

Evaluation and Revision of National Community Forestry Strategy, 2010

Terms of Reference (TOR)

1. Background

Forest management in Bhutan has gone through substantial changes in the last 60 years, with one of the major changes being the emergence of Community Forestry (CF) as a widely accepted and mainstream forest management modality. A National Strategy for Community Forestry (NSCF) was developed in 2009 and endorsed in 2010 at a time of rapidly changing political events in Bhutan. Democratization and decentralization were key themes, and these were perceived to have potential impact on planning and implementation of forest management in the years ahead. One of the underlying articles of faith of Community Forestry is that human well-being will be enhanced, and in the Bhutanese context this will contribute to Gross National Happiness. CF was seen as a practical example of promoting and practising good governance at the community level and contributing directly to poverty reduction.

There were about 200 CFs established and handed over to Community Forest Management Groups (CFMGs) at the time the NSCF was endorsed in 2010, and that number has now increased to more than 750. The 2010 NSCF outlined nine strategies that emphasised: the importance of an enabling regulatory framework; managing CFs sustainably; generating income from goods and services; contributing to poverty reduction; applying good governance; building capacity at all levels; developing CF based on good science and monitoring and evaluation.

The CF programme has progressed well in recent years. Many CFs have increased the quality of their forest resource base and demonstrated the potential to generate income through the sale of some of the products. However, there is huge potential that CF can develop community based enterprise, which can generate substantial income. Currently, there are more than 750 CFs established and handed over to more than 31,000 Community Forest Management Group (CFMG) members (Households), managing more than 85,000 hectares of forest land.

Substantial changes have taken place in the policy and social environment in Bhutan in the eight years since the NSCF was endorsed. Of particular note is the emergence of climate change as a major policy issue in the country. It is perceived that Community Forestry has the potential to contribute to carbon sequestration by implementing relevant adaptation and mitigation strategies. In addition, rural un-employment and under-employment (particularly affecting rural youths) has become an important social issue. Changes were also made to the Forest and Nature Conservation Rules and Regulation in 2017. Among other things, these changes give rights to CFMGs: over sand and boulders in their CFs; to establish CF networks and associations and to develop modalities for the payment for environmental services (PES).

As a result of the changes noted above, it is timely to reflect on the achievements that have been realised in the implementation of CF to date, and identify changes to the National Strategy that more accurately reflect the contemporary political, policy and social context.

2. Approach of the consultancy

The work will follow a two-step process. The Consultant will first prepare an evaluation report evaluating the implementation of the 2010 NSCF. This report will clearly and succinctly highlight key issues and make recommendations aimed at making the National CF Strategy more

relevant in today's political, policy and social context. This will be followed by the development of a new National Strategy document. The specific tasks of the consultancy are outlined below.

3. Objectives

Objective 1: Evaluate the implementation of the NSCF 2010 and prepare an evaluation report. The report should clearly identify key issues and conclude by making specific recommendations aimed at ensuring that the new Strategy reflects today's policy and social setting.

Objective 2: Revise the NSCF 2010 and produce a new National Strategy for Community Forestry. The revised strategy should (i) take into account lessons learned from implementation experience to date and (ii) reflect emerging policy and social issues and opportunities. Specifically, it should also provide strategies to ensure that the CF programme contributes to sustainable management of forest resources as well as social and economic development of the communities in the context of Climate Change.

4. Specific Tasks

4.1 Evaluation of National Strategy for Community Forestry, 2010

Task 1: Review the existing documents related to community forestry in the country. The SFED will make documents available to the Consultant.

Task 2: Evaluate the implementation of the NSCF 2010, particularly in the context of the nine strategies, and identify gaps and shortfalls. This task may need field visits and interaction with stakeholders, field staff of forestry offices, community forest management and non-wood forest management group members (taking into account different ages of the groups and hence experience and maturity).

Task 3: Prepare a preliminary draft evaluation report and present it to relevant stakeholders in workshops to validate overall information, with a particular focus on the key issues and recommendations which will need to be endorsed for incorporation into the revised CF strategy. The Social Forestry and Extension Division will organize the workshops.

4.2 Revision of National Strategy for Community Forestry

Task 1: Analyze the existing community forest management situation in Bhutan. In particular, identify the key issues associated with the contemporary political, policy and social context within which CF operates, and which should be reflected in the Revised National Strategy. Included in these issues are opportunities for the generation of youth employment in rural areas, nature-based community business, and the way in which adaptation to and mitigation of Climate Change can be incorporated into CF management.

Task 2: Consult and have meetings with relevant CF stakeholders and visit community forests and CFMG members (if necessary). If additional information and perspectives are required, conduct focus group stakeholder meetings (organized with the assistance of SFED).

Task 3: Prepare a draft National Strategy for Community Forestry for Bhutan that reflects the contemporary political, policy and social context and present it to stakeholders. SFED will organize the workshop in close consultation with the Consultant. The Consultant will facilitate the workshop.

Task 4: Finalize the strategy incorporating input from the workshop in Task 3, and prepare a presentation for debriefing to be organized by the SFED in collaboration with the Watershed Management Division.

5. Deliverables

The Consultant shall provide the following deliverables:

1. Final Evaluation report of National Strategy for Community Forestry in Bhutan, 2010 including identification of key issues and recommendations that need to be included in the revised strategy.
2. Final document of National Strategy for Community Forestry in Bhutan.

6. Eligibility criteria or EOI Evaluation criteria.

The EOI will be evaluated and shortlisted based on following criteria:

- Must have Master Degree in Forestry or environment
- Length of experiences on the consulting in the field particularly on Participatory Forest Management
- Experiences on Community forest in relation to Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) and Climate Change.
- Experiences of working with government institutions in Bhutan.
- Good knowledge on networking, governance, equity and gender
- Knowledge on local language

Selection of firm or individual Consultant will be done by the committee and will be evaluated based on following criteria mentioned above.

6. Selection Process:

- Social Forestry and Extension Division (SFED) calls for Expression of Interest (EOI) for two tasks together since evaluation is required to revise the national community forestry strategy. Eligible Bhutanese individuals are invited to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) with technical and financial proposals for both.
- Consultants meeting the required criteria will be evaluated by the committee. Individual selected to be employed by the Borrower shall be the most experienced and best qualified, and shall be fully capable of carrying out the assignment. The Borrower shall negotiate a contract with the selected individual consultant, or the firm as the case may be, after reaching agreement on satisfactory terms and conditions of the contract, including reasonable fees and other.
- If the negotiation on financial proposal fail with the first selected consultant, the next in line will be called for negotiations.

- The proposal will have to respond to the ToR and be consistent with the procedures set out in the World Bank's Consultant Guidelines¹.

7. Duration, Reporting and Payment

The duration of work is divided into two parts as per the tasks mentioned above but one contract will be signed since both the tasks are closely linked to each other and related.

1. Evaluation of National Community Strategy 2010

The work will have to be completed within 20 days including field visits.

- Upon signature of contracts: 10% of total amount quoted for this task will be released to the firm
- Upon submission and acceptance of the evaluation report: 40% of total amount will be released to the firm
- Upon acceptance/approval of final report by SFED: 50% of remaining amount will be released to the individuals or firm
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2. Revision of National Community Strategy 2010

The work will have to be completed within 45 days. The payment schedule is as follows:

- Upon signature of contracts: 10% of total amount quoted for this task will be released to the firm
- Upon submission of a first draft of evaluation report: 40% of total quoted amount will be released to the firm
- Upon approval of final report by SFED: 50% of remaining quoted amount will be released to the individual or firm

Reporting

The Consultant will report regularly to the Chief Forestry Officer or assigned officer of Social Forestry and Extension Division to update progress, summarize efforts underway to address the above scope of work, outline problems and constraints encountered.

The selected individual or firm will be work closely with SFED counter part and staff including field staff. The SFED will depute a full time counterpart to the Consultant.

7. Other Considerations

The work shall link with non-wood forest product component and network formation of community forestry to complement each other. The Consultant shall facilitate the workshops and meetings directly related to evaluation and revision of national strategy for community forestry.

The final document should be acceptable to SFED, DoFPS
