Consultant for End-term Review of CIFOR’s project “Knowledge for action to protect tropical forests and enhance rights’ 2021-2024” (Ref. No. 2392)

Climate Change, Energy and Low-Carbon Development (CCE) team and Quality for Impact (Q4I) team

The Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) envisions a more equitable world where forestry and landscapes enhance the environment and well-being for all. CIFOR is a nonprofit, scientific institution that conducts research on the most pressing challenges of forest and landscape management around the world. Using a global, multidisciplinary approach, we aim to improve human well-being, protect the environment and increase equity. To do so, we conduct innovative research, develop partners’ capacity and actively engage in dialogue with all stakeholders to inform policies and practices that affect forests and people. CIFOR is a CGIAR Research Center, and leads the CGIAR Research Program on Forests, Trees and Agroforestry (FTA). Our headquarters are in Bogor, Indonesia, with offices in Nairobi, Kenya; Yaoundé, Cameroon; Lima, Peru; and Bonn, Germany.

CIFOR is looking for a:

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Background

CIFOR seeks to engage an external review team to carry out an end-term review of the current last phase of the Global Comparative Study for achieving effective, efficient and equitable REDD+ results (GCS REDD+), Phase 4 (“Knowledge for action to protect tropical forests and enhance rights”), ending in June 2024.

CIFOR’s Global Comparative Study for achieving effective, efficient and equitable REDD+ results (GCS REDD+ Phase 4) works with research partners and stakeholders in four countries to ensure that REDD+ policy-makers and practitioner communities have access to and use the information, analysis and tools needed to design and implement REDD+; create enabling conditions; and assess to what degree REDD+ has delivered effective, cost-efficient and equitable carbon and non-carbon benefits. The project combines research, in-country capacity building for research, technical assistance and technology transfer, and policy engagement at sub-national, national, and international levels. Through co-production of knowledge, partners develop their technical capacity to address policy and implementation challenges and engage jointly in dissemination, multiplication and uptake of research results. The project builds on three previous phases of GCS REDD+, which demonstrated the catalytic potential of combining research, capacity building, and partner engagement to bridge the science-policy divide. In this fourth phase, the project worked with a wide range of stakeholders in project countries to promote changes in policy and practice towards reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and enhancing forest carbon sinks.

GCS REDD+ has four research-to-action packages, working across four focus countries and at global level - designed to deliver salient, credible and legitimate knowledge products that address important gaps in REDD+ policy design and implementation:

- WP1: Achieving transparency and accountability
• WP2: Tracking and assessing actions
• WP3: Bringing out the politics: understanding and enlarging the policy space
• WP4: Linking science, policy and politics for forest-based climate action

All research-to-action work packages are seeking to influence international, national, and subnational policies and practices and are supported in achieving this by integrated communications and outreach activities (coordinated under a Work Package 5: Sharing evidence and experiences).

The current GCS REDD+ theory of change reflects the knowledge that CIFOR has developed during the last fifteen years of Norad supported research on how to effectively influence REDD+ policy and practice. This experience highlighted the importance of developing ownership of the knowledge produced and the agenda for its use. Evaluations (ODI 2015; Efeca 2021)\(^1\) of the first three phases of CIFOR’s GCS REDD+ found that a combination of co-producing research, extensive engagement of knowledge users across the research cycle and targeted communications with key decision makers is effective in achieving ownership and use of information in REDD+ decision making.

As a result, the project theory of change is structured in five stages (with text in brackets pointing to the respective outcome and impact levels);

1. Knowledge creation and co-learning [knowledge co-production activities],
2. Enhanced access to knowledge [knowledge co-production outcomes],
3. Change in aspirations [intermediate outcomes],
4. Change in implementer behaviour that is assessed by looking at the resulting changed policy and practice [end of program outcomes],
5. and finally, impacts or changes in state (e.g. carbon and non-carbon benefits, forest cover, carbon emissions etc).

The first four stages are within CIFOR’s sphere of influence. Achieving the desired outcomes in these stages would mean the project will make a credible contribution to changes in the aspirations and decisions of key policy makers and practitioners.

The goal of phase 4 of the GCS REDD+ project (2021-2024) was a transition from CIFOR-initiated co-production and co-learning to policymaker- and practitioner-initiated ownership and use of information in their decision making processes. As such, the expected overarching outcome of phase 4 is: Policy makers and practitioners in key tropical forest countries design and implement effective, efficient and equitable (3E) forest-friendly policies and actions, based on the knowledge and capacities co-developed through this project.

A final evaluation of GCS REDD+ phase 3 (Efeca 2021), as requested by Norad, highlighted several recommendations to enhance potential impact, which the project team is following. These include (1) continue having a strong scientists’ physical in-country presence for all the countries included in future phases of the GCS project; (2) implement a more comprehensive communications strategy, particularly in some countries (e.g. Indonesia), and with respect to engagement with the private sector (which was not clearly tracked in Phase 3); (3) develop stronger partnerships with local organizations in priority countries for increasing engagement on the ground; (4) identify the audience for each study as soon as possible to ensure that the final outputs are targeted to the desired audience(s); (5) design country pages on CIFOR GCS website, together with a more sophisticated way to ‘filter’ publications; (6) conduct further research on Benefit Sharing Mechanisms, including on the integration of PES and solutions for sustainable livelihoods to help local communities to effectively use PES financial resources; (7) fully implement a MELIA system from the start of Phase 4.

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Each of the four project countries in the current phase 4 of the project have had their own dynamic change in political context and stakeholders’ demand. Country-specific theories of change have therefore been developed early on to set up the context and expectations right at the beginning, have been regularly revisited by project team and are considered as a useful learning process.

**Objectives of the Assignment**

The end-term review will focus on phase 4 of the project cycle (2021-2024), including priority setting, research design, implementation, and on-going engagement processes. It is important to bear in mind that the depth and breadth of engagement with partner countries is not equal among target countries in phase 4, e.g., Indonesia, DRC and Peru are focus countries (Tier 1), while Brazil is Tier 2. Also, DRC was introduced in phase 3, whereas the other countries (Brazil, Indonesia, Peru) were subject of the project since earlier phases. Hence the maturity of some results may vary from one country to the next depending on when the country started benefitting from project activities.

The end-term review will address key review questions (to be confirmed by the review team during inception phase), including:

1. To what extent has the project (phase 4) achieved its intended outcomes and contributed to relevant NICFI outcomes?
2. What have been the main contributing factors to achieving the project’s intended outcomes?
3. What have we learned about translating research to policy and/or practice change?
4. Were there any positive or negative unexpected outcomes, and if so, why and how did they affect project’s expected results?
5. How and under what conditions were key stakeholders and beneficiaries equipped by the project’s knowledge processes and products?
6. How did the project ensure it addressed country needs? What factors contributed to or hindered the relevance of the research to the priority country contexts?
7. How has the project influenced REDD+ policy and practice at international, national, and/or subnational levels?

**Scope of the Assignment**

The review team will be required to conduct an externally-led, summative review of GCS REDD+ phase 4 (2021-2024). The end-term review will examine the extent to which the project effectively achieved its outcomes as well as determine and assess factors, enabling conditions, and lessons learnt in achieving these goals.

The review shall include, but not be limited to, the following four phases: planning, data collection, analysis and reporting. In the section below is an outline of the specific responsibilities of the review team in each phase. These 4 phases break into two large blocks:

**Inception block (planning of the review).** The review team will work independently to design a review plan, data collection tools and analytic frameworks, and present it to Norad and CIFOR for feedback before its finalization (inception phase).

**Review block (data collection, analysis and reporting).** The review team will collect available information and synthesize it against the key review questions, assess the need for eventual further remote or face-to-face data collection to address information gaps as needed before compiling the end-term review report, as well as generate a learning process based on sharing preliminary findings and obtaining feedbacks from others. CIFOR’s project team, members of CIFOR’s Quality for Impact team (Q4I), and in-country CIFOR staff and core partners will support the review team to understand the structure of the project and assist with the collection of all data which CIFOR is to provide. The Norwegian embassies in the 4 countries will also be interviewed by the review team.

The review will focus primarily on the influence of GCS REDD+ in the four priority countries (Tier 1: Peru, Indonesia, DRC; Tier 2: Brazil) where phase 4 of the project was undertaken, as well as influence at the global level.
Phase 1: Design and Planning

The review design and planning will be conducted in a consultative manner and will involve both members of the review team discussing the proposed approach with CIFOR’s Q4I team and key members of the project implementation team. During this phase the review team will:

1. Conduct a (remote) inception meeting
2. Undertake an initial document review. Key documents to be provided include:
   - Project proposal and design documents (including annual implementation plans, results frameworks, ToCs)
   - Key research publications, tailored communication products and press releases
   - Annual project reports
   - Other reports and communication products submitted to NICFI and Norad, e.g., report on NICFI outcomes, blogs, podcasts, etc.
   - Existing outcome assessments, reviews, and evaluations
3. Lead review design and planning consultations. This will involve:
   - Remote consultations with project staff regarding the history and evolution of the project and the specific work packages
   - Participate in a review of the project’s theory of change and progress markers in order to address review question 1
   - Developing an approach to address key review questions 2 and 3
   - Facilitate project team and Q4I input into the analytic frameworks for assessing achievements against review questions 2 & 3
   - Identify data sources required to address the questions (including identifying how existing information can be utilized in addressing the review questions)
4. Develop a review plan and data collection instruments

Phase 2: Data collection

The review team will lead the collection of review data with the support and facilitation of the project team.

1. Compile all existing data related to the review questions. Relevant existing information includes:
   - Annual project reports
   - Implementation plans
   - Influence logs from country teams
   - Stories of change
   - Citation, download and social media monitoring data
   - Event and engagement data
2. Collect additional information from key informants at the sub-national, national and international scales to address the review questions. This will involve:
   - remote consultations with key stakeholders in the four priority countries
   - interviews of the Norwegian embassies in the four countries
   - remote consultations with key actors in the UNFCCC and UNFCCC Standing Committee on Finance, the Green Climate Fund, FCPF/FIP, CCBA

Phase 3: Analysis and sense-making

The review team will lead the analysis of the collected review data and be prepared to present a summary of findings in reference to supporting evidence.

1. Undertake data analysis in line with agreed plans and frameworks
2. Design and facilitate a remote sense-making process to engage project manager, module leaders, country project staff and the Q4I team

Phase 4: Reporting
The review team will lead the writing of the report in consultation with the project manager and the Q4I team. In terms of expected deliverables, the End-review team will produce:

1. 5-page standalone executive summary
2. Full report with annexes

**Requirements**

The assignment will be conducted by an evaluation and reviewing company with the following expertise and capacities:

- Technical experts in forests and climate change research with minimum 5 years’ experience in evaluating such initiatives
- Available network of local experts in the four priority countries for data collection purpose
- Proven experience conducting Theory Based Evaluations, i.e. outcome and impact assessments
- Technical experts with excellent communication, facilitation and interpersonal skills
- Extensive experience producing written products (in English) for a variety of audiences, including bilateral and multilateral partners, and governments.
- Technical experts with a strong knowledge of issues related to forests and climate change, REDD+ policies and policy impact assessment are preferred

**Terms and conditions**

- This is an assignment for an End-term Review.
- The duration of the assignment is expected to take more or less 3 months, spread over a maximum period of 6 months, with an expected starting date on April 1st, 2024.
- Work location: Home-based with necessary contacts in project priority countries (Peru, Brazil, DRC, Indonesia)

**Application and End-review process**

- 29 February 2024: application deadline. Please submit a letter of interest, technical and financial proposal, and company profile with CV of the End-review team, including contact information to cifor-icraf-pmu@cifor-icraf.org. We will acknowledge all applications, but will only contact short-listed applicants.
- 15 March 2024: selection of the End-review team and contracting
- 1st April 2024: Start of the end-review process
- 30th September 2024: Final end-term review report submitted

To learn more about CIFOR-ICRAF, please visit our websites at:

https://www.cifor-icraf.org

CIFOR-ICRAF promotes Gender Diversity – Applications from women professionals are encouraged.

CIFOR-ICRAF is an equal opportunity employer. It fosters a multicultural work environment that values gender equality, teamwork, and respect for diversity.