



Terms of Reference: Project Evaluation

Consultant for final project evaluation: “Securing Gabon’s Ecological Future”

World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) in Gabon seeks a Consultant for evaluation of project: “Securing Gabon’s Ecological Future”.

Project Background and Context

Project Location	Gabon
Project Name	Securing Gabon’s Ecological Future
Project reference number	9F208 500
Project Budget	€ 683,000
Donors/funding sources	WWF NL
Project Duration	July 2018 – June 2021

With a total human population in 2017 of 2,028,794, or 5.5 people per Km², middle-income Gabon is one of the least densely populated countries in the world. This low human population density has left the country's biodiversity and natural resources relatively intact until now; at over 85% forest cover, in addition to other important ecosystems such as savannas, rivers, deltas, lagoons and marine environments, as well as a remarkably high level of species biodiversity, Gabon is exceptionally rich in natural capital.

However, Gabon is at an important crossroad of development. For the past 20 years, the country has known a strong economic growth, largely driven by a thriving oil exploitation sector; oil industry accounts for more than 50% of Gabon's GDP and 80% of the country's export earnings. However, dwindling production due to maturing fields and a lack of major new finds have led to a significant decrease in production, and the global oil price downturn have hurt the nation's economy. Conscious of these developments, the Government of Gabon's Emergent' Strategic Development Plan (PSGE) 2010-2025 sets out the government's intention to decrease the country's dependence on the oil industry and to diversify the economy by attracting new investment in a variety of sectors. Key in this are the mining industry and large-scale agricultural expansion, in particular in the palm oil sector.

The expansion in the mining and agricultural sector is anticipated to put growing pressure on Gabon's natural environment. Despite the fact that the PSGE's 'Green Gabon' pillar sets out ambition that the growth and diversification of Gabon's economy should respect the government's vision of sustainable development, the reality is that the accelerated investment and growth created by Gabon Emergent is already bringing increased pressure for land conversion, and besides some notable exceptions, many investments do not yet apply environmental and social responsibility standards.

Within this context, the "Securing Gabon's Ecological Future" project builds on the Government's commitment for sustainability, by focusing on transformational interventions across the three WWF global practice drivers: Governance, Markets and Finance. In this regard, the project will address critical aspects of the global goals for Forests, Food, Wildlife and Freshwater in this important part of the Congo Basin – one of WWF's 35 priority area – and as key conservation targets forest (including savannah) and freshwater ecosystems, forest elephants and great Apes. Focus herein will be on the interlinked themes of natural capital values, land use planning, sustainability standards and best management practices (environmental, social and agricultural) across Gabon's development sectors while strengthening the voice of civil society in debates around the use and management of the country's rich natural resources.

The project's geographical scope extends to the whole territory of Gabon as a jurisdictional landscape, and is intended in this regard to influence and shape the general policy climate of Gabon in terms of recognition of the values of natural capital based goods and service as an important aspect to be considered in decision making around major development strategies and programs. At the same time, the project adopts a pilot-level focus on one of Gabon's two HCV landscapes, the Gamba landscape. The results of this pilot work will be used to influence the broader national-level policy framework, but at the same feed into the ongoing land use planning process in the Southern Gabon region (supported among others through separate funding from WWF NL).

The central theory of change that underpins the project is that by assuring that (i) Government considers the importance of natural capital in decision-making around land use planning and investment plans, as well as adopts and enforces best practice standards for such investments (RSPO & FSC), (ii) private sector at the same time adopts standards and norms in line with international practice as part of their operation, and (iii) civil society is adequately educated and empowered to influence and monitor Government and private sector investment decisions, Gabon's rich natural capital will be better managed, to the benefit of both nature and its dependent population.

Project Goal, Objectives and Strategies

The Goal of the project is:

To ensure that Gabon's biodiversity is sustainably managed so that its rich natural capital continues to bring well-being to populations, and healthy and equitable growth in Gabon

More concretely, the project's four key strategies, as outlined above, may be translated into four main objectives:

- *Objective 1: By 2021 the economic importance of Gabon's natural capital for the national economy are un-derstood and incorporated into government and eventually also private sector decision making.*
- *Objective 2: By 2021, Gabon's national regulations and norms incorporate best practice standards in relation to the management of HCV/HCS zones.*
- *Objective 3: By 2021 sustainable development best practice standards are implemented by large and small producers throughout at least one key economic sector in Gabon.*
- *Objective 4: By 2021 national/local CSOs and village committees are informed and empowered to be an active voice advocating for sustainable development at local and national level*

Project Evaluation Purpose and Use, Objectives and Scope

The primary client of the evaluation is WWF Netherlands, who formally requested the evaluation (as the program funding is higher than € 500,000 threshold). The timing of the evaluation is triggered by the coming to an end of the current phase of WWF NL funding of the Securing Gabon's Ecological Future project (June 2021).

WWF NL has confirmed a non extension of this project which must end on 31 June 2021.

Key Objectives of this evaluation:

1. Evaluate what has been achieved so far based on the defined objectives and as per the strategies contained in the project document as well as sustainability of results
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2. Provide recommendations for WWF Gabon and WWF NL, that will serve for the eventual future project in term of what worked well (to be scaled) and what doesn't worked (to be improved).

Other beneficiaries of the Evaluation findings:

- WWF ROA Yaoundé Hub

- WWF Gabon
- The Executive Secretariat of the Economic Community of Central Africa States (ECCAS), a WWF key implementing partner of the Congo basin regional Food System & Green Growth Program;
- WWF ROA (to guide the implementation of its Conservation strategy)
- The different key government ministries in Gabon
- The private sector and partners (technical and financial) operating in Gabon
- Local CSOs and communities.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals who have commissioned the evaluation: • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ingeborg Mägi, Ron Lamain and Marco Dekker (M&E), WWF NL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those responsible for the oversight of the evaluation: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ludovic MIARO, Regional Food System & Green Growth Program Lead, • Terrence Ekande, WWF Gabon Country Director, a.i. • Eugène Ndong Ndoutoume, National Business and Biodiversity Coordinator (WWF Gabon) • Marthe Jamila N'NANG AKOULOU, Project Assistant (WWF Gabon)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those responsible to act on the results, including the writing of a management response: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terrence Ekandje, • Ludovic Miaro • Eugène Ndong Ndoutoume • Marthe Jamila N'NANG AKOULOU
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary audiences that benefit from learning generated by the evaluation: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oil palm companies (such as OLAM)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissemination of results: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WWF Gabon and WWF ROA

Evaluation Criteria and Guiding questions

The evaluation shall span the period July 2018 (when the project began to present date) and it will be focusing on evaluating the extent to which the different activities realized over this period have been able to contribute or not contribute towards attaining the goals and objectives. It is expected that the evaluator in carrying out this assignment will use the WWF Evaluation Guidance for report structuring and performance rating.

Considering both time and financial constraints, it is expected that the evaluator will have to travel just to Gabon to meet with those responsible for the execution of the project but also with the different stakeholders. It is also expected that the evaluator may organize e-meetings with those stakeholders he/she may not be able to physically meet during the trip to Gabon. The travels and meetings in Gabon will be facilitated WWF Gabon country office.

Related to the evaluation objective, it is expected that the consultant is to assess the relevance and the contribution of the project in delivering effectively and efficiently the strategic objectives' planned:

- Providing government agencies and investors with a better understanding of the value of natural capital, of the benefits of sustainable investment and of the economic costs of failing to address environmental and social risks;
- Supporting the uptake of market-based standards for key sectors, and mainstreaming of standards and business models that can support a shift towards sustainable production;
- Influencing private sector to adopt sustainability criteria, in line with international standards; and

- Building an informed civil society that is demanding economic growth that brings environmental and social benefits.

Efficiency

A measure of the relationship (i) between outputs, the products or services of the intervention, and input and (ii) the human and financial resources the intervention uses:

- Appropriateness of the resources (both material and human) used for the programme;
- An analysis of whether certain costs could be reduced without threatening the programmes key objectives and goals?

Effectiveness

A measure of the extent to which the intervention's intended outcomes, its specific objectives or intermediate results has been achieved:

- What has and has not been achieved (both intended and non-intended) in relation to the duration of the project;
- Identification of factors that have may have negatively effected project effectiveness.
- Quality of the monitoring during project implementation.

Project Impacts

A measure of all significant impacts (positive or negative) of the project intervention on targeted stakeholders, natural resources and/or footprint issues.

- Analysis of the project's contribution to better understanding of the value of natural capital, of the benefits of sustainable investment and of the economic costs of failing to address environmental and social risks;
- Analysis of the project's impact on the involvement of private sector in the sustainable management of natural resources through best management practices;
- Analysis of the project's perceived impact on relevant policies and legal frameworks in the 3 countries.
- Analysis of the project's perceived impact on the capacity to mainstreaming of standards and business models that can support a shift towards sustainable production;
- Measure of concrete impacts/changes on the ground showing civil society that is demanding economic growth that brings environmental and social benefits .

Project Sustainability

A measure of whether the benefits of a conservation intervention are likely to continue after external support has ended:

- Are the results of the project sustainable in the long-term?
- Does the project have the right measures in place to ensure WWF conservation work is sustainable in Gabon?
- What are the key factors that will require attention in order to improve prospects of sustainability of project outcomes and the potential for replication of the approach?

- Based upon existing plans and observations made during the evaluation, what are the key strategic options for the future of the project (e.g. exit, scale down, replicate, scale-up, continue business-as-usual or major changes to approach)?
- What is the potential for WWF to support Green Growth via influencing large scale landscape /climate funding (such as for example via the proposed TRIDOM conservation plan)?

Adaptive Capacity

Adaptive Capacity is a measure of the extent to which the project or programme regularly assesses and adapts its work, and thereby ensures continued relevance in changing contexts, strong performance, and learning.

Related questions:

- Applying Good Practice (work & monitoring plans, reporting progress, etc.): Did the team examine good practice lessons from other conservation/ development experiences and consider these experiences in the project/programme design?
- What joint planning procedures have been applied and how did stakeholders contribute?
- How was the project monitored and how were activities adapted according to monitoring results?
- How project funds managed and project were dispenses monitored against budget provisions and procurement regulations?
- Identify any exceptional experiences that should be highlighted regarding what worked and didn't work (e.g. case-studies, stories, good practices)?
- What are possible new or aggravated threats to biodiversity conservation that should be addressed?
- What is the potential for WWF to play a role in influencing new Green Investment funding that are being set up (REDD+, Green Climate Fund, CAFI, GEF, GCF, etc.)?)

Methodology Considerations

The evaluation methodology should consist of:

- a) The compiling and review of all relevant project documents (will be provided by GCPO)
- b) Review of relevant legal and regulatory framework (will be provided by GCPO)
- c) Induction meeting and interviews with WWF management staff in Libreville
- d) Skype interviews with relevant WWF Staff (Gabon)
- e) Interviews with key project stakeholders (team WWF France)
- f) Field trip to the program area and visits of selected project sites
- g) Interviews with private sector representatives (palm oil and logging companies)
- h) Interviews with local communities (smallholders)
- i) Interviews with other relevant stakeholders (CSOs, ministries)
- j) Workshop with WWF staff in Libreville to present and discuss evaluation findings

The consultant may propose additional methodological components to be agreed upon with WWF Gabon.

The evaluator uses the WWF Evaluation Guidance for report structure and performance rating.

Qualifications of Evaluator

The Evaluator should be bilingual (English/French) in order to be able to evaluate all of the texts and reports, as well as to communicate with WWF staff and relevant stakeholders/partners of the project. The evaluator should also have proven experience with the evaluation of conservation projects implemented by non-governmental organisations, as well as familiarity with the issues surrounding environmental best practice policies and implementation in palm oil and forestry.

Central African experience would be much appreciated but is not obligatory.

Proposed Evaluation timeline

Activity	Target Date (Duration)
Selection of Evaluator	By 15 March 2021
Start date	1 st April 2021
Preparing for the evaluation, reading documents and preparing questions for the team (from home)	3 days
Meeting with project team, WWF management team (Gabon and Congo basin), WWF NL team and stakeholders in Gabon (public & private sector, local CSOs and communities) listed above; including travel times in Gabon.	15 days
Debriefing meeting with project management team	1 day
Preparation of draft report	3 days
Submission of Draft report to WWF	By 23 April 2021
Allow 5 days for comments by WWF Gabon, Congo basin and WWF NL	By 28 April 2021
Preparation of final report	2 day
Submission of final report	By 1 st May 2021
Total number of professional days	26 days

Deliverables

- A draft evaluation report in English of maximum 25 pages (without annexes).
- Feedback session on First Draft Report with WWF management
- Final Evaluation report

Preparation and organisation of Evaluation

The following shall be required pre-reading material for the evaluator:

- Project Description (appendix 1);
- Technical and Financial reports for FY19, FY20 and mid-term FY21;
- Other technical reports available.

The evaluator will conduct a preparatory briefing meeting by phone/skype with relevant WWF Netherlands staff charged with overseeing the “Securing Gabon’s Ecological Future “project prior to his/her site visit to Gabon.

The evaluation will be based in great part on interviews and discussions with the following individuals and organisations including:

- WWF staff responsible for the management and implementation of the project both in the Netherlands (D&I team), Gabon (project team) and Congo basin (Regional Food System & Green Growth Lead);
- Key WWF network staff (Country Directors – Gabon);
- Government key institutions (AGANOR; Ministries Agriculture and Environment/Forestry – Gabon
- Private sector players in Gabon (Palm Oil and logging companies);
- Other conservation NGO's and local CSOs active in Gabon
- Technical partners (CIRAD, CIFOR, PROFOREST, IUCN, MBG, TEREА etc.)
- Local communities and officials in the project area.

Depending on availability, some of these meetings could take place by skype or telephone.

Financial Terms

The costs of an international flight will be covered by the project. All domestic travel within the project scope area (Gabon) will also be arranged and paid for by the project (transport, hotel and food will be based on WWF per diem rates)). An honorarium will be offered based on the estimated number of days of work. Visa cost will be reimbursed based on real cost.

Expression of Interest

All candidates interested in conducting this evaluation on a consultant basis should submit, no later than **February 28th 2021**, a detailed technical proposal including:

- A curriculum vitae detailing his/her experience in project evaluation and NGO led conservation project implementation in Africa;
- The proposed evaluation plan (description of approach, suggestions for interview questions, timeline and time allocation, etc.) and comments on the Terms of Reference;
- A proposed date for the site visit in Gabon;
- A detailed budget proposal which takes into account the financial conditions specified in these ToR and specifies the honorarium (daily rate) as well as any other costs.

The estimated end date of the evaluation will be March 15, 2021.

All applications should be sent to wwfgab@wwfgab.org with copy to endong@wwfgab.org and with reference **“Securing Gabon’s Ecological Future – project evaluation”**

ANNEXS

Annex 1. Part A: REPORT SAMPLE TEMPLATE

The following provides a basic outline for an evaluation report. While this should be easily applied to evaluations of simpler projects or programs, adaptation will be needed to ensure reports of more complex programs (e.g., Country Offices, multi-country regions, eco-regions, Network Initiatives) are well organized, easy to read and navigate, and not too lengthy.

Title Page

- ♦ Report title, project or programme title, and contract number (if appropriate), Date of report, Authors and their affiliation, Locator map (if appropriate)

Executive Summary (*between 2 to 4 pages*)

- ♦ Principal findings and recommendations, organized by the six core evaluation criteria
- ♦ Summary of lessons learned

Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

Body of the report (no more than 25 pages)

A. Introduction (max 3 pages)

- Concise presentation of the project/programme characteristics
- Purpose, objectives, and intended utilization of the evaluation (reference and attach the ToR as an annex)
- Evaluation methodology and rationale for approach (reference and attach as annexes the mission itinerary; names of key informants; a list of consulted documents; and any synthetic tables containing project/programme information utilized in the exercise)
- Composition of the evaluation team, including any specific roles of team members

B. Project/Programme Overview (max 5 pages)

- Concise summary of the project or programme's history, evolution, purpose, objectives, and strategies to achieve conservation goals (attach conceptual model, results chain or logical framework and project monitoring system as annexes)
- Essential characteristics: context, underlying rationale, stakeholders and beneficiaries
- Summarize WWF's main interest in this project or programme

C. Evaluation Findings (5-8 pages)

- Findings organized by each of the six core evaluation criteria, including sufficient but concise rationale.
- Tables, graphics, and other figures to help convey key findings

D. Conclusions and recommendations (5-8 pages)

- Conclusion and recommendation organised each of the six core evaluation criteria, including sufficient but concise rationale – recommendations should be specific, actionable and numbered.
- Project/programme performance rating tables to provide a quick summary of performance and to facilitate comparison with other projects/programmes (see Annex A, Table B)

E. Overall Lessons Learned (max 3 pages)

- Lessons learned regarding what worked, what didn't work, and why
- Lessons learned with wider relevance, that can be generalized beyond the project

Annexes

- ♦ Terms of Reference
- ♦ Evaluation methodology detail
- ♦ Itinerary with key informants
- ♦ Documents consulted
- ♦ Project/programme logical framework/ conceptual model/ list of primary goals and objectives
- ♦ Specific project/programme and monitoring data, as appropriate
- ♦ Summary tables of progress towards outputs, objectives, and goals
- ♦ Maps
- ♦ Table Annex 1 Part B

Annex 1. Part B. EVALUATION SUMMARY TABLE - SCORING OF THE PROJECT/PROGRAM AGAINST THE SIX CORE EVALUATION CRITERIA

Evaluators are to assign the project/program a Rating and Score for each criterion as follows:

- **Very Good/4:** The project/program embodies the description of strong performance provided below to a *very good* extent.
- **Good/3:** The project/program embodies the description of strong performance provided below to a *good* extent.
- **Fair/2:** The project/program embodies the description of strong performance provided below to a *fair* extent.
- **Poor/1:** The project/program embodies the description of strong performance provided below to a *poor* extent.
- **N/A:** The criterion was *not assessed* (in the 'Justification,' explain why).
- **D/I:** The criterion was considered but *data were insufficient* to assign a rating or score (in the 'Justification,' elaborate).

Evaluators also are to provide a brief justification for the rating and score assigned. Identify most notable strengths to build upon as well as highest priority issues or obstacles to overcome. Note that this table should not be a comprehensive summary of findings and recommendations, but an overview only. A more comprehensive presentation should be captured in the evaluation report and the management response document.

Rating/Score	Description of Strong Performance	Evaluat or Rating/ Score	Evaluator Brief Justification
Relevance	The project/program addresses the necessary factors in the specific program context to bring about positive changes in conservation targets (i.e., species, ecosystems, ecological processes, including associated ecosystem services supporting human wellbeing).		
Quality of Design	The project/program has rigorously applied key design tools (e.g., the WWF PPMS).		
Efficiency	1. Most/all program activities have been delivered with efficient use of human & financial resources.		
	2. Governance and management systems are appropriate, sufficient, and operate efficiently.		

Effectiveness	1. Most/all intended outcomes—stated objectives/intermediate results regarding key threats and other factors affecting project/program targets—were attained..		
	2. There is strong evidence indicating that perceived changes can be attributed wholly or largely to the WWF project or program		
Impact	1. Most/all goals—stated desired changes in the status of species, ecosystems, and ecological processes—were realized.		
	2. Evidence indicates that perceived changes can be attributed wholly or largely to the WWF project or program.		
Sustainability	1. Most or all factors for ensuring sustainability of results/impacts are being or have been established.		
	2. Scaling up mechanism put in place with risks and assumptions re-assessed and addressed.		
Adaptive Management	1. Project/program results (outputs, outcomes, impacts) are qualitatively and quantitatively demonstrated through regular collection and analysis of monitoring data.		
	2. The project/program team uses these findings, as well as those from related projects/ efforts, to strengthen its work and performance		
	3. Learning is documented and shared for project/program and organizational learning		