

**Social Expert**

**Conkouati-Douli National Park  
REDD+ Project**

Terms of Reference

June 2024



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## 1. Introduction

Form International is a Netherlands-based company specializing in forest management and services. We are currently developing a carbon project with social and environmental impact in the Conkouati Douli National Park (CDNP) in the southwest and coastal region of the Republic of Congo, Central Africa. The project focuses on generating carbon offsets from a REDD+ project based on the VCS methodology and the CCB standard. Its main objective is to strengthen and enhance wildlife and floral biodiversity conservation activities within the national park in order to improve the livelihoods of surrounding communities living in the project area.

Alongside REDD+, the project promotes the active participation of beneficiary communities in a comprehensive social and economic development program. This program includes an ongoing process of capacity building for beneficiaries, as well as sustainable agricultural practices and support. All this is part of a comprehensive development project that works with local producers to improve their socio-economic conditions, while helping to avoid deforestation over the life of the project.

The project requirements document is based on VCS0007 as well as the SBIA series for CCBs and all standard documents required for REDD+ project development within this framework.

In this context, FORM International is seeking the services of a consultant to conduct a social study.

## 2. Context

The CDNP is home to a human population made up of 31 communities. These communities have maintained a close relationship with the park's natural environment for generations, depending on its resources to subsist and preserve their traditional ways of life. An integral social study was undertaken to understand better the social, cultural, and economic dynamics of these communities in the park. This study is based on focus groups, with the aim of obtaining a holistic view of their needs, challenges, perceptions and aspirations.

To date, focus group discussions have been conducted in 20 of the park's 31 communities. These discussions have provided valuable information on various aspects, such as cultural practices, economic activities, social relationships and perceptions regarding conservation and development. In order to complete the study and guarantee the representativeness of the results, particularly to comply with VCS-CCB requirements, it is necessary to gather additional information in the remaining communities, also specifically to identify High Conservation Values (HCVs). We expect to obtain additional data in two more communities next month, bringing the total number of communities covered to 22.

To have the information necessary to obtain certification for the REDD+ project under the VCS CCB, we are looking to hire a consultant with expertise in social studies and community work. The consultant's main responsibility will be to review the information gathered so far, identify any gaps or outstanding areas of interest in the research, and determine which additional information needs to be gathered from the communities to obtain a representative sample. Furthermore, the consultant should determine if and so yes, which, additional communities need to be visited to obtain a representative sample. The consultant should assist with gathering this additional information. Furthermore, the consultant should prepare the guidelines and train the Noé team in the skills needed for future monitoring and in independently and correctly acquiring Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) in particular.

We expect the consultant to work closely with the park's existing research team and to adhere to established protocols and ethical standards to ensure the quality and integrity of the study.

### 3. Required content

The study will aim to identify the baseline conditions (e.g., demographics, social organisation, social and economic interconnectivity, etc.) of the CDP communities, the HCVs present in the communities, how the communities will be positively and negatively impacted by the REDD+ project, and the risks arising from the project for the communities and how they can be mitigated, thus helping with informed decision-making.

The initial database will be provided by the Park's technical team, who have already collected detailed socio-economic information, cultural and demographic information, and information regarding land ownership, decision making structures, and cultural and archeological heritage, amongst others. Also, the database includes a map of village locations and fishing and hunting camp locations. Furthermore, an initial stakeholder analysis has been carried out for the main actors that play a role in the CDP, although this has not yet addressed community sub-groups. The consultant will use this database as a starting point and carry out an assessment to identify any gaps.

On the basis of this assessment, the consultant will plan his field visits to gather additional information in the communities he deems necessary, in consultation with the Park's technical team and Form International. The expectation is that one field visit will be enough to gather the remaining required information. It is suggested that additional information from communities that have already been visited is gathered through key informant interviews, while additional communities to be visited should be consulted through focus group discussions. **It is essential that the information gathered complies with Verra's requirements for VCS CCB certification, thus ensuring the consistency and quality of the data obtained. It is therefore imperative to keep a complete log of all stakeholder consultations, including photos and attendance lists, as part of the Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) requirements.**

The information to be collected for the representative sample of communities within the park, ecodevelopment zone and buffer zone (31) should include as follows below. It is important to note that a large part of this information has already been collected by the Park's technical team for 20 of the CDP communities during focus group discussions and therefore only needs to be analysed, especially regarding the community baseline and the different groups within the community (men, women, elderly, etc.).

1. Data regarding the community's conditions related to well-being → This is the baseline
  - a) Basic socio-economic information on communities in the project area, including land use and livelihoods, community infrastructure (e.g. schools, water, electricity, health clinics, etc.), employment (agriculture-related and non-agriculture-related), housing and transport, location of farms and main crops grown
  - b) Cultural and demographic information, including population, age distribution, gender, household size and marital status, education level, ethnic origin, presence of minority groups, etc.

- c) Political context, land claims and illegal encroachments
  - d) Access to and use of the forest reserve and the extent to which the CDNP provides ecosystem services that are important for meeting basic community needs, or are of cultural importance
  - e) Details of household composition, including the number of female-headed households
  - f) Illness and disability.
  - g) Details of subsistence economic activities inside and outside CDNP (fishing, charcoal production, farm size, harvests, productivity, sales of agricultural products, etc.).
  - h) Decision-making structures and conflict resolution mechanisms.
  - i) Major development constraints (e.g. land tenure, market access, environmental conditions).
2. Using this information, three focal issues should be determined indicating the main problems (e.g. low agricultural production, poor access to healthcare, low employment) occurring in the communities.
    - a. As part of the baseline, an analysis based on community input should be made about how these focal issues will develop in the without-project scenario.
    - b. Furthermore, it should be analysed how the REDD+ project will impact these focal issues and how it can contribute to solving them.
    - c. A monitoring plan describing how focal issues will be monitored and how the outputs and the outcomes of interventions by the REDD+ project aimed at these focal issues will be measured.
  3. A stakeholder analysis, including looking at main actors, communities, and **community sub-groups**, based on
    - a. List the communities
      - i. Describe the baseline conditions (e.g., demographic information, socio-economic details, conflicts) per community (based on the above mentioned baseline analysis)
    - b. List the community sub-groups, such as listed below. These can also be cross-cutting community groups:
      - i. Wealth or well-being groups
      - ii. Women
      - iii. Livelihood-based stakeholder groups (e.g., charcoal makers, bushmeat hunters, NTFP collectors, etc.). **This should include outsiders that make a living inside the CDNP but are not part of the communities.**
      - iv. Local stakeholders classified according to land tenure and/or landholding
      - v. Different ethnic groups
      - vi. Vulnerable community groups
    - c. For the community sub-groups, describe:
      - i. Role, responsibility, and distinguishing features
      - ii. Well-being of the different sub-groups

- iii. Needs of the different sub-groups
- iv. Relationships with other sub-groups, the CDNP, and other main actors
- v. Any conflicts with other sub-groups, the CDNP, and other main actors
- vi. How they are affected by the focal issues from the previous section
- vii. How the REDD+ project will impact well-being of the different sub-groups
- viii. How negative impacts by the REDD+ project can be mitigated
- d. List all the main players involved, including those listed below. A list of these actors is already available and should be elaborated upon.
  - i. Local leaders
  - ii. Grassroots or community-based organizations
  - iii. NGOs
  - iv. Local government
  - v. District or regional government
  - vi. National government
  - vii. Influential or powerful individuals from any of the above groups
  - viii. Insiders and outsiders
- e. For the actors, a description is available describing:
  - i. Role, responsibility, and distinguishing features
  - ii. Domain
  - iii. Interest for and influence on the CDNP
- f. Further analysis should look at:
  - i. Type of relationship: Specify the relationships between actors, such as collaboration, dependency, subordination, interaction, etc.
  - ii. Nature of relationships: detail how actors interact with each other, what kind of communication or interactions they have, and how they interact within the system or process.
  - iii. Mapping diagrams: visual representation of relationships between actors using diagrams, graphs or other visual tools for easier understanding and analysis.
  - iv. How these actors will be affected by the REDD+ project.
- 4. **Identification of HCVs** relevant to communities (HCV4, HCV5, and HCV 6) and how they should be managed. This should follow the methodology by the HCV Network<sup>1</sup>, and include a threat assessment and an HCV management plan.
- 5. An analysis of what social impacts and risks the REDD+ project poses to the communities and community sub-groups (risk assessment). This is different from the focal issues which focus on the current main issues in the communities and which are part of the baseline.
  - a. List all/main risks identified by the communities, also specifically for HCV's

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- b. Determine risk severity and likelihood, and control of park over risks
  - c. Make mitigation plan for risks using community feedback
  - d. A monitoring plan showing how risks will be monitored
6. The information gathered should be visualized in a map showing HCV's, social impacts, and land tenure.
7. Finally, the consultant should train the team of Noé regarding the procedures for Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC), specifically focusing on conducting FPIC validation workshops and effectively informing and communicating with stakeholders, particularly the communities, at all times. Additionally, the consultant should address any gaps in knowledge regarding focal group discussions and key informant interviews. It is essential to have constant monitoring of this process to ensure compliance and effectiveness.



## 4. Deliverables

Using both the data provided by the Park's technical team and the data gathered by the consultant, the results will be presented in a single report in English, with the raw data appended. Content should include:

**A social study according to Verra's VCS CCB standard with the inclusion of an analysis of HCVs in the project zone<sup>2</sup>.**

This product will consist of a detailed report that identifies and assesses the social conditions in the project zone, according to the criteria set by the Community and Biodiversity (CCB) methodological standard developed by Verra, which should include all the tables in appendices among other deliverables. The social study will be aligned with the project's objectives and will focus on the following aspects:

- Description of initial state of communities (baseline): A detailed description of the initial state of communities in the project zone will be provided, highlighting any significant historical changes. This will include information on community well-being and relevant community attributes.
- Description of three focal issues that cause problems within the community, how these will develop in the without-project scenario, and how the project can address them. This links to anticipated changes in community well-being in the without-project land-use scenario, highlighting the potential impact of these changes on all ecosystem services deemed important to communities within the project area.
- A stakeholder analysis showing
  - An analysis of the different community sub-groups addressing the social, economic and cultural diversity present in the communities, delineating the differences and interactions between the various community groups, and how the sub-groups will be impacted by the REDD+ project.
  - Actor classification, interest, influence, and motivation to participate, and how actors relate to each other.
- Identification and management of High Conservation Values (HCVs): HCVs in the project area will be identified and described, focusing on those relevant to community well-being. A threat assessment of HCVs will be included and how they will be

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<sup>2</sup> 'Project zone' is defined as the area encompassing the project area in which project activities that directly affect land and associated resources, including activities such as those related to provision of alternative livelihoods and community development, are implemented. See a map of the project zone with the communities in appendix B.

managed, in accordance with Verra's VCS CCB requirements and according to the method by the HCV Network<sup>3</sup>. The HCVs to be analyzed are:

- HCV4 - Ecosystem Services:  
Basic ecosystem services in critical situations, including protection of water catchments and control of erosion of vulnerable soils and slopes.
- HCV5 - Community Needs:  
Sites and resources fundamental for satisfying the basic necessities of local communities or indigenous peoples (for livelihoods, health, nutrition, water, etc.), identified through engagement with these communities or indigenous peoples
- HCV6 - Cultural Values:  
Sites, resources, habitats and landscapes of global or national cultural, archaeological or historical significance, and/or of critical cultural, ecological, economic or religious/sacred importance for the traditional cultures of local communities or indigenous peoples, identified through engagement with these local communities or indigenous peoples.
- Expected social problems and risk arising (**risk assessment**) in the with-project scenario, and how these can be mitigated, determined participatory with the CDNP communities, including for HCV's.
- A monitoring plan showing:
  - How the outputs and the outcomes of interventions by the REDD+ project aimed at focal issues will be measured.
  - How risks will be monitored.
- A map indicating
  - HCV map
  - Impacted areas map for communities
  - Land tenure map
- Training and documentation regarding FPIC for Noé employees should ensure that Noé employees are capable of independently acquiring FPIC by correctly informing and consulting stakeholders and conducting FPIC validation workshops. If gaps in knowledge regarding focal group discussions and key informant interviews are identified, these should also be addressed. Additionally, a detailed FPIC work plan must be delivered, including a process for continuous monitoring by park specialists to ensure compliance and effectiveness.

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[https://assets-global.website-files.com/624493bb51507d22cf218d50/628685903d12e717c7de80c2\\_NT\\_HCV\\_AssessmentManual\\_Final-WO-Public-summary-.pdf](https://assets-global.website-files.com/624493bb51507d22cf218d50/628685903d12e717c7de80c2_NT_HCV_AssessmentManual_Final-WO-Public-summary-.pdf)

## 5. Consultant

The consultant must have proven experience in developing social studies, and most have the following expertise:

- Degree in Social Sciences, Anthropology, Social Work, Agro-Economy or related field
- Minimum 5 years' experience in conducting social studies including HCV investigation or projects involving these areas of work.
- Deep understanding of social dynamics in rural Congo Basin Forest areas.
- Extensive experience in rural community consultations and participation.
- Ability to establish effective relationships with local communities.
- Knowledge of carbon certification standards, particularly for forestry and high conservation value projects relating to communities.
- Excellent communication and writing skills in French and English.

## 6. Duration

The study will be carried out over a total period of 45 days, covering complete data collection, desk studies and final report writing. Form International will provide the consulting team with shapefiles of the intervention area and other relevant information related to the subject.

## 7. Selection process

To be considered in the selection process, according to the terms set out in this document, interested parties must submit the following application documents (in PDF format):

- Cover letter from the consultant highlighting experience related to the job requirements described here.
- Curriculum vitae.
- Proposed technical plan and detailed budget (please refer to appendix).
- The economic proposal must include all travel and field expenses, as well as all statutory taxes.

Interested parties can send documents to the following e-mail addresses: [t.nijman@forminternational.nl](mailto:t.nijman@forminternational.nl) and [k.rivera@forminternational.nl](mailto:k.rivera@forminternational.nl). If you have any questions regarding the board, please contact Karin Rivera at [k.rivera@forminternational.nl](mailto:k.rivera@forminternational.nl).

Please indicate the subject of the application "Social Studies Consultancy". Applications will be considered until June 21, 2024.

Interested parties moving on to the next stage of the evaluation process will be informed of discussions with the evaluation committee by e-mail.

Form International is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, religion, sex, nationality, age or disability.

### *Important notes:*

- 1. It is fundamental to this project to recognize and respect the cultures, traditions and ancestral systems of the indigenous communities involved. Contractors must understand that they are operating in a culturally rich and diverse environment, and must work closely with community leaders and members to ensure that all activities are conducted with respect and in accordance with local cultural practices and values. Contractors must demonstrate cultural sensitivity and build relationships of trust with communities and other stakeholders, ensuring an environment of collaboration and mutual respect throughout the project. Under no circumstances should contractors interfere with the political situation or status of any of their interlocutors.*
- 2. These ToR may be subject to minor modifications, depending on the information and adjustments provided by the customer. Such adjustments will be discussed with the consulting team prior to contract signature.*

## Appendix A

The bid must include a brief outline of a technical and financial proposal that follows the "Activity Planning" and "Budget" template as outlined above.

activities :

Project week	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	te n	11	12	13	14
...														
...														

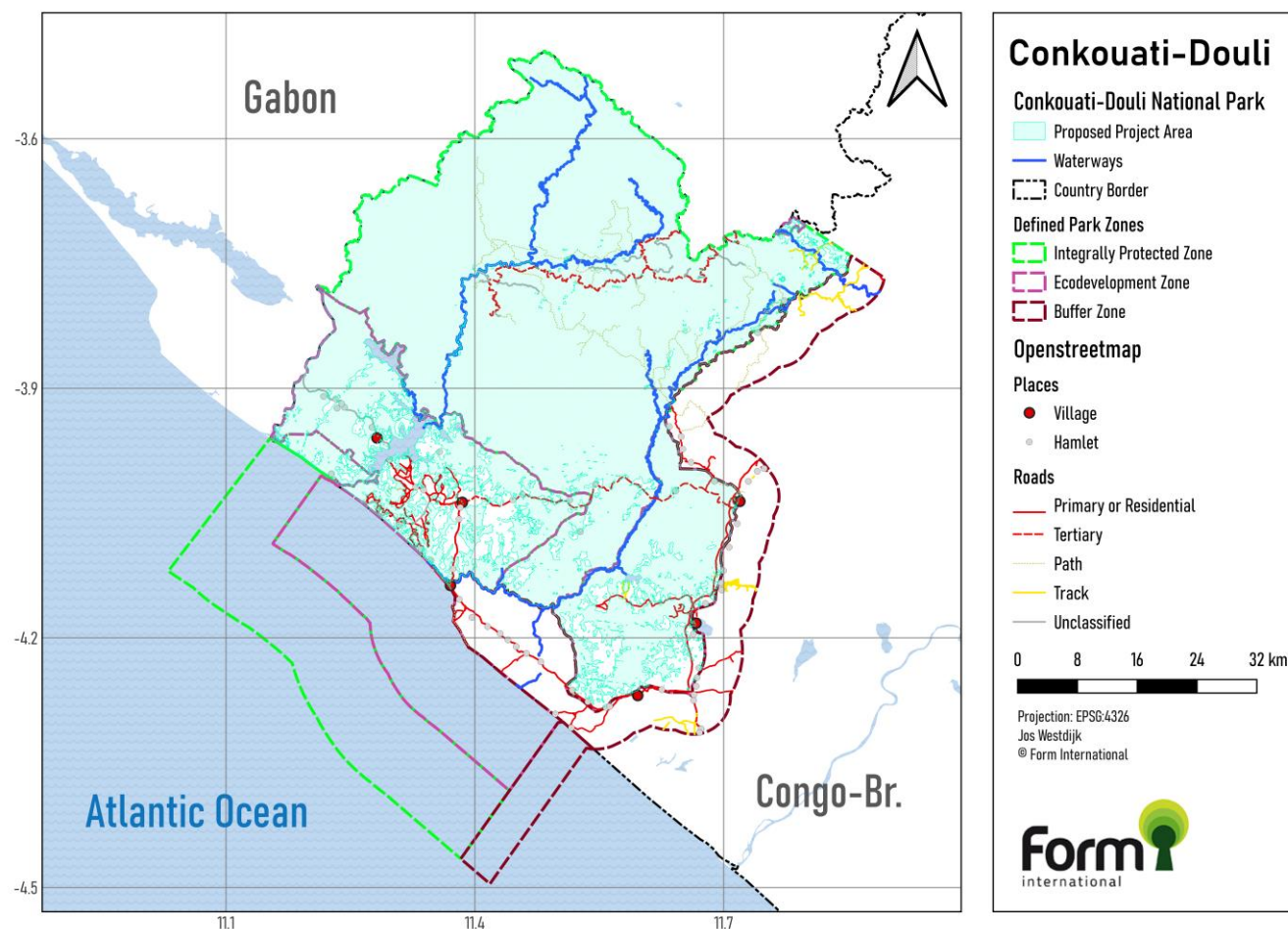
Budget :

Activity	Article	# articles	Expenses (€)	Total (€)

**Total**

*Note: The budget must include VAT and be presented in euros.*

## Appendix B: Project zone and communities



Project zone includes the integrally protected zone, the ecodevelopment zone, and the buffer zone. Communities are shown as villages and hamlets.