



Forest Carbon Technical Advisor

Terms of Reference for a new position

Location: Phnom Penh
Department, Division: Mekong Regional Program
Reports to: Cambodia Country Director
Coordinates with: Conservation Solutions Staff
Term: TBD
Expected Start Date: TBD

Background

The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) is a US non-profit, tax-exempt, private organization established in 1895 that saves wildlife and wild places by understanding critical issues, crafting science-based solutions, and taking conservation actions that benefit nature and humanity. WCS assists the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) to conserve species and habitats in four landscapes across Cambodia, namely, the Eastern Plains, the Northern Plains, the Tonle Sap, and the Freshwater Rivers. Taken together these landscapes support all of the major habitat types in Cambodia, as well as vital populations of most of Cambodia globally threatened species.

The Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary (KSWs), in the Eastern Plains landscape, is an active REDD project under the requirements of the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) and Climate, Community and Biodiversity (CCB) Standards. The project was validated in 2015 and is currently undergoing its third verification. To date, the project has generated significant financial resources for conservation and community development by preventing deforestation caused by agricultural expansion, large-scale land concessions, and illegal logging.

Based on the success of KSWs, WCS Cambodia and the Ministry of Environment (MoE) are in the process of developing the Northern Plains landscape – consisting of four interconnected wildlife sanctuaries – as a REDD project, also under the requirements of the VCS and CCB Standards. Joint project validation and verification is expected in early 2022.

Concurrently, the RGC is developing its requirements for standalone REDD projects to nest within a national REDD+ system as of 2021. WCS is an active participant in this national REDD+ policy dialogue to ensure REDD+ projects are adequately recognized and incentivized within this emerging system.

Position Overview

The Forest Carbon Technical Advisor's primary purpose is to manage WCS Cambodia's REDD+ portfolio. This includes: developing the necessary project documentation to ensure project registration and/or verification of ongoing credits from both the Northern Plains and KSWs REDD projects according to the requirements of the VCS and CCB Standards; monitoring and reporting on project progress; supporting landscape teams in the design of project interventions to collect and analyze necessary data and information, as well as ensure alignment with the project's theory of change; and, liaise with outside marketing partners for the sale of project credits.

The Forest Carbon Technical Advisor will collaborate with a range on internal and external stakeholders, including: landscape-based field teams and managers; technical support teams (e.g. GIS/Remote Sensing team); Senior WCS Cambodia Management Team; local to national government authorities; Validation and Verification Bodies (VVBs) and the Verra Secretariat; project investors and credit buyers.

The position will report to the WCS Cambodia Country Director and oversee the national REDD+ Technical Advisor(s). He/she will collaborate closely with the Senior Technical Advisor, Operations Manager and the Landscape Managers.

Position Responsibilities

Project Development and Monitoring

- Lead the design, collection and analysis of all data and information required to successfully achieve project validation and verification according to the requirements of the VCS and CCB Standards. Ensure data collection and analysis represents most up-to-date scientific findings and best-practice approaches.
- Engage specialized consultant firms to develop all necessary project documentation (PDs, MIRs, etc.) to achieve validation and verification for both WCS REDD projects.
- Ensure alignment of project activities and interventions with CCB safeguard requirements and VCS requirements.
- Act as the lead on project validation and verification audits, including engagement with VVBs and responding to VVB findings.
- Provide oversight and direction to the national REDD+ Technical Advisor(s) to ensure community benefits are delivered and safeguards adhered to as stipulated in project documents and according to safeguard requirements.
- Develop standard procedures for data collection and reporting to facilitate project monitoring and reporting across all project interventions.
- Ensure both REDD projects nest within the national REDD jurisdictional system according to national requirements.

Policy Engagement

- Participate in all national REDD processes and establish WCS as a port of REDD+ policy and technical excellence.
- Provide policy and technical advisory support to MOE as requested.
- Closely follow the development of the national REDD+ jurisdictional system to maximize potential value to WCS's REDD+ projects.

Project Marketing and Funding

- Support the development of project marketing and promotional materials for use by external REDD+ marketing firms.
- Act as principal liaison for REDD project information requests from WCS' external REDD+ marketing firm, as well as existing and potential credit buyers.
- Lead or contribute to client-specific reporting (as appropriate)
- Seek out and develop grant funding proposals supporting project outcomes.

Capacity Building

- Collaborate with and train, where necessary, REDD+ Technical Advisor(s) and landscape field teams to collect necessary project data/information and monitor key project indicators.
- Establish competencies of REDD+ Technical Advisor(s) and landscape managers to lead on the ongoing monitoring and verification of REDD+ project achievements.

Qualifications & Competencies

Required

- Master's degree in forestry, environmental science, geography, conservation or a related field.
- Prior experience and familiarity with the design and implementation of large, landscape-level forest conservation and rural development projects.
- 6+ years' experience in the assessment, development and implementation of forestry and land-use projects, preferably for the carbon markets under the VCS and CCB Standards.
- Prior experience with the development, validation and verification of AFOLU projects under the VCS and CCBA.
- Strong analytical and writing skills; extreme attentional to detail.
- Professional experience in leading project management and project reporting.
- Demonstrated professional-level fluency in both oral and written English is required
- Ability to travel to project sites, as required, for extended periods

Preferred

- Experience in proposal development and grant reporting
- Communication skills in Khmer
- Demonstrated GIS and Remote Sensing competencies

To successfully satisfy the requirements of this position, you should:

- Have good personal organizational and priority setting skills, with the ability to work effectively under time pressure and manage multiple priorities
- Be capable of working independently as well as being an effective team player, with initiative and creativity
- Have a demonstrated ability to coordinate multiple stakeholders in a culturally diverse setting and build project alliances
- Value information sharing and continuous improvement in a cooperative atmosphere of constructive evaluation and learning.