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Terms of Reference

Evaluation of the Central Africa Regional Forest Program

9F085701 and 9F203400

Background

The WWF Central Africa regional forest program, previously known as CARPO or GHOA forest program forms one of the four pillars of the former Green heart of Africa (GHoA) initiative. The GHoA vision aimed at addressing the driver of forest lost and what is needed to save the Congo Basin forests for environmental services, people and wildlife: wildlife management and fight against poaching and wildlife crime (Pillar 1 – Wildlife Crime), a network of well-managed and sustainably funded protected areas (Pillar 2 – Protected Areas), a push towards a greener economy through best practices for mining and palm oil, land use planning, etc. (Pillar 3 – Green Economy) and forests that are responsibly managed by governments, companies and people (Pillar 4). The latest pillar that constitutes the regional forest program has benefited from the technical and financial support of WWF-Netherlands (NL) and WWF-Norway (Norad) with funding from Norwegian cooperation (NORAD). The NL support started in 2011 and is in its second phase since 2014 and closing and the end of FY 17, with a total budget of 900,000 euro (300,000 euro/year). The Norad component of the regional forest program started in 2012 with a project in DRC followed by the regional contribution from January 2013 to December 2016, with a total budget of 14,787,431 Norwegian crowns.

The geographic scope of the programme covers five countries of the Congo Basin, including Cameroon, Central African Republic (CAR), Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Gabon and Republic of Congo (RoC). The activities are more specifically focus on production forests in these five countries and, to the extent possible, on those production forests close to GHoA priority protected areas. The programme in collaboration with the Market Transformation Initiative (MTI) is targeting a total of 14 million ha of forests under corporate Forest Management Units (FMUs). Along with the conservation of these forest ecosystems, the program seeks to contribute to the protection of other threatened biodiversity targets, i.e. elephants and great apes, for which forests are the main habitat. The main anticipated goal is zero net deforestation in WWF priority places in 2020, the main goal of GHoA.

The vision of the regional forest program is the same as for the GHOA program which is *“From its coastal waters, across the extensive forest, along the freshwater lifelines, people and biodiversity thrive in the Congo Basin, where ecological integrity and local and global ecosystem services are ensured through sustainable management and inclusive green economic growth”* .

Goal, Objectives and Strategies

The goal of the program is formulated as follow: “By 2020, regional and national policy frameworks are strengthened and areas under responsible forest management are increased in each of the GHOA countries, towards achieving an annual rate of zero net deforestation in lowland Congo Basin forests, safeguarding critical habitat for elephant and great apes”.

The project funded by Norad has defined its development goals as follow: “The Governments, and a critical number of private companies, forest communities and civil society organizations in the Green Heart of Africa landscapes are implementing sustainable forest management principles and practices, and responsible forest products trade as key drivers of forest conservation and poverty reduction, aiming at the strategic target of zero net deforestation in 2020”.

The objectives of the program are the following:

1. By 2017 at least one or new policy and/or legislation in each of the five targeted countries includes improved provisions towards forest conservation and responsible management
2. By 2017, the total area of FSC certified in the Congo Basin has increased from 4.4 to 7.9 million hectares, with a total 14 million hectares either FSC certified and/or holding a legality certificate

3. Advocacy and mediation role of at least thirty-four Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) is strengthened to effectively mainstream forest conservation and sustainable management in policies, legal/regulatory frameworks and practices on forestry, mining, energy and infrastructure development at local, national and regional levels

To address the above objectives, the Regional Forest Programme is aiming at supporting interlinked work on the following four strategies and a strong component on communications: (1) policy development for forest conservation, (2) responsible forest management and certification, (3) strengthening of civil society and (4) REDD+ and forest climate

Strategy 1: Policy development for forest conservation.

In collaboration with regional bodies (especially COMIFAC and based on its revised Plan de Convergence), national governments, civil society organisations and other stakeholders, the Programme highlights the needs for new texts/revision of texts as well as their harmonisation. Based on WWF's positions, it contributes to improvement of the forest sector policy and legislation at both regional and national levels. It also helps ensuring these improvements are accomplished via transparent participatory processes where civil society contribute efficiently to ensure local and indigenous peoples benefit from the economic development in their surroundings and forests continue to supply ecosystem services for future generations.

Strategy 2. Responsible forest management.

The thematic scope of this strategy includes work on responsible forest management with several actors. The *first category* of actors includes the most responsible companies that hold FSC certificates that need to be strengthened. The programme also works with those companies interested in FSC Certification and those who have made any commitment. The objective with this last category is to remind them what their gaps are in terms of legal compliance and eventually provide support to comply with this and other principles. The forest program, through responsible forest management work with FSC regional office to support the development of FSC national standards.

The regional forest program in this strategy worked to establish and strengthen dialogue between forest companies and communities and help the latter negotiate rights to resources and ensure that they benefit from the economic activities in their area. The programme also aims at creating conditions where policies and forest governance promote responsible forest management that is getting extra leverage from markets demanding products from responsibly managed forests.

Strategy 3: Strengthening of civil society.

This strategy contributes to strengthening the capacity of civil society and is tightly linked to the strategies on policy dialogue and responsible forest management. Capacity building efforts are supplied on topics such as lobbying, communication, fundraising, administrative and financial management etc., with the aim to get stronger conservation partners speaking up for the rights and needs of local and indigenous peoples. Support is provided to civil society to allow it to participate in an effective manner in the development of certification standards and opportunities for civil society to promote multi-stakeholder processes are promoted. By strengthening civil society it will be able to tell its government what reforms are needed (example: priority reforms planned under the VPA in CAR) and what changes should be made. Strong civil society groups will further be able to support communities negotiating rights from forest companies and act as independent observers of forestry operations (strategy 2).

Strategy 4: REDD+ and forest carbon.

Under this strategy the Forest Programme works on climate change, mainly with reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, forest conservation, sustainable forest management and activities to enhance forest carbon sinks (known as REDD+). REDD+ is a UN-backed scheme for combating climate change by providing incentives for people for reducing carbon emissions by keeping forests standing for forest ecosystem services. The work is done at several levels: global (participation in international working groups bringing lessons from the field), regional (supporting COMIFAC and countries ahead of big international meetings), national (helping governments prepare their REDD+ strategies and action plans) and local. The work is tightly linked to strategy 1 on policy development. This stream of work has been so far implemented by a dedicated regional coordinator, with a strong focus on REDD+. The bulk of REDD+ work is in DRC, which has the required capacity at national level. In Cameroon, it is planned to recruit a national REDD+ coordinator. Little work is needed in CAR and Gabon. As a result, this position will no longer exist as from FY15. The Regional Forest Programme Coordinator will act as focal point for REDD+ related issues. He will act as a relay between countries where REDD+ is implemented but will not undertake specific additional work.

It is worth noted that only the first three strategies of the program were supported under NL and Norad projects. The fourth strategy has receive sporadic support and have been mostly country specific with very little regional coordination.

Communications

The Forest Programme has clearly felt the need to improve its communications, with a stress on the impact of government policies and laws, and lack of coordination of these on forests, people and wildlife. There is need to talk more about good progress made by responsible forest companies and to draw attention to irregular or irresponsible practices.

WWF Project Team

The core project team structure includes five forest officers/forest programme coordinators in, respectively, Cameroon, CAR, DRC, Gabon and RoC and one project officer in DRC in charge of civil society strengthening, as well as a Regional Forest Programme Coordinator based in Yaoundé, Cameroon, responsible for the coordination of the "Forest Programme". The national forest officers each answer to a local supervisor: in Cameroon to the Conservation Director, in CAR to the Country Coordinator, in DRC to the national Forest Programme Coordinator, and in Gabon to the Field Programmes Manager. In RoC, given the size of the in-country programme, the forest officer is directly supervised by the Regional Forest Programme Coordinator.

The Regional Forest Programme Coordinator and the respective country supervisors work together to strengthen not only the individual capacity of the team members but also to contribute to increase capacity of the national offices under Africa Vision 2020.

Objective and scope of evaluation

The following points (in random order) provide guidance on the focus of the:

1. How well have the three main strategies in the program been covered, have they all been covered and if so, have they been covered equally well? What was their impact on conservation?
2. Has the program enabled the team to work towards a more regional and programmatic approach, a coherent forest program and improved program management (monitoring, financial management etc.)?
3. Has the program succeeded in strengthening country Forest programs/approaches?
4. How efficiently is the program implemented, has the regional program been efficient able to mobilise additional funds for regional/national activities?
5. How effective has the program been in working with and through partners, like COMIFAC and other regional bodies. What could we have done differently?
6. Relevance and Quality of Design: To what extent the regional forest program, design represents a necessary, sufficient, appropriate, and well-founded approach to contribute to GHoA strategic plan.
7. Sustainability: What benefits is the regional forest program likely to continue to have after the end of the external support.
8. Adaptive Capacity: To what extent has the regional forest program applied adaptive management practice to ensure continued relevance, performance, and learning?
9. Recommendations for identified weak points and shortfalls.

Setup of evaluation

Due to time constraints and fund, the evaluators will have to travel to Cameroon and DRC and organise e-meetings with forest officers and relevant stakeholders in the three other countries of the region. During his/her stay in the region the consultant will have interviews with key partners, including logging companies, forestry ministry officials, professional organisations like ATIBT, local stakeholders (NGOs, CBOs, etc.). The logistics around these meeting will be facilitated by Cameroon and DRC offices. The e-meetings with the countries not visited will be facilitated by the RFO in collaboration by countries' forest officers.

The consultant is expected to assess the monitoring and evaluation plan, biannual technical progress reports for the program (an extra technical progress report will be produced after the first quarter of the financial year 2014 to give the consultant access to the latest information), as well as various reports and other documents which will be compiled for him/her. Any other documents such as reports from meetings, travel reports etc. will be supplied on request. The consultant is also encouraged to meet with or contact partners by phone/Skype.

Duration

The consultant is expected to:

Spend 3 days preparing for the evaluation, reading documents and preparing questions for the team. This would be done from home.

Spend 5 days including travel time meeting with the regional team in Yaoundé, interviewing the project manager (regional forest officer), Cameroon forest officer, ROA management, staff working for other programs, partners etc.

Spend a week including travel time visiting DRC, interviewing forest program staff, partners (NGOs, FIB, IPOs, community representatives, etc.) and visiting at least one project sites where NGOs conducted independent monitoring.

Spend 2 weeks writing a draft report and a revised final report upon feedback from Central Africa offices, WWF-NL and WWF Norway.

Draft timeline: Visit Cameroon week of 24 Oct 2016 and meet with all the forest officers in Cameroon, visit DRC the following week (week of 1 Nov 2016). Produce first draft report by 25 Nov 2016, feedback received by 5 Dec 2016, final report submitted by 15 Dec 2016

Deliverables

An evaluation report in English of maximum 25 pages (without annexes).

Main qualification of the consultant

The consultant is expected to have broad knowledge of forests and forestry in the Congo Basin and general knowledge of adjacent land use issues is also important (mining, palm oil etc.). The consultant will need proven evaluation experience (reference to reports), good English writing skills and good knowledge of French. Most of the interviews required will preferably be done in French. Reports and other documents are in French or English. Cultural sensitivity is crucial.

Request for Technical and Financial Offers

The consultant should submit a letter of motivation including, in particular:

- (a) a description of his/her experience doing similar tasks, and
- (b) a confirmation of his/her availability to conduct the evaluation within the timeframe referred to in the Terms of reference.
- (c) an Annex including the following evaluation matrix presenting the consultant's proposed methodology

Issues	Key Questions	Specific Research Questions	Data Sources	Methods / Tools	(Indicators)
1					
2					
3 etc					
(other key issues as necessary)					

(d) A proposed itinerary and detailed budget (all inclusive, i.e. including visas, tickets, per diems, consultancy fees, etc.).

This letter should be submitted with a CV, to RecruitConsCab@wwfcam.org cc gbtchoumba@wwfcam.org no later than **21st August 2016**.

Annex 1. Part A: REPORT SAMPLE TEMPLATE

The following provides a basic outline for an evaluation report. While this should be easily applied to evaluations of simpler projects or programmes, adaptation will be needed to ensure reports of more complex programmes (e.g., Country Offices, multi-country regions, eco-regions, Network Initiatives) are well organized, easy to read and navigate, and not too lengthy.

Title Page

- ♦ Report title, project or programme title, and contract number (if appropriate), Date of report, Authors and their affiliation, Locator map (if appropriate)

Executive Summary (*between 2 to 4 pages*)

- ♦ Principal findings and recommendations, organized by the six core evaluation criteria
- ♦ Summary of lessons learned

Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

Body of the report (no more than 25 pages)

- A. Introduction (max 3 pages)
 - Concise presentation of the project/programme characteristics
 - Purpose, objectives, and intended utilization of the evaluation (reference and attach the ToR as an annex)
 - Evaluation methodology and rationale for approach (reference and attach as annexes the mission itinerary; names of key informants; a list of consulted documents; and any synthetic tables containing project/programme information utilized in the exercise)
 - Composition of the evaluation team, including any specific roles of team members
- B. Project/Programme Overview (max 5 pages)
 - Concise summary of the project or programme's history, evolution, purpose, objectives, and strategies to achieve conservation goals (attach conceptual model, results chain or logical framework and project monitoring system as annexes)
 - Essential characteristics: context, underlying rationale, stakeholders and beneficiaries
 - Summarize WWF's main interest in this project or programme
- C. Evaluation Findings (5-8 pages)
 - Findings organized by each of the six core evaluation criteria, including sufficient but concise rationale.
 - Tables, graphics, and other figures to help convey key findings
- D. Conclusions and recommendations (5-8 pages)
 - Conclusion and recommendation organised each of the six core evaluation criteria, including sufficient but concise rationale – recommendations should be specific, actionable and numbered.
 - Project/programme performance rating tables to provide a quick summary of performance and to facilitate comparison with other projects/programmes (see Annex A, Table B)
- E. Overall Lessons Learned (max 3 pages)
 - Lessons learned regarding what worked, what didn't work, and why
 - Lessons learned with wider relevance, that can be generalized beyond the project

Annexes

- ♦ Terms of Reference
- ♦ Evaluation methodology detail
- ♦ Itinerary with key informants
- ♦ Documents consulted
- ♦ Project/programme logical framework/ conceptual model/ list of primary goals and objectives
- ♦ Specific project/programme and monitoring data, as appropriate
- ♦ Summary tables of progress towards outputs, objectives, and goals
- ♦ Maps
- ♦ Table Annex 1 Part B

Annex 1. Part B. EVALUATION SUMMARY TABLE - SCORING OF THE PROJECT/PROGRAM AGAINST THE SIX CORE EVALUATION CRITERIA

Evaluators are to assign the project/program a Rating and Score for each criterion as follows:

- Very Good/4: The project/program embodies the description of strong performance provided below to a *very good* extent.
- Good/3: The project/program embodies the description of strong performance provided below to a *good* extent.
- Fair/2: The project/program embodies the description of strong performance provided below to a *fair* extent.
- Poor/1: The project/program embodies the description of strong performance provided below to a *poor* extent.
- N/A: The criterion was *not assessed* (in the 'Justification,' explain why).
- D/I: The criterion was considered but *data were insufficient* to assign a rating or score (in the 'Justification,' elaborate).

Evaluators also are to provide a brief justification for the rating and score assigned. Identify most notable strengths to build upon as well as highest priority issues or obstacles to overcome. Note that this table should not be a comprehensive summary of findings and recommendations, but an overview only. A more comprehensive presentation should be captured in the evaluation report and the management response document.

Rating/Score	Description of Strong Performance	Evaluator Rating/Score	Evaluator Brief Justification
Relevance	The project/program addresses the necessary factors in the specific program context to bring about positive changes in conservation targets (i.e., species, ecosystems, ecological processes, including associated ecosystem services supporting human wellbeing).		
Quality of Design	The project/program has rigorously applied key design tools (e.g., the WWF PPMS).		
Efficiency	1. Most/all program activities have been delivered with efficient use of human & financial resources.		
	2. Governance and management systems are appropriate, sufficient, and operate efficiently.		
Effectiveness	1. Most/all intended outcomes—stated objectives/intermediate results regarding key threats and other factors affecting project/program targets—were attained..		
	2. There is strong evidence indicating that perceived changes can be attributed wholly or largely to the WWF project or program		
Impact	1. Most/all goals—stated desired changes in the status of species, ecosystems, ecological processes—were		

	realized.		
	2.Evidence indicates that perceived changes can be attributed wholly or largely to the WWF project or program.		
Sustainability	1. Most or all factors for ensuring sustainability of results/impacts are being or have been established.		
	2. Scaling up mechanism put in place with risks and assumptions re-assessed and addressed.		
Adaptive Management	1. Project/program results (outputs, outcomes, impacts) are qualitatively and quantitatively demonstrated through regular collection and analysis of monitoring data.		
	2. The project/program team uses these findings, as well as those from related projects/ efforts, to strengthen its work and performance		
	3. Learning is documented and shared for project/program and organizational learning		