



**TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF THE BHUTAN FOR LIFE
CONSERVATION PLAN**

POSITION DETAILS	
Location	TBD
Reporting to	BFL Fund Board
Preferred timeframe	October - December 2021
Potential sites to visit	TBD
PROGRAM DATA	
Program Title	Bhutan for Life
Accredited Entity	WWF-US
Executing Entity(ies)	Bhutan for Life Fund; Ministry of Agriculture and Forests
Country	Bhutan
Total Financing	US\$ 118,228,001
RELEVANT DATES	
Implementation Start	October 5, 2018
Program Completion Date (proposed or actual)	October 5, 2032
Period to Be Evaluated	Conservation Plan (14 years)



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INTRODUCTION AND PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Bhutan for Life (BFL) Operating Manual states that periodic evaluations will take place every 2.5 years during the 14-year life of the BFL Program. The BFL Program (the “Program”) seeks to achieve a robust network of protected areas that contributes to human well-being and biodiversity conservation, and increases Bhutan’s resilience to the effects of climate change. The conservation Milestones that the Program will achieve, and the conservation activities it will implement are specified in the BFL Conservation Plan. The Conservation Plan is aligned with the Royal Government of Bhutan’s (RGoB) Five-Year Plan. This term of reference (TOR) sets out expectations for the 2.5-year evaluation of the Program. The technical consultant(s) selected to conduct this evaluation will hereafter be referred to as “evaluator.”

SCOPE AND OBJECTIVE FOR THE EVALUATION

The Bhutan For Life (BFL) Fund Board is seeking an independent consultant to undertake a 2.5 year evaluation of progress towards all of the Program’s conservation Milestones and Activities, which are specified in its Conservation Plan.

The objective of this evaluation is to assess progress towards conservation Milestones and Activities during the first 2.5 years of the Program; identify any Program design problems; and draw lessons learned that can improve Program effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of program benefits. Based on this assessment, it is expected that the evaluator will provide feasible recommendations regarding Milestones and Activities in the BFL Conservation Plan.

EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHOD

The evaluation will adhere to the relevant guidance, rules and procedures established in the BFL operating manual. The evaluation must provide evidence-based information that is independent, participatory, transparent, and ethical. The evaluator must be unbiased and free of any conflicts of interest with the Program. The evaluator is expected to consider all stakeholder views and follow a participatory and consultative approach. There should be close engagement with government counterparts, the GCF National Designated Authority, the Executing Entities (EEs), the WWF GCF Accredited Entity (AE), partners and key stakeholders. Contact information will be provided.

The Evaluation process will include the following, with deliverables marked by “*”:

A. Desk review consisting of, but not limited to:

- BFL Conservation Plan
- BFL Operating Manual
- BFL Operating Plan
- Full GCF Funding Proposal;
- Relevant safeguards documents;
- Annual Work Plans (AWP) and Budgets;
- Annual Performance Reports and mid-year Technical Reports;
- Relevant financial documents, including financial progress reports; co-financing documents;
- Meeting minutes; and
- Other relevant documents provided by the EE and partners.



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- B. Inception report that outlines evaluation methodology;*
- C. Field visits, as necessary and feasible;
- D. Interviews, discussions and consultations with EEs, partners and beneficiaries;
- E. Post-field visit debrief and presentation* of initial findings to EE, AE and other partners;
- F. Draft report* not to exceed 30 pages (excluding annexes) shared with GCF AE and EE for review and feedback. A sample outline will be provided; and
- G. Final MTE report* that has incorporated feedback and comments.

The evaluator is expected to frame the evaluation effort using the seven (7) core criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, results/impact, sustainability and adaptive capacity. Note that results/impact will only be reviewed for 'potential for results/impact' given the program has only been under implementation for two years. Definitions of each of these criteria will be provided as well as sample report outline (See annexes A - B).

EXPECTED CONTENT OF EVALUATION REPORT

The Evaluation report will include:

- a. Information on the evaluation process, including when the evaluation took place, sites visited, participants, key questions, summary of methodology and rating rubric, and feedback log showing how comments on draft were incorporated;
- b. Assessment of monitoring and evaluation systems;
- c. Assessment of knowledge management;
- d. Assessment of stakeholder engagement and gender-responsive measures;
- e. Assessment of any environmental and social impacts and safeguards used for the Program.
- f. Assessment of financial issues that have caused delays or other problems regarding progress toward achieving BFL Milestones and Activities;
- g. Assessment of execution by EEs and sub-departments;
- h. Summary of key findings by core criteria¹, including justification;
- i. Lessons learned regarding: program design (whether Activities are contributing to Milestones) and technical approach; use of adaptive management; administration and governance arrangements as they relate to effectiveness and efficiency; relevance; implementation of the Conservation Plan; environmental and social safeguards, etc.;
- j. Conclusions, and recommendations that include: practical and short-term corrective actions per evaluation criteria to address issues and findings; and recommendations on how to improve the Conservation Plan.

¹ See annex A



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EVALUATION TEAM QUALIFICATIONS

The consultant(s) shall have prior experience in evaluating similar programs. The evaluator(s) selected should not have participated in the program preparation and/or implementation and should not have a conflict of interest with program related activities.

Required Qualifications and Experience

- Minimum five years of relevant professional experience (results-based monitoring and evaluation).
- Excellent written and oral communication in English.

Preferred Qualifications and Experience

- Recent experience conducting evaluations, particularly for GCF financed programs is an advantage;
- Technical knowledge in climate and biodiversity programs.
- Experience with social assessments, participatory techniques, and gender mainstreaming;
- Knowledge and experience in implementing or reviewing application of social and environmental safeguards policies in GCF (or similar) programs;
- Fluent [Dzongkha] preferred or use of translator; and
- Regional experience an asset.

PAYMENT MODALITIES AND SPECIFICATIONS

Payment, expense reimbursement, and other contractual terms and conditions are outlined in the consultant agreement made between Bhutan For Life Fund Secretariat and the evaluator(s). Payments are according to deliverables submitted. Twenty-five percent of payment will correspond with completion of Inception Report. Fifty percent of payment will correspond with submission and approval of the debrief presentation and the Draft Report. The final twenty-five percent will be delivered with the submission and approval of the Final Report.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Interested consultants are invited to submit an Expression of Interest with their *curriculum vitae*. Applicants are requested to submit the EoI by 08 October 2021.

The selection of candidates and contractual agreements will be in compliance with BFL operating manual. Women and members of social minorities are encouraged to apply.



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ANNEX A: EVALUATION CRITERIA

Criteria for Overall Evaluation of Program

The evaluation should assess the program against the following criteria:

1. **Relevance** – the extent to which the program design, Milestones and Activities remain valid and consistent with local and national development priorities and organizational policies, including the context of the changing circumstances of the country (e.g. political context);
2. **Coherence** - the compatibility of a program intervention with other interventions (particularly policies) in a country, sector or institution. This can include internal coherence and external coherence. Internal coherence addresses the synergies and interlinkages between the program interventions and those carried about by the same sector or institution in country. External coherence measures consistency and compatibility of the interventions among different sectors, but in the same context.
3. **Effectiveness** - the extent to which the Program Milestones and Activities have been or are likely to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance. Identify the major factors – financial, organizational, political, social, ecological, etc. – which have facilitated or impeded this achievement. Review the management structure of the Program and determine whether the organizational structure of the program, the resources, the distribution of responsibilities and coordination mechanisms are appropriate for achieving progress towards Program Milestones;
4. **Efficiency** - the extent to which results have been delivered with the least costly resources possible. This includes efficiency of: funding availability, program management and human resources, coordination and information flow among the program partners;
5. **Sustainability** - the likely ability of an intervention to continue to deliver benefits, progress and impact after external support has ended. Determine the degree of support and buy-in given to the program at the national and local level;
6. **Adaptive capacity** –the extent to which the use of M&E, lessons learned and adaptive management are used to meet indicator targets and mitigate program issues (such as design flaws or any adverse impacts of the program).

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ANNEX B: SAMPLE EVALUATION REPORT OUTLINE²

- i.** Opening page:
 - Title of program
 - Evaluation team members and affiliations
 - Locator map (if appropriate)
 - Acknowledgements
- ii.** Executive Summary (~2 – 4 pages)
 - Program Description (very brief)
 - Principle findings and recommendations, organized by core criteria
- iii.** Acronyms and Abbreviations
- 1.** Introduction to Evaluation (~3 pages)
 - Purpose of the evaluation
 - Scope & Methodology
 - Composition of the evaluation team, including specific roles
 - Limitations of the evaluation
 - Structure of the evaluation report
- 2.** Program description and development context (~5 pages)
 - Program start and duration
 - Concise summary of program evolution, underlying rationale and strategies to achieve conservation results
 - Main stakeholders and beneficiaries
 - Discussion of baseline and expected results
- 3.** Findings (All criteria marked with (*) must be rated³) (~3-8 pages)
(will include rationale, tables, graphics, and other figures to convey key findings)
 - 3.1** Program Design / Formulation
 - Assessment of whether Program’s Activities are expected to achieve its Milestones, together with assumptions and risks
 - Analysis of M&E approach
 - Lessons from other relevant programs incorporated into Program design
 - Assessment of relevance and coherence including linkages between Program and other interventions in-country
 - Governance and management arrangements as they relate to effectiveness and efficiency
 - 3.2** Program Implementation
 - Assessment of program results (according to seven criteria)
 - Partnership arrangements
 - Implementation of M&E and use for adaptive management
 - Implementation / execution plus coordination, and operational issues

²The Report length should not exceed 30 pages in total (not including annexes).

³ Using a six-point rating scale: 6: Highly Satisfactory, 5: Satisfactory, 4: Marginally Satisfactory, 3: Marginally Unsatisfactory, 2: Unsatisfactory and 1: Highly Unsatisfactory



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3.3 Gender Equality and Mainstreaming

- Assess design and implementation of the gender analysis and gender mainstreaming strategy, including indicators and intermediate results.
- Assess gender responsive measures, as per GCF gender policies.

3.4 Stakeholder Engagement

- Evaluate stakeholder engagement and assess the design and implementation of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (if applicable).

3.6 Safeguards Review

- Assess if safeguards adequately considered in design and implementation;
- Assess implementation of the beneficiary criteria developed during program preparation;
- Provide information on measures taken to address safeguards
- Assess program activities for any additional adverse or unforeseen environmental or social impacts and include potential measures to address these;
- Revise risk category/classification, if applicable;
- Lessons learned
- Submit new assessments, monitoring/management plans or reports.

3.7 Finance and Co-finance review

- Financial management of the program, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions;
- Utilization of grant funds distributed to program partners;
- If any shortfalls in co-financing or materialization affected program results.

4. Conclusions, Recommendations & Lessons

- Lessons learned organized by the core evaluation criteria, including sufficient but concise rationale;
- Specific and actionable recommendations to improve the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and management of the Milestones and Activities in the BFL Conservation Plan; organized as applicable by evaluation criteria and findings; where feasible