

Terms of reference for the final evaluation of the project: 'Tackling deforestation through linking REDD+ and FLEGT'

Background

Tackling deforestation through linking Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD+) and Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) is a three year project funded by the European Union (EU) with co-financing from the UK Department for International Development (DFID) which started in March 2014 and ends in March 2017. The project falls under the Programme for the Environment and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources including Energy which helps developing countries to address environmental and natural resource management issues. Projects funded need to foster innovation, stimulate cross-country experience sharing, and target EU policy. The project fosters innovation by developing and implementing a new methodology to monitor forest governance, and by linking national FLEGT and REDD+ policies in four countries including Cameroon, Ghana, Liberia, and the Republic of Congo. The project stimulates cross-country experience sharing by ensuring annual South–South exchanges between all partners, and targets EU policies by working towards effective implementation of the EU FLEGT Action Plan and the EU 2008 Communication on Deforestation, including REDD+ actions. A key element of the project is to ensure that the voices of local civil society organisations (CSOs) in the target countries are heard in Brussels.

The main aim of the project is to improve governance through effective implementation of REDD+ safeguards and FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) Legality Assurance Systems (LAS). The specific project objectives are:

1. National civil society monitoring systems monitor key REDD+ safeguards and feed into the national system for ensuring these safeguards are being addressed. Indicators: (a) number of civil society monitoring systems up and running; (b) availability, quality and relevance of information on two key REDD+ safeguards as a result of CSO monitoring.
2. Key REDD+ safeguards are respected in practice. Indicators: (a) level of participation in REDD+ and FLEGT processes; (b) non-contested tenure arrangements/land area.
3. Implementation of FLEGT VPAs informs national REDD+ strategies and vice versa, leading to improved forest governance. Indicators: (a) increased government recognition and donor awareness of the need to link REDD+ and FLEGT; (b) REDD+ strategies integrate elements of VPA implementation, notably in relation to recognition of rights and effective participation in line with REDD+ safeguards.
4. Tenure rights are seen as critical to effective FLEGT VPA and REDD+ implementation. Indicators: (a) non-contested tenure arrangements/land area; (b) REDD+ strategies/FLEGT VPA process strengthen communities' tenure regimes.

The key target groups are (1) local CSOs working together in national civil society platforms in the four target countries. Most of these organisations have been involved in the negotiation and

implementation of FLEGT VPA agreements and some in REDD+ activities; (2) donor agencies including the EU, World Bank Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and UN-REDD (Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)), Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), DFID; and (3) relevant government ministries in target countries (through local CSOs).

The final beneficiaries of the project are forest-dependent communities, an estimated 22.2 million people in the four targeted countries.

Fern has been managing the project with implementing partners in Cameroon, Ghana, Liberia, and the Republic of Congo. The project ends in March 2017, and is due for a final external evaluation in the first quarter of 2017.

Objectives of the Evaluation

The objectives of the evaluation are to:

1. Assess the project's:

- a. Relevance – the extent to which the objectives were consistent with beneficiaries' needs and priorities
- b. Effectiveness – the extent to which the project objectives were achieved
- c. Efficiency – how well financial resources/inputs were converted into results
- d. Sustainability – the extent to which the partners have acquired skills that will benefit them to continue after the project has finished.
- e. Impact – the long-term impacts produced by the project (directly, indirectly, intended and unintended).

The evaluation should assess the above in relation to two central questions:

- I. What changes / outcomes / achievements have taken place?
- II. How have these changes / outcomes / achievements been brought about?

In relation to this, the evaluation should consider the following sub-questions:

- Who and what?

Who has benefited (government, NGOs, communities, men, women), in what ways? Have any changes been achieved in relation to policy / practice / attitudes of decision makers / policy makers and others in the countries where the project was implemented? Have any changes been achieved relating to broader national and international policies in the countries where the project was implemented? To what extent has the achievement of the changes / outcomes been influenced by external / other factors? To what extent are changes attributable to the project activities?

- How?

How accurate was the 'theory of change' that was articulated at the beginning of the project? Should it be adapted and improved for the future?

What were the most effective approaches used by Fern and its implementing partners to bring about change? What worked, what didn't, and why? What overall lessons have been learned? How have relationships between partners helped or hindered the delivery of outcomes? How can these relationships be improved? How effective have the project's monitoring, management, learning and financial systems been? How can these be improved? How transferable is project learning?

2. Provide recommendations for possible follow up projects of Fern and partners. The learning from this evaluation should be applied to future similar projects by Fern and its partners. The evaluation should be focused on recommendations for improvements relating to the central questions outlined above.

Evaluation stakeholders

The main audiences for the evaluation are Fern staff and implementing partners. The evaluation will be shared as appropriate with the EU delegations in implementing countries, the European Commission Directorate for Development, and relevant public officials in Ghana, Cameroon, Congo, and Liberia.

Methodology

The evaluation methodology will be developed by an external consultant, taking into account EU standards and guidelines.¹ The evaluation will involve gathering and analysing secondary data (i.e. information already collected in project reports and documents and the mid-term review) as well as some primary data (i.e. through field visits to one or more countries interviews and/or questionnaires and meetings).

Deliverables

- An evaluation workplan, including: planned timeline, methodology / approach, planned stakeholders to be consulted, data collection and analysis tools.
- A draft evaluation report.
- A final evaluation report addressing all comments. The main body of the report should not exceed 35 pages and should include an executive summary, brief project background and recommendations. Technical information should be included in appendices only.

Indicative schedule

The evaluation is expected to be completed in 18 working days. The consultancy will include at least one visit to an implementing partner.

The evaluation field work is expected to be undertaken before the end of February 2017. It is desirable that the final report is submitted to Fern by 31 March 2017.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/evaluation/docs/standards_c_2002_5267_final_en.pdf