

**TERMS OF REFERENCE (ToR) FOR FINAL EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT
'ENSURING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR THE BILI-UÉLÉ PROTECTED AREA COMPLEX,
ITS PEOPLE AND ITS BIODIVERSITY'**

Introduction

African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) is an international non-governmental organization which has been implementing conservation of biodiversity interventions for the past 60 years, focusing exclusively on Africa's wildlife and wildlands. AWF's conservation programs and strategies are designed to protect Africa's wildlife and wildlands and to ensure a right based sustainable future for people in Africa. Since its inception in 1961, the organization has protected endangered species and lands, promoted conservation businesses that benefit local African communities, and trained thousands of African nationals in conservation. The AWF project management methodology is based on "Plan/Do/Check/Act" (PDCA) model, a simple, iterative and four step process for management control and improvement. The PDCA model covers all stages from project initiation to the project closure. The initiation starts when the Budget & Grants Management Team (BGMT) receives a signed agreement from either the Program Design (PD) or Philanthropy Teams. Before that, the PD team, goes through 5 key steps that contribute to the design of a project proposal and budget. These include problem analysis, objective setting, development of results framework/ logframe and finally plan for the implementation to arrive at the first technical and budget draft and an award notification serves as the kickoff to the project planning phase. The notification includes a summary of the general conditions and requirements of the award and indicates roles and responsibilities, in addition to upcoming deadlines. AWF is guided by donors' and development partners' guidelines to ensure effective internal control, accountability and management capacity with a strong focus on results.

Project Background

AWF works in Bili-Uélé, which is located in a very remote, poor and underdeveloped area in northern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). This area presents exceptional biodiversity and ecosystem services. It is part of a cross-border landscape with ecologically linked protected areas. These areas include the Zemongo/ Chinko complex in eastern Central African Republic (CAR), the Garamba National Park/ Bili-Uélé complex in northern DRC and the Southern National Park in South Sudan. AWF is implementing a €5,544,159 European Union (EU) funded project in Bili-Uélé, DRC titled "*Securing a sustainable future for the Bili-Uélé protected area complex, its people and its biodiversity*" for 50 months, in the territories of Bondo and Ango (with a special focus on Bili Mbomu Core Conservation Area (BMCA)) in the Bas-Uélé province. This funding was granted within the framework of the Regional Support Programme "Preserving Biodiversity and Fragile Ecosystems in Central Africa" in its sixth phase (ECOFAC 6), with financial support of the European Union, for a total amount of 86,417,500 euros.

Launched in 2017 and conducted under the aegis of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), ECOFAC 6 involves 7 Central African countries (Cameroon, Congo, Gabon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Sao Tome and Principe and Chad). It operates in 16 protected areas, 10 of which are transboundary. Its logical framework includes five main results. The priority actions of ECOFAC6 are the conservation of the natural heritage of the partner states and local development in the peripheral areas of the protected areas. Some of the actions of this regional programme sometimes go beyond the perimeter of the protected areas, such as the work carried out on the transboundary spatial organization of transhumance routes (Cameroon/Nigeria).

The project "*Securing a sustainable future for the Bili-Uélé protected area complex, its people and its biodiversity*" target groups include the Congolese Institute for the Conservation of Nature (ICCN) and its staff responsible for

the management of the Bili-Uélé hunting area and the Mbomu Faunal Reserve, the local communities living near the central conservation area (BMCA); the judicial authorities in charge of the issue of illegal wildlife trade; and the territorial and provincial authorities responsible for the development of a balanced and integrated land use plan (LUP) at the territorial level. This project has four objectives;

- 1) Contribute to improved governance and management of natural resources and ecological services (environmental and ecosystem services) for sustainable development, social cohesion and conflict transformation in the Ango and Bondo territories.
- 2) Contribute to conservation of the biodiversity of BMCA and its habitats by preserving its ecological integrity and improving management and governance.
- 3) Contribute to security and sustainable management of natural resources for socio-economic development of local populations adjacent to BMCA.
- 4) Contribute to improved security and rule of law in and around the BMCA and positively influence the ability for the landscape to develop peacefully

The final beneficiaries of this project include the Garamba/ Bili-Uélé/ Southern/ Zemongo-Chinko Transboundary Conservation Area, which is an important region for global biodiversity and the Bili-Uélé Game Reserve and Mbomu Faunal Reserve, the staff of ICCN, local communities, local and judicial authorities as well as the wildlife, land and other natural resources in and around the BMCA are also direct beneficiaries.

Evaluation Scope and Purpose

The project has been implemented since January 2018. This end of project evaluation focuses on the entire implementation period. The evaluation shall cover the entire implementation project timeline from the start date to the end date (Jan 2018 – March 2022) and shall cover its implementation areas (Bondo, Bili-Uélé and Ango, in the Bas Uélé Province). The evaluation shall be guided by internationally agreed OECD/ DAC evaluation criteria.

The purpose of this evaluation is to measure the level of achievement of the project objectives and assess the extent and sustainability of their impacts. In addition, the evaluation will identify challenges and best practices drawn to inform future similar projects from the PD lenses. It shall also review the levels of implementation of the recommendations of the project's Mid-Term Review (MTR) and Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) reports. In the end, the evaluation shall report on the accountability towards the donor, EU and the beneficiaries of the project and offer a learning aspect for all stakeholders. Of utmost need will be the key lessons learned, challenges and the flexibility of the project to adapt and respond to the changes and sustainability of the context.

The end of project evaluation will seek to achieving the following three objectives:

- i. Evaluate to what extent the project has delivered effective, efficient, relevant and timely activities to targeted beneficiaries as set in the project logframe.
- ii. Assess whether the collaboration between AWF, ICCN, and implementing partners has added value to the interventions with a positive effect on target beneficiaries and stakeholders. What has contributed to this added value and what has not?
- iii. Identify and assess key lessons learned, challenges and draw recommendation for future project design.

The evaluation is expected to be forward looking and shall effectively capture lessons learnt and provide information on the nature, extent and where possible, the potential impact and sustainability of the EU Bili-

Uélé project. The evaluation shall also assess the project design, partners, scope, implementation status and the capacity to achieve the project objectives. It shall collate and analyze lessons learnt, challenges faced and measures taken to address them, and best practices used during implementation which will inform the project strategy in response to the ECOFAC 6 priorities. The evaluation will be guided by the DAC OECD evaluation criteria based on the following;

Objective 1: Evaluate to what extent the project has delivered effective, efficient, relevant and timely activities to targeted beneficiaries as set in the project logframe.

i. Effectiveness:

- To what extent were the EU Bili-Uélé project objectives achieved?
- To what extent have the EU Bili-Uélé project outcomes contributed to the overall goal/ Impacts? What are some of the pointers that the potential impact of the project will be achieved?
- What were the major factors influencing the achievement or not of the EU Bili-Uélé project objectives?

ii. Efficiency:

- How efficient was the delivery of project by AWF, not only in terms of expenditure, but also in terms of implementation of activities? Were the right strategies such as capacity development strategies in place. Were they followed?
- Was the project implementation modality considered to have been cost-efficient, while not compromising quality?
- What would have been the opportunities within project to reach more target beneficiaries with the available resources such as staffing, logistical capacity or to reduce costs while reaching at least the same number of beneficiaries without compromising quality?
- Were alterations made to the project design, if any, in terms of collaboration during the implementation phase based on the reality on the ground? What were the outcomes of these choices for effective and efficient project implementation?
- How has the project built or optimized synergies with other projects in the area?

iii. Relevance

- How relevant were the project's objectives and activities in addressing priority conservation needs in the project area and national/ international policies and commitments such as SDGs and CBD?
- How did the beneficiaries perceive the relevance of the project and how has the activities implemented changed their socio-economic and rights situations? What are some of the stories of change (positive or negative)?
- How has the collaboration between AWF, partners, civil society organizations (CSO) and ICCN contributed to appropriate response of specific needs and priorities of the beneficiaries?
- To what extent was project able to adapt and provide appropriate response to context changes, emerging local needs, or priorities of beneficiaries?

iv. Project Quality Implementation

- What mechanisms are in place to track project implementation of the AWF? (i.e. internal monitoring, evaluation, accountability, learning (MEAL) and quality assurance mechanisms)?

- How well did the project sustain the social and environmental safeguards among the local communities in the area? What lessons can we draw from the challenges that the project faced with Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) while working with communities?
- How have they been utilized to increase quality within the project?
- What facilitated/ hindered the project to deliver quality outcome? What do beneficiaries think could be improved in contribution to improving local capacity?
- To what extent, did the project interventions contribute to build long-term community capacity?
- To what extent, was the project participatory throughout the project cycle?

Objective 2: Assess whether the collaboration between AWF, ICCN, and implementing partners has added value to the interventions with a positive effect on target beneficiaries and stakeholders.

- What has contributed to this added value and what has not?
 - Which interventions, approaches, and modalities/ strategies, including the right communication and cooperation approaches/modalities were used, have been most effective according to AWF, ICCN and implementing partners?
 - Who benefited from shared learning experiences (e.g. quarterly, joint field visits, workshops provision on best approaches and methodology)?
 - How did the different actors learn from these experiences?
- v. *Complementarity and harmonization*
- What are some of the concrete examples of successful models of collaboration between AWF other stakeholders/actors on a geographic level, not just in terms of avoiding duplication but increasing complementarity and integrated programs affecting the reach and impact on beneficiaries?
 - What were barriers and/or enablers to this?
 - To what extent did the activities of the project complement the work of others i.e. prevented duplication and contributed to the larger project activities in Bili-Uélé?
 - How best was the consortium composition given the potential challenges observed during the implementation. Which type of partner did the project miss in the consortium?
- vi. *Visibility*
- What measures were taken to create visibility of the project and its added value, towards line ICCN, DRC public (including beneficiaries), DRC government, NGO forum?
 - What joint activities were undertaken during project implementation both at the landscape level as well as at the country office level? (Please provide concrete, short, substantial, cases of evidence).
 - Did the project achieve the visibility criteria and expectations set by the donor?

Objective 3: Identify and assess key lessons learned, challenges and draw recommendation for future project design and implementation. The end term evaluation shall assess:

- The end line evaluation shall at least include one lesson learned and recommendation per evaluation category, i.e. effectiveness, efficiency, relevance etc.
- What are the key lessons learned per project objective? To what extent has the delivery of project activities contributed to effective, efficient, relevant and timely delivery of aid and enhanced impact for the beneficiaries?

vii. Sustainability

- Will the changes caused by this project continue beyond the life of the project? If not, why not? If partially or conditionally, why so?
- What mechanisms have AWF and partners put in place to sustain the key project Outputs and Outcomes?
- How has the project worked with local partners to increase their capacity in a sustainable way?
- What motivations /mechanisms exist for partners to continue playing these roles?
- What are the risks facing sustainability of project outputs and outcomes?

Evaluation Methodology

The consultant will be expected to suggest a robust evaluation methodology that demonstrates how the evaluation questions above will be answered. This shall be firmed up with the successful vendor during inception meeting, which will include the vendor, AWF and EU representative, and the project key partners in implementation. The evaluation objectives will be assessed, including all evaluation questions under each. The proposed data collection should include the use of a number of qualitative and quantitative approaches to gain a deeper understanding of the outcomes of the project, including:

- Desk review of background documents (project document, project monitoring data, progress report, mid-term review report, ROM field visit reports etc.).
- Survey with project beneficiaries in project's target area.
- Key informant interviews (e.g. with EU Bili-Uélé project staff members, key community members/beneficiaries, implementing partners, and representatives from ICCN) to gather substantial anecdotal evidence on the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and timeliness of the project activities implementation and delivery
- Focus group discussions (e.g. with stakeholders, community members, target beneficiaries and local authorities' representatives) to serve as input for the narrative anecdotal evidence.
- A learning event in Bili-Uélé and Kinshasa to disseminate evaluation findings and lessons learned through a presentation and a workshop facilitated by the consultant.

Reference Material

Various sources of information for the project will be made available to the vendor by AWF. These will include relevant project documents such as: project contract, proposal, budget, work plans, logical framework, annual reports (narrative and financial) and M&E Indicators Tracking Table.

Evaluation deliverables

The consultant is expected to lead, accomplish and submit the following deliverables within the agreed timeframe and budget:

- An inception report, which will serve as an agreement between parties on how the evaluation shall be conducted.
- Raw data in any of the following statistical packages (STATA, EXCEL, SPSS, CPro) and also transcribed qualitative scripts.
- A max 45-page draft and final evaluation report (in MS Word and PDF), excluding annexes in FRENCH. It should be in the format indicated below, to be submitted in electronic form by email to, AWF's Senior Manager – Knowledge management, who is also the Evaluation manager for this assignment. AWF reserves the right to request a hard copy to be deposited at its office in Kinshasa. The report should also include presentation of results by appropriate graphs, visuals, tables and/or a dashboard with an accompanied explanatory text. The report should consist of:

- a) Executive Summary
- b) Introduction
- c) Methodology, including sampling and limitations
- d) Analysis and findings of the evaluation (including an implementation strategy for the recommendations). The analysis should be done according to the objectives but follow the OECD/ DAC evaluation criteria.
- e) Conclusions for each of the evaluation objectives
- f) Recommendations
- g) Annexes.

Evaluation Timeframe and Implementation Arrangements

The consultancy will run for approximately 50 days, commencing in 4th April, 2022, with the submission of the final report not later than the 50th day from the date of signing contract. A tentative work plan will be agreed upon between the evaluator and AWF.

This consultancy shall build on previous work in the landscape to critically analyze AWF’s EU Bili-Uélé project Theory of Change to ensure this is robust and identify the critical assumptions to be tested with recommendations for data needs and gaps. For this work, the consultant will be required to implement a human-centric approach (process clearly articulated in the application) to deliver high quality, relevant, and actionable results. On account of the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic, the consultant shall have recourse to conducting virtual meetings when needed.

Roles and Responsibilities

Successful Consulting Firm	AWF DRC	AWF HQ
Develop an inception report, detailing the methodology-stakeholders to be interviewed, tools to be developed, time frame for the evaluation and budget.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide all required background materials to the consultant in a timely manner. • Providing data/ information for desk review. • Read and provide comments on the inception report including the proposed evaluation methodology, the information gathering techniques and the suggested target villages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read and provide comments on the inception report including the proposed evaluation methodology, the information gathering techniques and the suggested target sites.

<p>Holds the overall management responsibility of the review, including designing and carrying out the evaluation, drafting the final report and debriefing the project team and key stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and comment on deliverables. • Provide guidance where necessary. • Support logistics for the evaluation team where necessary. • Facilitate contacts with partners, key beneficiaries and line ministries. • Arrange logistics and planning of the field visits, supporting the evaluation team during field work and bring evaluation team to partners and beneficiaries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee the service provider by managing the consultancy contract; monitor adherence to specified guidelines and deadlines; facilitating access to required information; review and comment on deliverables.
<p>Liaise with Service De Conservation (SCD) staff throughout the process, providing weekly updates and seeking their input and advice where necessary. Request approval in case of deviation from budget or work plan, and for miscellaneous costs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide guidance throughout all phases of execution, facilitation of the fieldwork, including interviews with local partners, stakeholders, government, communities, etc. • Review and provide feedback to the project evaluation draft and final report. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and comment on draft report submitted by the consultant i.e. preliminary reports and the final report, providing feedback to draft data collection tools, quality/quantity and reports. • Approving all deliverables and facilitating access to any documentation (or any person) deemed relevant to the evaluation process.
<p>Sign the AWF rights-based conservation and social safeguards Policy and abide by the terms and conditions thereof.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage the adherence to rights-based conservation and social safeguards policy

Qualification and Application procedures

i. Selection process

AWF will use its internal guidance, checklists and an interview process to select the successful consultant/firm. The guidelines require the applicants to submit, a proposal explaining, their understanding of the Terms of Reference, and how they would approach this assignment, with a summary of their methodology, especially in terms of how they plan to meet the objectives, including a work plan and budget. This should include a team composition with a lead consultant and at least one other experienced evaluator and a CV of each person to be involved in the assignment, including relevant experience, a detailed budget, work plan, and time availability/anticipated starting date.

ii. Evaluation team composition and required competencies

The evaluation will be conducted by one professional (or a team with specific roles) with the following experience and skills

- An advanced degree in applied social sciences research, Natural Resource Economics, anthropology, natural resource management, or development studies.
- At least five years of proven experience in carrying out evaluations and systemic reviews in west and central Africa countries. Having experience with natural resource conservation will be an added advantage.
- Proven expertise in managing and/or demonstrable success in conducting EU grants project evaluation
- Proficiency in qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and analysis.
- Experience working in multicultural environments.
- Be able to communicate fluently using both verbally and in writing in French and English.

iii. Submission of application

Interested vendors are expected to submit via procurement@awf.org with a copy to eomondi@awf.org the following not later than **25/03/2022**.

- A technical proposal with a company profile, explaining their understanding of the ToR, and how they would approach this assignment, summarizing, the methodologies, and approaches they plan to use, including a work plan.
- CVs of at least two key members of the evaluation team
- Two references/ referees of similar previous assignments.
- Their commitment and availability.
- A financial proposal and budget outlining their expected fees.

AWF shall cover logistical costs associated with assignment including flights, in country travels, and accommodation for the lead consultants during the duration of field travel as per AWF guidelines and procedures. The consultants will be responsible for their own vaccinations that may be required, security approvals, their meals and any payments to local research assistants that they may hire. In their proposal, candidates should consider that the budget would cover approximately 50 consecutive man days.