

Government of Nepal  
Ministry of Forests and Environment  
**REDD Implementation Center**



**Terms of Reference (ToR) for Consultancy Services for  
Revision of Operational Plans of Leasehold Forests  
(Budget Head 2.12.1.85)**

## **1. Background**

Nepal is one of the leading countries in Reducing Emission from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, sustainable management of forests and conservation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (REDD+), under the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF). Its Emission Reduction Program Document (ER-PD) has been included into the Carbon Fund portfolio of the FCPF. Nepal completed implementation of the first phase of the REDD+ readiness project in 2015. Nepal's request for an additional readiness grant was approved by the 21st Participants Committee meeting of the FCPF in 2015. Nepal and the World Bank signed the grant agreement for additional readiness funding of USD 5.2 million in January 2017. This second phase of the readiness project will be completed in December 2019. Among other readiness activities, improvement of the national forest inventory and monitoring system for a robust and functional Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) system is one of the focused areas of the ongoing 2nd phase of REDD+ readiness. It is expected that Nepal will enter into implementation phase of the REDD+ at the latest January 2020 after negotiation and signing of the Emission Reduction Payment Agreement (ERPA) between the government of Nepal and the World Bank in 2019.

Nepal's Emission Reduction Program Document (ER-PD), which has been approved by the Carbon Fund of the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and has been included into the Carbon Fund portfolio has proposed "Scale up pro poor leasehold forestry program" and "improve the management of existing Protected Areas (PA)" among the seven REDD+ interventions for the proposed Emission Reduction (ER) program in the 13 districts of the Terai Arc Landscape (TAL). This intervention will support the Leasehold Forestry Program (LFP) in the PAs within the ER program area, which has been successful in providing employment opportunities to economically disadvantaged communities in other parts of Nepal. Moreover, this will contribute to biodiversity conservation along with livelihood improvement and other non-carbon benefits in the Buffer zone areas of Protected Areas in ER program districts.

The Leasehold Forestry and Livestock Program (LFLP) was built on the success of the completed 10-year project, 'Hills Leasehold Forestry and Forage Development Project' which was implemented during 1994-2004. The overall goal of the LFLP was to reduce poverty by allocating leasehold forestry areas to poor families, thus enabling them to increase their income from forest products and livestock. The project had the twin objectives of poverty alleviation and ecological development. The strategy adopted by the project was to transfer the degraded portion





of land on lease to poor families of the population. There were more than 7,000 Leasehold Forestry User Groups (LFUGs) in the country managing over 40,000 ha of degraded forest area as the Leasehold Forests (LFs) involving of over 62,000 poor families in 2014, when the project was closed after implementation of various activities for 10 years (2004-2014) in 22 districts of the country. The program has helped to alleviate poverty in these families through the production of forage, fodder, agroforestry, medicinal and aromatic plants, and other NTFPs.

Under LFLP program, the Government handed over state-owned, virtually open access, degraded forest lands to a group of identified poor households, generally less than ten in number, with each household receiving around one hectare of land in the form of a lease contract. The duration of the lease is 40 years, with provision to extend it to another 40 years. This lease enables the recipient household to exercise legally all rights exercised by a private landowner although actual ownership of the land vests with the state, a scenario in which the land is de jure state owned but de-facto privately-owned. The state requires the LF households to protect their forest lands against degradation from open grazing, forest fires, soil erosion, etc., either for enhancing the natural regeneration of trees, shrubs and grass or to cultivate economically beneficial perennial plants on LF lands. Open grazing on the LF land is to be replaced by stall feeding of livestock while LF rules ban the cultivation of cereals on leasehold land. The basic idea is to enhance forest regeneration while also making it possible for LF land to meet basic livelihood needs. The program expects LF households to enhance their income in a sustainable manner from both livestock, due to improved fodder availability, and timber and non-timber forest products. LFLP is considered innovative for several reasons. First, it utilizes degraded forest or wasteland that has low productivity but is available in significant amounts in Nepal.


The LFs of the buffer zone area were handed over to the LFUGs and the Operational Plans for the LFs were prepared and approved by the DFOs. But now these areas are under the park authority and these LFs need to be revised as per the rules, regulations and guidelines related to the LFLP.

Leasehold Forest Operational Plans need to be revised and updated before their time expires so that there is no interruption of forest management and utilization activities. LFUGs would like to implement. However, they can be revised and updated anytime if LFUGs want to change or include new activities. LFUGs cannot implement any activities which are not included in the valid operational plans.

Under the second phase of REDD+ readiness, REDD IC is supporting revision of Operational Plans of 20 Leasehold Forests in the Buffer zone area of ERPD districts. This assignment will help the Leasehold Forestry Groups and Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation to revise the Operational Plans of 20 Leasehold Forests.

## **2. Objectives of the Assignment**

The main objective of this assignment is to revise the Operational Plans of 20 LFs after wider consultations and robust discussion with the LFUGs and Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation.



Specific objectives of the assignment include:

- Conduct a robust discussion with the concerned LFUGs about various issues related to the management of LFs; and;
- Revise the Operational Plans of different LFUGs specified in the scope of the work (section 3 below) for submission to the concerned National Park Office for approval after wider consultations with LFUGs as well as the concerned National Park following the rules, regulations and guidelines related to the LFLP.

### **3. Scope of the work**

REDD IC is seeking a qualified firm/consortium of the firms to support 20 LFUGs in revising their Forest Operational Plans following the rules, regulations and guidelines related to the LFLP for submission to the concerned Park office for approval.

Under this assignment Operational Plans of 20 LFUGs under the jurisdiction of Parsa National Park will be revised where number of LFOPs backlog is more than 80. List of the LFUGs whose Operational Plans to be revised will be provided by the REDD IC in coordination with the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation and Parsa National Park.

Following tasks need to be carried out for successful completion of this assignment:

#### **3.1 Desk Review and analysis**

- Review of recent forest policy, strategies, Acts, regulations and guidelines related to the LFLP;
- Review of Emission Reduction Program Documents (ER-PD) for the TAL;
- Review of Forest Investment Plan for Nepal;
- Principles of SFM and forest certification process in Nepal;
- Emerging issues related to the federal structure of the country including the rights and responsibilities of the local governments in forest resource management;
- Review of existing Operational Plans; and;
- Review of principles of Decent Works and issues related to the forest labor.
- Summarize recommendations arising from the desk review as a basis for the discussions with the LFUGs and other stakeholders.

#### **3.2 Consultation and discussion with the LFUGs**

Consultation and discussion with the LFUGs about the different aspects of the operational plans including the outcomes of the desk review and analysis (section 3.1) is very important part of the assignment.

#### **3.3 Forest Survey and Inventory**

An inventory of the targeted LFs should be carried out following the prevailing rules, regulations and guidelines related to the LFLP.

#### **3.4 Socio Economic Survey**





For selected LFUGs, conduct a household survey, collect gender disaggregated data, identify gender and social inclusion actions, discuss benefit sharing plans, well-being ranking and the monitoring plan.

### **3.5 Development of draft LFOPs**

Based on outcomes of the desk review, consultations, and survey and inventory results, a draft LFOP should be developed for each LF. The plan should include all headings provided in the LF program related rules and regulations.

### **3.5 Sharing the draft LFOPs**

When draft LFOPs are ready, they should be shared with the concerned LFUGs and the Parsa National Park Office for comments, inputs and feedbacks.

### **3.6 Finalization and validation of the LFOPs**

Operational Plans of LFs should be finalized incorporating all the comments, inputs and feedbacks from the LFUGs and Parsa National Park Office. Thereafter, the concerned LFUGs will validate the plan from their general assemblies and submit them to respective Park Office for approval.

## **4. Expected outcomes and deliverables**

### **4.1 Inception report with detail action plan and timeframe**

Inception report with detail action plan and timeframe as well as methodology shall be submitted within one week of signing of the contract for the assignment. This should be presented at the inception workshop. After incorporating all the feedbacks, suggestions and inputs from the participants of the workshop, the inception report must be finalized and submitted to the REDD IC within one week of the inception workshop. The selected firm and REDD IC will agree on the specific activities and accordingly detailed plan of action and deliverables. The work plan should be developed in close collaboration with technical committee in REDD IC.

**4.2. Revised Operational plans:** The consulting firm should prepare revised Leasehold Forest Operation Plan in close consultation with Parsa National Park office and LFUGs. The technical committee formed for this assignment will oversee the assignment. The committee will make field visits as needed for monitoring progress and quality. The Team Leader will report to the technical committee. The technical committee will report the progress status to the Director General of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation and Chief of REDD IC. Five hard copies of each revised operational plan in standard format need to be submitted to the respective LFUGs along with a digital copy. The firm will report to the respective National Park Office about the submission of the LFOPs to the LFUG along with the digital copies. A final digital copy of each LFOP will be submitted to REDD IC.

### **4.3 Completion Report**

The firm will submit to REDD IC a complete report for the assignment along with the digital copies of the LFOPs. The firm will also submit a recommendation letter from the relevant National Park Office confirming the submission of the revised LFOPs to REDD IC.



## 5. Team composition and qualification of the firm and experts

### 5.1 Qualification of the firms/consortium/organization\*

Firms legally registered within the concerned authorities with clear mission, vision and objectives and registered in national VAT system are eligible to apply. The firms should have relevant work experience in forestry, SFM, REDD+ and /or related field in Nepal. The firm must have registered for at least three years with valid registration, Tax/VAT clearance, demonstrated annual transaction, audit and renewal.

### 5.2 Composition and qualification of the team members

The team of experts led by a Forestry Expert will provide the consulting services for this assignment. Other members of the team include a GESI expert and crew members. Qualification and roles and responsibilities of each of the team members are as following:

**Team Leader cum Forestry Expert:** The team Leader cum forestry expert, in close coordination with and under the guidance of the technical committee formed to oversee this assignment at the REDD IC will lead the team for this assignment. Specific roles and responsibilities of the team leader include:

- Review and analyze related policies, measures, working documents, guidelines and forest management/operational plans and develop a firm foundation for the assignment;
- Develop a plan of actions for successful completion of the assignment;
- Coordinate the team and make sure that all the experts are preparing corresponding reports and harmonizing the efforts;
- Coordinate consultation meetings with the technical committee and other senior officials from both REDD IC and the Department of National Park and Wildlife Conservation;
- Prepare draft Operational Plans in coordination of other team members;
- Finalize the plans and validated from concerned Authorities, e.g. LFUG Assembly and respective Park Offices; and;
- Prepare and submit a work completion report for the assignment to REDD IC.

#### Required qualification:

The team leader must be a Nepali national and have strong knowledge on community based forest management process in Nepal. He/she should have minimum qualification and experiences as below:

- Hold at least a Bachelors' degree in forestry;
- Have at least 5 years of working experience in forestry – preparing forest management/operational plans/community forests operational plans;
- Demonstrate technical capacity, including analytical skills and proven track record in preparing forest management/operational plans;
- Sound knowledge on current forestry sector policies and institutions; and;
- Command in writing, facilitation and communication skills are essentials.
- Knowledge in GIS mapping.
- Should have prior proven engagement in such operational plan preparation.





### **Gender and Social Inclusion Expert**

The Gender and Social Inclusion Expert will report to the team leader. She/he will work under the guidance of the team leader in close collaboration and consultation with the Technical Committee and REDD IC. She/he will specifically be responsible to:

- Access, review and analyze gender and social inclusion related policies, programs, activities in national and global context.
- Identify and integrate potential areas of gender and social inclusion issues in the forest operational plan considering the current context practiced in forestry.
- Support and sensitize the team leader and forestry assistant about GESI integration in LFMPs.
- Participate in meeting with Technical Committee and REDD IC as well as consultations in selective LFUGs and guide the team for addressing the issues raised by the GESI interest groups in LFOPs.

**Required qualification:** The Gender and Social Inclusion Expert should possess the following qualification and experiences:

- Hold at least a Bachelor's degree in Forestry, Social Sciences, Sociology, Gender, Women Studies, Development Studies, Conflict Management, or any relevant disciplines.
- Proven skills and experiences in dealing with gender related issues particularly in forestry sector.
- Should have at least five years of working experience in community development or rural development, familiarize with gender, social and cultural issues and local reality.
- Possess strong knowledge of user rights, customary rights and traditional practices in Forestry.
- Woman candidate in this position is highly desirable for this position.

### **Crew Members:**

- Must be a Nepali national and have strong knowledge on community-based forest management process in Nepal;
- Should hold at least certificate level in forestry or equivalent;
- Women and Disadvantaged groups highly encouraged

### **6. Selection Process and Criteria**

Selection process of the qualified firm/consortium/organization will start from advertising for "Expression of Interest (EoI)". The shortlisted firms based on EoIs submitted will be requested to submit the full proposal following THE WORLD BANK Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers, July 2016 Revised November 2017 and August 2018.

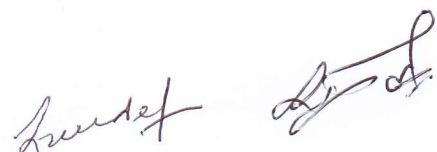
### **7. Work Schedule**

The assignment is expected to complete in end of May 2019.

### **8. Application Procedure**

Eligible firm/consortium/organization of the firms should submit "Expression of Interest (EoI)" with the following documents:

- Letter of EoI
- Profile of the firm



- Copy of firm registration, VAT registration and renewal certificates
- Copy of annual audit report for last three years and tax clearance certificate
- Letter from partnering firm/institution if joint venture is proposed.

The shortlisted firms will be requested to submit the full proposal along with following documents:

- Full technical proposal for the assignment in a sealed envelope. The proposal should include commitment letters from the proposed experts along with handwritten signed CVs;
- Detail financial proposal for the assignment in a separately sealed envelope.

#### **Contact Information**

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