

Consultancy Title: Assessment and Development of a Framework for Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) in Northwest Liberia

Terms of Reference

Project Title:	Food Systems, Land Use, and Restoration (FOLUR)Project.
Location:	Monrovia, Liberia with one-two week travel to project locations
Type of Contract:	National Consultancy
Duration of Contract:	30 days spread over 2.5 months (June to August 2024)
Opening Date:	May 1st, 2024
Closing Date:	Closing Date: May 22 nd , 2024

A. Background

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) is the UK's largest nature conservation charity, dedicated to protecting birds and the wider environment. Founded in 1889 to combat the mass killing of birds for the fashion industry, the RSPB has evolved into an organization with a broad environmental focus, managing over 200 nature reserves in the UK.

Over the years, the RSPB has expanded its focus beyond birds to the conservation of all wildlife, encompassing a broad range of environmental issues. It manages over 200 nature reserves across the United Kingdom, which are crucial habitats for wildlife and are also important for educational purposes and public engagement.

The RSPB is actively involved in research, conservation projects, and lobbying for policy changes to protect birds and the environment. Their work extends internationally, working in partnerships with other organizations across the globe to tackle pressing environmental issues like deforestation, climate change, and habitat loss. The Gola Landscape of Liberia and Sierra Leone is one of RSPB's international programmes. RSPB work with Partners in Liberia – the Society for Conservation of Nature in Liberia (SCNL) and in Sierra Leone, the Conservation Society of Sierra Leone (CSSL) and the Gola Rainforest Company (GRC LG).

To this end, RSPB in collaboration with the Conservation International and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA,) is implementing a Global Environment Facility (GEF) funded Project on Food Systems, Land Use, and Restoration Impact Program (GEF FOLUR). The RSPB focuses on Sustainable Financing and Land Use and Restoration components of the GEF FOLUR Project in Northwest Liberia.

B. Project Description:

The Food Systems, Land Use, and Restoration (FOLUR) Impact Project is based on the growing recognition that food production systems and land use must improve to benefit people's health, planet, and economies. The FOLUR project will promote sustainable integrated landscapes and efficient food value chains at scale, targeting eight commodities: beef, cocoa, corn, coffee, palm oil, rice, soy, and wheat. In addition, FOLUR aims to transform the global food and land use systems to integrate production areas better, produce ecosystem services, and maintain natural capital.

To this end, CI Liberia, in collaboration with the Environment Protection Agency (EPA), is cordially implementing a five-year Global Environment Facility (GEF)-funded FOLUR project titled "Reducing deforestation from palm oil and cocoa value chains," with the primary objective of "promoting biodiversity conservation and sustainable food systems for enhanced livelihood opportunities in the NW. Liberia Landscape through land use planning, restoration of degraded lands, and strengthening governance, policies, and market incentives for nationally replicable models of deforestation-free cocoa and palm oil value chains."

Based on the above-mentioned, the Liberia FOLUR project is being implemented in the Northwest Liberia landscape (Grand Cape Mount, Bong, Bomi, Lofa, and Gbarpolu Counties) with partners including Fauna and Flora International (FFI), the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), and the Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL). The project covers four components, and they are as follows:

Component 1: Development, adoption, and implementation of National and NW. Liberia Landscape: This component aims to develop comprehensive course national land-use plans/maps and identify target areas for production, protection, and restoration developed in a participatory and inclusive manner in the NW. Liberia landscape.

Component 2: Promotion of sustainable production practices for food crops, palm oil, and cocoa, supported by responsible value chains: This component aims at building the capacity of male and female farmers, small-medium enterprise service providers, government, universities, civil society, and organizational staff on climate-smart agricultural practices and nontimber forest products (NTFP) practices with a focus on palm oil and cocoa value chains.

Component 3: Biodiversity loss reduction and restoration of natural habitats. This seeks to develop a restoration plan and conduct restoration initiatives, including agroforestry, land management, and natural regeneration implementation in the NW. Liberia Landscape.

Component 4: Coordination, collaboration, Monitoring, and Evaluation. This component seeks to link the FOLUR Global Platform to align program management and ensure consistency of M&E systems. Additionally, the component enhanced strategic knowledge management of the project by men and women.

C. Objectives of the assignment:

RSPB and its partner, SCNL are seeking a consultancy firm to evaluate the potential for Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) including the development of a robust framework for implementation in Northwest Liberia in pursuance of the above.

The task aims to develop a framework for designing and implementing a PES system in NW Liberia, institutionalizing the GoL's efforts to incentivize sustainable use and regeneration of ecosystem services in the NW landscape through various departments and ministries.

D. Scope of Work:

The selected consultancy firm or team is expected to follow the steps for conducting the PES below: In summary therefore, the PES will be conducted as follows.

- a) Desk review of the literature
- b) Drafting and presentation of the inception report to the stakeholders for discussions
- c) and to solicit ideas and consent of key stakeholders in the Liberia
- d) Development of data collection tools
- e) Data Collection
- f) Data entry, analysis, and report writing.
- g) Presentation of the draft final report for validation by the project stakeholders and other key actors in NW Liberia and the
- h) Sharing of the report with stakeholders for comments

The chosen consultancy firm or team will develop a comprehensive methodology for designing and implementing a PES system in NW Liberia, ensuring it is robust enough to identify and address the interests of relevant stakeholders, navigating the political economy for effective implementation.

1. Conduct a literature review on existing PES models and their applicability in similar ecological and socio-economic contexts.
2. Assess the existing policy and institutional frameworks and their alignment with PES implementation with recommendations for necessary policy adjustments or development.
3. Analyze the ecological, economic, and social characteristics of Northwest Liberia to understand the feasibility of PES.
4. Identify and engage with key stakeholders, including local communities, government agencies, NGOs, and potential funders by facilitating workshops and focus group discussions to gather insights and expectations regarding PES.
5. Identify, assess, and value the range of services provided by the watershed ecosystem including evidence on the economic, social, and environmental impacts of the
6. ongoing initiatives.
7. Identify and analyze the major beneficiaries of these services including their needs (agricultural, water quality, fishing, etc.) and associated risks (pollution, drought, degradation, etc.).
8. Propose potential Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) models suitable for the region, considering local dynamics and stakeholder preferences.

9. Outline implementation strategies, including beneficiary and payer identification, payment mechanisms, and monitoring protocols.
10. Highlight the most important lessons for promotion and design of payments for ecosystem services schemes.

E. Deliverables and schedule of payments

The successful consultants or consulting firm will be paid a lump sum upon submission of deliverables and approval by RSPB for each task, which includes all associated costs. Payments will be based on output, which is the delivery of the services specified in each deliverable of the TOR. All planned costs must be specified in the proposal.

Deliverable/ activities	Proposed Payment (%)
1. Desk Review and Inception reports: Completion of an Inception workshop and submission of inception report following preliminary consultations with different stakeholders and desk review. The inception report needs to clearly identify potential problems and bottlenecks of the assignment, as well as possible solutions and a revised work plan after consulting with relevant stakeholders.	20%
2. Final inception report	
3. Submission of the assessment report: detailing Payment mechanisms for PES schemes, progress, problems and challenges, proposed models, and strategies, what 'prerequisites' need to be in place, what roles and responsibilities for communities, the government, private companies, etc. with alignment with relevant industry best practices.	30%
4. Submission of draft PES framework and policy brief	10%
5. A report presentation session with RSPB and partners	
6. Final strategic framework for PES: including proposed schemes and models, and benefits, benefit-sharing mechanisms, priority intervention areas and strategies, and	40%
7. Policy Brief document: incorporating regional and global policy recommendations.	

** Payment will be made based on RSPB's acceptance of the deliverables, based on inputs from project key stakeholders.*

F. Institutional Arrangement

The chosen firm or consulting team will report to the RSPB Country Programme Manager for Liberia and the Sustainable Financing Technical Advisor and will collaborate with the SCNL and relevant stakeholders to fulfill their responsibilities.

G. Duration of the Work

The contract is a fixed-term service level, expected to be delivered promptly from the signing date. The services will be delivered over two months from mid-June to mid-August 2024. A draft of the activities is provided below.

Timeline

Table below shows the expected timeline for specific deliverables:

Key Activities/Deliverables	Responsibility	Number of days (estimated)	Timeline
Initial overview meeting, orientation, and collection of relevant literature for the desk review	RSPB, SCNL, partners, and Consultants	3.5 days	June 2024
Conduct stakeholder consultative meeting	RSPB, SCNL, partners, and Consultants	2.5 days	June – July 2024
Produce draft inception report and incorporation of comments	RSPB, SCNL, partners and Consultants	2.5 days	June 2024
Produce a final detailed desk review and inception reports	Consultants	1.5 days	June – July 2024
Data collection (primary, secondary data including Focused Group Discussions, relevant documents for review)	Consultants	10 days	July – Aug 2024
Produce a draft implementation framework report of the PES and Policy Brief	Consultants	4.5 days	Aug 2024
Stakeholder meeting to discuss the results and policy recommendations	RSPB, SCNL, Partners, and Consultants	1 day	Aug 2024
Final report for the PES Sprinting and Launching of Report	Consultants	4.5 days	Aug 2024
Total: 30 days			

H. Evaluation Criteria

The RSPB will evaluate proposals based on technical expertise, experience, and cost merits, aiming for the best value for money.

Summary Criteria	Score (out of 100)
Technical: The proposed approach and methodology are suitable and practical in to execute the assignment.	20%
Proposed Methodology, Approach, and Implementation Plan: The presentation is clear, logical, realistic, and promises efficient project implementation.	10%
Bidder's qualification, capacity, and experience (include sample of relevant work done): The bidder's experience and performance demonstrate proven expertise to execute the assignment.	20%
Management Structure & Key Personnel: The bidder and the proposed team of personnel have the specific technical expertise for the assignment.	30%
Cost: The proposed costs are reasonable and realistic while indicating a clear comprehension of the assignment.	20%

I. Minimum Qualification and experience of consultants

The successful consultancy firm or consultants should have team members with the following minimum the requirements.

- a) Education: Master's degree in Natural Resources Management and Environmental Economics, Public Policy, Environmental Planning, and or other related subjects with proven experience in qualitative and quantitative data collection.
- b) Project management of consulting projects (with expertise in watershed management), including preparation of consulting reports, presentation material, assistance in liaison with key stakeholders, or Social and Gender analytical skills.
- c) Successfully worked with national governments and or international organizations on watershed management projects.
- d) Extensive experience in stakeholder consultation and coordination and managing workshops and seminars.
- e) Expertise in forestry, watershed, and agricultural ecosystems.
- f) Knowledge of the nexus between poverty, agriculture, and environment.
- g) Proven ability to work under pressure and meet deadlines.
- h) Proven knowledge of and expertise on gender issues, ecosystems, and watershed services.
- i) Excellent writing and presentation skills.
- j) Professionalism: The individual possesses the ability to make ad-hoc changes, perform under stress, and maintain flexible working hours.

J. Instructions for preparation of Budget (Cost Proposal)

- i. **Format:** budgets must be prepared and submitted in Microsoft Excel and explicitly show all units (e.g., labour days), unit costs (e.g., loaded daily rates), and total costs. Excel files should be "unlocked" and show all calculations.
- ii. **Included costs:** budgets should consist of lines for:
 - **Labour**, by an individual expert, in person-days, multiplied by either a base daily pay (in US dollars) or a "loaded" daily pay (e.g., inclusive of fringe benefits, other indirect costs, or fees). Proposed daily rates must be based on the qualifications represented in the resumes of the named individuals.
 - **Other direct costs include** telephone, internet, photocopying, small office supplies, travel, etc. (if required).
- iii. **Budget Justification:** The budget spreadsheet should be accompanied by a budget narrative that provides a detailed explanation of the proposed costs.

K. Instructions for Submission of Technical Proposals

- a) **Submission address:** Proposal submissions and queries should be sent to "William Miller" william.miller@rspb.org.uk and "Bunmi Jegede" Bunmi.Jegede@rspb.org.uk. All submitted proposals should carry the subject line "PES Assessment Consultancy in NW Liberia."
- b) **Right of award:** RSPB reserves the right to reject any or all bids that are not responsive to the scope of work.
- c) **Language:** Proposals must be submitted in English.
- d) **Deadline for Submission:** The deadline for submission of the entire proposal is **22nd May 2024.**
- e) **Currency:** proposals should be budgeted in United States dollars. Payment will be made in United States dollars.
- f) **Cover and signature:** Applicants should submit their proposals with a cover letter signed by an authorized applicant representative.
- g) **Expert table:** Proposals should include a table detailing the names, team positions, expertise, and level of effort of all team members proposed for the assignment.
- h) **Resumes/CVs:** Proposals should include a detailed work plan detailing each deliverable for the completion of the Consultancy.

NB. All expressions of interest should include:

- **Cover letter:** A concise letter expressing an expression of interest, typically limited to one page.
- **Technical proposal** (maximum eight pages) highlighting: an overview of the consultant's experience, profile, understanding of the ToRs, methodology approach, and timeline for the assignment.
- **Financial Proposal:** The proposal should detail the costs of services such as consultancy fees, accommodation, transportation, stationery, data collection supplies, and other related expenses.