

Terms of reference for mid-term review/evaluation of programme: *“Civil society as catalyst for rights-based, sustainable rainforest protection”*

Background:

Rainforest Foundation Norway (RFN) is one of Europe’s leading organisations in the work to protect the world’s rainforests and strengthen the rights of indigenous peoples, in cooperation with indigenous and environmental organisations in South-East Asia, Central Africa and the Amazon.

RFN’s program *“Civil society as catalyst for rights-based, sustainable rainforest protection”* is a five-year program funded primarily by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad). The program started in 2018 and ends December 2022. RFN implements the program together with 52 partners, in seven different countries. The annual budget is about 97M NOK. The program builds on results and experiences from a previous five-year program *“Advancing rights-based rainforest protection and the rights of indigenous peoples”* from 2013-2017.

The program is divided into four subprograms (three regional programs, in the Amazon, Asia/Oceania and the Congo Basin) and one global policy program), each with individual results frameworks. All four subprograms are organized according to *three common overall and long-term outcomes*:

- 1) Indigenous peoples and forest-dependent communities are able to define and fulfil their development needs within the framework of rights-based sustainable rainforest management.
- 2) Policy and legal frameworks prevent destruction of the rainforest and safeguard indigenous and forest peoples’ human rights.
- 3) Rainforest destruction and human rights violations resulting from commercial activities of public or private businesses are significantly reduced.

The point of departure for this program is the theory of change underpinning RFN’s strategy for the period 2018-2030.¹ We believe that our work is most effective when RFN and our partners engage simultaneously on the same specific issue at the local, national, and international levels. RFN and partners complement each other in terms of expertise and the kind of access and influence we have on various types and levels of decisionmakers. Our theory of change emphasizes putting to use the linkages between the three areas of work (contributing to the three outcomes listed above). Experience from RFN and partner organizations has shown that the best results are achieved when we can draw on advances in one of these three areas to create movement in the others. Communities that produce sustainable solutions can lead to changes in political priorities. Zero deforestation commitments by individual companies can be used to influence governments, which in turn may modify entire business sectors. To ensure the protection of large, contiguous rainforest areas, local communities, governments as well as commercial actors must be mobilized.

The program was designed to build on previous efforts of both strengthening the rights and means of indigenous and other forest peoples to manage their traditional territories, and the political advocacy to create the necessary framework conditions for doing so. This program places a larger effort than the previous program on achieving policy change also at the national level in the rainforest countries, not only at the global level. It is also a new feature that we wanted to expand our work on the commercial sector/the drivers of deforestation into all countries/regions included in the program.

¹ Strategy 2030: https://d5i6is0eze552.cloudfront.net/documents/Styringsdokumenter/RF_strategy_2018-2030_web.pdf?mtime=201809111100928

Based on RFN's approach to evaluations, we have chosen to use evaluations to ask the more difficult questions to address the doubts and uncertainties we have regarding the program, to be able to maximize learning from the investment in evaluations.

Purpose: The purpose for this review is to learn from the work done so far in the program period and receive input before designing a new program from 2023.

Evaluation use and users: The findings will be used by RFN and partners, as well as reported to the program's main donor, Norad.

Objectives: The review should assess:

- 1) The added value of RFN for strengthening civil society to become a catalyst for change.
- 2) The effectiveness of the program in achieving results.
- 3) The synergies within and across sub-programs (theory of change and program design).
- 4) The adaptive capacity and learning from changing realities/contexts.

Evaluation questions:

1) RFN's added value for strengthening civil society

- a) To what extent has RFN through this program contributed to the strengthening of capacity and potential of civil society organizations in Brazil and Indonesia to represent and give voice/power to their constituencies?
- b) What strategies/methods have proven effective in ensuring sustainable strengthening of civil society in these countries?
- c) What are the challenges or bottlenecks for RFN to provide effective support towards a stronger civil society?
- d) Based on the findings from these two countries, how could RFN change its collaboration with partners to become a more effective contributor to the strengthening of civil society?

2) Program results: Effectiveness and impact

- a) To what extent is the program's scale and design (results framework) effective for reaching the program's outcomes, and the desired impact of both enhancing rights and securing sustainable forest management of large tracts of rainforest?
- b) Looking at one case from each of the three regional programmes (one from DRC, one from Indonesia, and one from Brazil), how effective is RFN and partners in generating results, and what are the explanatory factors behind variations in results achievement? (excluding the external factor of political will).
- c) How could RFN and partners revise program and log frame design (are we measuring the right things?) or theory of change (are we doing the right things) to strengthen both the achievements towards outcomes and enhance impact in the future?

3) Synergies within and across programs

Looking at four different results achievements (to be selected, two at the national level, and two at the global level, involving projects in Brazil, Indonesia and/or Peru):

- a) To what extent do the results build on synergies between the three outcomes?

- b) For the two results in the global programme, what are the enabling factors for creating synergies between efforts at the local/project level in the selected regional programmes and the global programme,
- c) Looking at the results examples based on synergies, to what extent do different partners involved play complementary roles?
- d) What are the unrealized/potential synergies (within or across programs) and the barriers to achieving synergies in these four cases?

4) Adaptive capacity and learning

- a) How have RFN and partners adapted to changing realities, with either improved or decreased opportunities for results achievement? Look at changing realities both prior to and after onset of Covid-19.
- b) Which factors (within program management and the relationship between RFN and partners hinder and facilitate adaptation?
- c) How can RFN and partners better integrate learning from the program's implementation into the management of programs and projects?

Scope:

Assess the three years from 2018 to 2020. Which parts of the program that will be included in scope are identified in the different evaluation questions. We have chosen to put an emphasis on one country from each sub-programme (Brazil, Indonesia, and DRC) as these are the countries to which the largest amounts of funds are directed. DRC is only included under question 2 as we have a parallel evaluation ongoing that will include at least elements of what we want to assess under questions 1 and 3. We also want to look at one case in Peru, to be able to continue the learning from a previous evaluation of our work to support territorial rights of indigenous peoples there. The global programme is included for considerations of synergies as this is a central element of RFN's theory of change. Adjustments to or further delimitation of scope will be done together with the evaluator during the inception phase.

Methodology:

Due to the risks and limitations cause by the Covid-19 pandemic, this evaluation will have to be carried out using only document reviews and digital interviews or survey techniques to collect and assess data. Further details on methods will be agreed with evaluators in the inception phase.

Deliverables:

Inception report: Short text where methodology and other suggestions (such as outline or modifications of questions) and delimitations are presented to RFN.

Presentation of draft report findings: Before the final report is prepared, the consultant shall organize a presentation of selected elements of the draft report to RFN and partners. The aim of this presentation is to receive feedback on findings and preliminary conclusions and recommendations.

Final report: The final report is to be submitted and presented to both Norad and RFN with partners after feedback has been received and integrated into the draft report. The final report should be submitted as a final, proof-read version, in a reader-friendly layout, and submitted electronically. The report shall be in English and constitute a maximum of 30 pages, excluding annexes. It should contain at least the following sections (not exhaustive):

- Executive summary (max 2 pages).
- Introduction and context background.
- Description of the evaluation questions and methodology for data collection and analysis including scope, constraints, and limitations.
- Brief description of the projects/cases evaluated.
- Findings and conclusions.
- Recommendations for the remainder of the program and future programming to be implemented by RFN.

Annexes to be included are: The agreed Terms of Reference (ToR), work plan, data collection instruments, reference to sources of information (including interviewees) for both qualitative and quantitative data.

Timeframe and budget:

We foresee that this evaluation will require approximately 6-8 weeks of work, and we would like to have a final report in hand by November/December 2021. We ask the interested candidates to submit a proposal with hours, rates and possible deadlines for deliveries as outlined above. A detailed timeline and budget will then be agreed with consultant in contract.