



Citizen Voices 4 Change

Congo Basin Forest
Monitoring Project

Terms of Reference

monitoring and evaluation services

ENV/2016/380-500



Project Details

Project/Programme Name(s)	Citizen Voices for Change : Congo Basin Forest Monitoring Project
Project/Programme Location(s)	Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon and Republic of Congo
Project manager	Centre for International Development (CIDT), University of Wolverhampton
Project/Programme Duration (from start year)	2017-2020
Scope of work	Baseline study, mid-term review, end of project review, call-down M&E support
Project Budget & Funder	6.25 million euros, funded 80% by the European Union
Names of Implementing Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• BRAINFOREST, Gabon• CENTRE POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT ET LE DEVELOPPEMENT (CED), Cameroon• CENTRE POUR L'INFORMATION ENVIRONNEMENTALE ET LE DEVELOPPEMENT DURABLE (CIEDD), Central African Republic (CAR)• CERCLE D'APPUI A LA GESTION DURABLE DES FORETS (CAGDF), Republic of Congo• FIELD LEGALITY ADVISORY GROUP (FLAG), Cameroon• FORETS ET DEVELOPPEMENT RURAL (FODER), Cameroon• OBSERVATOIRE DE LA GOUVERNANCE FORESTIERE (OGF), Democratic Republic of Congo• WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE (WRI), United States of America

Introduction

Under the CV4C project, the University of Wolverhampton, Centre for International Development and Training (CIDT) will establish a strong, sustainable partnership of forest monitoring Non State Actors in the Congo Basin.

The **purpose** is to strengthen the capacity, influence and long-term viability of over 500 civil society organisations, to perform essential watchdog functions effectively across the Congo Basin region.

The **ultimate goal** of this Action is an increased contribution of forests to development, through reduced deforestation and degradation, conservation of biodiversity, sustained provision of ecosystem goods and services, and improved livelihoods for local forest communities.

The **specific objective** is that strong and effective target NSAs monitor forest governance and forest land use change, inform relevant processes particularly FLEGT and REDD+, and contribute to effective responses from law enforcement and policy making agencies.

The Action will increase participation of national and local NSAs in:

1. collecting, assessing, analysing and sharing information;
2. monitoring forest governance, REDD+ and land-use change processes; and
3. advocacy, representation and holding governments accountable.

Scope of work

CIDT are looking to recruit an M&E firm to provide services over the project lifetime, including a baseline study in the first quarter of year 1, mid-term review at the beginning of year 3 and final evaluation following the end of the project in year 4. The purpose of the consultancy will be to support the project:

1. To set a clear project baseline such that results can be measured and evidenced;
2. To design and implement a comprehensive monitoring plan/framework (working in partnership with the Project Manager & M&E Officer);
3. To provide call down support to the M&E Officer and Project Manager to support the implementation of the monitoring plan throughout the duration of the Action (project);
4. To assess the results in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact (at the mid-term and the end point);
5. To learn lessons that inform improvements in the delivery of the project during its lifetime, to enhance replication of what works elsewhere and/or taking up approaches and activities that are proven to work in order to scale up the project;
6. To demonstrate accountability for the funding received to donors, partners and beneficiaries;
7. To generate independent reports that will inform the wider policy debate concerning the role of civil society in forest governance especially monitoring forest activities, REDD+ and land use change in the Congo Basin.

For this consultancy, the University of Wolverhampton, CIDT seeks to procure the services of an independent, external consultant(s) to design, plan and conduct a rigorous baseline study, mid-term review and final evaluation.

Project Background

NON-STATE ACTORS PARTICIPATION IN FOREST GOVERNANCE, FLEGT AND REDD+¹

An empowered civil society, including indigenous peoples and local communities, with the capacity to access and analyse information, to monitor forest governance including forest land use policies, to advocate and to hold governments accountable are key to improve forest and land governance. It is central to the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) and Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) processes.

As forest and land use policies are susceptible to corruption², ensuring transparency and accountability linked to FLEGT and REDD+ implementation is key to the credibility and viability of both processes. The current scale and pace of deforestation and forest degradation is alarming. This has a negative impact not only at a local level – on local economies, community livelihoods and ecosystem goods and services provided to the local population (timber and non-timber forest products, local climate, water availability, protection against erosion and natural disasters) but also globally, especially on climate change and biodiversity, desertification and poverty reduction.

Agriculture is estimated to be the driver for around 80% of deforestation worldwide³. Recent analysis suggests that almost half of total tropical deforestation between 2000 and 2012 was due to - possibly illegal- conversion of forests for commercial agriculture, and that a quarter was the direct result of - possibly illegal-agro-conversion for export markets. Although conversion primarily takes place to clear forest- land for agricultural expansion, significant portions of tropical timber come from these conversion areas, and this raises issues of possible illegality of the timber salvaged from these areas as well as of the agro-commodities produced from them.

A roadmap for progress towards the good governance required for successful implementation of REDD+ is being developed⁴. Importantly, it has to be owned and understood by a wide array of stakeholders in the countries concerned, preventing the conflict of interest that would arise if e.g. governments or non-state actors were left to monitor and evaluate their own performance.

Forest monitoring has been reported to contribute towards combating corruption, reducing illegal activities and improving accountability in the forest sector. Although such monitoring activities have been implemented mostly in the context of industrial timber harvesting and trade, its potential to improve forest governance has interested actors to carry out independent monitoring activities in other areas of forest and forest land management, for example REDD+.

Supporting increased capacity of stakeholders to build open and accessible information systems responds to the increasing demand for transparency in forest and land use policies. The use of this information through activities such as participative forest monitoring allows citizens to observe how official governance systems operate in practice and to push for improvements if needed. As forest and land use policies are susceptible to corruption, ensuring transparency and accountability linked to FLEGT and REDD+ implementation is key to the credibility and viability of both processes.

Participative forest monitoring assesses forest governance and legal compliance in the forest sector. As a tool for improving forest governance, participative forest monitoring has been carried out using a variety of approaches and by involving different stakeholder groups in specific countries. It has been a major focus of work of many actors engaged in Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) implementation. In several VPA partner countries, independent monitors have established solid networks at national and subnational levels and built their credibility as watchdog organisations. Although only in its inception, regional exchanges are increasingly frequent and there is an interest to build more formal networks in and between regions.

VPAs highlight the importance of this role by establishing the rights of citizens to access information on the forest sector, by including the use of complaints mechanisms and by providing that independent monitors are a source of information to the independent audit of the timber legality assurance system established under the Agreements. As both REDD + and FLEGT implementation makes progress on the ground there is an increasing acknowledgement from partner countries of the need for open, transparent systems and processes and the ability of civil society and stakeholders (including e.g. right holders, farmers, the private sector and academics) to effectively engage in these processes. This project responds to these needs.

Monitoring and Evaluation Phases of the Project

BASELINE PHASE

The main purpose of the baseline is to clearly identify, articulate, and document the existing situation of project target groups in project countries at the beginning of the project so that changes as a result of the Action in the light of the project objectives can be measured and the progress to reach those changes can be tracked for learning and future improvement.

Specific objectives

1. Assess the current capacity for civil society led monitoring of forest activities, land use change and REDD+ in the Congo Basin. This will focus on co-applicants in this Action but also wider national civil society platforms and networks involved in advocacy for improving forest governance in the Congo Basin. This will be harmonized with organizational, institutional and technical needs assessment work conducted by the project team.
2. Provide the project management team with baseline data against project indicators and improve/update as required the project logframe from the original logframe included in the project proposal;
3. Support the Project Management Team to design a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan to guide project data collection and reporting. The monitoring strategy is expected to be included in the inception report.
4. Assess the current socio-political, economic and institutional conditions in target countries, especially in relation to the project risks and assumptions with the view to update the project risk management plan

MIDTERM REVIEW

The purpose of the Mid-Term Review is :

- To assess the extent to which the project is on track, in terms of implementation, and achievement of the results (positive/negative/ intended / unplanned etc);
- To conduct a mid-point assessment of enabling conditions/ constraining factors stakeholders perceive could help/hinder project sustainability;
- To identify good practices, lessons learnt case studies, and potential models for scale-up/adaptation/replication, which will inform activity planning and organisational learning among the partners;
- To revise and validate indicators in the logframe and check whether assumptions are holding.

END OF PROJECT/IMPACT EVALUATION

The purpose of the Final Evaluation is threefold, namely:

1. To assess the extent to which the project has achieved its intended results (with a focus on outputs and outcomes).
2. To compare the situation at the baseline to the situation as of the end of the project, and identify factors for sustainability beyond the Life of the Project (LOP); and
3. To identify good practices, lessons learnt case studies, and potential models for scale-up/ adaptation/replication, which will inform future project design and management, sectoral and geographic learning among project stakeholders and beyond.

In carrying out the evaluation, the consultant (s) will be expected to use the standard OCED - DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance framework⁵. However, the consultant(s) will be expected to work with the Project Management Team to review and revise the project evaluation questions as appropriate.

Consultancy Approach

The detailed methodology for each phase will be defined by the Consulting firm/team, taking into account EU standards and guidelines, the available budget and time constraints. The methodology to be suggested should incorporate the following approaches, to the extent possible:

1. A Literature Review of project proposal and other relevant documentation related to the project.⁶
2. Incorporation of mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative) of primary data collection, such as data collection via key informant (KI) interviews and/or focus group discussions (FGDs).⁷

3. Through early engagement and provision of quality assurance, establish robust project M&E frameworks, SMART indicators and effective data collection systems (such that review and evaluation can be achieved successfully).

M&E services should reflect the project ethos of capacity development and work to strengthen ownership of M&E systems and capacity of the project partners in the process. The consultant will be expected to employ participatory research and facilitation tools for data collection and analysis and to consider an approach that promotes partner learning and capability.

Timeframe and Deliverables

BASELINE STUDY

The baseline study is anticipated to begin from 20th February, 2017 subject to negotiation but expected to be completed and final report submitted by 15th April, 2017.

Deliverables

1. Inception report

Submitted in French in electronic form – within 10 days of contract signing. The report should detail:

- a) **Baseline study approach** (data collection strategy, methodologies, work plan etc)
- b) **Primary quantitative and qualitative research instruments** developed for the baseline study.

2. Baseline study report

A report that describes the initial conditions (before the start of the project) against which progress can be measured or comparisons made to show the effects and impacts of the project in the final project evaluation report. The main body of the baseline study report should be no more than 20 pages, excluding additional annexes of data collection tools used in the study. The report should be submitted in French.

- a) **Comprehensive monitoring plan** for project data collection to support baseline study and successive evaluations
- b) **Risk management plan** detailing measures to mitigate any potential risks to the delivery of the required outputs for the evaluation processes

3. Presentation of baseline study findings

Presentation of findings with the project team and key stakeholders in the Democratic Republic of Congo, end of April 2017 (date tbc).

MID-TERM REVIEW

The mid-term review is expected to begin by March, 2019.

Mid-term deliverables

1. Mid-term evaluation design report

Report detailing mid-term evaluation approach (sampling framework, data collection strategy, methodologies, etc), risk management plan, research ethics plan components). The report should be submitted in French.

2. Primary quantitative and qualitative research instruments

Research instruments adapted and developed for mid-term evaluation. These instruments will include research instruments used during the baseline study as well as any revisions to assess changes at the mid-term project stage (e.g. focus group questions revised or added to reflect project progress, effectiveness, outcomes, etc. at this stage).

3. Mid-term evaluation report

Report assessing the project's progress, and assessment based on OECD criteria. The main body of the final report should be no more than 30 pages excluding additional annexes. The report should be submitted in French.

4. Presentation of mid-term evaluation findings

Presentation with the project steering committee, project team and key stakeholders.

FINAL EVALUATION

The final evaluation is expected to start by March, 2021.

Final evaluation deliverables

1. Final evaluation design report

Report detailing final evaluation approach (sampling framework, data collection strategy, methodologies, etc), risk management plan, quality assurance plan, and research ethics plan etc). The report should be submitted in French.

2. Primary quantitative and qualitative research instruments

Research instruments adapted and developed for final / impact evaluation. These instruments will include research instruments used during the baseline study and/or mid-term evaluation as well as any revisions to assess changes at the final project stage (e.g. focus group questions revised or added to reflect project effectiveness, outcomes, impact, etc. at this stage).

3. Final/impact evaluation report

Report assessing the project on the basis of DAC OECD Standard evaluation criteria. The main body of the final report should be no more than 30 pages excluding additional annexes. The report should be submitted in French.

4. Presentation of final/impact evaluation findings

Presentation with the project steering committee, project team and key stakeholders.

management

The consultant(s) will be responsible for administering and supervising the baseline/ review/evaluation studies, including designing data collection tools, collecting data, drafting the final report etc.

Project partners in country will be responsible for organizing logistics in -country, liaising with the consultant(s) prior and during the process and facilitating staff and logistical support required by the consultant(s) for the study, where appropriate.

CIDT Programme Manager will be responsible for overseeing the consultant(s) by managing the consultancy contract; providing relevant project documents (proposal, logical framework, etc.); monitoring adherence to specified deadlines; facilitating access to required information, resources and contacts; providing feedback on drafts of the data collection tools and final report; and sharing the final report with all relevant stakeholders not in attendance at the debriefing.

Consultant(s) Qualifications and Experience

- Relevant degree(s) in social sciences or development studies, preferably in international development, environmental sciences, forestry, research methods
- Strong experience with and knowledge of qualitative and quantitative research methods and sampling strategies
- Experience with longitudinal study designs desired
- Statistical analysis skills and strong proficiency with data analysis packages
- At least 5 years proven experience in conducting baseline study surveys and complex evaluations
- Experience in assessing / evaluating projects in fragile and conflict-affected countries
- Knowledge and expertise in international forest policy – proven experience with FLEGT, REDD+ highly desirable
- Excellent communication and written skills in both English and French

Desirable

- M&E in the context of capacity-strengthening
- Good understanding of training & Capacity development principles
- Strong knowledge of the Congo Basin forestry context
- Research experience working with indigenous peoples

Contract Value

The overall value of this contract (fees and reimbursable costs) is €90,000.

Reporting Reimbursable costs: In country costs relating to organization of in country events will be covered by national project partners and will not be included in the financial offer. This does not include in country transport costs, accommodation and subsistence for the consultants.

About CIDT

The Centre for International Development and Training (CIDT) is a department within the University of Wolverhampton (UoW), based in the United Kingdom.

CIDT sits in a unique position, having the corporate backing and research support of an institution of higher learning, while functioning as a social enterprise deeply involved in the practice of international development.

As a centre of excellence in capacity strengthening for international development, we offer practical solutions for positive change, based on our experience in over 140 countries worldwide. For over four decades, we have been teaching, training, supporting and facilitating learning among a wide range of individuals and groups as well as helping to establish systems, strategies and tools for sustainable development worldwide. For more details, see www.cidt.org.uk.

How to Apply

Interested applicants should submit a tender application covering the following:

- A brief explanation describing why you are an appropriate consultant/organization for this assignment – drawing on but not limited to the consultant/s specifications above
- CVs of the consultant(s) who will undertake the assignment
- A short concept note including your proposed approach and brief methodology (no more than 4 A4 pages)
- Your availability to be physically available to deliver the services required over the project lifespan
- Financial proposal which should clearly break down consultancy fees and reimbursable costs.
- Max 2 examples of baseline/evaluations conducted by consultant (s)

Note: we consider 100 days to be an appropriate maximum time frame for the delivery of the required services depending on the methodologies selected.

Application Process

Once the applications are reviewed and candidates shortlisted, CIDT will conduct interviews to select few suitable consultants.

For the second stage of the selection process, applicants will be asked to provide more detailed research proposal. Based on this proposal the final decision will be made⁸.

Deadline

**Applications to be sent to
CV4C-Forestmonitoring@wlv.ac.uk
no later than the 3rd February 2017.**

Contact Details

Centre for International Development and Training (CIDT)

University of Wolverhampton,
Telford Innovation Campus,
Shifnal Road, Priorslee,
Telford, TF2 9NT, UK

Key contact

Dr Aurelian Mbzibain
Tel: +44 01902 323 140
Email: CV4C-Forestmonitoring@wlv.ac.uk

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1. Source: European Union (2015) Action document Non-State Actors Participation in Forest Governance, FLEGT and REDD+ - CRIS number: DCI-ENV/2015/38120
 2. http://www.transparency.org/news/feature/to_conserve_forests_climate_funds_must_cut_out_corruption
 3. Consumer Goods and Deforestation: An Analysis of the Extent and Nature of Illegality in Forest Conversion for Agriculture and Timber Plantations- Sam Lawson
 4. This set of Principles and Criteria was developed as the UN-REDD Programme's response to the safeguards for REDD+ agreed at UNFCCC COP 16 in Cancun.
 5. <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/dacriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>
 6. Upon start-up, CIDT/University of Wolverhampton will provide a set of project documents and other references to the Consultants.
 7. These could potentially be conducted through a combination of field work, online survey (e.g. Survey Monkey), and/or Skype calls, as appropriate.
 8. Final research design and detailed methodology will be reviewed following the desk research and few key informant interviews and would need to be approved by CIDT.