



CALL FOR PROPOSALS

CONSULTANCY

End of project evaluation of the “Embedding community real time monitoring to sustain livelihoods and forest in West and Central Africa” project

1. The Rainforest Foundation UK

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.

RFUK considers that an essential first step to protect and manage the tropical forests and to reduce poverty in tropical forest countries is to realise the rights of the traditional and indigenous communities who live in those forests. With secure rights to land and livelihoods, forest peoples can effectively manage forest resources and direct and manage their own development.

RFUK tackles the underlying causes of deforestation linked to the problems of disenfranchisement of forest peoples globally and locally. From the field to the international policy arena, RFUK reinforces the active participation of forest peoples in the decisions that affect them. We work with over 15 partner organisations in tropical forest countries and our programme work is split into the following thematic areas:

- Threats to forests from the extractive industries, infrastructure development and agro industrial expansion;
- Conservation effectiveness and monitoring of initiatives to reduce deforestation and degradation (REDD+);
- Community-based forest management, land-use planning and tenure reform;
- Community mapping and forest monitoring;
- Indigenous peoples' rights.

2. Context of independent Forest Monitoring in the Congo Basin

Civil Society-led Independent Forest Monitoring (IFM) provides information on legal compliance, and law enforcement systems as well as guidance for improving legality, transparency and governance, particularly related to industrial logging. There has been widespread support for IFM schemes in the Congo Basin and West Africa over the past two decades as a way of reducing illegalities in the logging industry, and more recently as

a central component of VPA and REDD+ processes. However, the potential role of forest communities in forest monitoring has often been overlooked in favour of an externally driven approach, which relies mainly on third-party observers.

While IFM has served to highlight illegalities and act as a deterrent in some cases, much of the forest sector in the region is still characterised by high levels of political intervention, weak governance, corruption, disregard of social responsibilities, and theft. Regional enforcement agencies barely function and illegal logging continues unabated in many places. The reasons for this are various but those specifically related to independent observation may include:

- An extractive approach to forest management that overlooks the possible role of forest dwellers, as well as their rights and subsistence needs;
- Weak or incomplete legal frameworks to monitor against;
- A lack of visibility and transparency about reported breaches;
- Lack of systematic assessment and transparency about why and which officials are failing to follow-up observed infractions;
- In many cases, political involvement in illegalities, leading in blockages of the process and threats to those participating in it;
- Limited political will and capacity to meet the high costs and processes involved in implementing third-party monitoring and enforcement systems, and logistical constraints for independent evaluators who are often based in capital cities.

In 2015, the Rainforest Foundation UK successfully developed and launched ForestLink community based Real Time Monitoring (RTM) system. The system comprises a set of software and methodologies which enable forest communities anywhere in the world to collect and transmit accurately geo-referenced reports of forest illegalities to a central database in real time, even from areas where there is no mobile phone or internet connectivity. It has been built in house at RFUK and is comprised of four main components:

- Collectaur - a smartphone app to collect geo-referenced evidence of suspected illegalities;
- Monitaur - an online platform where the alerts transmitted with Collectaur are received, stored and viewed for analysis;
- Centaur – a data encryption and transmission system; and
- The Community Hub which stores evidence and alerts from field monitors.

From 2015 to 2018, under a DFID (now FCDO) funded project, RFUK and local civil society organisations partners trialled community-based real-time monitoring of forest activities in Ghana, Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to test the opportunities to integrate such systems into governmental forest enforcement mechanisms, as a means of containing illegal logging and contributing to the implementation of FLEGT VPAs.

3. The project

Seeking to consolidate the achievements of the 2015-2018 RTM project, RFUK has partnered with four local Civil Society Organisations: Civic Response in Ghana, Forêts et Développement Rural (FODER) in Cameroon, Groupe d'Action pour Sauver l'Homme et son Environnement (GASHE) in DRC, and Comptoir Juridique Junior (CJJ) in the Republic of Congo (RoC) to further deploy and use the ForestLink community-based real-time forest monitoring (RTM) system in order to reduce forest illegalities for the benefit of local communities. The current phase of the project (2018-2021) aims specifically to capitalise on the previous phase's results and lessons learnt, and to sustain the system in each implementing country by:

- Further supporting FLEGT VPA processes in implementing countries;
- Promoting governance reforms to institutionalise the ForestLink RTM system within national forest monitoring, control and law enforcement systems;
- Improving and adapting the system to upscale its implementation and dissemination in new countries (e.g. RoC) and in connection with a wider range of forest illegalities and other sectors of the extractive industry;
- Enhancing law enforcement and forest peoples' rights;
- Ensuring that improved forest governance directly benefits forest communities;
- Promote sustainability, notably by ensuring that improved forest governance directly benefits forest communities.

The project has been designed around 4 outputs:

1. A "ready to deploy" version (V2.0) of the technology and system is consolidated based on further deployment and testing of the community based Real Time forest Monitoring;
2. Enforcement actions increase in response to community generated alerts, leading to a sustainable reduction of illegalities and better protection of community rights in the context of forest activities;
3. Civil society led real time monitoring systems are institutionalised in user countries through integration of the system to forest control mechanisms and participation of forest communities and civil society representatives in forest management mechanisms;
4. Sustainable engagement of forest communities in forest monitoring efforts.

In 2020, an additional component was added to the project with the aim of supporting CSOs in DRC and RoC to put the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) firmly on the agenda of national and international processes linked to the Biodiversity and Climate COPs.

5. Objective of the Evaluation

An independent consultancy team will be contracted by RFUK to:

- Evaluate the project from its design to its implementation in accordance with the criteria below to focus on the impact of interventions and outcomes in Cameroon, DRC, Ghana and RoC.
- Make relevant recommendations for the RFUK and partner organisations in Cameroon, DRC, Ghana, and RoC and inform future work as the ForestLink system is being further developed, and deployed in other countries.

The evaluation will refer to the original and revised overall logical frameworks for the project, as well as the national-level logical frameworks developed by partners, and will relate to the following themes:

A. Conception of the project/ Relevance:

- Relevance and appropriateness, context of the project in relation to local and national issues; details of the project's significance with respect to specific needs and its relevance in terms of the priorities of the communities involved.

B. Efficiency and project management:

- Execution, organisation, experience of the personnel, technical expertise, administration, financial management, training, monitoring and reporting.
- Examine how far funding, personnel, regulatory, administrative, time, other resources and procedures contributed to or hindered the achievement of project results.

- C. Effectiveness:**
- Assessment of how far the intended outputs and results were achieved in relation to targets set in the original and revised logical frameworks.
- D. Impact and project outcomes:**
- Describe the main changes and results, intended or unintended, and to what extent they can be attributed as a direct result of the intervention.
 - Evaluation of impacts at community and local partner level as well as relating to other actors involved in the project either directly or indirectly.
 - Review of the broader economic, social, legal and political consequences of the project and how it contributed to the overall objectives.
- E. Participation and Empowerment:**
- Extent, effectiveness, and how the project enabled participation of implementing partners in providing strategic direction and guiding project work plans and activities.
 - Extent, effectiveness, and how the project has empowered communities to take part in the decision making and policy processes.
 - Extent, effectiveness, and how the project has fostered coordination between implementing partners and relevant stakeholders (e.g. forest monitoring CSOs and forest control authorities), and facilitated communities' participation to relevant multi-stakeholder deliberation processes.
- F. Equity:**
- Discussion of social differentiation in particular gender and indigenous communities 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.
- G. Sustainability:**
- Potential for the continuation of the impact achieved and of the delivery mechanisms, following the withdrawal of external support.
- H. Replicability:**
- How replicable is the process that introduced the changes/had impact. Refer especially to innovative aspects which are replicable.
 - Describe any unanticipated, positive or negative, enablers or constraints that the project encountered.
- I. Lessons Learned:**
- Key lessons learned throughout the period of the project, which can be utilised to guide future strategies, projects or agencies working in development (divided into project, sector and broader developmental lessons).
 - How has the project been adapted or changed to take into consideration specific contexts and risks.
- J. Information, Dissemination and Networking:**
- Detail the mechanisms used for dissemination to project stakeholders.
- K. Recommendations:**
- Recommendations for improvements based on observations during the evaluation process (e.g. for sustainability, future project design and management).

6. Methodology

The team of consultants is expected to develop a detailed methodology, which will be reviewed and further developed in coordination with the RFUK team.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, international travel will not be feasible during the course of this evaluation. However, the lead consultancy team may engage national consultants based in each of the implementing countries to support their work.

The evaluation is expected to include:

- Desk-based research and evaluation, drawing on key project documentation (individual project logframes, 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. These may be face-to-face or remote and likely to include self-evaluation and semi-structured interviews.
- 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).
- Security and health context permitting, semi-structured interviews and observation with targeted communities.

7. Deliverables

The final evaluation should be presented in the form of a written report, in English. 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;
- An explanation of the evaluation's objectives, methodology (including a comment on the limitations);
- An evaluation of project implementation in relation to the themes listed above;
- An evaluation of the project outcomes beyond those identified in the project documents and logframe;
- Recommendations for the RFUK, Partners and other stakeholders, including the donor, based on observations made during the evaluation process;
- Conclusions.

8. Timeline

The evaluation is expected to be completed in full, and all outputs submitted to RFUK by the end of January 2021. The consultancy is expected to begin in October 2020. The consultancy team should include a proposed timeline/workplan in their proposal.

9. Skills and Experience

- Qualifications and experience in international development, political science, land or forest management, forestry, anthropology, or a related relevant field;
- Deep understanding of forest governance challenges and implementation context of civil society led monitoring in the Congo Basin / Western Africa, and related strategic stakes;
- Significant experience of external project Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning, and knowledge of participatory monitoring and evaluation processes;
- Experience in evaluating technical assistance projects with major donors, including DfID/FCDO;
- Extensive experience in working with national/provincial/local institutions particularly in Cameroon, DRC, Ghana or the Republic of Congo;
- Knowledge of new technologies and their potential in improving forest governance;
- A track record of working to tight deadlines to produce high-quality outputs;
- Excellent analytical and report writing skills;
- Fluency in both English and French, written and spoken.
- Ability to communicate complex information in understandable and relevant terms adapted for different stakeholders.

10. Application process

The consultancy team should submit an application in writing to jobs@rainforestuk.org with: *RTM end of project evaluation & your organisation's name* in the reference field of the email.

This must include:

- Presentation of the organisation, including: team structure, and relevant CVs;
- A technical proposal including: a detailed timetable, an indicative methodology (to be further developed at the start of the consultancy) and key questions to be addressed (according to evaluation themes);
- A financial proposal detailing consultant fees and related costs;
- Details of previous relevant missions or consultancies carried out during the last five years;

Closing Date for Proposals: 30th September 2020 at midnight (UTC/GMT)