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## Terms of reference for final evaluation of the project:

### Strengthening the capacity of non-state actors (NSA) to improve FLEGT-VPA and REDD+ processes in Western Africa

EU Project 2016 / 380 509

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Implemented by *Tropenbos International* with

In Ghana: *Tropenbos Ghana* and *NDF Ghana*

In Côte d'Ivoire: *GNT-CI*

In Liberia: *VOSIEDA*

#### **Background**

In Western Africa, FLEGT-VPA and REDD+ have become main drivers for reforms in forest governance and land-use, with both processes currently ongoing in Ghana, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. Both FLEGT-VPA and REDD+ processes are designed through extensive consultations with all stakeholders involved, including Non-State actors (NSAs). NSA have been involved in these policy processes in the role of technical advisors, representing the interests and insights of local forest dwelling communities and Civil Society, and of the scientific community. Moreover, evidence-based information on forest governance, safeguards and land-use, gathered through independent monitoring has significantly contributed to improving transparency and providing real-time information for advocacy by NSAs, thus influencing national policy processes.

The three project countries; Ghana, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, are making significant progress in paving the way towards full FLEGT-VPA and REDD+ implementation, but they are at different stages, which presents a big opportunity for mutual learning. Despite progress, considerable challenges have also characterised the evolution of REDD+ and FLEGT-VPA processes in the three countries, for example, high and unrealistic stakeholder expectations; the slow pace of policy and legal reforms that is required to provide the needed impetus to drive the REDD+ and the FLEGT policies and strategies; as well as the increasing pressure on forests from several drivers.

Independent Forest Monitoring (IFM) has played an important role in the national policy process, where evidence of what actually happens "on-the-ground" informs national policy debate and improves practice. Most of the IFM has focused on the forest sector in the context of the FLEGT-VPA, monitoring forest exploitation, social contracts and a variety of forest governance issues. With REDD+ now moving into the testing and implementation phase, monitoring land-use change, land- and tree- tenure, environmental and social safeguards of large investment projects needs to be monitored as well.

The capacity of NSAs, primarily civil society, to monitor, to do advocacy and to engage with state-actors at local and national levels in these different areas of governance and monitoring practice has developed over past years and has informed and influenced the national FLEGT-VPA and REDD+ processes. However, this capacity is vested mostly with a limited number of NGOs working at national level.

In this context, together with other partners, Tropenbos International (TBI) has been implementing the project "**Strengthening the capacity of non-state actors to improve FLEGT-VPA and REDD+ processes in Western Africa**" to tackle these challenges, better position NSAs and increase their participation in both FLEGT-VPA and

REDD+ process in Ghana, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. Tropenbos Ghana and Nature - Development Foundation (NDF) implemented the activities for Ghana, Volunteers to Support International Efforts in Developing Africa (VOSIEDA) for Liberia and Groupe National de Travail pour la Gestion Durable des Forêts et la Certification Forestière en CI (GNT-CI) for Côte d'Ivoire.

### **The project**

The key target groups are Non-State Actors (1) local CSOs working together in national civil society platforms in the three project countries and (2) small and medium forest enterprises and their associations. Furthermore the (3) EU national delegations in the three countries, the (4) relevant government ministries and the (5) various VPA FLEGT and REDD+ national multi stakeholder platforms. There is special attention for involving the (6) various local media. The (7) final beneficiaries of the project are forest-dependent communities. This project has specifically engaged local level NSAs and CSOs, including associations of forest dwelling communities, farmers, SMFEs, local authorities, women and the youth.

**Duration:** 2017-2020

**Objective:** Enhanced capacity of Western Africa NSAs to monitor, advocate and engage with State Actors in FLEGT-VPA and REDD+ processes

### **Expected results:**

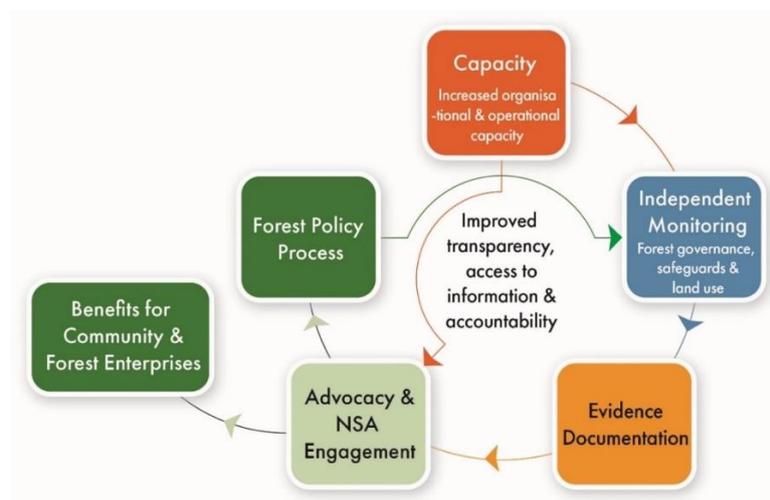
1. Increased organisational and operational capacities of local and national NSAs to undertake participatory and independent monitoring of forest governance and forest land-use change, including changes in livelihoods and social and environmental safeguards;
2. Improved transparency, access to information and accountability in the forest and land sectors;
3. Effective engagement of NSAs in FLEGT-VPA and REDD+ processes;
4. Viable sub-national, national and cross-border networks of well-informed local non-state actors, and increased cross-border cooperation and information exchanges;
5. Information and lessons exchanged with international REDD+ and FLEGT-VPA communities

### **Approaches**

- Awareness creation, training and NSAs mobilisation
- Develop and implement tools for independent forest and land-use change monitoring
- Building coalitions and networks
- Peer-to-peer experiential learning, promotion of good practices and technical guidance
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Sharing of lessons and experiences on NSA user-friendly platforms

### **Intervention logic:**

A key assumption of the project is that when a diversity of NSA actors work in coalitions on jointly defined issues and strategies, they will jointly have more impact than the sum of individual efforts.



## Objectives of the Evaluation

The objectives of the evaluation are to:

### **1. Assess the project's:**

- a. Relevance – the extent to which the objectives were consistent with beneficiaries' needs and priorities
- b. Effectiveness – the extent to which the project objectives were achieved
- c. Efficiency – how well financial resources/inputs were converted into results
- d. Sustainability – the extent to which the partners have acquired skills that will benefit them to continue after the project has finished.
- e. Impact – the long-term impacts produced by the project (directly, indirectly, intended and unintended).

The evaluation should assess the above in relation to three central questions:

- I. What changes / outcomes / achievements have taken place?
- II. How have these changes / outcomes / achievements been brought about?
- III. Review the project's original assumptions as formulated in the original project document and assess other relevant assumptions regarding advocacy and community based IFM for improved forest governance practice.

In relation to this, the evaluation should consider the following sub-questions:

- Who and what?

Who has benefited (government, NGOs, communities, men, women), in what ways? Have any changes been achieved in relation to policy / practice / attitudes of decision makers / policy makers and others in the countries where the project was implemented? Have any changes been achieved relating to broader national and international policies in the countries where the project was implemented? To what extent has the achievement of the changes / outcomes been influenced by external / other factors? To what extent are changes attributable to the project activities?

- How?

How accurate was the intervention logic and 'theory of change' that was articulated at the beginning of the project? Should it be adapted and improved for the future?

What were the most effective approaches used by the project implementation partners to bring about change? What worked, what didn't, and why?

Has the overall objective broadly been achieved? If so, what facilitated the achievement? If not, for what reasons?

What overall lessons have been learned? How have relationships between partners helped or hindered the delivery of outcomes? How can these relationships be improved? Were the approaches of partners appropriate and workable? What lessons can be learnt from how the process evolved in the partner countries? (Differentiate between external factors and those which partners had control over)

Review the performance of the various grantees/partners in implementing the project - How effective have the two project's monitoring, management, communication, reporting, capacity building, learning and financial systems been? How can these be improved? How transferable is project learning?

How have these grants facilitated effective networking among partners and promoted information flow and strategizing for clear objectives between them?

What comments can the evaluator make about the choice, capacity and working relationships with partners, and overall project management (accountability through agreements, reporting requirements, and communication)

What could have been done differently? What capacities or other resources would be required?

## **2. Provide recommendations for possible follow up projects.**

Report on the outcomes of the evaluation and provide relevant and pragmatic recommendations to improve the project partners' interventions in the targeted area. The learning from this evaluation could be applied to other organisations involved in similar projects future. The evaluation should be focused on recommendations for improvements relating to the central questions outlined above.

### **Set-up of the evaluation**

#### **Evaluation stakeholders**

The main audiences for the evaluation are Tropenbos International and its implementation partners Tropenbos Ghana, NDF-G, GNT-CI and VOSIEDA. The evaluation will be shared as appropriate with the EU delegations in implementing countries, the European Commission Directorate for Development, and relevant public officials in Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia as well as with relevant civil society partners.

#### **The evaluation team**

Tropenbos International will recruit one international and up to two national / regional consultants. Each of the three countries will be visited by one of the team members.

#### **Methodology**

The evaluation methodology will be developed by the externally recruited consultants, taking into account EU standards and guidelines. The evaluation will involve gathering and analysing secondary data (i.e. information already collected in project reports and documents and the mid-term review) as well as primary data through interviews and/or questionnaires and meetings with key partners and stakeholders in the three project countries. We should however recognise that travel and organising meetings may be restricted by COVID-19 measures.

#### **Deliverables**

- An evaluation workplan, including: planning timeline, methodology / approach, planned stakeholders to be consulted, data collection and analysis tools.
- A draft evaluation report.
- A final evaluation report addressing all comments. The main body of the report should not exceed 20 pages and should include an executive summary and recommendations. Technical information should be included in appendices only.
- Debriefing? At the Delegation and/or TBI?

#### **Logistics**

Tropenbos International and its local project partners will be responsible for preparing the mission programme, providing information to the consultant and managing all preparations and arrangements once the programme has been approved by TBI, the partners and the consultant. TBI will cover all agreed costs of the evaluation. TBI will ensure timely availability of all listed reference documents to the consultant.

#### **Budget**

The budget will cover the cost of consultancy fees, the consultant's per diem and accommodation and transportation costs incurred during the mission. The total number of consultancy days, shared between the lead consultant and the local consultants, will be 35 days.

#### **Indicative schedule**

The evaluation is expected to be undertaken during the period January - March 2020.

## **Recruitment procedure**

Tropenbos International is recruiting consultants for the evaluation of its EU funded project “**Strengthening the capacity of non-state actors (NSA) to improve FLEGT-VPA and REDD+ processes in Western Africa**”. The project countries are Ghana, Côte d’Ivoire and Liberia, with the EU Liberia Delegation as the designated project holder.

- Deadline for submission CVs, including expectation of fees, is Monday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2020
- Selection of CVs by 9<sup>th</sup> December and shortlisting by TBI.
- Shortlisted consultants will be asked to provide a short proposal to be submitted by Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020. This will include commitment of availability.
- Selection of consultants by Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December.

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## **Award criteria**

The contract will be awarded to the “economically most advantageous tender”.

Criteria to be applied are:

- competence of the proposed evaluator
- price

*Tropenbos International reserves the right to cancel the procurement procedure, without candidates being entitled to claim any compensation. Publication of this procurement notice does not commit Tropenbos International to implement the programme or project announced.*