

Terms of Reference - Case studies for ClientEarth's 'Building legal foundations for sustainable forests & livelihoods' programme

1. Introduction to the programme

ClientEarth's 'Building legal foundations for sustainable forests and livelihoods' five-year project (2021-2026) sought to combat deforestation on supply-side forest governance reform and demand-side forest commodity supply chain reform. The first objective was to improve and promote community forestry as a tool to enhance forest management and governance, reduce deforestation, conserve biodiversity and generate sustainable development, focussing on Liberia (Outcome 1), Republic of Congo (Outcome 2) and Gabon (Outcome 3). The second objective was to promote, and shape import commodity regulations focusing on two of the largest importing markets, the EU (Outcome 4) and China (Outcome 5). Our target groups are local communities in Liberia, Republic of Congo and Gabon, and government decision-makers in the EU and China.

ClientEarth's activities focussed on legal analysis, training, advocacy and support on legal concepts. All activities under this programme have been implemented in partnership with in-country partners with established track records in forest governance and community engagement. ClientEarth's role has been to provide strategic, legal, and technical support through and alongside our partners, ensuring that interventions remain locally owned, contextually relevant, and rooted in existing relationships with key national and community stakeholders. This partnership model is central to the programme's approach and will be reflected in the scope and methodology of the endline evaluation.

The programme was funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) under its Norad International Climate and Forests Initiative (NICFI). NICFI's overall goal is to contribute to the reduction and reversal of tropical forest loss to enable a stable climate, preserved biodiversity and sustainable development.

2. Objectives of the consultancy

ClientEarth's NICFI-funded activities run from 1 May 2021 to 31 March 2026. As the programme period is coming to an end, ClientEarth is commissioning a consultancy to produce high-quality case studies ("stories of change") designed to document programme outcomes, lived experience, and lessons learned for communication, donor engagement and organizational learning purposes.

The objective of the consultancy is to produce compelling and ethically grounded case studies showcasing how programme interventions have contributed to meaningful change in the lives of participants and communities. The consultant will use a combination of written narrative, photography, and (where feasible) short-form video documentation.

The case studies will be from individuals, communities, or institutions that have benefitted from the programme in Liberia and / or Gabon such as:

- Communities supported through Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms (Liberia)
- Women leaders empowered through governance and capacity-strengthening initiatives (Liberia/ Gabon)
- Communities receiving training on sustainable, alternative activities to generate income and support livelihoods within community forests (Gabon).

The stories produced by this consultancy will contribute to donor reporting, resource mobilisation, organisational learning, stakeholder engagement, and public communications.

All intellectual property rights developed or created by the consultant while carrying out this consultancy will be the sole property of ClientEarth.

3. Scope of Work

The consultant will be responsible for the following tasks:

Content Development

The consultant will conduct field visits to selected communities in Liberia and/or Gabon, as determined by the programme team. During these visits, the consultant will gather qualitative data through interviews, direct engagement with community members, observation, and review of relevant documentation.

Based on this, the consultant will draft between two and four high-quality case studies or stories of change. Each case study should demonstrate a clear narrative structure, be supported by strong qualitative evidence, and convey emotional resonance while maintaining accuracy and credibility.

Each case study is expected to include the following elements:

- A clear introduction outlining the title, purpose, key messages, and type of case study.
- A description of the situation prior to programme intervention.
- An overview of the key challenges faced by communities or stakeholders.
- An explanation of the programme actions and interventions implemented.

- Documentation of observed changes, including planned and unplanned outcomes, as well as positive and negative effects where relevant.
- Evidence supporting the documented changes.
- An analysis of impact, sustainability, and key influencing factors.
- Lessons learned and practical recommendations.
- Relevant photographs, quotes or testimonials, and, where appropriate, links to short video content.

Visual Documentation

The consultant will produce high-quality photographic content that accurately and respectfully depicts programme participants in their communities, programme activities, and any changes or impacts realised as a result of the programme.

All individuals photographed must provide informed consent, and all photography must comply with safeguarding requirements and ethical standards.

Where feasible and appropriate, the consultant may also produce short-form video content (approximately 30–120 seconds in length). This may include interviews with beneficiaries, scenes from community life, and footage of key programme activities or moments of change.

Ethical and Safeguarding Requirements

The consultant will ensure informed consent is obtained from all individuals featured in written, photographic, or video materials. All representations must uphold dignity, accuracy, and respect, and avoid extractive, misleading, or sensational narratives.

The consultant will ensure data privacy and the secure handling, storage, and transfer of all photo, video, and interview materials.

The consultant will adhere to ClientEarth’s safeguarding, data protection, and ethical storytelling policies and guidelines, which will be shared at inception. ClientEarth reserves the right to exclude, request revisions to, or withhold approval of any content that raises safeguarding, consent, ethical, or reputational concerns.

Collaboration and coordination

The consultant will participate in briefing calls with the programme team and coordinate closely with in-country partners to plan and schedule field visits and interviews. The

consultant will incorporate feedback from programme and communications teams throughout the assignment.

Final deliverables will be provided in editable formats, and all raw media files will be shared in full with ClientEarth. ClientEarth will provide consolidated feedback on draft materials within an agreed timeframe. A maximum of two rounds of revisions is anticipated per case study.

4. Key outputs

The final number of case studies, photographs, and any video outputs will be agreed at the contracting stage and aligned with the approved budget, scope of work, and number of field visits.

The key deliverables of the consultancy will include the following:

Case Studies

The consultant will produce 5 written case studies, each of approximately 800-1200 words, unless otherwise agreed.

Each case study must follow the agreed structure and include, at a minimum:

- An introduction.
- A description of the initial situation.
- A description of the changes observed.
- An analysis of those changes.
- Lessons learned and recommendations.
- Relevant photographs, quotes or testimonials, and links to any related media content.

Photography

The consultant will provide a minimum of 5 high-quality photographs per case study. The photographic outputs must include:

- Portraits of individuals, captured with informed consent.
- Images of the environment, community context, and programme activities.
- Visual evidence of “before and after” change, where feasible.
- Horizontal (landscape) images suitable for reports and publications.

- Vertical images suitable for social media and digital platforms.

Video content (where agreed)

Where agreed as part of the contract, the consultant will produce between one and three short videos, each approximately 30–120 seconds in length.

Each video should include:

- Interview clips with beneficiaries or relevant stakeholders.
- A simple narrative illustrating the change or impact achieved.
- Footage that provides community context and highlights relevant activities.

Supporting Material

The consultant will submit signed consent forms for all individuals featured in written, photographic, or video materials. All raw photo and video files must be provided in an organised and clearly labelled format. Final, edited case study documents must be delivered in an editable format, such as Microsoft Word or Google Docs.

5. Tentative timeline

The timeline may be adjusted to account for field access, community availability, and safeguarding considerations.

- Consultancy to begin 15 February 2026
- Preliminary findings presented by 15 March 2026
- Drafts submitted by 15 March 2026
- Final versions by 31 March 2026

6. Required Qualifications

- Proven experience producing human-centred case studies, stories of change, or journalism in development/human rights contexts.
- Strong photography skills; videography experience desirable.
- Ability to work sensitively with vulnerable or marginalised communities.
- Strong writing, narrative development, and analytical skills.
- Ability to work independently in challenging environments.
- Fluency in English; French is required for Gabon.

- Understanding of gender equality, disability, and social inclusion (GEDSI) principles.

7. Remuneration

There is a maximum budget of £5000 (inc. VAT and all applicable taxes). Payment can be made on receipt of deliverables and/or invoices.

8. Application process

Please submit a cover letter, CV, and portfolio showcasing relevant photographic work, together with a short technical proposal and budget outlining the proposed methodology for the consultancy, to Catherine Lalonde at clalonde@clientearth.org by 28 January 2026. Please note that applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis as they are received.

Applications will be assessed against predetermined evaluation criteria, including relevant experience, proposed methodology and approach, timeline and ability to meet deadlines, as well as cost-effectiveness and value for money.