Request for Proposals

Title: VCS and CCBS Validation/Verification Services
RFP No: RFP-CM_FY2301
Date of Issuance: 06 October 2022

1. Background

Conservation International (CI) is a US non-profit, tax-exempt, private organization that works to spotlight and secure the critical benefits that nature provides to humanity. Building upon a strong foundation of science, partnership, and field demonstration, CI empowers societies to responsibly and sustainably care for nature, our global biodiversity, for the well-being of humanity. We imagine a healthy, prosperous world in which societies are forever committed to caring for and valuing nature, for the long-term benefit of people and all life on Earth.

Conservation International (CI) and its partner, the Royal Government of Cambodia’s Ministry of the Environment (MOE), would like to register their joint forest protection activities in the Central Cardamoms Mountain National Park (CCMNP) and adjacent Biodiversity Conservation Corridor as a Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD+) project under the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) and Climate, Community, and Biodiversity (CCB) Standard. The project will have a start date of January 1, 2021 and will cover approximately 469,000 hectares and involve 24 villages as stakeholders. It is an Avoided Unplanned Deforestation (AUD) project and will utilize the VCS REDD Methodology v6.0 (VM0007). It will utilize data from a forest carbon inventory consisting of ~90 permanent, nested fixed radius plots that were completed in March through July 2022. See Exhibit A-1 for maps of plot locations. The radius of the largest nested plot was 20 meters. An average of ~30 trees were recorded in each sample unit of three nested plots. Spatial modeling will be performed using IDRISI Land Use Modeler.

2. Project Overview

Conservation International seeks to engage a qualified third-party auditor to perform validation and the 1st verification services. The ultimate goal is to assess the conformance of the Central Cardamoms REDD+ Project documentation against the VCS Requirement v4.0 for REDD - Avoided Unplanned Deforestation (scope 14) and based on VM0007 v6.0 methodology) as well as independently assess the continued conformance of the project activities against the Project Design Document and determine if the project has delivered any climate, community and biodiversity benefits according to the CCBS Requirements 2nd Edition (2008), covering the reporting period of January 2021 to December 2022. Currently, the plan is for the Project Description and Monitoring Report to be delivered in February/March 2022.

3. Terms of Reference, Deliverables and Deliverables Schedule
The scope of services includes the following tasks:

- Review the Project Document, Monitoring Report and any other supporting documents
- Assess and if applicable verify in the field the comments submitted to Verra during the public comment period
- Assess the GHG emissions reductions and removals that have occurred as result of the project during the monitoring period, in accordance with the VCS rules including:
  - Buffer discount due to the risk of non-permanence
  - Leakage caused by the project due to activity shifting
  - Ex-ante GHG emissions reductions calculations (applicable to validation only)
- Perform a field visit by May 2023 to interview stakeholders and check for evidence of conformances (reports, documents, photos, etc.), and to validate project boundaries, emissions reductions and compliance with VM0007.
  - Note that if travel restrictions and risk of contamination to COVID-19 remains high, the field visit might be replaced by a virtual visit (e.g. conference calls with local partners and beneficiaries) as long as VVB ensures a reasonable level of assurance as per Section 4.1.2 of the VCS Standard, v4.0.

Key deliverables are listed below. It is recognized that interim deliverables might also be required:

- Detailed project plan identifying tasks, interdependencies, and milestones/deliverables to complete project validation and verification by March, 2023
- List of non-conformities (if applicable) to be addressed by the project
- Joint VCS-CCBS Validation draft and final reports
- Joint VCS 0CCBS Verification draft and final reports
- VCS Validation Statement
- VCS and CCBS Verification Representation

4. Submission Details
   a. Deadline. Proposals must be received no later than 23rd October 2022 23:59 ITC. Late submissions will not be accepted. Proposals must be submitted via email to info-cicambodia@conservation.org. All proposals are to be submitted following the guidelines listed in this RFP.
   b. Validity of bid. 120 days from the submission deadline
   c. Clarifications. Questions may be submitted to jfrechette@conservation.org by the specified date and time in the timeline below. The subject of the email must contain the RFP number and title of the RFP. CI will respond in writing to submitted clarifications by the date specified in the timeline below. Responses to questions that may be of common interest to all bidders will be posted to the CI website and/or communicated via email.
   d. Amendments. At any time prior to the deadline for submission of proposals, CI may, for any reason, modify the RFP documents by amendment which will be posted to the CI website and/or communicated via email.
5. Minimum Requirements

This consultancy is open to firms that meet the following requirements:

- Accredited by competent bodies to perform validation and verification of VCS and CCB Standards
- Lead verifier(s) with expertise in forestry, environmental science, GIS/spatial modeling and remote sensing, carbon accounting, statistics, conservation/biodiversity, social sciences, and community safeguards.
- Proven track record of successfully validating and verifying REDD+ projects under the VCS and CCB Standards
- Prior experience in assessing projects that applied the VM0007 methodology
- Demonstrated professional-level fluency in both oral and written English is required.
- Ability to perform the field visit and interviews in the local language.

6. Proposal Documents to Include

a. Signed cover page on bidder's letterhead with the bidder’s contact information.
b. Signed Representation of Transparency, Integrity, Environmental and Social Responsibility (Attachment 1)
c. Technical Proposal.
   i. Corporate Capabilities, Experience, Past Performance, and 3 client references. Please include descriptions of similar projects or assignments and at least three client references.
   ii. Qualifications of Key Personnel. Please attach CVs that demonstrate how the team proposed meets the minimum requirements listed in section 5 (Minimum Requirements).
   iii. Technical Approach, Methodology and Detailed Work Plan. The Technical Proposal should describe in detail how the bidder intends to carry out the requirements described in the Terms of Reference in Section 3.
d. Financial Proposal. Offerors shall use the cost proposal template (Attachment 3).

7. Evaluation Criteria

In evaluating proposals, CI will seek the best value for money considering the merits of the technical and costs proposals. Proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria:
### Evaluation Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Criteria</th>
<th>Score (out of 100)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qualification of Lead verifier and team composition (30 points)</td>
<td>30 Max points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experience with similar assignments (30 points)</td>
<td>30 Max points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposal, timeline, and cost (40 points)</td>
<td>40 Max points</td>
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8. **Proposal Timeline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RFP Issued</td>
<td>6 October 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarifications submitted to CI</td>
<td>12 October 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarifications provided to known bidders</td>
<td>17 October 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete proposals due to CI</td>
<td>23 October 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final selection</td>
<td>7 November 2022</td>
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</table>

9. **Resulting Award** CI anticipates entering into an agreement with the selected bidder by **22 November 2022**. Any resulting agreement will be subject to the terms and conditions of CI's Services Agreement. A model form of agreement can be provided upon request.

This RFP does not obligate CI to execute a contract, nor does it commit CI to pay any costs incurred in the preparation or submission of the proposals. Furthermore, CI reserves the right to reject any and all offers, if such action is considered to be in the best interest of CI. CI will, in its sole discretion, select the winning proposal and is not obligated to share individual evaluation results.

10. **Confidentiality** All proprietary information provided by the bidder shall be treated as confidential and will not be shared with potential or actual applicants during the solicitation process. This includes but is not limited to price quotations, cost proposals and technical proposals. CI may, but is not obliged to, post procurement awards on its public website after the solicitation process has concluded, and the contract has been awarded. CI’s evaluation results are confidential and applicant scoring will not be shared among bidders.

11. **Code of Ethics** All Offerors are expected to exercise the highest standards of conduct in preparing, submitting and if selected, eventually carrying out the specified work in accordance with CI’s Code of Ethics. Conservation International’s reputation derives from our commitment to our values: Integrity, Respect, Courage, Optimism, Passion and Teamwork. CI’s Code of Ethics (the “Code”) provides guidance to CI employees, service providers, experts, interns, and volunteers in living CI’s core values, and outlines minimum standards for ethical conduct which all parties must adhere to. Any violation of the Code of Ethics, as well as concerns regarding the integrity of the procurement process and documents should be reported to CI via its Ethics Hotline at [www.ci.ethicspoint.com](http://www.ci.ethicspoint.com).

12. **Attachments:**
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CI relies on the personal integrity, good judgment and common sense of all third parties acting on behalf, or providing services to the organization, to deal with issues not expressly addressed by the Code or as noted below.

I. **With respect to CI’s Code of Ethics, we certify:**
   a. We understand and accept that CI, its contractual partners, grantees and other parties with whom we work are expected to commit to the highest standards of Transparency, Fairness, and Integrity in procurement.

II. **With respect to social and environmental standards, we certify:**
   a. We are committed to high standards of ethics and integrity and compliance with all applicable laws across our operations, including prohibition of actions that facilitate trafficking in persons, child labor, forced labor, sexual abuse, exploitation or harassment. We respect internationally proclaimed human rights and take no action that contributes to the infringement of human rights. We protect those who are most vulnerable to infringements of their rights and the ecosystems that sustain them.

   b. We fully respect and enforce the environmental and social standards recognized by the international community, including the fundamental conventions of International Labour Organization (ILO) and international conventions for the protection of the environment, in line with the laws and regulations applicable to the country where the contract is to be performed.

III. **With respect to our eligibility and professional conduct, we certify:**
a. We are not and none of our affiliates [members, employees, contractors, subcontractors, and consultants] are in a state of bankruptcy, liquidation, legal settlement, termination of activity, or guilty of grave professional misconduct as determined by a regulatory body responsible for licensing and/or regulating the offeror's business

b. We have not and will not engage in criminal or fraudulent acts. By a final judgment, we were not convicted in the last five years for offenses such as fraud or corruption, money laundering or professional misconduct.

c. We are/were not involved in writing or recommending the terms of reference for this solicitation document.

d. We have not engaged in any collusion or price fixing with other offerors.

e. We have not made promises, offers, or grants, directly or indirectly to any CI employees involved in this procurement, or to any government official in relation to the contract to be performed, with the intention of unduly influencing a decision or receiving an improper advantage.

f. We have taken no action nor will we take any action to limit or restrict access of other companies, organizations or individuals to participate in the competitive bidding process launched by CI.

g. We have fulfilled our obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country where the contract is to be performed.

h. We have not provided, and will take all reasonable steps to ensure that we do not and will not knowingly provide, material support or resources to any individual or entity that commits, attempts to commit, advocates, facilitates, or participates in terrorist acts, or has committed, attempted to commit, facilitate, or participated in terrorist acts, and we are compliant with all applicable Counter-Terrorist Financing and Anti-Money Laundering laws (including USA Patriot Act and U.S. Executive Order 13224).

i. We certify that neither we nor our directors, officers, key employees or beneficial owners are included in any list of financial or economic sanctions, debarment or suspension adopted by the United States, United Nations, the European Union, the World Bank, or General Services Administration’s List of Parties Excluded from Federal Procurement or Non-procurement programs in accordance with E.O.s 12549 and 12689, "Debarment and Suspension".

Name: ____________________________________________

Signature: __________________________________________

Title: ______________________________________________

Date: _______________________________________________
Attachment 2: Terms of Reference

Scope of Services

Conservation International seeks to engage a qualified third-party auditor to perform validation and the 1st verification services. The ultimate goal is to assess the conformance of the Central Cardamoms REDD+ Project documentation against the VCS Requirement v4.0 for REDD - Avoided Unplanned Deforestation (scope 14) and based on VM0007 v6.0 methodology) as well as independently assess the continued conformance of the project activities against the Project Design Document and determine if the project has delivered ne climate, community and biodiversity benefits according to the CCBS Requirements 2nd Edition (2008), covering the reporting period of January 2021 to December 2022. Currently, the plan is for the Project Description and Monitoring Report to be delivered in February/March 2022.

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Deliverables

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Attachment 3: Cost Proposal Template

The cost proposal must be all-inclusive of profit, fees or taxes. Additional costs cannot be included after award, and revisions to proposed costs may not be made after submission unless expressly requested by CI should the offerors proposal be accepted. Nevertheless, for the purpose of the proposal, Offerors must provide a detailed budget showing major expense line items. Offers must show unit prices, quantities, and total price. All items, services, etc. must be clearly labeled and included in the total offered price. All cost information must be expressed in USD.

If selected, Offeror shall use its best efforts to minimize the financing of any taxes on goods and services, or the importation, manufacture, procurement or supply thereof. If Offeror is eligible to apply for refunds on taxes paid, Offeror shall do so. Any tax savings should be reflected in the total cost.

Cost Breakdown by Deliverable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deliverable</th>
<th>Price (Lump Sum, All Inclusive)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Detailed project plan identifying tasks, interdependencies, and milestones/ deliverables to complete project validation and verification by March, 2023</td>
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Cost Breakdown by Cost Component (example only)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Unit of measure (day, month etc)</th>
<th>Total period of engagement</th>
<th>Unit cost/rate</th>
<th>Total Cost for the Period</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consultant 1</td>
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<td>Consultant 2</td>
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<td>Sub-total Personnel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Travel Costs (if applicable)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other related Costs (please specify)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Cost of Financial Proposal</td>
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