

Terms of Reference for Mauritius International Consultant

UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTS (UNFF)

Background

Forests cover 33% of the earth's land area and provide multiple social, economic and environmental benefits to humankind through its significant contribution to poverty eradication, climate change mitigation and adaptation, maintaining of biodiversity, clean air, water quality, weather stability, etc. However, forests, especially natural forests, are still disappearing in an alarming rate. From 2010 to 2015, 32.5 million hectares of natural forests were lost globally (FAO-FRA 2015). With acknowledgement of the importance of forests, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the General Assembly in September 2015 squarely address the need for forests and Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) in its Goal 15. In addition, forests and SFM also contribute to the achievement of most of the other SDGs through their multiple functions. In January 2017, the UN General Assembly adopted the first ever UN Strategic Plan for Forests (2017-2030) (UNSPF), which provides a global framework for actions to sustainably manage of forests and halt deforestation and forest degradation in a holistic and coherent manner.

A major constraint to achieving the forest-related SDGs and UNSPF, is the lack of funding for forests and SFM, especially in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, mainly due to other pressing priorities such as employment, health and education, and general lack of resources and poverty. Furthermore, despite significant resources being available from existing international funding mechanisms (especially climate financing), the actual financial flows to developing countries and countries with economies in transition have been limited by a number of disbursement constraints. In fact, poor access to international (multilateral and bilateral) funding often presents additional challenges to the sheer availability of financial resources for SFM.

Further, the disruptions to the world economy caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have hit SIDS particularly hard. Due to their small size, remoteness, high dependence on trading partners and reliance on a few key sectors they are highly vulnerable to external shocks. The pandemic has wrought serious economic hardship on SIDS, who were unprepared for the multidimensional impact of the pandemic. GDP dropped by 9% in SIDS in 2020, compared to a 3.3% decline in other developing countries per IMF estimates. Important sectors such as tourism and fisheries have suffered particular hardships. Fiscal measures put in place to keep economies afloat during the pandemic and to alleviate its economic consequences resulted in rising debt burdens, making the need for appropriate recovery strategies and access to development finance even more pressing at this time. Long-standing problems are also heightened by climate change, which has meant escalating costs from the impacts of natural disasters and a greater emphasis on the need for disaster risk management. The increase in food and commodity prices seen in 2022, following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, has further exposed the vulnerability of these import dependent countries.

During the pandemic, African countries reported a significant reduction in public and private financing in the forest sector and as a result a rational pathway for recovery of the forest sectors of

Africa is an obvious necessity. Further, COVID-19 adversely impacted on foreign direct investment (FDI) flows to Africa and the rest of the world. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD, 2020) predicted that FDI flows to Africa contracted by 25% to 40% in 2020.

It is in this context that the Department of Economic and social Affairs (DESA) on-going work through the GFFFN supports developing countries in developing national forest financing strategies (NFFS). Further, DESA has developed the current Development Account 15th Tranche project ***“Integrating and Coherent National Recovery Strategies Promoting Social Inclusion, Macroeconomic Stability, effective Governance and protection of the Environment for selected Small Island Developing States(SIDS)”*** that is designed to strengthen the capacity of selected small island developing countries to develop integrated and coherent national strategies to recover and rebuild better from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The project aims to build the capacity of SIDS such as Guinea-Bissau and Mauritius to develop national forest financing strategies and measures to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on forest cover, aspects of forest management, enhance the livelihoods of forest dependent people, address institutional capacity at national to regional levels, improve manufacturing and trade, employment, increase financial flows into the forest sector and encourage the adoption of forest certification and traceability of forest products. This also includes measures to address the impacts of the pandemic for accelerating socio-economic recovery and inclusive sustainable development will be incorporated into the design of new and/or updating the existing regional, sub-regional or national forest programmes/forest action plans.

The consultant has completed the following activities during his initial contract as part of the package to develop a national forest financing strategy (NFFFS) for Mauritius:

- (i) Produce and submit an inception report describing methodology and process to be used in undertaking the work and a detailed workplan
- (ii) Mission to Mauritius to conduct stakeholder consultation within the country, collecting initial views from key stakeholders on the challenges and opportunities in forest management in the country, priorities for the National Forest Financing Strategy (NFFS).

Task and activities:

The consultant will carry out the following tasks and activities to complete the assignment that started on 15 November 2024 to validate and finalize the NFFFS.

- i) In collaboration with the national project development team comprising a national consultant, country representatives, produce a national forest financing strategy for Mauritius and taking into account views of the Government of both countries and stakeholder consultation. The strategy should contain, inter alia, the following elements:
 - A mapping of financing resources available from all possible sources for SFM in both countries;
 - Key activities or measures that require financing in order for SFM to be implemented nationwide, with tentative costing for each activity;
 - A table matching the financing sources with the activities/measures mentioned above, using criteria that the consultant will identify; and

- A roadmap containing the activities and measures required to harness the necessary financing and allocate it where needed.
 - Measures to address the impacts of COVID-19 for accelerating socio-economic recovery and inclusive sustainable development in line with the “Guidelines to Address the Impacts of COVID-19 on SFM in Africa” adopted in 2021.
- ii) As part of the preparation of the and NFFS, undertake multi-stakeholder consultations especially with other relevant ministries and agencies, the potential accredited entities, implementing agency/entity and other stakeholders, especially NGOs, local authorities, communities. Potential links with key UNFF partners such as FAO, UNEP, UNDP and the World Bank as well as on-going forest management programmes and projects should be given priority. Such consultations include participating actively in UNFF workshops held as part of this project in both countries.
 - iii) Assist UNFFS in conducting the capacity building and validation workshops for the national forest financing strategy. This includes delivering training presentations on national forest financing strategy development at the capacity building workshop.

1. Duration of Contract

The duration of the contract is 45 working days between 15 November – 30 August 2025.

2. Duty Station

The international consultant will work remotely for most of the contract and remain available for regular supervisory and review teleconferences.

3. Travel

The consultant will undertake two trips travel to Mauritius for a total of 10 days. Travel costs will be obligated separately upon approval of each trip.

- The first trip is to conduct stakeholder consultation within the country. This will also include participation in the capacity building workshop on National Forest Financing Strategy development focusing on fine-tuning the NFFS and consulting with the national team and development partners on the feasibility of the proposed National Forest Financing Strategy.
- The second trip will be to participate in the NFFS validation workshop where the second draft of the national forest financing strategy will be shared with a wider range of stakeholders to discuss and validate the national forest financing strategy.

4. Expected Outputs and Delivery Dates

The consultant shall work along the following deadlines:

1. Final national forest financing strategy incorporating comments from UNFFS by 30 June 2025
2. Validation workshop by 30 August 2025

5. Fee and Payment Schedule

The fee of US\$17,500 will be payable in 2 installments with the first payment (\$7,500) upon production of a first draft the national forest financing strategies for Mauritius by 30 June 2025; and the final payment payment (\$10,000) upon successful completion and approval of all final deliverables by 30 August 2025.

6. Performance Indicators

- Quality and comprehensive national forest financing strategy based on the country's national priorities.
- Successful execution of the capacity building and validation workshops

7. Competencies and Qualifications

The consultant shall have the following competencies and qualifications:

- At least 10 years' experience in natural resources management, forest financing and forest policy
 - Proven experience in development and formulation of medium to full size projects for submission to the multilateral fund for financing;
 - Have demonstrated technical/scientific expertise relating to forest management, international cooperation, biodiversity conservation the role of forests in climate change mitigation and adaptation, community-based forest management, forest financing, payment for environmental services, emerging carbon markets/emissions trading systems including REDD+,
 - Excellent policy analytical, technical, managerial and drafting/writing skills;
 - Possess thorough knowledge on the Rio Conventions and protocols, and knowledge of the UN Forest Instrument;
 - Have an advanced university degree in forest management, economics, social, environmental studies, natural sciences, development studies, or any related discipline;
3. Ability to prepare and present reports in English.
 4. Be free from any interest that might cause him/her to act in other than an impartial and non-discriminatory manner.

8. Supervision

The consultant will work under the direct supervision of Ms. Njeri Kariuki and Mr. Shyam Paudel under the overall guidance of the Director, Ms. Juliette Biao Koudenoukpo and Deputy Director, Minoru Takada.

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