

CALL FOR TENDERS

CONSULTANCY: Research on the Just Transition in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Deadline for proposals: 25 September 2024

1. Purpose of the call

RFUK, in collaboration with its Congolese partners, is seeking a research consultant or team of consultants to produce a concise and informative 'white paper'. This paper will be used in the context of a joint initiative to support civil society organisations in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in crafting a holistic vision for a just transition that balances economic viability, environmental sustainability, and social equity. The ideal candidate(s) will have expertise in just transition frameworks, a deep understanding of the DRC context, strong research and analytical skills, experience in stakeholder engagement, and proven ability in writing and communication.

2. Rainforest Foundation UK

Founded in 1989, the Rainforest Foundation UK (RFUK) works to support Indigenous Peoples and other populations of the Congo and Amazon Basins in their efforts to:

- Secure and control the natural resources necessary for their long-term wellbeing and managing these resources in ways which do not harm their environment, violate their culture or compromise their future.
- Develop means to protect their individual and collective rights and to obtain, shape and control basic services from the state.

RFUK is committed to both human rights and environmental protection when it comes to tackling deforestation. Locally, we support forest communities to gain land rights, challenge destructive industries, manage their forests and protect their environment. Globally, we campaign to influence national and international laws and policies that protect rainforests and their inhabitants.

3. Context

DRC is a country of immense natural wealth but with a population among the poorest on earth. Featuring towards the bottom of most development indexes, 90 percent of people lack access to electricity and to basic services. How the country meets its energy and development needs whilst conserving its climate-critical forests and protecting the rights of its citizens is one of the biggest challenges of our times.

The Congolese government has long pursued a development model based on the industrialisation of its vast natural resources, notably through its recent attempts to auction 30 oil and gas blocks and to revive the Inga 3 project, which would be the largest hydroelectric dam on earth. At the same time, the DRC has promoted itself as a 'solutions' country to the climate and biodiversity crises due to its globally significant deposits of critical transition minerals and the vast carbon stocks stored in its forests, which it plans to trade on international voluntary carbon offset markets.

This drive to exploit its natural resources has been met with several social and environmental concerns. While such developments are often couched in terms of local development, observers warn that most of the benefits are likely to accrue in foreign countries and with national elites and extractive companies rather than the Congolese people. Combined with corruption and weak governance, this is leading to a new wave of land grabbing, rent-seeking and human rights abuses. Meanwhile, pressure on forests from extractive industries, associated infrastructure development, population growth and climate change itself continue to grow.

The failure of this 'extractivist' trickle-down economic model to bring sustainable development clearly points to the need for an alternative development pathway in DRC. Yet most studies on the just transition in DRC have viewed the issue through a narrow macro-economic lens, paying insufficient attention to questions of equity and rights when it comes to energy access and low-carbon development. It is in this context that several Congolese civil society organisations have come together and expressed a desire to develop a long-term alternative economic vision for DRC that encompasses these themes.

4. Objective

Develop a white paper to serve as a reference document to support Congolese civil society organisations that wish to build a vision for the just transition, articulating a definition for what this means in a DRC context and outlining the enabling conditions for it. Specifically, the research will focus on three interlinking themes:

- I. Addressing DRC's energy needs in ways that do not compromise human rights or the environment
- II. Protecting forests and catalysing a vibrant green economy founded on the rights of local communities, and
- III. Developing a clear position on the role of critical minerals in DRC's development.

5. Suggested research areas:

NB: This is an indicative list which will be discussed and finalised together with the consultant, also based on their proposed methodology and assessment of the research.

I. *Context:*

- An overview of DRC's development context, its national development programmes, carbon markets, extractive and agricultural industry plans as well as challenges linked to the governance of natural resources.
- Analysis of the global and regional context regarding just transition concepts and their specific application in the Congolese context.

II. *Energy transition:*

- A brief analysis of the current status of energy access and infrastructure in the country and of current national programmes, policies and strategy on this issue.
- A review of economic, social and environmental dimensions of carbon intensive, fossil fuel development in DRC.
- An analysis of technological innovations in the energy sector, including the rise of "green" hydrogen as a proposed clean fuel alternative, and resulting pressures on countries like the DRC within those supply chains.
- An assessment of the potential of large scale vis a vis localised renewable energy to power low carbon, forest-friendly development in DRC, the associated risks and possible mitigation strategies, and the necessary economic inputs and sources of finance.

III. *Forests and the green economy:*

- Brief political economy analysis of forests in DRC including the timber and agricultural industries, the protected area network and the growth of carbon offset projects; net contributions to the formal and informal economies, social impacts etc.
- An analysis of the concept of a green economy in DRC to define its fundamental characteristics.
- Drawing on solid economic analysis and data, present alternative rural development pathway options in DRC's forests (e.g. sustainable agriculture, Payment for Ecosystem Services) that are sustainable, rights-based and inclusive.

IV. *Critical minerals/green extractivism:*

- Analysis of transition minerals sector in DRC; stakeholder mapping, its contribution to the formal and informal economies, environmental and social impacts etc.
- The conditions under which DRC could harness the potential of critical minerals e.g. supply-side measures, value chains, community rights frameworks.

V. *Enabling conditions and fundamental elements of the just transition in DRC:*

- A framework for a just transition in DRC: addressing land rights and tenure challenges, ensuring meaningful inclusion and self-determined development of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, strengthening natural resource governance, the role of the national and local government, the private sector and development partners etc.

VI. *Recommendations and next steps:*

- Targeted recommendations for civil society organisations that can use this document as a tool for articulating and defining their engagement and vision vis-a-vis policy-makers, government agencies, development partners and others who can contribute to the realisation of a *just transition for the DRC*.

6. Methodology

The research will be led by an independent consultant or a team of consultants with multi-disciplinary experience and should include:

- Desk-based research, drawing on existing literature, case studies, statistics, relevant laws, policies and regulations etc.
- Interviews with civil society partners, government representatives and subject matter experts in DRC.
- An in-country visit to DRC (Kinshasa and/or other locations as relevant) should candidate(s) be based outside the country.
- Periodic and ad-hoc meeting with staff at RFUK and a committee composed of local and international partners to refine goals, methodology and approach at key research intervals.
- The consultant should provide a methodology note as part of their proposal.

7. Output

The final product will be in the form of a written report of around 40-pages, in English or French (depending on which language the consultant is more comfortable with).

8. Timeline

Proposals will be accepted until **25 September 2024**. The selection process is expected to conclude by 31 October 2024. A detailed implementation calendar will be discussed as part of the contracting process but it is expected to take roughly 50 paid consultancy days.

9. Budget

Consultants should provide an indicative budget as part of the proposal (including consultancy fees, travel expenses and any other costs). The budget will be agreed upon with the consultant(s) before contracting. Consultants will also be responsible for arranging their own insurance.

10. Skills and Experience

- Strong background in Law, Environmental Science, Development Studies, Social Science, Natural Resource Management, economics, or another relevant field, at post-graduate level.
- In-depth knowledge of theory and policy frameworks linked to the energy transition, green economy and climate justice, particularly in an African context.
- In-depth knowledge of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC): the specific challenges faced in this country and the key stakeholders working on energy and climate issues.
- Strong project management skills to manage a multi-disciplinary research project, including planning and coordinating with stakeholders and meeting deadlines.
- Ability to analyse and distil complex socio-economic and environmental issues related to resource extraction, the transition energy and sustainable development in ways that are accessible, clear and persuasive.
- Strong networking skills to identify and engage diverse stakeholders.
- Creative thinking and ability to propose innovative solutions to promote sustainable development and the transition to a green economy in the DRC, while taking account of local realities and global best practices.
- A track record of working to tight deadlines to produce high-quality outputs.
- Fluency in oral and written French and English is essential.

11. Consultancy proposals should include:

- Demonstration of how the proposed consultancy team meets the skills and experience requirements outlined in Section 10.

- Team structure, if applicable, indicating roles and responsibilities of the research team.
- CVs of all members of the proposed consultancy team.
- References of previous research publications.
- An indicative research methodology note summarising your understanding of the project and your proposed research approach.
- An indicative work plan and budget according to expected outputs.

The successful candidate/team will be selected based on value for money – i.e. their skills and experience, the quality of their technical proposal, as well as the requested budget – and also on their availability as per the project timeline.

Methodologies, work plans and budgets will be further developed in consultation with RFUK and its partners.

12. To apply

Interested applicants should submit proposals to vittoriam@rainforestuk.org with procurement@rainforestuk.org in copy by **25 September 2024** at the latest.

Frequently Asked Questions

Please click here for a list of [Frequently Asked Questions](#) and their answers. We will update this list as and when we receive questions.

For more information, please contact vittoriam@rainforestuk.org