate and biodiversity agendas.

The consortium interacts with a wide variety of actors on various aspects of the project. Local communities, including some indigenous groups (Batwa in Equateur, Wambuti and Nandes in Nord Kivu), are the main target beneficiaries. For policy advocacy, capacity building, activities include authorities at local, provincial and national level, donor governments and local and international civil society organisations.

7. Methodology

The evaluation will be led by an independent consultant or consultancy team with regional forestry and natural resources sector expertise and strong French language skills.

The evaluation is expected to require:

- Desk-based research and evaluation, drawing on key project documentation (project log-frame, project plans, quarterly and annual progress reports, methodological and training documentation, publications, statements, press coverage, summaries of key outputs etc.).
- Discussions with project partners (lead delivery organisations) and key stakeholders, including relevant actors in the DRC national, provincial and local administrations. These may be face-to-face or remote and likely to include self-evaluation and semi-structured interviews.
- An in-country visit to the project locations in DRC (Kinshasa and at least Equateur Province) for semi-structured interviews and observation. Country visits will include trips to the field to meet with targeted communities.
• Initial and follow-up meetings with key RFUK staff throughout the evaluation process to assess progress and provide feedback. These may include formal presentations of progress and/or short reports at key points (for example of the proposed methodology, initial findings).

8. **Output**

The final evaluation should be presented in the form of a written report, in English, which should not surpass 30 pages excluding annexes. The evaluation report should include the following main sections:

• Executive summary (in English and French);
• An introduction briefly giving the background to the project, and context of the intervention (community forestry in DRC);
• An explanation of the evaluation’s objectives and methodology (including comment on the limitations);
• Evaluation findings
• Conclusions
• Recommendations for RFUK, partners, project donors and, if relevant, other stakeholders, particularly to draw lessons and adapt for the remainder of the project.
• Annexes, including all sources used.

9. **Timeline**

RFUK aims to finalise this evaluation before the end of 2023.

Proposals will be accepted until 21 August 2023. The selection process will conclude by 11 September 2023.

A detailed implementation calendar will be discussed as part of the contracting process.

10. **Budget**

RFUK will cover consultant(s) fees and transport, accommodation and per diems (according to RFUK policy) for travel to and from field sites, and for the duration of the mission in the countries.

Consultants should provide an indicative budget as part of the proposal (including consultancy fees, travel expenses and any other cost). The budget will be agreed upon with the consultant(s) prior to contracting. Consultants will also be responsible for arranging their own insurance.

11. **Skills and Experience**

• Strong background in a relevant field of Law, Environmental Science, Development Studies, Social Science, Forestry or Natural Resource Management, or other relevant field, at post-graduate level;
• Demonstrable knowledge and practical overseas experience of conducting programme M&E and/or primary research in relevant sectors of international development (community forestry, natural resource management, land tenure, rural livelihoods etc.). This should include quantitative and qualitative surveys, structured and semi-structured interviews, focus groups, etc.
• Knowledge of forestry issues in the Congo Basin region
• Proven experience and technical skills of participatory monitoring and evaluation processes and experience in evaluating similar projects involving Norad, USAID or other major donors;
• Extensive experience in working with national/provincial/local institutions in developing countries, including contexts of insecurity. Previous experience in the Congo Basin is preferred, and in DRC specifically;
• A track record of working to tight deadlines to produce high-quality outputs;
• Excellent analytical and report writing skills;
• Ability to communicate complex information in understandable and relevant terms adapted for different stakeholders;
• Fluency in French and English is essential.

12. Consultancy proposals should include:

• Demonstration of how the proposed consultancy team meets the skills and experience requirements outlined above (in Section 11)
• Team structure, indicating roles and responsibilities for the evaluation;
• CVs of all members of the proposed consultancy team;
• References of previously conducted evaluations, relevant research publications, delivered trainings/capacity building tools conducted by the proposed team members;
• An indicative work plan according to expected outputs and provided timeframe
• An indicative methodology
• An indicative outline budget

The successful candidate / team will be selected based on value for money – i.e. their skills and experience (outlined in Section 11.), the quality of their technical proposal, as well as the requested budget – and also on their availability in accordance with the project timeline.

Methodologies, work plans and budgets will be further developed in consultation with RFUK.

Proposals to be submitted by email to procurement@rainforestuk.org

Proposal deadline: 21 August 2023