

Common Fund for Commodities

Invitation to Tender: Request for Expression of Interest & Terms of Reference

Consultancy – Local Project
Manager to support CFC
programming in the Congo
Basin region (based in Kinshasa)

Date: 19 December 2025

Tendering procedure: Direct Award

This tender is issued by the Common Fund for Commodities

Preface

This tender package and enclosed Terms of Reference (ToR) have been prepared by the Common Fund for Commodities.

1. LETTER OF INVITATION

Project: Invitation to tender: Consultancy - Local Project Manager to support CFC programming in the Congo Basin region (based in Kinshasa)

Issued by:

Common Fund for Commodities
Rietlandpark 301
1019 DW Amsterdam
The Netherlands

19 December 2025

Dear Ms./Mr.:

1. The Common Fund for Commodities (CFC) is scaling up its activities in the Congo Basin region, with a particular focus on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Kinshasa). This expansion includes private sector-oriented investment programmes, Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) initiatives, and technical assistance projects aimed at promoting sustainable and inclusive development.
2. The CFC now invites proposals to ensure the effective operationalization of these initiatives. More details on the requested Services are provided in the Terms of Reference herewith attached.
3. A consultant will be selected under a direct award selection procedure. The Services will be tendered in a two-step process, first step being the submission of Expressions of Interest followed by a shortlisting procedure, after which shortlisted candidates will be invited to submit their full proposal. Bidder profiles and proposals will be reviewed and assessed on receipt following predefined evaluation criteria.

The deadline for submission of Expression of Interest: ~~09 January 2026 at 17:00 (CET)~~ extended to 31 January 2026 at 17:00 (CET). Submissions are assessed on a rolling basis and early submissions are encouraged.

Kind regards,

Jos de Best
External Funds Programme Coordinator

2. Terms of Reference

1. BACKGROUND

Common Fund for Commodities

The Common Fund for Commodities (CFC) is an intergovernmental financial institution established within the framework of the United Nations. The CFC has 101 Member States and nine Institutional Members. Since its establishment in 1989, the CFC finances and implements development projects, originally multi-country grant-based projects in collaboration with international commodity bodies. Over the years, the CFC has evolved from implementing primarily grant-based projects to offering tailored loan finance solutions and technical assistance for private agribusiness SMEs that create and leverage impact. Today, the CFC has more than 30 years of experience in agri-commodity value chains as a technical assistance provider and as investor in SMEs in agricultural and forestry targeted impact funds.

Commodity value chains in the Congo Basin region

Rainforests play a crucial role in mitigating two of the most pressing challenges of our time: climate change and biodiversity loss. Despite covering only 6% of the Earth's surface, these ecosystems have the capacity to absorb and store vast amounts of carbon and support more than 50% of terrestrial and coastal biodiversity. No other ecosystem possesses the same potential to address the unfolding climate and biodiversity crises.

However, the Congo Basin rainforest still faces a range of threats. Since 2001, and despite significant conservation efforts, the region has lost over 6 million hectares of primary rainforest.¹ This alarming trend shows no signs of abating and requires immediate attention and action. Deforestation and forest degradation in the Congo Basin, like in other parts of the world, have complex causes. Next to mining concessions, infrastructure projects, and fuelwood collection, agricultural expansion is one of the main leading drivers of deforestation.

The expansion of agriculture is one of the engines of economic development in the region. However, the negative externalities from deforestation-driven agriculture's adverse impact on natural forest assets' ability to deliver public good ecosystem services, including carbon sequestration, are not factored into the decision-making of actors in conventional agricultural value chains. The result is a disincentive to sustainable production. Without sufficient market incentives for loggers, agro-industrial players and smallholder farmers to adopt sustainable or regenerative practices and to create deforestation-free value chains, the problem is expected to worsen.

Shifting cultivation (short-cycle slash-and-burn, rotational farming) by smallholder farmers remains the main driver of deforestation in the Congo Basin. As these farmers have a low adoption rate of good agricultural practices, productivity remains low which leads to even more deforestation. Smallholder farmers play a key role in securing food security (maize, cassava) and in driving the economic potential of cash crops (cocoa, coffee, palm oil, soy). Providing smallholder farmers with alternative approaches for sustainable production is essential in establishing deforestation-free value

¹ State of the World's Forests (FAO, 2020)

chains. These interventions can be coupled with the development of sustainable agro-industrial plantations and processing facilities (palm oil, rubber, timber).

A comprehensive shift in perspective and practice within the agricultural value chains necessitates adopting a more holistic landscape approach that considers the environmental and social impacts of agricultural activities alongside economic gains. Implementing sustainable land-use practices, such as agroforestry systems, can help mitigate the adverse effects of deforestation and promote biodiversity conservation. As the Congo Basin rainforest crosses borders, and regional trade drives production and consumption, a regional approach is essential.

Efforts to combat deforestation in the Congo Basin have made progress in various areas, such as capacity development in public institutions, raising awareness, policy strengthening, forest management, rural development, research, and civil society support. However, insufficient expertise to implement innovative business models and the lack of access to affordable finance to invest in transformative plans often undermine the effectiveness of these regular grant interventions, while unlocking investments is essential.

CFC initiatives in the Congo Basin region

CFC is increasing its exposure and strategic engagement in the Congo Basin region, recognizing the region's global importance for climate stability, biodiversity conservation and sustainable commodity value chains. Building on existing partnerships and leveraging its own investment vehicles, CFC is scaling up its activities to support sustainable land use, climate-smart agriculture and inclusive private sector development.

In this context, CFC is in the process of establishing and operationalizing a set of complementary mandates. These include:

- The establishment of a Congo Basin Sustainable Land-Use Facility providing debt financing instruments targeted at smaller SMEs, leveraging CFC's growing deal flow in the region.
- The operationalization of Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) projects, designed to reward measurable environmental and social outcomes linked to sustainable land-use practices.
- The operationalization of the Agricultural Commodity Transformation (ACT) Fund, a blended finance impact investment fund managed by CFC, aimed at supporting more mature agri-SMEs.

To support the design, operationalization and alignment of these parallel initiatives, CFC is seeking to engage a consultant with strong expertise in sustainable finance, land-use and investment mechanisms in the Congo Basin context for programme preparation, roll-out, and implementation.

2. OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of the assignment is to support the CFC with targeted technical and strategic support to launch and operationalize its emerging initiatives in the Congo Basin region.

3. SCOPE OF WORK AND DELIVERABLES

To meet the above-mentioned objective, a suitable candidate will be contracted on a part-time consultancy basis.

The consultant is expected to perform the following activities:

- Support the launch and early implementation of payments for ecosystem services programmes in the Kinshasa Basin area, in coordination with relevant partners and stakeholders.
- Undertake regular field missions, including to the Mai-Ndombe and Kwango regions, as well as other locations in the Congo Basin region, and periodic missions to CFC headquarters (Amsterdam), to ensure close operational follow-up and alignment.
- Develop, maintain and strengthen relationships with key stakeholders in Kinshasa and in the region, including public sector counterparts at ministerial level and relevant agencies, as well as private sector actors and development partners.
- Support the organization and facilitation of steering committee meetings, delegation visits and other events, particularly those linked to the launch of programmes, investment vehicles or new initiatives.
- Support due diligence processes and the assessment of potential private sector partners, including initial screening, risk identification and mitigation measures, in coordination with CFC teams.
- Monitor regulatory, policy and political developments relevant to CFC operations, and represent CFC in discussions with local and national authorities as appropriate.
- Perform other related tasks as required to support the effective establishment, coordination and scaling up of CFC's activities in the Congo Basin region.

In performing these activities, the consultant shall:

- Report regularly to CFC headquarters on progress, risks, opportunities and contextual developments, providing timely inputs to inform strategic and operational decision-making.
- Overall contribute to the smooth day-to-day coordination of CFC activities in the region, ensuring effective communication, follow-up and problem-solving across partners and counterparts.

4. IMPLEMENTATION & TIMELINE

The assignment is expected to commence in Q1 2026. The initial engagement will have a maximum duration of three months (main focus on preparing and launching programme activities), with the possibility and intent of extension into a longer-term assignment based on performance and evolving operational needs (main focus on implementing programme activities).

The consultant is expected to dedicate approximately 0.5–0.8 full-time equivalent (FTE) to this assignment.

The consultant will preferably be based in Kinshasa or be willing and able to relocate there for the duration of the assignment. The CFC cannot accommodate visa or work permit related aspects of the assignment, and the consultant shall therefore preferably already be in possession of relevant work permits and fulfil relevant visa requirements, where applicable.

The assignment requires travel to rural areas within the DRC, particularly the Mai-Ndombe and Kwango regions, as well as travel to other countries in the Congo Basin region.

5. TENDER PROCEDURE & EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

The rules of the present Tender are in accordance with the CFC Procurement Guidelines.

This assignment will be procured following a two-step process, with the first step being the submission of Expressions of Interest followed by a shortlisting procedure, after which the shortlisted candidates will be invited to submit their full proposal in the second step.

Interested consultants are invited to submit their **Expression of Interest (EoI)**, which shall contain:

- a) A brief comment on the assignment, ToR and scope of work (max. 1 page);
- b) Up to date Curriculum Vitae of the consultant outlining prior engagements in similar assignments that qualify consultant to implement the assignment;
- c) Indication of daily consultancy fees.

EoIs are to be submitted in English and shall be sent electronically to the following email addresses:

jos.debest@common-fund.org
peter.nielsen@common-fund.org

The deadline for receipt of Expressions of Interest is: ~~09 January 2026 at 17:00 (CET)~~ extended to 31 January 2026 at 17:00 (CET). Submissions are assessed on a rolling basis and early submissions are encouraged.

7. REQUIRED SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

The following guiding selection criteria will be applied in the assessment of the submitted EoIs:

- Documented extensive experience working in the Congo Basin region;
- Documented expertise and experience in structuring loan products, technical assistance projects, and performance-based financing mechanisms;
- Practical (agronomic) expertise designing and implementing large-scale agroforestry models;
- Proven track record in the sustainable development agri-commodity value chains, specifically in oil palm, rubber, coffee, cocoa, cassava, maize, and soy;
- In-depth knowledge of agriculture-driven deforestation dynamics;
- Proven expertise in the development and implementation of REDD+ projects;
- Track record in implementing environmental impact monitoring mechanisms;
- Knowledge on (sustainable) forest concession models, including timber, carbon and alternative use of concessions.

- Strong analytical, financial, writing and presentation skills;
- Fluency in English and French.

8. TENDER EVALUATION

The received Expressions of Interest will be evaluated by CFC on their technical merit, daily fee estimates, and accordance with the requirements as indicated in these Terms of Reference.

Based on this evaluation, CFC will compile a shortlist of candidates who will be invited to submit a detailed proposal in the second step of this tender. The shortlisting and invitation to the second step of the tender is estimated to take place during February 2026.

9. MISCELLANEOUS

Any question, communication or requests for additional information concerning this tender and related ToR are to be sent to the following email addresses:

jos.debest@common-fund.org
pieter.nielsen@common-fund.org

CFC may for whatsoever reason and without any obligation to potential consultants decide to cancel this tendering procedure and not to award the contract for this consultancy to any candidate. No interested candidate shall be entitled to any form of compensation whatsoever referring to this invitation to tender or to these ToR.

The commencement of the assignment is subject to the final confirmation of availability of funding.

10. CONFIDENTIALITY

All data and information received from CFC for the purpose of this assignment under this tender procedure are to be treated confidentially and are only to be used in connection with the execution of these Terms of Reference. The contents of written materials obtained and used in this assignment may not be disclosed to any third parties without the expressed advance written authorization of the CFC.