Dear Sir or Madam,

Conservation International Foundation (hereinafter referred to as “Conservation International”), is issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the “Blue Carbon Feasibility Study for Mexico.”

Interested consulting firms (consultants), should submit their proposals by 5:00 PM EST on December 13, 2019. Proposals must be prepared in English and be submitted in an electronic format using the subject line, “BC Feasibility Study - consultant application for Mexico” to Jean Brodeur at jbrodeur@conservation.org. Interested applicants are encouraged to raise any questions of clarification on the proposed scope of work prior to submission of their proposal.

Conservation International’s reputation derives from our commitment to our values: Integrity, Respect, Courage, Optimism, Passion, and Teamwork. 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. 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 to which all parties must adhere. Any violation of the Code of Ethics should be reported to CI via its Ethics Hotline at www.ci.ethicspoint.com. Concerns regarding the integrity of the procurement process and documents shall be reported to www.ci.ethicspoint.com under the procurement and purchasing activities.

The attached RFP contains all the necessary information for interested Offerors.
Consultancy Objective

Conservation International (CI) is working with a corporate partner to assess the viability of blue carbon crediting projects in Mexico. The specific objective of this consultancy is to produce a feasibility report assessing the technical considerations and enabling conditions of the potential sites, including the carbon, policy, stakeholder, environmental, community, legal, and financial characteristics. As part of this feasibility assessment, CI is interested in considering the potential for both emissions reductions and removals that can be achieved by reducing deforestation and promoting restoration at the different sites. The consultant and CI staff will conduct a field visit to Mexico, to further refine assumptions and meet with key stakeholders.

Project Background and Context

As a founding and coordinating member of the International Partnership for Blue Carbon (IPBC), the Blue Carbon Initiative, and the Global Mangrove Alliance, CI has been working to improve conservation and protection of mangroves, as well as other vital blue carbon ecosystems around the world. These coastal habitats provide critically important ecosystem services for communities, including sequestering and storing large quantities of blue carbon, up to five times the carbon stored in terrestrial forests. When these ecosystems are lost or degraded, their carbon stores can be released, turning efficient carbon sinks into significant sources of greenhouse gases and accelerating climate change.

CI is currently involved in developing a VCS-certified Blue Carbon crediting project in Colombia. We are interested in partnering with local stakeholders to expand this work globally to demonstrate how carbon finance can be used to conserve, protect, restore and fund mangrove ecosystems, while providing for livelihood and development opportunities for local people.

Mexico has an extensive coastline, with mangrove forests and salt marshes in need of protection and restoration that present opportunities for conservation via blue carbon crediting and innovation in combining restoration with sustainable economic development. For example, the Chiapas coastline has a diversity of ecosystems, including mangroves that support livelihoods, such as fisheries and tourism. Mangroves are being removed to clear land for cattle ranching and palm oil production. In addition to providing climate mitigation benefits, restoring and conserving mangroves will increase the resiliency of the region by diversifying livelihoods and creating a coastal buffer to help protect communities from the hurricanes that are increasing in intensity and frequency with climate change. The State of Tabasco, located on the Gulf of Mexico, has approximately 1.5 million hectares (ha) of land located on the coastal delta
Coastal areas have previously been cleared for ranching, but ranchers in the state are interested in new livelihoods, since they are already experiencing droughts and extreme rainfall due to climate change. These areas could be part of an integrated project to conserve and/or restore blue carbon ecosystems, alongside sustainable silvopasture and agroforestry. Other states and sites within Mexico will also be considered.

**Activities and Deliverables**

CI is proposing to contract with a suitably qualified and experienced consultant to provide technical support in producing a report assessing the blue carbon potential (emission reductions and removals) of mangrove sites in Mexico, including a desk-based analysis of the characteristics of potential sites and a field visit to refine the assumptions and allow for meetings with in-country staff and partners.

Activities and deliverables will specifically include:

1) An inception report, to be produced upon contracting, that outlines the assessment design, methods and approach, and a detailed work plan.

   **Deliverable: An inception report within 2 weeks of contracting**

2) A desk-based review of potential sites in Mexico, including, but not limited to:
   a) consultation with CI staff to narrow in on site specific locations;
   b) identification of potential or existing project proponents and key partners;
   c) a review of available data and other literature about the potential site(s), including project value (biodiversity, water, climate resilience), habitat condition, biomass and soil carbon stocks, and agents and drivers of deforestation;
   d) analysis of readily available spatial data to help identify potential reference regions and estimate baseline rates of deforestation and emission reductions /removals and the potential of conservation and restoration activities;
   d) national and subnational policy context, governance structure, profile of communities and key stakeholders, and the expected level of project support

   **Deliverable: A preliminary report reviewing possible sites, key findings, and any identified informational gaps or challenges sourced from the initial desk review (to be completed prior to the site visit)**

3) A field visit to the sites between January and April, 2020 (depending on weather and scheduling), including:
   a) Meetings with CI in-country staff and key partners;
   b) Site visits of project locations with the aim to better understand and assess:
      - agents and drivers of deforestation and degradation, additionality, leakage, non-permanence risk
      - national policy and legal context
- baseline scenarios
- project intervention activities, stakeholder support, partner roles, and the approximate resource and funding needs for project development and implementation
- estimates of emissions reductions and removals
- risk analysis

Deliverable: A short field visit note summarizing the places visited, interviews held, key findings and any remaining informational gaps identified (to be completed within two weeks of the site visit)

4) A final feasibility report containing the desk-based and field-based findings, including recommendations and proposed next steps for further development. A short PowerPoint presentation highlighting the key findings will also be submitted and delivered to CI staff, either in person or via webinar.

Deliverable: A draft of the final report, to be submitted no later than May 1, 2020, to allow for CI review and the incorporation of feedback. The final report will need to be submitted no later than May 30, 2020.

Competencies and skills of the Consultant

1. Proven track record of performing blue carbon feasibility studies
2. Proven track record of performing REDD+ project feasibilities or PD development under the VCS and CCB standards
3. Familiarity with the draft VCS tidal wetlands modules that are currently under development as part of a revision to the REDD+ Methodology Framework (REDD+MF), v1.6
4. Ability to proactively engage with a range of relevant stakeholders to ensure inclusion of all necessary partners
5. Solid understanding of UNFCCC architecture on REDD+, and of the possible pathways to nesting site-level REDD+ activities (which could include mangroves) into national strategies and approaches
6. Availability to meet deliverable due dates as stated in this RfP
7. Fluency in English and Spanish

Application Requirements

Interested consultant/s must submit the following documents/information to demonstrate their qualifications, experience and skills:

- CV of each member of the team (if more than one);

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1 https://verra.org/methodology/redd-methodology-framework-reddmf-v1-6/
• Evidence of the organization’s and/or individual competencies and experience with similar projects;
• A narrative proposal for delivering the services as per the RfP including (1) a draft workplan/timeline for completion of the scope of work; (2) a detailed budget and accompanying budget narrative. The budget should include an overall summary by cost category as well as an activity-based budget for each of the deliverables stated in this RfP.

Applications will be evaluated against the following criteria:

• Personal qualifications (20 points)
• Experience with similar assignments (20 points)
• Proposal, timeline, and cost (60 points)

Any resultant contract will be subject to the terms and conditions of Conservation International, including the CI Code of Ethics. This is a request for proposal only and does not obligate CI to execute a contract, nor does it commit CI to pay any costs incurred in the preparation and submission of the proposals.