
Terms of Reference (TOR)
For Senior Procurement Specialists for the Project Management Unit (PMU) of
Assam Project on Forest and Bio-Diversity Conservation (APFBC), Phase-II

(A) PROJECT BACKGROUND

1. French Development Agency (AFD) has partnered with the State of Assam and the Assam Forest Department for the purpose of Sustainable Forest Management and Bio-Diversity Conservation in Assam. This is the 2nd phase of the project.

In the framework of the Assam Project on Forest and Biodiversity Conservation Society, a Special Purpose Vehicle created by the Government of Assam and registered under Society Registration Act is mandated with overall execution, management, and coordination of the project activities through a Project Management Unit (PMU) established to implement the project. Implementation of the Project at Forest Division level would be facilitated by the Field Implementation Units (FIUs).

The overall vision of the project is that it “contribute through the Forest Department to the conservation of nature for healthier ecosystem and happier communities”. This over arching vision/goal shall be reached through the following three main specific objectives:

- Developing participatory Sustainable Forest and Biodiversity management under changing climatic conditions.
- Improving the livelihoods for Forest neighboring communities through inclusive(collective and individual) supports
- Strengthening the Forest department to better fulfill its missions.

The project is divided into three major components. Brief description about each component is presented below:

- I. **Component 1: Conservation of Ecosystems:** The key focus of APFBC Phase II is conservation of forests and wildlife. It is divided into two sub-components to ensure each receives due attention:
 - a. **Sustainable Forest Management:** This includes a state-wide forest resource mapping to form a comprehensive database of the state’s natural resources and conservation needs. This would be followed by 12,500ha of plantations, efforts towards setting up Climate Change and REDD+ processes and further improvement of infrastructure (construction/ renovation of staff quarters, office buildings etc.) needed by front line staff to execute these works as well as their regular duties.
 - b. **Biodiversity Conservation:** This subcomponent addresses the pressing conservation needs of the rich biodiversity of the state through improvement of Protected Area management, critical habitat management, conservation efforts for a few key species, man-animal conflict management, strengthening of veterinary & rescue support infrastructure (construction/ upgradation of veterinary hospitals), infrastructure outreach efforts to spread public awareness, and supporting the Assam State Biodiversity Board in making its Biodiversity Management Committees stronger. This component will contain a number of technological interventions aimed at greatly enhancing the department’s conservation efforts and effectiveness.
- II. **Component 2: Community Engagement:** aims to further strengthen the 140 existing communities that were supported in Phase I as well as support 125 new communities through capacitating Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMCs)/Eco Development Committees (EDCs) for joint forest management and linking them with alternate livelihood options. This is expected to empower them economically and reduce dependence on forests for basic needs (such as affording gas cooking instead of firewood). There is a major focus on market linkage to ensure that the livelihood intervention provides sustainable economic growth. To further ensure efficiency and sustainability of the intervention, component 2 aims to converge with existing state/center-level livelihood schemes. This will enable the communities (women and men) to reap benefits from the activities even after the project is over.
- III. **Component 3: Institutional Strengthening:** is aimed at improving various departmental cells to

enable better management of the staff and resources. This includes strengthening of the legal cell, updation and implementation of a digitized Human Resource Management mechanism, digitizing the department's work by strengthening the Forest Management Information System (FMIS), supporting the research and education cell, supporting the Forest Schools, and addressing few infrastructural requirements. This component also details the project management modalities of Phase II. The goal is to address Forest Department's most urgent institutional gaps, ensuring that it is equipped to deal with the complex challenges it faces.

IV. ***Cross cutting component 4: Climate, Gender and Social Inclusion:*** Throughout the project activities, Climate, Gender and Social Inclusion will be recurring and crosscutting 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 micro planning 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.

2. The PMU, APFBCS is seeking interested and qualified person for the position of 'Senior Procurement Specialist' hereinafter referred as 'SPS' on a full-time basis to provide assistance in procurement management function under the Project.

(B) KEY TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Support Coordination and Management: The Senior Procurement Specialists will report to the Project Director of the PMU, APFBCS and provide assistance in procurement management of APFBCS, including the following:

- a) Develop procurement plans, implementation schedules, and contract supervision plans including contract performance evaluation criteria;
- b) Assist Project Executive of the PMU throughout the procurement process;
- c) Review requisition submitted by the stake holders of the project for completeness and compliance with objective of PMU, AFD procurement policies and procedures, guidelines and best practice;
- d) Provide administrative support to the PMU in procurement management and contract administration, disbursement and contract closure;
- e) Prepare Invitation for Bid/Bidding Document/ Requests for Expression of Interest (REOI)/Request for Proposal (RFP) document/ Minutes of short-listing/ Minutes of pre-bid meeting/ Minutes of pre-proposal conference, taking into account applicable policies, procedures, guidelines/ best practice;
- f) Prepare Bid Evaluation Report/ Technical Evaluation Report/ Combined Technical and Financial Evaluation Report/ Contract document/ Minutes of Negotiation, taking into account applicable policies, procedures, guidelines/ best practice;
- g) Oversee administration of the contracting process including contract requisition, payment processing, contract closure, and maintenance of all contract files;
- h) Review invoices/requests for payment submitted for accuracy and process for payment, ensuring that all payment requests are processed on a timely basis;
- i) Maintain individual contract files including compilation of all procurement documentation. Maintain a computerized as well as physical filing system to include all contract documentation to support procurement process, contract administration documents, payment requests, contract closure and evaluation. Ensure that all contract files are up-to-date and contract related documentation is readily available upon request;
- j) Prepare procurement documentation to ensure the application of and compliance with AFD's procurement policies and procedures applicable for PMU and best practice and assure the integrity of the procurement process;

- k) Provide reference and guidance to other Support staff of the PMU on AFD procurement policies and procedures and best practice throughout the contract administration process;
 - l) Finding viable solutions to contract administration issues;
 - m) Identify operational gaps in contract administration procedures and recommend improvements to existing processes, best practice, tools, and systems to achieve operational efficiency;
 - n) Review of procurement documentation to ensure quality of supporting documents and compliance with established standards;
 - o) Conduct Procurement Audit by the AFD/Consultants engaged for the task;
 - p) Ensure that any issues and/or deviations from AFD procurement policies and procedures are highlighted to the Project Director, PMU for necessary action/resolution;
 - q) Raise awareness within the PMU on contract administration issues, problems and lessons learned; Develop and implement plan to correct identified non-compliance issues;
 - r) Any other official responsibilities as assigned by the PD, PMU, APFBCS;
 - s) Prepare/Update the procurement plan and schedule for the project, in consultation with the Project Director, and ensure optimum competition, economy and efficiency and priority of items.
 - t) Any other tasks as assigned by the PD, APFBCS.
2. The SPS will have to attend PMU, APFBCS on all working days from 9:30 to 18:00 hours unless he/she is on official tour as approved by the PD. He may also be required to attend office on holidays as and when so desired by the PD for disposal of urgent matters. However, no extra remuneration will be paid for attending office on holidays.

(C) FACILITIES TO BE PROVIDED BY THE CLIENT:

1. PMU will–
 - a) Give access to all the required documents, correspondence, and any other information associated with the project and as deemed necessary.
 - b) Provide a seating arrangement in the PMU along with computer, printer, computer/office consumables, and internet access.

2. Reporting and Performance Review

The SPS will report to the Project Director, APFBC Society. The performance of the SPS will be reviewed by the PD.

3. Duration of Service

The SPS will have to serve the APFBC Society on full time basis and reporting to the Project Director, APFBC Society and provide services from the Project Management Unit (PMU) at Panjabari, Guwahati. The selected candidate will be engaged initially till 31st December 2025 or co-terminus with the project, whichever is earliest. It may be extended further on the basis of performance evaluation, and the project requirements. The Resignation/Termination shall be as per the HR Policy of the APFBC Society.

4. Remuneration and payment terms

Depending on the qualifications, experience, competency, the consolidated fixed remuneration of the SPS will be determined and mutually agreed. Tentative range is estimated between Rs. 1.50 lakh to Rs. 2.50 lakh per month. The remunerations shall be inclusive of all taxes. Taxes as applicable will be dealt with as per applicable laws.

(D) PROFILE

1. Essential qualifications:

Educational Qualification and Work Experience: The following would be the preferred order of educational qualification and experience. Preference of choice will follow category (a), (b) and (c) in order.

- a) Master's degree, or equivalent, in Business Administration, Economics, Engineering, Public Procurement, Public policy, or other related fields.

- b) University degree in Business Administration, Economics, Engineering, Public Procurement, Public Policy, or other related fields combined with specialized experience of handling procurement in externally aided projects, maybe considered in lieu of a Master's degree.
- c) Minimum of 15 years of relevant experience in procurement or project management, preferably in forestry/ infrastructure/ social development projects.
- d) Experience of having handled procurement of at least INR 500 Cr or equivalent in total, or INR 100 Cr on multiple occasions.
- e) Minimum of 5 years of demonstrated experience of having already worked on international donor funded procurement policies and procedures.

Computer Skills: The SPS must have experience of using Internet based applications, using and working with advanced word processing/spreadsheet including MS Word, MS Excel and MS Power Point and other related applications.

Age: Age of the candidates should not be more than 60 years as on 1st January 2024.

Language: High level of fluency in English and Hindi. Local language Assamese is desirable.

2. Desirable qualifications, experience, skills:

The following would be the desirable qualifications, experience, skills etc. and candidates having these qualities would be given preference:

- a) Demonstrated procurement specialization acquired through training programs organized by bi-lateral or multilateral agencies like World Bank, Asian Development Bank, GIZ etc.
- b) Able to lead, work collaboratively with teams and share relevant knowledge.
- c) Excellent oral and written communication skills in English.
- d) Have experience of using internet-based applications, using and working with advanced word processing/spreadsheet including MS Word, MS Excel and MS Power Point and other relevant applications.
