

Government of Nepal
Ministry of Forests and Environment
REDD Implementation Center

**Terms of Reference (ToR) for Consultancy Services for
Preparation of Sustainable Forest Management Plans for Community Based
Forests, Contract ID:NEP-REDD-124829-CS-QCBS
(Cluster-1)**

1. Background

The United Nations General Assembly defines sustainable forest management (SFM) as a “dynamic and evolving concept, which aims to maintain and enhance the economic, social and environmental values of all types of forests, for the benefit of present and future generations”. SFM can capture multiple benefits in a multi-purpose approach spanning different sectors and achieving results that are greater than the sum of its parts. Under SFM, economic, ecological and social functions of forests should be considered and simultaneously pursued by setting a hierarchy of objectives at different spatial scales – from the landscape to the forest stand to single ecosystem components. The implementation of SFM, however, requires a conducive policy and regulatory framework across sectors and institutions. Furthermore, SFM is one of the five actions that have been included under the REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation, Forest Degradation, conservation of forest carbon stocks, sustainable forest management and, enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries) initiative.

Various policy documents including National Forest Policy 2019, Forestry Sector Strategy 2016, Nepal's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) as well as recently approved National REDD+ Strategy have recognized and emphasized that SFM is critical component of the national economy and mitigation of climate change through the REDD+.

Nepal is one of the leading REDD+ countries under the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) whose Emission Reduction Program Documents (ER-PDs) have 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 June 2020. It is expected that Nepal will enter into implementation phase of the REDD+ Emission Reduction Program latest by January 2020 after negotiation and signing of the Emission Reduction Payment Agreement (ERPA) between the government of Nepal and the World Bank in 2019. That means, Nepal will be implementing its Emission Reduction Program, “People and Forests - A SFM Based Emission Reduction Program in the Terai Arc Landscape, Nepal” from January 2020 at the latest.

Improve management practices on existing community and collaborative forests building on traditional and customary practices based on SFM principles is 1st and one of the seven proposed REDD+ interventions in the ER-PD. Under this intervention, gradually all existing community and collaborative forests will be brought under the SFM regime. Similarly, sustainable forest management through CBFM is one of the five projects proposed for the investment in the forestry sector under the Forest Investment Program (FIP) of the Climate Investment Fund.

Under the second phase of REDD+ readiness, REDD IC is supporting for preparation of SFM Plans for 9 existing community forests within the 13 Emission Reduction (ER) program districts. This TOR is developed for the service provider/s who is/are interested in this assignment to help the CFUG and Division Forest Offices in preparing SFM plans following the prevailing rules, regulations and guidelines related to the SFM/Scientific Forest Management.

2. Objectives of the Assignment

The main objective of this assignment is to support Community Forestry User Groups in the ER program area to prepare Sustainable Forest Management Plans that will improve their forest management practices based on the scientific principles of silvicultural systems. Other specific objectives of the assignment include:

- To prepare sustainable forest management plans of 9 community forests in different ER program districts, consulting all related stakeholders including, but are not limited to, indigenous peoples, local communities, women, Madhesis, Dalits and other marginalized communities and the recommendation of the divisional forest officer;
- To demonstrate plans of sustainable forest management for other CBFM groups in the program area;
- To integrate Emission Reduction interventions for generating emissions reduction target of the ER-PD following principles of sustainable management of forests.

3. Scope of the work

REDD IC is seeking a qualified firm/consortium of firms to provide support in preparing sustainable forest management plan of 9 community-based forests compatible with prevailing rules, regulations and guidelines in the 13 ER program districts of the TAL for submission to the concerned Divisional Forest Offices for approval. CF of which SFM plans is to be prepared will be selected by the REDD IC in close coordination with the Divisional Forest Offices.

The service provider for this assignment will work with the selected Nine CFUGs in close coordination with the relevant Divisional Forest Offices (Dhangadhi and Kanchanpur) of Kailali and Kanchanpur district. 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, rules, regulations and guidelines including the guidelines for Scientific Forest Management and community forest including National REDD+ Strategy, Gender and Social Inclusion Strategy of Forestry Sector, Community Forestry Inventory Guidelines and Carbon Assessment Guidelines.
- 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;
- Review of existing Forest Management Plan of CF,
- Review past performance, issues, challenges and opportunities faced by the CF;
- Review methods, systems and approaches of national forest monitoring system in Nepal
- Review and analyze existing sectoral plans of Nepal Government including forestry, agriculture, livestock and other cross cutting areas;

- Review and analyze emerging issues related to the federal structure of the country including the rights and responsibilities of the local governments in forest resource management; and;
- Review of principles of Decent Works and issues related to the forest labor.

3.2 Consultation and discussion with the CFUGs and other stakeholders

Consultation and discussion with the CFUGs about the different aspects of SFM including the outcomes of the desk review and analysis (section 3.1) is very important part of the assignment. Furthermore, consultation and discussion with respective DFOs, REDD IC officials, Provincial-level Ministry of Forests, Industry, Tourism and Environment, and Forest Directorate, and other stakeholders including local governments and local communities is critical.

3.3 Survey and sampling of forest area

Detail boundary survey, block division, and sampling of the forest area should be carried out for collecting biophysical information following the relevant guidelines. Stem mapping and fire line preparation should be done at least for one periodic block or for purposed CFOP period.

Similarly, socio-economic survey should be conducted to understand dependency on forests, and demand and supply status of forest products. Both biophysical data and socio-economic data should be analyzed following appropriate methodology and presented in the management plan. Appropriate silvicultural prescription should be prescribed based on the bio-physical data of the forests and the demand of the users.

3.4 Development of draft SFM plans

Based on outcomes of the desk review, consultations and survey of the forest area, draft SFM plans should be developed. The service provider should develop the plan by including all the headings, and all associated field work provided in the Annex 1.

3.5 Sharing the draft SFM plans with CFUGs, Divisional Forest Offices and REDD IC

When draft SFM plans are ready, they should be shared with the concerned CFUGs and the respective Division Forest Offices for comments, inputs and feedbacks.

3.6 Finalization and validation of the SFM plans

SFM plans should be finalized incorporating all the comments, inputs and feedbacks from the CFUGs, Division Forest Offices and REDD IC. The plans then should be validated by the general assembly of the concerned CFUGs.

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 detailed and clear methodology shall be submitted within the two weeks of signing of the contract for the assignment. The methodology should cover how to carry out resource inventory, socio-economic survey, data analysis, CFUG mobilization, silvicultural prescriptions and so forth. 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 the two weeks 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 REDD IC.

4.2 Finalized, validated and approved SFM Plans for selected 9 CFUGs.

Five hard copies of the validated SFM plans of each 9 CFUGs along with the soft copy must be submitted to the concerned CFUGs/DFOs. One set of hard copy of each CFUGs along with a soft copy of the data collected and any other materials prepared during this assignment should be submitted to the REDD IC.

4.3 Completion report

Service provider should also prepare and submit a work completion report (a hard copy along with the soft copy) to REDD IC along with the recommendation letter from respective DFOs regarding the completion of tasks for the final payment. The work completion report should clearly explain the methodology adapted to prepare the SFM plan.

5. Team composition and qualification of the firm and experts

5.1 Qualification of the firms

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, SMF, REDD+, forestry inventory and /or related field in Nepal. The firm must have registered for at least five 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 leading by a Sustainable Forestry Expert will provide the consulting services for this assignment. Other members of the team include at least a Forest Inventory Expert, a Gender and Social Inclusion Expert and a GIS expert. Required qualification and roles and responsibilities of each of the team members are as following:

The Team Leader cum Sustainable Forestry Expert

Roles and responsibilities: The team leader cum sustainable forestry expert, in close coordination with and under the guidance of the technical committee formed particularly for this assignment will lead this assignment. The team leader will be responsible for:

- Review and analyze related policies, measures, working documents, guidelines and forest management plans and develop a firm foundation for the assignment;
- Develop a plan of actions (i.e. guideline) considering available team members, given time and objectives of the assignment.
- Coordinate the team and make sure that all of 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 Forests and Soil Conservation;
- Prepare draft plans combining reports from all the thematic experts for the sustainable forest management plans (The SFM plan should be technically sound and should also consider the Scientific Forest Management guideline of the Department of Forests)
- Finalize the plans and validated from concerned Authorities, e.g. CFUG Assembly and Respective District Forest Offices.
- Prepare and submit a special work completion report for the assignment to REDD IC.

Required qualification and experience: The team leader cum sustainable forestry expert must be Nepalese citizen having knowledge and experience on community-based forest management and

government initiative of scientific forest management. He/she should have minimum qualification and experiences as below:

- Hold at least a postgraduate degree (Masters, preferably PhD) in forestry or Natural Resource Management.
- Have at least 10 years working experience in forestry, preparing and managing forest management plans.
- Demonstrate technical capability, including analytical skills, and proven track record in preparing forest management plans based on Principles of SFM.
- Good understanding of national forest monitoring system, community forest inventory guidelines and participatory MRV (Measurement, Reporting and verification).
- Sound knowledge on current forestry sector institutions and policies;
- Commands in writing, facilitation, and communication skills are essential.

Forest Inventory Expert

Roles and responsibilities: Forest inventory expert will be responsible for the following tasks:

- Develop sampling design considering national forest monitoring system, current forest inventory guidelines, carbon inventory guidelines and other widely accepted forest measurement methods.
- Analyze the inventory data including growing stock, biomass and carbon stock (above ground and below ground).
- Interpret forest inventory data and prescribe appropriate harvesting and management plans.

Required qualification and experience:

- Hold at least a graduate degree (BSc or MSc) in forestry;
- Have at least five years working experience in undertaking forest inventory, particularly in community-based forestry management considering principles of sustainable forest management and scientific forest management practiced in Nepal;
- Demonstrate technical capability, including analytical skills, and proven track record in undertaking similar assignments;
- Good understanding of National Forest Monitoring System, community forest inventory guidelines and participatory MRV; and;
- Good in quantitative data management and analysis, sound in the use of statistical software for data analysis.

Gender cum Social Inclusion Expert

Roles and responsibilities: The gender cum social inclusion expert will report to the team leader and work under the guidance of the team leader in close collaboration and consultation with the respective CFUGs. 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 management plan considering the current context practiced in forestry;
- Prepare a report detailing activities, sites, targeted groups, stakeholders and their roles and responsibilities in implementing the management plan, particularly in decision making process; and;
- Conduct consultation meetings with the forest user groups as required.

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

- Hold at least a graduate degree (Bachelor or Master) degree in Natural Resource Management, Social 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 natural resource management or forestry sector and, familiarize with gender, social and cultural issues and local reality;
- Possess strong knowledge of user rights, customary rights and traditional practices in Forestry;
- Be familiar with participatory rural appraisal and social issues associated with NRM in Nepal and the REDD+ safeguard policies; and;
- Strong skills in facilitating the multi stakeholder workshops and consultation.

GIS Expert

Roles and responsibilities: GIS expert will be responsible for producing different maps GIS required for the forest management plan they can be boundary maps, block maps, forest type maps, afforestation area, degraded area, other management activity area and so on.

Required qualification and experience: GIS expert should have:

- At least Bachelor's degree in related field;
- At least five years of experience in preparing land use maps utilizing GIS and remote sensing tools. She/he should have prior proven engagement in forest management plan preparation.

Other supporting staff:

Consulting firm/s can propose other supporting staff such as Enumerator for Forest inventory and Social mobilizer for social data collection purpose as per requirements. In general, 2 Forest Inventory Enumerator and 2 Social mobilizers for each community forest can be proposed. Forest Inventory Enumerator should have at least I Sc /Certificate level in forestry with relevant experience and as far as possible from the same community forests; otherwise from same district. . Social mobilizer should have at least intermediate in any discipline with relevant experience.

6. Inputs to the Firm

- The technical committee formed for this assignment will oversee the work. The committee will make field visits as it requires. The committee will provide the technical guidance to the consulting team.
- REDD IC and concerned DFOs will provide access to available background documents (policy documents and other reports) to carry out the assignment.
- REDD IC and concerned DFOs will support and coordinate to organize consultations workshops/meeting as necessary.

7. Work Schedule

The assignment is expected to start from November, 2019 and should be completed at the end of May, 2020.

8. Selection Process and Criteria

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

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Annex 1

General Framework of SFM Plan

Part 1: SFM Plan

1.1 Background

1.2 Identification of forests

1.3 Identification of concerned stakeholders

1.4 Forest survey

1.4.1 Boundary survey and existing features

1.4.2 Division of forest into blocks

1.4.3 Division of block into compartment (10% area of block should be allocated for BD conservation)

1.4.4 Division of compartment into sub-compartment

1.4.5 Stem mapping and fire line preparation (at least for one periodic block)

1.4.6 Delimitation of biodiversity block

1.4.7 Map-preparation

1.5 Forest inventory

1.5.1 Calculation of Sample plot

1.5.2 Mapping of trees, pole, seedling and sapling in sample plot

1.5.3 Estimation of growing stock

1.5.4 Estimation of annual allowable timber and fuel wood (harvesting plan)

1.5.5 Estimation of forest carbon stocks (above ground biomass)

1.5.6 Listing of biodiversity and non-carbon benefits

1.6 Socio-economic data collection and analysis

1.6.1 Well-being ranking

1.6.2 Gender analysis

1.6.3 Social Inclusion analysis

1.6.4 Analysis of bundle of rights

1.7 Vision/goal, Objective and Results of SFM plan (Log frame)

1.8 Prescription of Silvicultural-system

1.9 Identification of forest management programs and cost estimation

1.10 Financial/economic analysis

1.11 SFM plan approval

Part 2: Implementation of SFM plan

2.1 Formulation of annual plan

2.2 Separation of block, compartment and sub-compartment

2.3 Identification of sub-compartment for undertaking silviculture operation

2.4 Stem mapping (at least one periodic block)

2.5 Survey of regeneration

2.6 Selection of mother tree

2.7 Harvesting of trees

2.8 Evaluation of harvested timber and fuel wood

2.9 Silvicultural operations

2.9.1 Removal of debris after harvesting

2.9.2 Coppicing

2.9.3 Thinning

2.9.4 Pruning

2.9.5 Forest protection

2.9.6 Undertaking other forest development activities

2.9.7 Work planning and scheduling

2.9.8 Other administrative management

2.10 Forest governance improvement plan, (with indicator)

2.11 Gender integration plan

2.12 Social inclusion plan

2.13 Benefit-sharing plan including poverty reduction plan

Part 3 Financial arrangement

3.1 Potential sources of finance

3.2 Sustainable financial plan

Part 4 Monitoring and Coordination

4.1 Forest monitoring plan

4.2 Biodiversity monitoring plan

4.3 Coordination and collaboration plan