

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Business Models Development Consultancy

GEF-8 Congo Basin Integrated Program — UNEP Regional Coordination Project

Reference: GEFSEC ID: 11248 / Activity 4.1.4	Issuer: Forest Stewardship Africa Limited (FSA) on behalf of UNEP/FSC
Location: Congo Basin Region (Angola, Cameroon, CAR, DRC, Equatorial Guinea, São Tomé and Príncipe)	Contract Duration: 3 Months
Publication Date: 5 May 2026	Submission Deadline: 3 Months

1. Introduction & Purpose

The Forest Stewardship Council Africa Limited (FSC Africa), on behalf of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), invites qualified firms and individual consultants to submit proposals for a Business Models Development Consultancy under the GEF-8 Congo Basin Integrated Program (Congo IP).

This consultancy will develop, validate, and strategically pitch commercially viable, socially equitable, and legally compliant business models for ecosystem services in the Congo Basin, targeting 1,500 direct beneficiaries (50% women).

2. Programme Background

As the second largest contiguous tropical forest on Earth, the Congo Basin harbours 70% of Africa's forest cover and contains the world's largest tropical peatland complex, storing an estimated 30 gigatons of carbon. Annual forest disturbance rates reached 1.79 million hectares between 2015 and 2020. Without intervention, 27% of undisturbed rainforest present in 2020 could disappear by 2050.

A fundamental barrier to conservation is market failure: standing forests are assigned a low market value, creating perverse incentives favouring resource extraction. The value of ecosystem services — carbon sequestration, biodiversity conservation, and water regulation — is not effectively translated into market signals. Forest-dependent communities, particularly Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), are excluded from the economic benefits of conservation.

3. Objective & Scope of Work

The Consultant shall develop and promote the adoption of carbon and ecosystem services strategies and adapted business models to support the valorization of ecosystem services from the Congo Basin. Work will focus on two priority intervention areas:

Model A: Production and Community Forest Biodiversity Premiums

- Develop revenue models combining carbon credits, biodiversity credits, and non-timber forest products (NTFPs)
- Define cost structures for Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) tailored to community-managed forests

- Draft governance structures ensuring compliance with FSC standards and IPLC protocols

Model B: Protected Area Ecosystem Services and Verified Impact Schemes

- Design sustainable financing mechanisms for protected area management (e.g., trust funds, payment for ecosystem services)
- Model integration of carbon offsets with biodiversity conservation outcomes
- Define stakeholder engagement frameworks balancing state agencies with adjacent community rights

3.1 Work Plan Phases

Phase 1 — Inception and Market Mapping (Weeks 1–2): Identify and profile bilateral/multilateral donors and private sector investors; submit Inception Report with financial modelling approach and stakeholder engagement matrix.

Phase 2 — Business Model Drafting (Weeks 3–8): Draft both business models with financial projections, revenue models, governance structures, and MRV cost frameworks.

Phase 3 — Validation and Refinement (Weeks 9–11): Facilitate structured review with 20 regional participants (REFADD, REPALAC, national focal points); incorporate feedback from the Regional Advisory Group (COMIFAC, ECCAS, OFAC).

Phase 4 — Strategic Pitching and Finalization (Weeks 12–14): Present validated models to donors and investors; co-facilitate the Final Validation Workshop; submit final report and pitch summary.

4. Deliverables

#	Deliverable	Description & Format	Deadline
1	Inception Report	Detailed work plan, financial modelling methodology, list of target investors/donors. Format: MS Word/PDF, 15–20 pages.	Week 1
2	Donor and Investor Mapping Report	Comprehensive database of potential financiers, including contact details, investment criteria, and strategic alignment. Format: Excel + Narrative Summary.	Week 3
3	Draft Business Models	Draft documents for both models including financial projections and governance charts. Format: PDF, 20–25 pages per model.	Week 6
4	Validation Workshop Materials	Agenda, presentation decks, feedback forms, and summary report of the 20-participant review session.	Week 9
5	Final Validated Business Models	Final versions of both models incorporating Regional Advisory Group feedback. Format: Professionally designed PDF.	Week 12
6	Progress & Financial Reports	Monthly narrative and financial updates.	Monthly
7	Final Report & Pitch Summary	Summary of pitching activities, investor interest levels, feedback, and lessons learned.	Week 14

5. Eligibility & Technical Requirements

5.1 Experience

- Minimum 10 years of professional experience in business model development for conservation or climate finance

- Proven track record of structuring at least 2 carbon credit projects (REDD+, ARR, IFM) or biodiversity offsets that have reached financial close or are under implementation
- Demonstrated experience engaging with Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) and private sector investors in the African context

5.2 Technical Skills

- Expert-level proficiency in financial modeling (Excel), risk analysis, and stakeholder facilitation
- Deep, verifiable understanding of the socio-political and legal context of the Congo Basin

5.3 Regional Presence Mandate

Bidders must demonstrate a physical presence or proven operational network in the Congo Basin. Evidence must include ONE of the following:

- A registered office in at least one of the six participating countries; OR
- Formal partnership agreements with local entities in the region; OR
- Documentation of prior projects executed in at least 3 of the 6 target countries

5.4 Language Requirements

- Mandatory: Fluency in French and English (written and spoken)
- Advantageous: Proficiency in Portuguese (Angola/STP) and Spanish (Equatorial Guinea)

6. Proposal Submission Requirements

Proposals must be submitted in English or French and must comprise the following components:

A. Capability Statement (Max 5 pages)

A mapping table of previous projects matching the requirements. For each project, specify:

- Project Name and Donor
- Country (must include Congo Basin experience)
- Type of Business Model Developed (e.g., Carbon credits, PES, Biodiversity Offsets)
- Outcome (e.g., Reached financial close, Secured investment)

B. Detailed Methodology

- A thorough description of how the firm will conduct donor mapping, financial modelling, and stakeholder validation
- A clear explanation of how the business models will align with the carbon rights analysis being conducted under Activity 4.2.4 (Policy Assessment Consultancy)

C. Team Composition

- CVs of key personnel highlighting roles (Lead Financial Modeler, Regional Engagement Specialist)
- Proof of regional presence as per Section 5.3

D. Financial Proposal

- Detailed budget broken down by deliverable and personnel
- Daily/monthly rates for key personnel

7. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated on a technical/financial split basis. The evaluation committee will score proposals as follows:

Criterion	Weight	Key Evidence Required
Technical qualifications and track record in conservation/climate finance business models	30%	CVs, capability statement, evidence of projects reaching financial close
Quality and rigor of proposed financial modelling and stakeholder validation methodology	25%	Detailed methodology section
Regional presence and understanding of Congo Basin socio-political context	20%	Proof of office, partnerships, or prior in-region projects
Team composition and sector expertise (DFIs, private sector)	15%	CVs and references
Value for money (financial proposal)	10%	Budget breakdown and justification

8. Key Dates

Publication of Call for Proposals: 5 May 2026

Deadline for Questions: 12 May 2026 (17:00 CET)

Responses to Questions Published: 15 May 2026

Submission Deadline: 19 May 2026, 17:00 CET

Evaluation Period: 20–26 May 2026

Expected Contract Start: June 2026

9. Submission Instructions

All proposals must be submitted electronically to Forest Stewardship Africa Limited via the contact below. Submissions must include all required components (Sections A–D) in a single PDF or ZIP archive.

Late submissions will not be accepted. FSA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals without providing reasons.

Submission Email: fscafrica@fsc.org

Subject Line: CFP | Business Models | GEFSEC 11248 | Activity 4.1.4

Questions to: fscafrica@fsc.org — Questions only; submissions to this address only.

10. General Conditions

- This Call for Proposals does not constitute a commitment to award a contract
- FSA/UNEP/FSC will not be responsible for any costs incurred in the preparation of proposals
- All submitted materials become the property of FSA and will be treated as confidential
- The successful consultant will be required to sign a contract in accordance with UNEP/FSC procurement procedures
- FSC and UNEP are committed to gender equality; proposals should demonstrate how gender-responsive approaches will be integrated, with a specific target of 50% women among direct beneficiaries