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CALL FOR PROPOSALS

15 February 2022

‘National Incubation Manager’ to provide in-country support in Thailand for Output 2.5 of the UN-REDD programme’s project for Sustainable Forest Trade in the Lower Mekong Region (SFT-LMR)

Background

Unsustainable and illegal logging and trade is a serious issue, fuelling a network of criminal activity across the Lower Mekong region (LMR). While it is challenging to estimate the extent, volumes and monetary value of illegal logging and timber trade across LMR, independent investigations, media reports and regular seizures by forest administrations and law enforcement agencies are tangible reminders of this recurrent governance problem, including the forest sector. Most national REDD+ strategies or action plans recognise illegal logging and illegal forest conversion as key drivers of forest degradation and deforestation, which further confirms that illegality remains an indicator of wider governance failures in the forestry sector. Underlying weak governance issues such as insecure land tenure, unclear and potentially conflicting or ill-adapted legal frameworks, poor law enforcement and unclear management and enforcement responsibilities, can drive or exacerbate illegality in the forestry sector.

Loss and degradation of natural forests in the middle-income countries of the region have displaced the growing demand for timber to the least developed countries of the region, and illegal logging practices and actors have followed. Intra-regional timber trade dynamics echo that of agricultural commodities, where raw or semi-processed materials from Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar feed the processing industries of Thailand and Viet Nam as well as China; the bulk of these are then consumed regionally or feed the growing global demand for wood products.

A number of countries in the LMR (including Viet Nam, Lao PDR and Thailand) are engaged in negotiating or implementing a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) with the European Union. A core aim of the VPA is to develop and implement a mechanism to ensure that the timber and forest products they export to EU markets are legally sourced and processed. National Timber Legality Assurance Systems (TLAS) are the cornerstone of a VPA which in turn is the key supply side measure of the EU FLEGT Action Plan. Similar legislation is in place or being developed in various other countries that import timber from the region. The implementation of sustainable forest management (FM) and related chain-of custody (CoC) standards through voluntary certification systems can be seen as complementary and synergistic to the legality assurance or verification and other forest governance support efforts currently underway. The expected impact of increasing verifiably sustainably

produced timber and wood products in the LMR countries is to tackle forest crime and reduce deforestation, degradation and associated carbon emissions at national and regional scale.

Outcome 2 of the SFT-LMR project supports LMR countries in developing, strengthening and preparing for the implementation of systems that define and reliably demonstrate the sustainability of wood products. WWF is leading the implementation of Output 2.5 to identify and support the development of viable forest production models for the supply of sustainable timber in Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam.

One intervention being pursued with the support of the enterprise incubation program is to increase forest enterprises' and SMEs' ability to attract or generate investment and/or enhance sustainability. This scaling up of existing sustainable business models and/or enhancement of sustainability is geared towards supporting all enterprises engaged in the supply chain to grow together to benefit as many people and as much forest as possible.

The aim of the enterprise incubation program under SFT-LMR is to support ('incubate'/'accelerate') selected enterprises within these supply chains to develop business plans to enhance their sustainability and growth. Final selection of specific enterprises to be supported will follow a careful process to determine the feasibility of success following both ongoing studies into the reality of existing business models/supply chains and an open call for expressions of interest from enterprises with early ideas that they'd like to develop to as full-fledged business propositions.

National Incubation Manager Role

WWF is expecting to run an enterprise incubation program for a single cohort of enterprises in Thailand during 2022 based on the model developed under the UNEP Restoration Factory program. This is an incubation and mentorship journey for enterprises managers with ideas for sustainable forest trade initiatives that will help them to build viable models for their companies and prepare for more growth and impact. This first cohort will take 6 months to implement plus 2 months to get set up and another for reporting. WWF expects to contract a Lead Incubation Organisation for delivering the envisaged enterprise incubation program consistently across multiple countries. However, as the program is to be run in Thailand, it should be conducted in Thai and thus requires support from a local partner as National Incubation Manager to ensure smooth implementation in the Thai context.

The Enterprise Incubation Manager will be responsible for the operational implementation Enterprise Incubation Programs in Thailand because of their knowledge of the local language and ecosystem, and anchorage in the implementation country. The Enterprise Incubation Manager will work in close collaboration with the Lead Incubation Organisation. Together, they are accountable for the program's success and report to the WWF/UN-REDD project team.

The role includes finalising the program timeline, contributing to the scouting and selection of participants, communicating with participants, tracking the progress of each participant, and providing support to participants (entrepreneurs and mentors) throughout the incubation program, from selection to the closing sessions of the program. This role requires about ~10

hours of work per week for 9 months. The expected project duration is March-November 2022. The specifics of the role are:

Program planning

- In-depth understanding of the program's objectives and phases
- Validation of the program website and marketing materials developed by the Lead Incubation Organisation
- Finalise and validate the program schedule and specific dates for the selection, entrepreneur-mentor matching, incubation, etc. phases
- In collaboration with WWF, propose to the Lead Incubation Organisation additional content to the predefined incubation program that can provide sector-specific or value chain knowledge to entrepreneurs, depending on their sectors
- Finalise the selection criteria for entrepreneurs and mentors to enter the program

National Incubation Manager training

- Attend all incubation management training sessions (around 5 x 1.5h hour sessions, hosted on Zoom), have a stable internet connection during all these sessions.
- Perform the follow-up actions agreed upon after each incubation management training session (example: validating the selection criteria, broadcasting the call for participants, scheduling the cohort calls, etc.)

Application/Selection phase

- Amplify the call for participants in organisation's network, personal networks as well as by sharing with partners locally
- Review incoming applications from entrepreneurs and mentors in coordination with the Lead Incubation Organisation
- Follow up with participants with incomplete applications and remind applicants of the deadlines.
- Keep an eye on the dates to ensure enough applications are received to meet the program participant goals for entrepreneurs/mentors
- Analyse if an extension of application dates will be needed and if so communicate with the Lead Incubation Organisation
- Inform applicants of any delays or changes to the program dates
- Analyse applications and accept or reject participants based on pre-defined selection criteria
- Move accepted applicants to the next stage of the program

Onboarding phase

- Communication with participants about program stages/next steps
- Schedule & facilitate participant's onboarding/welcome call the Lead Incubation Organisation will provide the session outline and the National Incubation Manager will deliver this in Thai
- Answer participants' questions about the program on the ground

Matching phase

- Review invites sent/received by each participant and follow-up as needed
- Assist entrepreneurs in reviewing their “venture description” to improve visibility
- Follow-up with participants to send their rankings/preferences for matches at end of the matching period
- Follow-up on the status of the “mentorship agreement” signing to formally join the enterprise incubation program
- Assign a mentor to entrepreneurs who did not find an organic match and coordinate/communicate with the mentors on this assignment

Incubation phase

- Incubation support for program participation
- Communicate/remind participants of upcoming meetings
- Community engagement, management and content (in program’s Whatsapp group)
- Incubation follow-up with participant’s progress; checking tools progression, following up with entrepreneurs and mentors, reminding of deadlines, problem-solving
- Review the work of the tools in detail and provide feedback or resources to support the entrepreneurs
- Survey follow-up when issues are identified
- Checking in every two weeks with Lead Incubation Organisation
- Remind participants of closing session

Closing phase

- Co-facilitate closing meetings of the program
- Offer participants their final certificate
- Participate in the impact report presentation

Requirements

Skills needed

- Entrepreneurial spirit
- Dynamic, comfortable in a fast-paced, digital work environment
- Strong organisational and coordination skills; there are many different types of responsibilities, so being able to stay organised is essential.
- Good writing skills, ability to have a friendly but professional tone and deliver information effectively
- Agility in facing change, ability to adapt
- Good interpersonal and communication skills, comfortable with entrepreneurs, mentors and partners
- Comfortable facilitating and speaking in groups
- Extraordinary attention to detail/dislike of imperfections related to work; should test materials, tools, etc. before releasing them
- Comfortable with analysing data and making quick decisions based on that data to improve program outcomes.
- At ease digitally and testing new tools and improving processes
- Resourcefulness and common sense to approach problems effectively

Education & experience of key personnel

- Advanced university degree (Bachelor's or Master's or equivalent) in business administration, management, economics or related field
- A minimum of two years of experience in project or program management
- Experience advising entrepreneurs/mentoring/coaching is preferred
- Previous experience in start-ups/entrepreneurship is a plus
- Comfortable with technology tools such as online platforms, Trello, Slack, Google Drive, or willing to learn quickly
- Good command of spreadsheets
- Oral and written English, local languages of where the program is implemented desired as well.

Application Process

Interested organisations, individuals, consortia should develop a brief proposal to be submitted to james.bampton@wwfgreatermekong.org by 17:00 Indochina time on 28 February 2022 detailing the following:

- ✓ Key personnel – curricula vita should be attached as an annex
- ✓ Past relevant experience – project summaries can be attached as an annex
- ✓ Financial proposal – 45 days' consultant full time equivalent
- ✓ Any other relevant information