

Terms of Reference for a Consultant/Researcher: Forestry Evidence Gap Map

Independent Evaluation Unit, Green Climate Fund

I. Introduction to GCF and IEU

The Green Climate Fund (GCF) is a multilateral fund created to make significant and ambitious contributions to the global efforts to combat climate change. The GCF contributes to achieving the objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement. In the context of sustainable development, the GCF aims to promote a paradigm shift towards low-emission and climate-resilient development pathways by providing support to developing countries to limit or reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and to adapt to climate change, while accounting for their needs and supporting particularly those that are vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. The GCF is governed by a Board, composed of an equal number of members from developed and developing countries. It is operated by an independent Secretariat headed by an Executive Director.

The Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) of the GCF, is mandated by the GCF Board under paragraph 60 of its governing instrument inform its decision making. Specifically, the governing instrument states “... the Board will establish an operationally independent evaluation unit as part of the core structure of the Fund. The head of the unit will be selected by, and will report to, the Board. The frequency and types of evaluation to be conducted will be specified by the unit in agreement with the Board.”

The IEU has several objectives:

- (a) Informing decision-making by the Board and identifying and disseminating lessons learned, contributing to guiding the GCF and stakeholders as a learning institution, providing strategic guidance
- (b) Conducting periodic independent evaluations of GCF performance to objectively assess the results of the GCF and the effectiveness and efficiency of its activities
- (c) Providing evaluation reports to the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement for purposes of periodic reviews of the Financial Mechanism¹

The IEU has a mandate for both discharging an accountability function and supporting a learning function.² These are central to the GCF being a learning organization as laid out in its Governing Instrument and its initial strategic plan.³ The responsibilities of the IEU are as follows:

¹The Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC provides the following guidance on the function of the IEU: “The reports of the GCF should include any reports of the independent evaluation unit, including for the purposes of the periodic reviews of the financial mechanism of the Convention” (UNFCCC decision 5/CP19, annex, paragraph 20).

² Board document B.16/18.

³ Annex I to decision B.12/20.

- (a) Evaluation: The IEU will undertake independent overall, portfolio, country, thematic, programme evaluations that inform GCF strategic result areas.⁴ In key cases, it will also support and undertake project evaluations. The IEU will use relevant and innovative methods and an independent peer-review mechanism that will provide guidance on independent evaluations. The vision, criteria and guidelines for these will be laid out in the Independent evaluation policy. The IEU is also mandated to independently peer review and attest the quality of GCF self-evaluation;⁵
- (b) Advisory and capacity support: The IEU is required to advise the Board by synthesizing findings and lessons learned from its evaluations. These findings and lessons learned are expected to also inform the Executive Director of the Secretariat and other GCF stakeholders.⁶ The IEU will engage closely with the independent evaluation units of intermediaries and implementing entities of the GCF, including national designated authorities (NDAs) and accredited entities (AEs). It will provide support to catalyse learning and build and strengthen NDA and AE evaluation capacity. It will also provide guidelines and support evaluation-related research that helps produce rigorous evidence in GCF result areas;
- (c) Learning: The IEU will support the GCF in its learning function by ensuring that recommendations from independent evaluations are incorporated into the Secretariat's functioning and processes.⁷ This includes recommending possible improvements to the GCF performance indicators and its initial results framework, after accounting for international experience and the results of evaluation;⁸
- (d) Engagement: The IEU will actively participate in relevant evaluation networks to ensure that it is at the frontier of evaluation practice. The IEU will involve its own staff and staff from NDAs and AEs in evaluations wherever feasible and appropriate.⁹ In addition, the IEU will support knowledge hubs of low-emission and climate-resilient pathways.¹⁰

II. Project Objectives and Goal

This consultancy assignment is supported by the Independent Evaluation Unit of the Green Climate Fund (IEU) and will be undertaken in collaboration with Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR). IEU is requesting applications for a consultant to develop and update the forest conservation evidence gap review conducted by the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie) in 2016, incorporating new evidence that has come out during the past three years (see the full report from this link - http://www.3ieimpact.org/media/filer_public/2017/01/06/egm-4-forest-conservation.pdf)

One challenge in taking stock of evidence in forestry interventions, is the absence of a causal relationship between forest conservation interventions and overall results (outcomes or impact). Overall impacts can arguably be diverse but for the evidence map, we are specifically interested in interventions that deal with forestry interventions including REDD+ programmes and interventions and their causal impact on various possible result areas including forest cover, livelihoods, health, agricultural

⁴ Annex I to decision GCF/B.05/03.

⁵ Decisions B.12/12 and 20.

⁶ Annex III to decision B.06/09

⁷ Syntheses will include not just evidence from GCF funded programmes and policies but also from other agencies that are relevant to the GCF's result areas.

⁸ Annex III to decision B.06/09.

⁹ See note 7 above.

¹⁰ Annex I to decision GCF/B.05/03.

productivity and greenhouse gas emissions. For the purposes of this EGM we are looking for someone who understands EGMs and high-quality studies that include counterfactual identification designs and is able to update the existing EGM. The candidate will also be expected to incorporate to a limited extent the institutional of the organizations that are implementing the forestry interventions (including REDD+ programs), the local context of where these programs are being implemented and to also incorporate process evaluations to provide additional context for implementation fidelity related topics.

The candidate is expected to undertake two specific activities. First, developing and updating the forest conservation evidence gap review conducted by 3ie by populating the gap map framework with studies of forest conservation interventions including REDD+ and their outcomes/impacts in developing countries. Second, tailor the framework such that it is relevant to the GCF institutional perspective while also incorporating the institutional, local and process related contexts in a limited way as mentioned above. Based on the initial 3ie search procedure, the consultant will also provide an annotated bibliography with key words and an assessment of quality, as well as recommendations for possible future systematic reviews and meta-analyses.

Common key questions that the gap map accompanying report will address are: What is the existing evidence that takes stock of forest conservation and REDD+ interventions in the context of climate change mitigation and adaptation? How do these attributes differ by scale and levels of implementation? To what extent has organizational context, made a difference, including implementation processes? Given these inputs, what type of lessons can be drawn from the emerging evidence gap map for future meta-analyses? The overall aim of the evidence gap map will be to enable practitioners to explore the findings and quality of the existing evidence on the impacts of diverse forest conservation interventions, and to ultimately facilitate evidence-based decision-making with respect to the design and implementation of climate change-oriented forest conservation programmes in the future. How are GCF, CIF and UN-REDD+ institutional perspectives recognized in this issue? How does GCF's role in forest management compare with the mandates of different agencies in the context of global policy?

In this respect, the aim is to build an evidence gap map with the following steps:

- Based on initial 3ie report, become familiarized with the categories of forest conservation interventions and outcomes/impacts for developing countries, with a possible theory of change
- Based on 3ie initial protocol, develop a systematic review protocol and a search protocol
 - Using an evidence gap map framework, build a comprehensive protocol by mapping the population, interventions, comparison and outcomes and study designs (PICOS) of studies focused on measuring the impacts of forest conservation interventions
 - Screen, review and code studies, including some relevant grey literature including those on institutional local and process contexts to a limited extent, as useful
 - Develop inclusion and exclusion criteria
 - Update the search protocol for an extensive and exhaustive search of the literature and indicate the databases where this will take place
- Undertake a comprehensive review of the literature for primary studies and systematic reviews of relevant studies in developing countries
- Populate the evidence gap map framework based on theory-driven intervention and outcome/impact criteria and sub-criteria

- Review existing GCF/UNREDD+/CIF strategic documents on forest conservation programmes in the context of climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Deliver a high-quality, well-written, well-thought out evidence gap report
- Provide a forward-looking review of possible future systematic reviews and meta-analyses

III. Timeline and Deliverables

The scope of this review may be modified in discussion with the selected consultant. Deliverables will consist of evidence gap map, and gap map report. This consultancy will be carried out remotely (home-based) for a period of four months with some possibility of being in Bogor Indonesia for a few weeks as is determined in consultation with the consultant.

The timeline for this study is as follows:

- August 1st – September 1st, 2018: Inclusion and exclusion criteria, along with search protocol developed in conjunction with IEU and CIFOR; Database search based on criteria and protocol
- September 1st – 30th, 2018: Studies to be included are finalized through title search, abstract search and full text screening; the approach paper is updated
- October 1st – 31st, 2018: Studies are analysed
- November 30th, 2018: Draft paper finalized and sent to IEU
- December 15th, 2018: Comments received
- January 15th, 2019: Paper finalized and submitted

The final product of this project will be jointly owned by IEU and CIFOR. IEU will provide overall leadership and technical vision. CIFOR will support this work by supervising and providing technical backstopping on a day to day basis during the whole exercise. The consultant will be hired under GCF procurement procedures but will work closely with CIFOR scientists and research associates. The study will be co-authored with the task managers from IEU and CIFOR who will continue to provide conceptual and technical guidance.

IV. Expertise

A qualified consultant requires the following attributes to undertake this evidence gap successfully:

- (a) Educational background – MSc or PhD in economics, natural resource management, environmental science or related fields with a minimum of three years of experience
- (b) Strong expertise and experience (minimum 10 years) in forest conservation and resilience work.
- (c) Familiarity with evidence gap maps, and inclusion and exclusion criteria, meta-analyses methods, and counterfactual and as-if counterfactual methods.
- (d) Familiarity with systematic reviews and meta-analyses methods.
- (e) Expertise and linkages with multi-sector evidence, especially in the areas of health, agriculture, forestry, energy and environment.
- (f) Experience in database search and access to relevant databases.
- (g) Strong ability to produce a highly credible, well-written study report in the time period requested.

V. Application Process

Interested candidates are required to send an e-mail attaching their CV and a letter of interest in a single file to: roster@gcfund.org and ieu@gcfund.org

File name: “[last name], [first name]” (e.g. Olsson, Anna) Subject line: “IEU Forestry EGM Consultant”

Closing date for applications is **20 July 2018 (KST)**. Applications submitted after the closing date may not be considered. Applicants should provide the following:

- A cover letter stating their main relevant qualifications and experience for this consultancy including previous experience with evidence maps, systematic reviews, meta-analyses and search methods
- A CV with key relevant qualifications and publications highlighted
- One or two previously produced publications that are relevant to this assignment and that were led by the applicant, or where the author played a key role
- A two-page approach paper that provides a critique of where the previously cited 3ie paper has strengths and areas for improvement

Upon submission of your application, you will receive an automatic e-mail acknowledging receipt of your application. Should you not receive a response, however, please check your spam/clutter mail before resubmitting your application. Please also ensure to use the correct spelling for the subject line of your email. Thank you.