

Selection of Consultants

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Request for Expression of Interest

Consulting Services: Project Management and Monitoring Consultant (PMMC)



June2020

[Assam Project on Forest & Biodiversity Conservation- Phase II]¹

CONSULTING SERVICES

Expressions of Interest

Project Context

Assam's population is expected to increase to 34 million by 2021 and continue to grow. A vast majority (86%) still lives in rural areas. Catering to the demands of a rising population as well as meeting its developmental goals is going to be a major challenge for the state, especially in terms of managing the pressure on its forests and natural resources to meet those needs. It is also important to note that Assam is a primarily rural state, with 53% of its population engaged in agriculture. Production of all crop types has been increasing, and the majority of the rising population is bound to stay within the sector. This means that the pressure on forest areas to make way for more agricultural land has never been higher. This also sets the stage for increasing instances of man-animal conflicts as people breach natural habitats to meet their needs. The global issue of climate change is a major threat to Assam's rich and complex ecosystems, and forest communities that depend directly on forests will be especially vulnerable. This interrelated web of challenges being faced by the state needs urgent solutions. The Forest Department, being the custodian of the forests, operates at the juncture where people and natural resources interact. The department thus needs to be prepared to deal with a variety of challenges.

The Assam Project on Forest and Biodiversity Conservation (APFBC) was co-funded by the French Development Agency – Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and the State Government of Assam; it commenced in February 2012. Its Phase I came to an end in May 2019.

The project's vision was "to enable sustainable forest management in Assam through multi-scale integrative planning involving participation of local population". Its specific objective was "in collaboration with the forest dependent communities, to restore forest ecosystems to enhance the forest dependent communities' livelihoods and ensure conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity".

The project activities covered in Phase I were:

1. Capacity building and infrastructural strengthening of the Assam Forest Department through trainings, exposure visits, major improvement of infrastructure and research to improve departmental effectiveness;
2. Implementing sustainable forest management by forest restoration and rehabilitation efforts via plantations and Joint Forest Management (JFM) of the forest areas by mobilizing the local communities, and
3. Supporting forest fringe villagers by providing a range of livelihood and income generation activities, equipment and micro-infrastructures. This was aimed at reducing their dependency on forests.

After successful implementation of Phase I, APFBC Phase II began in August 2019, with a budget of € 62.5 million (INR 500 crore). AFD will contribute 80% of the budget at € 50 million (INR 400 crore) and Government of Assam will contribute 20% of the budget at € 12.5 million (INR 100 crore).

The APFBC Phase II project is divided into four major components. Brief description of each component is presented below:

1. *Component 1: Conservation of Ecosystems:* the key focus of Phase II is conservation of forests and wildlife. The component is divided into two sub-components to ensure each receives due attention:
 - a. *Sustainable Forest Management:* activities will include
 - State-wide forest resource mapping will be conducted to form a database of the state's natural resources and conservation needs.

¹ If the project is specified. Otherwise, the identified specific Services shall be named.

- 12,500 ha of plantations,
 - Setting up Climate Change and REDD+ processes and
 - Improvement of infrastructure needed by frontline staff
- b. *Biodiversity Conservation*: addresses the critical conservation needs of the rich biodiversity of the state through activities as
- Improvement of Protected Area management,
 - Conservation efforts for a few key species (especially those that have not received enough attention so far),
 - Outreach efforts to spread public awareness and
 - Supporting the Assam State Biodiversity Board in making its Biodiversity Management Committees stronger.

This component will also contain a number of technological interventions aimed at enhancing the department's conservation efforts and effectiveness.

2. *Component 2: Community Engagement* aims to
- a. Further strengthen the 136 existing communities from Phase I as well as support 125 new communities through training and supporting JFMC/EDCs for joint forest management and linking them with alternate livelihood options.
 - b. Build market linkages to ensure that the livelihood interventions are successful and sustainable.
 - c. Converge with existing government schemes to ensure forest fringe communities reduce their dependence on forest resources
 - d. Form Self Help Groups and Joint Liability Groups to allow beneficiaries to function independently and reap benefits from the activities initiated under the project even after the project is over.
3. *Component 3: Institutional Strengthening* addresses Forest Department's most urgent institutional gaps, ensuring that it is equipped to deal with the complex challenges it faces.

Activities are as under:

- a. Conduct of a comprehensive HR study including strengthening of the legal cell, procurement cell and research and education cell
 - b. Digitizing the department's work by strengthening the Forest Management Information System (FMIS),
 - c. Improving the human resource module of the FMIS,
 - d. Supporting the Forest Schools by addressing their infrastructural requirements.
 - e. Project management of Phase II.
4. *Component 4: Climate, Gender and Social Inclusion*

Throughout the project activities, Climate, Gender and Social Inclusion will be recurring and cross-cutting themes for all activities. This is reflected in the Project's Environmental and Social Commitment, which will be fulfilled through the Environmental and Social Management System and the Gender Action Plan. The project is committed to ensuring fair gender representation as well as inclusion of vulnerable sections of all stakeholders, especially in case of its beneficiary communities. This translates to a participative approach wherever applicable, such as for microplanning with the community; and an inclusive approach inviting a broad representation of community members, such as in case of livelihood trainings. Considering the wide ambit of project activities which would interact with forests, biodiversity and other large infrastructural undertakings (equipment, vehicles, buildings,

etc.), the Project shall closely monitor its activities to ensure alignment with its climate, gender and social inclusion commitments.

The *[Assam Project on Forest and Biodiversity Conservation (APFBC)]* ~~has received-~~ a financing from *Agence Française de Développement ("AFD")*, and intends to use part of the funds thereof for payments under the following project *[Project Management and Monitoring Consultant (PMMC)]*.

The Services of the consultant shall consist of the following:

- Provide management support for the overall project implementation in compliance with the Feasibility Report, Manual of Procedures and Workplan;
- Provide support to the Project Director and Head of the PMU in preparation of the Terms of Reference (ToR) as well as managing project activities. Draft the ToR of at least a dozen of studies relative to biodiversity, wildlife, forest, communities, management, etc. and prepare the necessary RFP according to PMU orientations.
- Extend support in preparation of activity implementation plans and other readiness requirements for project implementation;
- Review contracts and performance management of the Technical Assistance provided by the vendors hired under the project, including technical review of reports, consolidating payment requests, physical verification of goods and works, preparation of action summaries and recommendations;
- Consolidate all the reports and documentation generated under the project into a systematic framework;
- Prepare and submit quarterly, biannual and annual progress reports to the Project Director
- Initiate hiring of additional staff, if needed, to support the increased workload due to the project;
- Organise and facilitate meetings with selected officers (from within or outside the Forest Department in Assam associated with the project), as well as other partners, such as NGOs, public and private institutions;
- Organize workshops/dissemination events/trainings/preparation for participation in national & international events/draft MoUs for cooperation arrangements for internal as well as external stakeholders
- Revise Manual of Procedures, Work Plan, and Disbursement Plan on an annual basis, as required;
- Undertake Concurrent Monitoring for plantations, including compliance of Environmental and Social Management Framework;
- Undertake preparation of project closure reports;
- Undertake performance of all other activities as may be mutually agreed with the Project Director;

The team shall comprise about 10-12 full-time person with relevant profiles to fulfill the needs expressed above. The duration of the assignment will be of around 5 years.

The *[Assam Project on Forest and Biodiversity Conservation (APFBC)]* hereby invites Applicants to show their interest in delivering the Services described above.

This Request for Expressions of Interest is open to:

- Consulting firms (single bidders/ joint ventures/ consortiums), or
- Joint Venture/ consortiums between NGO(s) and consulting firm(s), providing that there will be only one head preferably with the consulting partners as the lead and that a sound agreement will be required to apply for the mission. Bank guarantee will be required for the Advance payment

Eligibility criteria to AFD financing are specified in sub-clause 1.3 of the "Procurement Guidelines for AFD-Financed Contracts in Foreign Countries", available online on AFD's website: <http://www.afd.fr>.

The Applicant shall submit only one application, in its own name. If an Applicant submits or participates in more than one application, those applications shall be all rejected. Also, participation of the same JV partner/ Sub-consultants, Key Experts and Non-Key Experts in more than one Proposal is NOT permissible. Any consultants/experts associated in the upstream activities of the project shall not be eligible to apply.

Experiences and qualifications of Subconsultants are not taken into account in the evaluation of the applications.

Interested Applicants must provide information evidencing that they are qualified and experienced to perform those Services. For that purpose, documented evidence of recent and similar services shall be submitted.

Determination of the similarity of the experiences will be based on:

- The contracts size;
- The nature of the Services
- The technical area and expertise
- The location

Among the submitted applications, *[Assam Project on Forest and Biodiversity Conservation (APFBC)]* will shortlist a maximum of six (6) Applicants, to whom the Request for Proposals to carry out the Services shall be sent.

The last date of receipt of sealed EoI documents (1 original, 4 copies and soft copy of the same (either in CD or in Pendrive)) in English at the above mentioned address is 23rd of July, 2020 by 03:00 P.M.

-Sd/-
Project Director,
Project Management Unit, APFBC Society
Panjabari, Guwahati- 781037;
Email: pd.pmu.apfbc@nic.in

Annexure 1: Format for Expression of Interest

The expression of interest must be submitted along with the following documents:

- FORM 1: Organization Details
- FORM 2: Compliance to Eligibility Criteria
- FORM 3: Credentials / Past Experiences for all the projects cited under eligibility criterion

{Note: In case, documents submitted are in any language other than English, the consultant shall submit a self-certified copy of the translated document in English (along with originals).}

Form1: Organization Details

Section1: AbouttheEoIRespondent										
I.	Name of the Organization									
II.	Details of the Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address of the Registered Office : Telephone : Website : 								
III.	Information about Organization	<input type="checkbox"/> Year of Establishment : <input type="checkbox"/> Status of the Organization : (Sec25, Societies):								
IV.	Name and designation of the person authorized to make commitments	<input type="checkbox"/> Name <input type="checkbox"/> Designation <input type="checkbox"/> E-mail <input type="checkbox"/> Contact Number								
V.	Annual Turnover for the last three Financial Years (The bidder should have a minimum average annual turnover from consultancy/ advisory of INR 40 Crore from Indian operations over the last three financial years)	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Financial Year</th> <th>Annual Turnover (INR)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2017-18</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2018-19</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2019-20</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Financial Year	Annual Turnover (INR)	2017-18		2018-19		2019-20	
		Financial Year	Annual Turnover (INR)							
		2017-18								
		2018-19								
2019-20										
Please attach audited annual accounts statements for last 3 years										

Form2: Compliance to Eligibility Criterion*

Sn	Eligibility Criterion	Compliance (Yes/ No)	Documentary Evidence Provided
1	Entity legally registered under appropriate authority in India for last 10 years. In case of a Consortium/ Joint Venture this would be applicable to the lead firm.		Certificate of Incorporation/ Registration
2	The bidder (lead or partner of the JV firm) should have a minimum average annual turnover from consultancy/ advisory of INR 40 Crore from Indian operations over the last three financial years (2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20).		Self-certification. Copies of the audited balance sheet and I/E Statement duly sealed and certified by the CA and the authorized representative of the bidder.
3	Experience in establishing Project Management Consultancy/ Project Implementation Agency/ Project Management unit for Natural Resource Management/ Agriculture/ Forestry/ Livelihood Projects (at least 3)		Copies of Work Order/Contract Document/Completion Certificate from the previous clients
4	The company should have at least 50 full time Consulting professionals on its rolls as on 31.3.2020		Certificate from company's HR

Form 3 : Format for Credentials / Past Experiences for projects cited under eligibility criterion (Maximum 2 pages per credential)

Assignment name :	Country : Location within the country
Name of Client :	Address :
Name of the Legal Entity in whose name the contract is :	Duration of assignment (months) :
Number of man-months to fulfill the assignment:	Start date (Month/year) : Completion date (Month/year) :
Approx. Value of the overall contract (in INR):	
Name of associated organizations, if any:	Role of Consortium member :
Narrative description of the Project :	
Detailed Scope of services, coverage and relevance to this project :	
Copy of Purchase Order /Contract attached ?	YES /NO

Form 4: Matrix template for evaluating Expressions of Interest

The table below will be used to establish the shortlist of Applicants. For each experience, the Applicant should check the boxes of the criteria which are met and provided in Form 2.

Name of the Applicant: _____

	Reference in Form 2	Entity legally registered under appropriate authority in India for last 10 years. In case of a Consortium/ Joint Venture this would be applicable to the lead firm	The bidder (lead or partner of the JV firm) should have a minimum average annual turnover from consultancy/ advisory of INR 40 Crore from Indian operations over the last three financial years (FY16-17, FY17-18 and FY18-19).	Experience in establishing Project Management Consultancy/ Project Implementation Agency/ Project Management unit for Natural Resource Management/ Agriculture/ Forestry/ Livelihood Projects (at least 3)	The company should have at least 50 full time Consulting professionals on its rolls as on 31.3.2020
[Experience A]					
[Experience B]					
[Experience C]					
[Etc.]					

The selection of Applicants to be shortlisted shall follow the rules as defined here below:

- Each experience will be based on a single contract and can meet multiple criteria provided in the columns above
- The Applicant must meet the “at least” criterion provided in each column above; otherwise the application will be disqualified.
- The ranking of Applicants is based on the greatest number of criterion fulfilled (boxes checked).
- For a Joint Venture/Consortium, the experiences of all members will be added together for a combined total

**Appendix to The Request for Expressions of Interest
(To be submitted with the application, signed and unaltered)**

Statement of Integrity, Eligibility and Environmental and Social Responsibility

Reference of the bid or proposal _____ (the "Contract")

To: _____ (the "Contracting Authority")

1. We recognise and accept that *Agence Française de Développement* ("AFD") only finances projects of the Contracting Authority subject to its own conditions which are set out in the Financing Agreement which benefits directly or indirectly to the Contracting Authority. As a matter of consequence, no legal relationship exists between AFD and our company, our joint venture or our suppliers, contractors, subcontractors, consultants or subconsultants. The Contracting Authority retains exclusive responsibility for the preparation and implementation of the procurement process and performance of the contract. The Contracting Authority means the Purchaser, the Employer, the Client, as the case may be, for the procurement of goods, works, plants, consulting services or non-consulting services.
2. We hereby certify that neither we nor any other member of our joint venture or any of our suppliers, contractors, subcontractors, consultants or subconsultants are in any of the following situations:
 - 2.1 Being bankrupt, wound up or ceasing our activities, having our activities administered by the courts, having entered into receivership, reorganisation or being in any analogous situation arising from any similar procedure;
 - 2.2 Having been:
 - a) convicted, within the past five years by a court decision, which has the force of *res judicata* in the country where the Contract is implemented, of fraud, corruption or of any other offense committed during a procurement process or performance of a contract (in the event of such conviction, you may attach to this Statement of Integrity supporting information showing that this conviction is not relevant in the context of this Contract);
 - b) subject to an administrative sanction within the past five years by the European Union or by the competent authorities of the country where we are constituted, for fraud, corruption or for any other offense committed during a procurement process or performance of a contract (in the event of such sanction, you may attach to this Statement of Integrity supporting information showing that this sanction is not relevant in the context of this Contract);
 - c) convicted, within the past five years by a court decision, which has the force of *res judicata*, of fraud, corruption or of any other offense committed during the procurement process or performance of an AFD-financed contract;
 - 2.3 Being listed for financial sanctions by the United Nations, the European Union and/or France for the purposes of fight-against-terrorist financing or threat to international peace and security;
 - 2.4 Having been subject within the past five years to a contract termination fully settled against us for significant or persistent failure to comply with our contractual obligations during contract performance, unless this termination was challenged and dispute resolution is still pending or has not confirmed a full settlement against us;
 - 2.5 Not having fulfilled our fiscal obligations regarding payments of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of either the country where we are constituted or the Contracting Authority's country;
 - 2.6 Being subject to an exclusion decision of the World Bank and being listed on the website <http://www.worldbank.org/debarr> (in the event of such exclusion, you may attach to this Statement of Integrity supporting information showing that this exclusion is not relevant in the context of this Contract);

- 2.7 Having created false documents or committed misrepresentation in documentation requested by the Contracting Authority as part of the procurement process of this Contract.
3. We hereby certify that neither we, nor any of the members of our joint venture or any of our suppliers, contractors, subcontractors, consultants or subconsultants are in any of the following situations of conflict of interest:
 - 3.1 Being an affiliate controlled by the Contracting Authority or a shareholder controlling the Contracting Authority, unless the stemming conflict of interest has been brought to the attention of AFD and resolved to its satisfaction;
 - 3.2 Having a business or family relationship with a Contracting Authority's staff involved in the procurement process or the supervision of the resulting Contract, unless the stemming conflict of interest has been brought to the attention of AFD and resolved to its satisfaction;
 - 3.3 Being controlled by or controlling another bidder or consultant, or being under common control with another bidder or consultant, or receiving from or granting subsidies directly or indirectly to another bidder or consultant, having the same legal representative as another bidder or consultant, maintaining direct or indirect contacts with another bidder or consultant which allows us to have or give access to information contained in the respective applications, bids or proposals, influencing them or influencing decisions of the Contracting Authority;
 - 3.4 Being engaged in a consulting services activity, which, by its nature, may be in conflict with the assignments that we would carry out for the Contracting Authority;
 - 3.5 In the case of procurement of goods, works or plants:
 - a) Having prepared or having been associated with a consultant who prepared specifications, drawings, calculations and other documentation to be used in the procurement process of this Contract;
 - b) Having been recruited (or being proposed to be recruited) ourselves or any of our affiliates, to carry out works supervision or inspection for this Contract.
4. If we are a state-owned entity, and to compete in a procurement process, we certify that we have legal and financial autonomy and that we operate under commercial laws and regulations.
5. We undertake to bring to the attention of the Contracting Authority, which will inform AFD, any change in situation with regard to points 2 to 4 here above.
6. In the context of the procurement process and performance of the corresponding contract:
 - 6.1 We have not and we will not engage in any dishonest conduct (act or omission) deliberately intended to deceive others, to intentionally conceal items, to violate or vitiate someone's consent, to make them circumvent legal or regulatory requirements and/or to violate their internal rules in order to obtain illegitimate profit;
 - 6.2 We have not and we will not engage in any dishonest conduct (act or omission) contrary to our legal or regulatory obligations or our internal rules in order to obtain illegitimate profit;
 - 6.3 We have not promised, offered or given and we will not promise, offer or give, directly or indirectly to (i) any Person who holds a legislative, executive, administrative or judicial mandate within the State of the Contracting Authority regardless of whether that Person was nominated or elected, regardless of the permanent or temporary, paid or unpaid nature of the position and regardless of the hierarchical level the Person occupies, (ii) any other Person who performs a public function, including for a State institution or a State-owned company, or who provides a public service, or (iii) any other person defined as a Public Officer by the national laws of the Contracting Authority's country, an undue advantage of any kind, for himself or for another Person or entity, for such Public Officer to act or refrain from acting in his official capacity;

- 6.4 We have not promised, offered or given and we will not promise, offer or give, directly or indirectly to any Person who occupies an executive position in a private sector entity or works for such an entity, regardless of the nature of his/her capacity, any undue advantage of any kind, for himself or another Person or entity for such Person to perform or refrain from performing any act in breach of its legal, contractual or professional obligations;
- 6.5 We have not and we will not engage in any practice likely to influence the contract award process to the detriment of the Contracting Authority and, in particular, in any anti-competitive practice having for object or for effect to prevent, restrict or distort competition, namely by limiting access to the market or the free exercise of competition by other undertakings;
- 6.6 Neither we nor any of the members of our joint venture or any of our suppliers, contractors, subcontractors, consultants or subconsultants shall acquire or supply any equipment nor operate in any sectors under an embargo of the United Nations, the European Union or France;
- 6.7 We commit ourselves to comply with and ensure that all of our suppliers, contractors, subcontractors, consultants or subconsultants comply with international environmental and labour standards, consistent with laws and regulations applicable in the country of implementation of the Contract, including the fundamental conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and international environmental treaties. Moreover, we shall implement environmental and social risks mitigation measures when specified in the environmental and social commitment plan (ESCP) provided by the Contracting Authority.
7. We, as well as members of our joint venture and our suppliers, contractors, subcontractors, consultants or subconsultants authorise AFD to inspect accounts, records and other documents relating to the procurement process and performance of the contract and to have them audited by auditors appointed by AFD.

Name: _____ In the capacity of: _____

Duly empowered to sign in the name and on behalf of¹: _____

Signature: _____

Dated:

¹ In case of joint venture, insert the name of the joint venture. The person who will sign the application, bid or proposal on behalf of the applicant, bidder or consultant shall attach a power of attorney from the applicant, bidder or consultant.