

Final Evaluation of the Green Heart of Africa Global Initiative (FY08-FY15)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Project/Programme Name(s)	Green Heart of Africa Global Initiative
Project/Programme Location(s)	Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Republic of Congo
Project/Programme Reference Number(s)	GHoA core 9F0810
Names of Project/Programme Executants (WWF Office, name of project/programme manager)	Marc Languy, GI Leader
Project/Programme Duration (from start year)	8 Years
Period to Be Evaluated	July 2008 – June 2015 (8 years), with a more important focus on the past 5 years.
Project/Programme Budget Sources and Amounts (for period to be evaluated)	WWF Belgium, WWF Sweden, WWF Italy, WWF Germany, WWF US, WWF Netherlands, WWF Japan, WWF France
Names of Implementing Partners (if relevant)	WWF-Cameroon program office WWF-Central African Republic program office WWF-Democratic Republic of Congo program office WWF-Gabon program office WWF-CARPO

1. PROJECT/PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

The forests of the Congo Basin are truly magnificent: a vast stretch of tropical rainforest, second in size only to the Amazon, and home to some of the most fascinating wildlife species on earth - including our closest relatives. Four of the world's six great ape species live here. Lowland and Grauer's gorillas and bonobos are found nowhere else on earth. In fact, thousands of plant and animal species are unique to the Congo Basin - from the world's largest frog to a coffee plant that produces caffeine-free beans. The forest ecosystem is also hugely important to the economy of the region, and of the world. It provides food, fuel and shelter to millions of people, and regulates climate and rainfall far beyond their borders. The timber industry is worth several billions of Euros, and large reserves of oil and minerals could drive much-needed economic growth and development. But for exactly this reason, the forests are coming under intense pressure. Increasing local and global demand for food, wood, minerals, water and energy is fuelling unsustainable rates of resource extraction. The illegal trade in ivory and other wildlife parts is also taking its toll: over the last 10 years, the Congo Basin region lost an estimated 62% of its forest elephants¹.

In 2007, WWF decided to establish 13 Network Initiatives, later renamed Global Initiatives (GI) as flagship programmes to deliver on the organization global priorities as laid out in the Global Programme Framework. GIs are intended to be transformational interventions implemented

¹ Maisels F, Strindberg S, Blake S, Wittemyer G, Hart J, et al. (2013) Devastating Decline of Forest Elephants in Central Africa. PLoS ONE 8(3): e59469.doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0059469

through concerted Network action to meaningfully impact critical threats, opportunities, biodiversity and development targets within priority places or on priority themes.

The GHoA-GI was created in 2008 and its first three-year strategic plan (FY09-FY11) was approved by the shareholders' group in 2008. The second SP (FY12-15) was approved by the shareholders' group in 2011 and in 2014 prolonged until FY16. In 2013, WWF International conducted a review of all WWF's GIs. The following are the recommendations regarding GHoA:

Given the huge conservation challenges in the Congo Basin, simply holding the tide - which WWF and partners are doing - is significant. The GHoA GI has delivered or contributed to a number of significant achievements including some at scale in the Congo Basin, such as the expansion of protected areas, the adoption of regional FSC standards, 5.3 million ha of forests FSC certified, development of REDD+ pilot projects, and the adoption of a regional law enforcement action plan. CC also recognises the potential to achieve transformational outcomes, including through multiplication with government and private sector partnerships, if the programme can maintain its new momentum with a full complement of staff, a revised strategy, and sustained support.

However, after six years in existence the GI does not appear to have achieved any transformational outcomes consistent with the GI model definition, and the revised strategy approved by the SHG in August 2012 does not articulate a focused set of truly transformational strategies or outcomes, despite a thorough review of the GI 18 months ago. In addition, the merging of the GI with the CARPO programme does not fit the GI model. However, it should be noted that GHoA benefited significantly from the Network concerted action generated through the GHoA SET/SHG.

Further, the review recommended:

- The transitioning out of the GI portfolio by no later than end of December 2013 to a global priority place-based programme that builds upon achievements to date.
- that GHoA should continue as a global priority place-based programme for which multi-year (core) funding commitments should be maintained.

The vision for GHoA is "From its coastal waters, across the extensive forests, 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".

GHoA-GI 2020 Goals:

- Priority populations of target species within priority landscapes are either increasing or stable from 2014 levels
- Zero net deforestation and degradation in priority areas within WWF Priority Landscapes
- Economic development in the Congo Basin delivers improved human well-being and social equity while sustaining ecosystem services [Goal to be further focused and defined for the Congo Basin context through Year 1 scoping studies on Green Economy

The main elements of the evaluation are shown below:

Programme Areas	Structure, Governance, Implementation Model
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catalyse radical reductions in unsustainable and illegal wildlife offtake • Partner for new, effective, and sustainable protected areas • Advance a green economy for the Congo Basin • Build durable mechanisms to retain forests and carbon • Links with other key WWF programmes and campaigns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance – SHG, SET, Host Office, Coordinating Team • GHoA team • Alignment between GI and National Offices • Synergies with other GIs • Funding – to Coordinating Team; to National Offices

Note: the National Offices and their programmes are not being directly evaluated.

2. EVALUATION PURPOSE AND USE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

Purpose and use

The GHoA-GI has been implemented for eight years (FY08-FY15). The program core team and the shareholders group (SHG) of the GHOA-GI are planning this end of program evaluation with the overall objective of assessing how well the program has achieved its objectives and planned results for 2015 and also identify lessons learned and knowledge generated from the implementation of the GI program and its added value above regular implementation through country offices and the regional program office (CARPO). These lessons will be shared with the program team and the wider WWF network (including WWF International, National Offices, the Regional Office for Africa and the four country offices in Central Africa). The key stakeholders of this evaluation are therefore the core GHoA team, Central Africa countries, shareholders' group and implementing partners.

The final report of the evaluation will be approved by the shareholder's group of GHoA and the Regional Office for Africa. The GHoA SHG chair will be responsible for overall oversight of the evaluation, including the development of a management response, as well as ensuring dissemination of results internally and/or outside the WWF Network.

Scope and focus of the Evaluation

The evaluation would include evaluations of the GHoA funded programmes and their impact on the CARPO portfolio as a whole.

Thematic scope: Specifically, the scope of the evaluation will include an assessment of:

- Progress made by the programme (including evidence in place to demonstrate achievements) towards the expected outcomes and impacts stated in the FY13-FY15 Strategic Plan and M&E Plan, including the enablers or factors that hindered progress;
- The degree to which the program effectively applied the WWF PPMS cycle, in particular using effective M&E, analysis of progress/challenges and lessons learning for adaptive management and if this has supported achievement of programme goals and contributed towards improving the effectiveness of the organization,

- Whether the program design, organization, and funds were appropriately aligned to effectively and efficiently deliver on the expected results;
- Whether the investment plan and other tools were appropriate and effective to gather support and to channel funds to the most strategic priorities
- Whether the program achieved transformational changes at regional and national level;
- Organizational set-up with GI lead, GI team of regional experts, shareholder group (SHG) and shareholder group executive team (SET).
- Technical, organizational and financial merging and/or alignment and/or complementarity between the GHoA programme and CARPO's strategies and operations.
- Whether synergies with other key priority programmes (other GIs, global thematic programmes, global campaigns) were set up and contributed to improved conservation impact
- What key adjustments are needed to approaches, and ways of working, to ensure the program achieves its 2020 objectives and goals, and in particular, in light of the phase-out of the WWF GI System, what structures and transitioning measures would be required in order to sustain and continue to work initiated under the GI, in particular also in terms of devolution of roles and responsibilities to country offices and partners.

In addition, the evaluation will look at program management effectiveness, aid coordination engagement and the effectiveness of partnerships with implementing partners and partnerships with other development partners/stakeholders. The evaluation will cover the GHoA-GI portfolio of interventions for the period covered by the FY08-FY16 strategic plans.

Geographical scope: The scope of the evaluation will be the GHoA-GI implementation countries.

3. GUIDING QUESTIONS

In line with the WWF evaluation framework, the GHoA-GI final evaluation will particularly focus on the following questions – but will not necessarily be limited to these:

Evaluation criteria and guiding questions
<p><i>Relevance and Quality of Design</i></p> <p>This will measure the extent to which the programme design represents a necessary, sufficient, appropriate, and well-founded approach to bring about positive changes in targeted biodiversity (e.g., species, ecosystems, ecological processes, including associated ecosystem services that support human well-being).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the Strategic Plan well informed by current and relevant data? • To what extent has the GHoA-GI focused on the right things; i.e. addressed the most important issues to achieve its objectives? • Are the objectives likely to lead to conservation success? • Are the goals and objectives SMART and have indicators for success been clearly identified? • To what extent the programme design represented necessary, sufficient, appropriate, and well-founded approach to bring about positive changes in targeted biodiversity and/or footprint issues (e.g. species, ecosystems, ecological processes, including associated ecosystem services that support livelihood and human wellbeing). • Did the design and operation of the GHoA-GI adequately seek to mobilize the most strategic stakeholders (locally, nationally, regionally, and internationally) and thereby enhance its ability to achieve the expected changes?

Efficiency (of delivery of outputs)

This will measure the relationship between outputs, the products or services of the intervention, and inputs – the human and financial resources the programme uses.

- Is the governance model effective, with clearly defined lines of accountability and authority? Are the shareholder group (SHG) and Shareholder Executive Team (SET) effective and efficient in guiding and supporting the GI? Was the set-up of a hosting office effective?
- Are there appropriate mechanisms in place to ensure accountability?
- Was the program sufficiently resourced (in terms of staff, staff qualifications, capacity, financial resources, shareholder financial and technical support). Were there key gaps and any strategies used to fill these (fundraising strategy, strategic partnerships)? Which tools did GHOA establish to mobilize funds in the most strategic way?
- How did the GHOA programme adapt to existing CARPO structure, staffing and priorities to avoid duplication and ensure proper synergies between GHOA and CARPO, and was this efficient?
- Is the programme delivering value for money and that costs are reasonable given the outputs and outcomes generated?
- To what extent did the GI result in increased or decreased administrative burden (proposals, reporting, audits).
- To what extent did the GI result in increased funding for WWF in the Congo Basin and did economics of scale improve?
- Was the GI efficient in establishing synergies with other key priority programmes (other GIs, global thematic programmes, global campaigns) and did it contribute to improved conservation impact?

Effectiveness (of delivery of intermediate results and outcomes)

This will measure the extent to which the intervention's intended outcomes – its specific objectives or intermediate results – have been achieved.

- With a focus on stated objectives, desired outcomes, and intermediate results, what has and has not been achieved (both intended and unintended) and can these changes be attributed to the program's interventions?
- What is the significance/strategic importance of the progress, or any lack thereof, made to date? To what extent have targeted key factors – drivers, opportunities, threats – been affected?
- Which strategies have been effective or are likely to be, and which are not? What anticipated and unanticipated factors have promoted or impeded the programme's progress? What supporting or impeding factors might affect successful implementation in the next planning period?
- What evidence is there that this GI actually improved WWF's effectiveness by bringing innovation, transformation and multiplication? What positive effects on WWF priorities in the region have resulted from the GHOA-GI that would likely not have been seen in its absence?

Sustainability (of progress, benefits, and impact realised)

This will measure whether the benefits of a conservation intervention are likely to continue after external support has been ended.

- Did the programme have the right measures in place to ensure our conservation work is sustainable?
- Are there risks to sustainability that were not being accounted for?
- What external factors could have a high or medium likelihood of undoing or undermining the future sustainability of the programme's positive impacts? (e.g., political stability, economic crises and shocks, overall level of development, natural disasters, climate change). Is the programme adequately anticipating and taking measures to ensure resilience to these?
- How effective are the exit strategies of GHOA transition plan, and approaches to phase out assistance provided by the program including contributing factors and constraints?
- What are the key factors that will require attention in order to improve prospects of sustainability of program outcomes as it is phased out, and the potential for replication of the approach?
- To what extent has the implementation of the GHOA-GI resulted in strengthened capacity of WWF

in the five GHOA country programs?

- How and to what extent were capacities strengthened at the individual and organizational level (including contributing factors and constraints), both inside WWF and with partners?

Adaptive Capacity (monitoring, evaluation, adaptation, learning)

This will measure the extent to which the programme applies strong adaptive management practice to ensure continued relevance, strong performance, and learning.

- Is/was there capacity within the core team to utilize strengths, team experience, and past successes effectively?
- Did the core team examine good practice lessons from other conservation/development experiences and consider these experiences in the programme design?
- Did the programme establish a baseline status of conservation targets and key contextual factors? Is there ongoing systematic monitoring of these?
- Monitoring of efficiency, effectiveness, impact:
 - Was there ongoing, systematic, rigorous monitoring of output delivery, outcome attainment, and impact measurement, with plausible attribution to WWF's actions?
 - Are lessons documented and shared in a manner that is promoting learning by the project/programme team and the broader organisation?
- To what extent has the GI applied conservation programme management best practices as embedded in the WWF Project/Programme Management Standards?
- Are lessons documented and shared in a manner that is promoting learning by the GI team and the broader WWF network?
- How often were the original risks and assumptions revisited? Were risks assessed adequately and external assumptions identified realistically? Were mitigation strategies identified and implemented by the team?
- In what ways did the program's adaptive management support the GI to be transformational? What made it transformational that we need to learn and carry forward? What failed it that we need to do differently?
- Were recommendations from the 2013 GI review followed?
- Are there any key lessons learned about the GI model itself, based on the GHOA-GI experience?
- In the framework of the transitioning of GHOA and the setting up of 9 global practices, what are the key recommendation to ensure momentum gained by GHOA is maintained and key conservation issues at the regional level continue to be addressed adequately?

4. METHODOLOGY CONSIDERATIONS

The evaluation methodology should include the following:

- A desk review of key documents (e.g. GHOA-GI strategic plan, monitoring plan, monitoring framework, progress reports, former reviews and evaluation reports such as the WWF GI Portfolio review, Mid Term Review, Progress Reports, program reviews like regional Forest program, SHG and SET meeting reports, GHOA/CARPO Investment Plan, etc.). This should also be done to provide and confirm the quality of data, evidence and chain of evidence for outcomes, impacts and approaches. Analysis of quantitative data should, as much as possible, be shown in graphs with trends over time (2008-present) where needed complemented with qualitative data. A list of reviewed documents should be annexed to the evaluation report.
- Interviews with key GI team members including samples of SHG/SET, the former GI Leader, Thematic teams at the GI level, and key staff members at ROA and the CCPO, DRC, Gabon and CAR Offices teams. Interviews should also be conducted with WWF supporting National Offices, and other WWF partner programmes (MTI, FCP, TRAFFIC, CIRAD etc.) as well as with representatives of key partners and stakeholders at regional

and national levels (COMIFAC, ECCAS, WB, AfDB). Interviews might be done both with individuals and through relevant focus groups among the program stakeholders. A list of interviewed partners and stakeholders should be annexed. Most interviews can be done over phone or Skype but some face to face discussions are to be held in WWF Office in Yaounde, Cameroon.

- Field visits to two programme sites to verify on the ground information from document review, to be reached from Yaounde:
 - o OLAM Palm Oil plantations in Kango and Mouila (Gabon), following interviews with selected ministries and partners in Libreville (1 night in Lambarene and one night in Mouila will be required)
 - o FSC certified timber concession in SE Cameroon (planning about 4 to 6 nights outside Yaounde, land travel included)
- Presentation of the final draft of the end of program evaluation to the GHoA Shareholders Group.

This is an external but very participatory evaluation of the GHoA-GI program. It is therefore proposed that the external evaluator will work very closely with an internal WWF staff member, preferably a member of WWF's Conservation Strategy and Performance Unit (CSPU) and a M&E officer for WWF-Central Africa or RoA.

In addition, selected representatives from relevant WWF offices/programmes will be engaged to allow for peer reviewing, experience sharing and feedback at both program and thematic level.

5. EVALUATION DELIVERABLES AND TIMELINE

Timeline

Major Evaluation Task/Output	Dates or Deadline	Who is Responsible
Desk study of key documents	February 2016	Evaluation Team
Evaluation and meetings with GHoA SHG/SET, GHoA-GI team and other stakeholders, field trips	March-April 2016	Evaluation Team
Evaluation report drafted and circulated to the relevant team members for comments	30 April 2016	Evaluation Team
Team submits comments on draft report	15 May 2016	GHoA-GI
Final report produced and shared with GHoA SHG	01 June 2016	SHG/SET/Evaluation Team

Deliverables

The deliverables of this evaluation will be the following:

- a. A first draft evaluation report, not to exceed 30 pages, as a digital copy in MS Word format as per the template provided by WWF by 30th April 2016. The first draft report will be used for feedback on inaccuracies and/or omissions within 15 days from GHoA-GI team.
- b. A final evaluation report, not to exceed 30 pages, as a digital copy in MS Word format as per the template provided by WWF by 1st June 2016.

All presentations and reports are to be submitted in English in accordance with the deadlines specified.

6. SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

The successful bidder(s) will be expected to have the following skills and experience:

- Significant experience in portfolio, programme and project delivery in an international development context;
- A strong understanding and experience of using/applying quantitative and qualitative evaluation methodologies for large multi-country programmes and portfolios (e.g. result-based M&E, contribution analysis);
- Excellent knowledge and experience of natural resource management and rural livelihoods programming and of the relationship of livelihoods, poverty, natural resource management and conservation, in a changing climate;
- Experience of evaluating organisational effectiveness (including value for money, accountability to beneficiaries, and learning and reflection among others);
- Knowledge of WWF or similar NGOs working in international development; and an affinity with WWF's conservation mission;
- Excellent writing and communication skills.

7. OFFERS AND SELECTION

Prospective consultants will produce a technical and financial offer (consultant may propose to work alone or with support of other consultants).

Your proposal should not exceed 12 pages in length (excluding annexes). It should include:

- a summary of your experiences relevant to this work;
- your understanding of the context;
- a suggested evaluation approach and methodology;
- a tentative work schedule and activity plan clearly linked to the timeline for this evaluation;
- A proposed budget for undertaking this work; the budget should clearly identify consultation fees, travel costs (air ticket, lodging), and any other expenses directly contributing to the evaluation. The offer must be all inclusive
- Where relevant, a presentation of the team, their respective roles and levels of involvement.

Annexes

- summary CV(s)
- Three references/referee contact details (related to evaluations).

Interested candidates should submit their response electronically to the following address: recruit-roaydehub@wwfafrica.org. The subject should read "**GHoA Evaluation**".

Deadline for proposals is close of business on **14 February 2016**.