



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Longitudinal Impact Review & Learning Evaluation

Project Title: Community-Led Climate Resilience in Zanzibar: A longitudinal impact & learning review of Community Forests' 17 years in operation from grassroots to scale-up to trade readiness.

Locations: Pemba Island and Unguja Island, Zanzibar, Tanzania

Commissioned By: Community Forests International (Canada) & Community Forests Pemba (Zanzibar)

Application Deadline: March 25, 2026 (17:00 Eastern Time UTC -5)

Assignment Length: 6–8 Months

Maximum Budget: \$125,000 CAD plus applicable tax

1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Community Forests International (CFI) and Community Forests Pemba (CFP) have partnered for 17 years to empower communities across Zanzibar. Our work centers on the intersection of livelihood- and nature-based climate adaptation, poverty reduction, and gender equality.

As Community Forests approaches nearly two decades of operation, we seek an independent, third-party evaluation to validate our track record, distill lessons learned, and provide a benchmark for our future trajectory—moving from grassroots tree planting to complex market systems development.

Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and the Trade-Development Nexus

GAC is currently increasing focus on inclusive economic growth that facilitates international trade. We are uniquely positioned to lead in this space as our work has evolved from a startup to enabling social enterprise growth, and now to feminist economic empowerment under the Zanzibar Women Leadership in Adaptation (ZanzAdapt) project which centers on gender-transformative climate action livelihoods.

Our next horizon involves bridging the gap between diversified and rapidly increasing yields from beneficiary agroforestry and community forest efforts to global ethical markets that can drive sustainable results. The scope of work described here will not only provide an objective third-party evaluation of our work to date, but also provide supply-side data and clarity to inform our next chapter of investment and growth.

Community Forests' 17-Year Trajectory

The evaluator will assess impact across six distinct phases of organizational evolution:

- **2007–2011: Grassroots Tree Planting Phase (Startup).** Community Forests was founded by a group of friends and tree-planters from East Africa and Eastern Canada who came together to support communities on Pemba Island, Zanzibar to replant their lost forests. It was an entirely volunteer, grassroots effort in the early days focused on growing seedlings in community-run nurseries and reforesting surrounding degraded areas.
- **2011–2013: Piloting Innovation Phase (Resilient Landscapes).** Expanding on Community Forests' origins in community-based tree planting to test out a wider range of community-based climate resilience innovations including agroforestry, renewable energy and green building, rainwater harvesting and an overall more holistic approach to supporting people and their ecosystems.
- **2015–2019: Scale-Up Phase (Scaleable Resilience).** Identifying the most successful innovations and expanding them to as many people and communities as possible through knowledge products, commercialization, cooperatives, and other social enterprise pathways. Learning the risks of rapid expansion.
- **2019: Social Enterprise Element (Case Study).** Identifying the fragility of ownership and the risks of dependency when bridging from nonprofit community support to community-owned social enterprise methods of creating positive change.
- **2020–2024: Consortium Phase (VI/UNGO).** Navigating complex partnerships and difficulties of maintaining Community Forests standards when relying on other organizations to implement components of shared projects. Establishing a second zonal office on Unguja Island, and expanding to new communities in a new working region.
- **2024–Present: Feminist Phase (ZanzAdapt).** Tackling gender power dynamics and centering equity in community- and nature-based approaches to climate resilience, poverty reduction and forest protection.
- **2027+: Trade-Development Phase:** Transitioning toward a Commercial Execution Unit (CEU) to enable smallholders to earn better income from ecological and climate-adaptive forest livelihoods such as spice agroforestry.

To note:

The evaluation must explicitly account for the distinct operational timelines and maturity levels of Community Forests' interventions across different islands in the Zanzibar Archipelago. Specifically, the study must disaggregate data and analysis between the Pemba Island zone (17-year longitudinal scope) and the Unguja Island zone (6-year scope) to reflect their differing stages of project evolution and community adoption. While respecting these unique context-specific trajectories, the evaluator is required to synthesize findings into a holistic analysis, identifying cross-cutting patterns, replicable success factors, and shared challenges. The final report should articulate how the deeper, long-term lessons from Pemba inform the emerging results in Unguja, providing a unified strategic view of Community Forests' impact on climate resilience and nature-based livelihoods across Zanzibar.

2. Objectives of the Assignment

The primary objective of this assignment is to conduct a longitudinal review of our work up to the present with a view to not only evaluating our current GAC project but also to provide clear lessons and data to shape our forward strategy. Specifically, the evaluation will:

1. **Validate Impact:** Provide a credible, evidence-based summary of how the lives of beneficiaries have changed over the long term with a focus on identifying the most consequential activities and approaches so they may continue to be replicated. Use the Resilience Capacities Framework (RCF) or equivalent models.
2. **Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus):** Conduct a current and retroactive GBA+ analysis centered primarily on the current ZanzAdapt project but also to provide insights into the relative strengths, weaknesses and sustainability of the organization's previous actions.
3. **Learning Review & Success Conditions:** Identify the key ingredients which have enabled Community Forests' most successful interventions to date.
4. **Trade-Development Nexus:** Conduct a value for money and production inventory focused on agroforest and community forest beneficiaries, past and present, to inform the expansion of livelihood and trade approaches to sustainability and to inform Community Forests' next phase of investments.

3. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The evaluator is expected to employ a mixed methods approach combining both quantitative and qualitative data analysis alongside both statistically significant and purposive sampling. The proposed methodology must be summarized in the application and then further elaborated and validated in the first phase of the assignment.

Furthermore, the three specific complementary frameworks below must be adhered to and integrated. Although the Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) is mandatory and the IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions is highly preferred as both these standards are favoured by Global Affairs Canada, the Resilience Capacities Framework (RCF) is only suggested as a means of adequately capturing the critical livelihood-ecosystem nexus—the evaluator may propose an alternative to RCF for consideration.

A. Retroactive Gender Analysis

This assignment is funded by Global Affairs Canada (GAC). While the current phase (ZanzAdapt) operates under GAC's Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP) and Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) frameworks, the preceding 13 years of programming (EU-funded) did not. Therefore, the consultant is expected to apply a Retroactive Gender Analysis across separate phases:

- Current Projects (2023–Present): Strict compliance assessment against FIAP and GBA Plus standards.
- Historical Projects (2007–2023): Use GBA Plus as an *analytical lens* to uncover insights about power dynamics, inclusion, and unintended consequences, without auditing these past projects against compliance standards they were not designed to meet.

B. Nature-Based Solutions (NbS)

To evaluate the technical quality and integrity of the nature-based interventions (e.g., climate-adaptive agroforestry and community-based mangrove forest protection and restoration), the evaluator should reference the IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions. The Consultant is required to assess the interventions against the IUCN NbS standard's eight criteria, with specific emphasis on Criterion 3 (Biodiversity Net Gain) to verify ecological recovery, Criterion 4 (Economic Feasibility) to assess the long-term viability of nature-based livelihoods and if they have proven economically viable without perpetual external subsidy, and Criterion 6 (Balancing Trade-offs) to determine how effectively the project managed competing demands between immediate resource use and long-term ecosystem protection.

C. The Livelihood-Ecosystem Nexus

To assess the evolution of household and community resilience over the 17-year implementation period, the evaluation will utilize the Resilience Capacities Framework (RCF).¹ Unlike static asset-based models, RCF evaluates dynamic responses to shocks through three distinct dimensions: Absorptive Capacity (ability to minimize exposure to shocks), Adaptive Capacity (ability to make proactive, informed livelihood choices), and Transformative Capacity (systemic changes in governance and enabling environments). We direct the evaluator to the official technical guidelines found in USAID's Resilience Measurement Practical Guidance Note Series and specifically *Guidance Note 3: Resilience Capacity Measurement*.

For this assignment, the evaluator is required to tailor the RCF to explicitly measure the contribution of Natural Capital, evaluating how ecosystem restoration (e.g., mangrove buffers, agroforestry systems) has functioned not just as an environmental output, but as a critical safety net and driver of economic adaptability for coastal communities.

D. Data Validation Requirements

The consultant must physically ground-truth historical data points such as tree survival rates, infrastructure status (e.g., schools and solar processing facilities built by Community Forests), and independence of community groups and cooperatives (e.g., Community Forest Management Agreement Committees, the Pemba Spice Producers Cooperative). In addition, to inform sustainability the evaluator must also conduct bio-economic modelling including:

Current Yield Audit: Inventory of current spice production among agroforestry beneficiaries including mature growers supported through previous actions. Conduct field-level yield audits for a representative sample of Senior Growers (from early phases 2015–2020) to establish the maximum proven productivity of mature spice agroforestry systems. Verify current production volumes for key crops such as clove, cinnamon, black pepper and vanilla.

Future Yield Projection: A 5 year production forecast based on current ZanzAdapt technical extension training and material delivery to agroforestry growers. This model must disaggregate by gender to show how women will contribute to total trade volume in the coming years.

Value for Money (VfM): A Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis to gauge the economic multipliers of previous EU investments, to inform a projection of the future SROI of GAC's current investments. For example, what is the projected lifetime economic value generated for a women agroforestry farmer per dollar of donor funding spent on agroforestry extension services?

¹ Refer to Resilience Measurement Practical Guidance Note Series:
<https://www.preventionweb.net/publication/resilience-measurement-practical-guidance-note-series#:~:text=In%20five%20parts%2C%20the%20series,measurement%2C%20from%20assessment%20to%20analysis>

4. KEY EVALUATION THEMES & QUESTIONS

We invite proposals that address the following longitudinal themes using OECD-DAC criteria (Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, Sustainability).

Theme 1: Economic Empowerment & Intersectionality (GBA Plus Lens)

- **Context:** Value creation evolved from subsistence (kitchen gardens) to commodities (spice exports) and now aspirations looking forward to ecosystem services (payments for conservation).
- **Key Question:** Which economic model provided the most reliable safety net for the poorest households? Using a GBA+ lens, did the shift to commercial crops inadvertently exclude land-poor women or people with disabilities?

Theme 2: Gender Transformative Governance (FIAP Action Area 1)

- **Context:** Early projects focused on women's *participation* (numbers). The current phase focuses on *power* (leadership and agency).
- **Key Question:** Are interventions gender transformative? We recognize that women's empowerment entails more than economic empowerment and must also be fostered by organizational capacity development, leadership training and knowledge of rights, and collective efforts to act on this knowledge by protesting injustice or claiming their rights (Kabeer, 2019). As secondary question is if the Male Ally approach (training husbands and male duty-bearers) yielding deeper empowerment results than the previous focus solely on establishing women-led cooperative models? Do women in CoFMA and other community groups established between 2007-2016 still hold decision-making power today?

Theme 3: Nature-Based Solutions & Climate Resilience (FIAP Action Area 4)

- **Context:** Moving from heavy initial manual planting to assisted natural regeneration and ecosystem or agroecological management.
- **Key Question:** Have older mangrove forest restoration sites (2007–2015) reached a tipping point of self-sustaining rewilding? How have these nature-based solutions reduced the unpaid care burden on women (e.g., time spent fetching water/fuel)? What about the longest standing agroforestry systems, how diverse and productive are they now? What percentage of agroforestry and reforestation sites established between 2007-2019 are still thriving today?

Theme 4: The Mindset of Sustainability (Agency & Social Capital)

- **Context:** 2019 research identified potential for dependency syndrome where farmers felt they could not survive without Community Forests' support.
- **Key Question:** Five years later, has that psychological dependency been broken? Have earlier supported communities transitioned from receiving support to managing assets independent of Community Forests' intervention?

Theme 5: The Livelihood-Resilience Link (RCF Analysis)

- **Context:** The organization has moved from subsistence support to developing complex value chains (e.g., spice agroforestry) to incentivize conservation.
- **Key Question:** Has the increase in Financial Capital (income) directly led to an increase in Natural Capital (forest protection), or have there been trade-offs? (e.g., Did higher incomes lead to *more* sustainable practices, or did beneficiaries use new wealth to expand into unsustainable activities?)

5. DELIVERABLES

1. **Inception Report:** Detailing the methodology, sampling strategy, and Retroactive Gender Analysis framework.
2. **Desk Review & Senior Staff Engagement Interviews:** Analyzing all preexisting evaluations and relevant project reports and conducting conversations with senior staff to clarify core actions, approaches and learning summarized in those documents.
3. **Preliminary Findings Workshop:** A presentation to Community Forests staff to ground-truth initial findings and inform context for the larger assignment, and to present the proposed first phase work plan including the first study trip to Zanzibar.
4. **First Study Trip (May 2026):** The initial in-country visit to involved communities and Community Forests' operations in Zanzibar to carry out phase 1 scope of work, and should be planned for late-May / early-June to coincide with the annual ZanzAdapt Project Steering Committee (PSC) meeting.
5. **First Study Report and Workshop:** A presentation to Community Forests staff to deliver the first phase findings and to present the proposed second phase work plan including the second and final study trip to Zanzibar.
6. **Final Study Trip:** The second and final in-country visit to involved communities and Community Forests' operations in Zanzibar to carry out the phase 2 scope of work.

7. **Draft Final Report and Presentation:** Comprehensive analysis provided to Community Forests staff for feedback.
8. **Final Evaluation Report:** (40–50 pages) Including Executive Summary and Recommendations.
9. **External Impact Brief:** A highly visual, 4-page summary document designed for donors and external partners, focusing on the 17-year track record and the trade ready investment case for Community Forests next chapter focused on commercial execution.
10. **Production and Forecasting Annex:** Technical data detailing current inventory and future supply projections. This must be provided in an editable format (Excel) so that Community Forests can review and use it as a live tool going forward.

6. CONSULTANT QUALIFICATIONS

- **Thematic Expertise:** Proven track record evaluating Climate Change Adaptation (CCA), Agroforestry, and Gender-Transformative programming.
- **Trade-Development Nexus:** Demonstrated experience in bio-economic modeling, agriculture and forest supply chain analysis, and market systems.
- **Framework Familiarity:** Demonstrated experience with Global Affairs Canada's RBM, FIAP, and GBA Plus frameworks is mandatory. Additionally, the consultant must demonstrate expertise in applying the Resilience Capacities Framework (RCF) to climate adaptation contexts.
- **Regional Experience:** Extensive experience in East Africa, specifically Tanzania/Zanzibar.
- **Language Skills:** The field team **must be fluent in Swahili** to ensure accurate capture of community sentiment.
- **Independence:** No prior employment or contract history with Community Forests International or Community Forests Pemba to ensure third-party objectivity.

7. APPLICATION PROCESS

Interested parties should submit:

1. **Technical Proposal:** Understanding of the ToR, proposed methodology (specifically addressing the Retroactive Gender Analysis, Trade-Development Nexus and RCF), and work plan. To ensure comparability between bids, all technical proposals must follow this structure:
 - a. **Methodological Matrix:** Bidders must provide a table mapping each of the five themes in Section 4 to their proposed primary data collection (e.g., “Theme 3: NbS will be validated by ## field visits and satellite imagery analysis”).
 - b. **Inventory Approach:** A specific sub-section (max 2 pages) detailing how the consultant will execute the production inventory and bio-economic modeling. This must specify approach to sampling and interpreting data from more senior established growers and new entrants.
 - c. **Level of Effort (LoE) Table:** A summary of person days per deliverable, disaggregated by Senior Consultant, Field Lead, Enumerator.
2. **Financial Proposal:** Bidders must use the following cost categories for a detailed breakdown of their financial submission:
 - a. Phase 1: Inception & Historical Desk Review (fixed fee).
 - b. Phase 2: Field Data Collection & Physical Inventory incl. first study trip (daily rate x no. of days).
 - c. Phase 3: Analysis, Modeling & Impact Brief incl. final study trip and workshop.
 - d. Reimbursable Expenses (travel, workshops, enumerator stipends).

***Budgetary Ceiling:** The maximum available budget for this assignment, inclusive of all professional fees, international and local travel, per diems, and data collection costs, is \$125,000 CAD plus applicable tax.

3. **CVs:** For the lead consultant and key field staff.
4. **Work Samples:** Two examples of similar evaluation reports (preferably covering long-term impact).
5. **References:** At least three references for related or equivalent assignments.

Send proposals to: jobs@forestsinternational.org with the subject line: *Zanzibar Longitudinal Evaluation [Firm Name]*

Deadline: March 25, 2026 (17:00 Eastern Time UTC -5)

→ **Restricted Communication:** From the date of issuance until the contract award, bidders shall not contact any Community Forests International staff or Board members regarding this RFP, other than through the designated email address and process described below.

8. CLARIFICATIONS

a. Requests for Clarification:

Prospective bidders may submit questions regarding any aspect of this RFP, including the technical requirements for the bio-economic model and the scope of the longitudinal review. Questions must be submitted via email to **jobs@forestsinternational.org** no later than **February 25, 2026**. Please use the subject line: *CLARIFICATION: Zanzibar Longitudinal Evaluation [Firm Name]*.

b. Response Procedure (Addendum):

To maintain transparency and ensure a level playing field, individual responses will not be provided. A consolidated **Q&A Addendum** will be sent to all bidders who have expressed interest and will be posted on the Community Forests International website by **March 9, 2026**. This Addendum will include anonymized questions and official responses.

c. RFP Amendments:

Community Forests reserves the right to amend this RFP at any time prior to the submission deadline. Any such amendments will be clearly outlined in the Q&A Addendum. Bidders are responsible for ensuring their technical and financial proposals reflect all information provided in the Addendum.