

Project Evaluation Series

**Evaluation of the project “Strengthening
National Forest Inventory and Satellite
Land Monitoring System in support of
REDD+ in Bangladesh”**

Project code: GCP/BGD/058/USA

Annex 1. Terms of reference

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1. Background and context of the project

1. Forest resources in Bangladesh play an important role in country's physical and socio-economic development and maintenance of environmental balance and sustainable land-based production system. The total area of forest land is 2.53 million hectares representing about 17.1 percent of the country's area. Bangladesh Forest Department manages 1.53 million hectares of forest land. These forests are under tremendous pressure. As part of its REDD-readiness activities, Bangladesh became a partner country of the UN-REDD Programme in 2010.
2. Large information gaps about forests in Bangladesh limit the country's ability to monitor, conserve and manage its forest resources and participate in climate change mitigation through the UNFCCC REDD+ mechanism. To address these gaps, FAO and the Bangladesh Forest Department have implemented the Bangladesh Forest Inventory (BFI) and Bangladesh Forest Information System, providing critical information about land cover and forest resources. Additionally, integrated within the BFI is a socioeconomic survey that informs national level reports to international conventions. Together, these efforts provide rich and robust datasets about forest cover extent and carbon stocks, and the economic value of forests as an ecosystem service, among other important forest characteristics.
3. The Strengthening National Forest Inventory and Satellite Land Monitoring System in support of REDD+ in Bangladesh (GCP/BGD/058/USA) project, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) with a total budget of USD 6 456 087, started in Jan 2015 and expected to close on 30 April 2019. The outcome of the project is the strengthening of the National Forest Inventory (NFI) and Satellite Land Monitoring System (SLMS) in support of REDD+ in Bangladesh. Project sustainability will be addressed through the strengthening of technical capacities and the establishment of an appropriate institutional framework.
4. It is expected that when completed, the newly developed technical capacity, institutional framework, and datasets, will be adopted by the Bangladesh Forest Department. Thus, Bangladesh will be much better equipped to develop the policies necessary for addressing climate change impacts and sustainable forest management. The key government counterpart is the Bangladesh Forest Department under the Ministry of Environment and Forest. The implementing partners: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Bangladesh National Herbarium, Bangladesh Society of Geoinformatics, Bangladesh Space Research and Remote Sensing Organization, Bangladesh Computer Council, Centre for Environmental and Geographic Information Services, Soil Resource Development Institute, Shahjalal University of Science & Technology, Khulna University, Chittagong University and Dhaka University.
5. The expected outcome was to the strengthening of the National Forest Inventory and Satellite Land Monitoring System in support of REDD+ in Bangladesh. This contributes to both the REDD+ context, the production of data required for other international agreements, and support to national forest policy and land management.
6. The project has the following objectives:
 - i. Establish broad consensus at the national level on the process and approach to NFI and SLMS in Bangladesh, taking into account national users' information requirements for planning and sustainable management of the forestry resources and country's obligations of reporting to the international processes including greenhouse gas (GHG) reporting and expected REDD+.

- ii. Strengthen the capability of Bangladesh Forest Department to collect, analyse, update and manage the needed information on forests and trees outside forests (TOF) for planning and sustainable management of the forestry resources and REDD+ Monitoring Reporting and Verification.
- iii. Develop a national database and information system on forests and TOF.
- iv. Prepare national maps of forests and land uses based on harmonized classification and forest related definitions.
- v. Undertake an NFI of the forest and TOF resources with the aim to create an information base according to national and international requirements and to set up a long term monitoring system of the resources.
- vi. Define long term satellite forest monitoring programme of the forestry resources, design multi- purpose forest inventory.
- vii. Develop tools and methods for integration of REDD+ Monitoring, Reporting and Verification to NFI and SLMS methodology.

7. The outputs of the project are:

- i. **Output 1:** General conditions to implement the NFI and SLMS reinforced
- ii. **Output 2:** NFI and SLMS strategy are reinforced
- iii. **Output 3:** NFI and SLMS implemented
- iv. **Output 4:** Value of forest ecosystem goods and services estimated

2. Evaluation purpose

8. This Final Evaluation serves a dual purpose of accountability and learning. The evaluation is expected to document lessons, identify good practices and challenges that can inform the design and implementation of follow-up projects.
9. Primary users of the evaluation report will be FAO, the donor, Bangladesh Forest Department under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, project implementing partners and international partners.

3. Evaluation scope

10. The final evaluation will be confined to the objectives and outputs of the project, covering all activities undertaken from 2015 to date.

4. Evaluation objective and key questions

11. The main objective of the evaluation will be to assess the extent to which the project enhanced the technical capacity, institutional framework, and datasets of the Bangladesh Forest Department under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change to collect, analyse, update and manage the needed information for the National Forest Inventory and Satellite Land Monitoring System in support of REDD+ in Bangladesh.
12. The evaluation will assess the projects' contribution to reinforcement of the national capacities (individual, institutional and enabling environment) in forest inventory and satellite monitoring.

4.1 Evaluation questions

13. The evaluation will seek to answer the following key questions:
 - i. Was the project design and approach the most appropriate to achieve project objectives?
 - ii. How will the NFI and SLMS enhance planning and sustainable management of forest resources in Bangladesh?
 - iii. Did the project foster collaboration (maintain active and engaged alliances) among key stakeholders working on forest management planning and REDD+?
 - iv. How successfully did the project institutionalize NFI and the SLMS and create a sense of ownership of the outputs of these processes.
 - v. To what extent did the project develop the professional, technical and management capacity of the national staff?
 - vi. To what extent did the project increase and/or improve the necessary data to meet the national and international requirements and to set up a long term monitoring system of the resources?
 - vii. To what extent did the products and processes influence forest policies, international reporting requirements, forest management planning and REDD+ needs?
14. The questions will be fine-tuned and further developed by the principal consultant after the inception phase.

5. Methodology

15. The evaluation will adhere to the UNEG Norms & Standards¹ and be in line with OED Manual and methodological guidelines and practices. It will adopt a consultative and transparent approach with internal and external stakeholders throughout the evaluation process. Triangulation of evidence and information gathered will underpin its validation and analysis and will support the conclusions and recommendations.
16. The Principal Consultant in consultation with the Evaluation Manager, will develop an evaluation matrix, undertake stakeholder analysis and submit an inception report articulating how the overall assessment will be undertaken. The matrix will list evaluation main and sub-questions, related methods and tools selected to collect data/evidence.
17. The evaluation process will include consulting the project team, members of the steering committee, practitioners, government agencies, universities and implementing partners, who participated in any of the project activities or were expected to be affected by the projects.
18. The evaluation framework is structured based on the three dimensions of FAO's Capacity Development Strategy, which are define as follows:
 - i. Individual Level: Changes in skills (technical and managerial), competencies, knowledge, attitudes, behaviors and values.
 - ii. Institutional level: Linked to the functioning and performance of organizations, including the: mandates, motivation and incentive systems (financial and non-financial), strategic leadership, inter/intra institutional linkages and collaborations, programme management, multi stakeholder processes, organizational priorities, processes, systems and procedures, human and financial resources, knowledge and information sharing, infrastructure. The learning change that occurs at individual level affects, from a results chain perspective, the changes at organizational level. An example can be the improvement in the use of databases or information systems for decision-making and partnership building effectiveness.
 - iii. Enabling environment level: The context in which individuals and organizations work, including: the institutional set-up of a country, implicit and explicit rules, power structures, legal, policy and political environment and frameworks and overall efficiency of the policy instruments. The initial enabling environment, overall plans and visions at country and sector level are the arena which determines the legitimacy of the project and provides the framework for its implementation. The project can, during its implementation, propose changes to the enabling environment by identifying new actions and regulations that can, e.g. facilitate the sustainability of the project. A clear example could be budget allocations.
19. In summary, the evaluation will use the following methods:
 - i. Desk review of documents project proposals, project progress reports, reports such as FAO country reports, progress reports, project publications and relevant national documents.

¹ <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/21>

- ii. Assess the post-training uptake of individuals trained by the project; assess the institutional set-up, including the databases, and budgets.
- iii. Key Informant Interviews with the project team, implementing partners, key stakeholders such as the government entities (including the Bangladesh Forest Department, the Ministry of Environment and Forests) the FAO Representative, international organizations, information firms, private sector, civil society, academia and research institutes.

6. Roles and responsibilities

20. The Office of Evaluation (OED), in particular the Evaluation Manager develops the first draft terms of reference (TORs) with inputs from PTF and using the guidance of this document.
21. The BH and LTO assists the Evaluation Manager in drafting the TORs, in the identification of the consultants and in the organization of the mission. The Evaluation Manager is responsible for the finalization of the TORs and of the identification of the evaluation team. The Evaluation Manager shall brief the evaluation team on the evaluation methodology and process and will review the final draft report for quality assurance purposes in terms of presentation, compliance with the TORs and timely delivery, quality, clarity and soundness of evidence provided and of the analysis supporting conclusions and recommendations in the evaluation report.
22. OED also has a responsibility in following up with the Budget Holder for the timely preparation of the Management response and the follow-up report to the Management response.
23. The Project Task Force (PTF), which includes the FAO Budget Holder, the Lead Technical Officer (LTO) and the team of the project to be evaluated, are responsible for initiating the evaluation process, providing inputs to the first version of the TORs, especially the description of the background and context chapter, and supporting the evaluation team during its work. They are required to participate in meetings with the evaluation team, as necessary, make available information and documentation, and comment on the terms of reference and report. Involvement of different members of the PTF will depend on respective roles and participation in the project. The Budget Holder is also responsible for leading and coordinating the preparation of the FAO Management response and the follow-up report to the evaluation, fully supported in this task by the LTO and others members of the PTF. OED guidelines for the Management response and the follow-up report provide necessary details on this process.
24. The evaluation team is responsible for further developing and applying the evaluation methodology, for conducting the evaluation, and for producing the evaluation report. The principal consultant will participate in briefing and debriefing meetings, discussions, field visits, and will contribute to the evaluation with written inputs for the final draft and final report. The evaluation team will agree on the outline of the report early in the evaluation process, based on the template provided by OED. The principal consultant will also be free to expand the scope, questions and issues listed above, as well as develop its own evaluation tools and framework, within time and resources available and based on discussions with the Evaluation Manager, consults the Budget Holder and PTF where necessary. An evaluation report is not subject to technical clearance by FAO although OED is responsible for quality assurance of all evaluation reports.
25. The OED Evaluation Manager guides and coordinates the principal consultant specific work, discusses his findings, conclusions and recommendations and prepares the final draft and the final report.

7. Evaluation team composition and profile

26. The evaluation will be undertaken by one principal consultant - forestry expert, who will work in collaboration with the Evaluation Manager. The expert will have had no previous direct involvement in the formulation, implementation or backstopping of the initiative. The principal consultant will have expertise in:
- i. evaluation experience of global and complex projects;
 - ii. NFI and SLMS;
 - iii. forestry monitoring, reporting and verification; and
 - iv. awareness raising and capacity development.

8. Evaluation products (deliverables)

27. The principal consultant will prepare and submit to OED: i) questionnaire development and stakeholder analysis; ii) a first draft; iii) a final draft evaluation report, and iv) the supporting evidence to the evaluation report.
28. The first draft evaluation report: a clear, concise (30-40 pages excluding appendices and annexes), professionally-written and high-quality draft evaluation report is expected. It should be written in English, and composed in accordance with the FAO Style of writing. For reference, samples of FAO evaluation reports can also be accessed at <http://www.fao.org/evaluation/library/>. The report will be quality checked by OED, the project team and key stakeholders in the evaluation will also provide comments.
29. The final draft evaluation report: should include an executive summary and illustrate the evidence found that responds to the evaluation questions listed in the TORs. The report should incorporate comments from OED and other stakeholders. The report will be prepared in English, with numbered paragraphs, following the OED template for report writing. Supporting data and analysis should be annexed to the report when considered important.

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