

CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST - ACCOUNTABLE GRANTS

FLEGT VPA SUPPORT FUND IN MYANMAR

Invitation No: VPASF-001

Issue Date: 12-12-2017

Submission Deadline: 5-1-2018

1. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

In January 2015, the Government of Myanmar began preparations to negotiate a Voluntary Partnership Agreement for Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT VPA) with the European Union (EU).

The United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) has provided GBP 2.5 million to establish a VPA Support Fund for the preparation and negotiation of a FLEGT VPA between Myanmar and the EU. Disbursement and administration of funds will be managed by Palladium International through its FLEGT Support Office in Myanmar.

Stakeholders in Myanmar have developed a work plan comprising activities needed to prepare for VPA negotiations. A 24-member multi-stakeholder Interim Task Force (ITF) has been established to oversee implementation of these activities and to undertake necessary preparation tasks for the emergence of a Multi-Stakeholder Group (MSG).

As well as financing activities led by the ITF / MSG, Accountable Grants will be accessible to other entities through the VPA Support Fund. A Bilateral Oversight Committee, comprised of representatives from DFID and the Government of Myanmar, will oversee use of the fund. The Bilateral Oversight Committee will periodically review the performance and effectiveness of this fund, including a reflection of an equitable balance of support to various stakeholder interests.

Monitoring of specific grant performance against agreed work plans and progress towards deliverables will be undertaken by the ITF / MSG. Monitoring and oversight of financial invoicing, reporting and financial management will be the responsibility of Palladium.

2. GOAL, OUTCOME AND OUTPUTS

2.1 Goal

The overall goal of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) support fund is to promote legal and sustainable forest management in Myanmar through strengthening forest governance and forest law enforcement, combatting illegal logging and promoting legal timber trade.

2.2 Outcome

The outcome of the support fund is to conclude a VPA between Myanmar and the EU through a range of actions, including bilateral negotiations, national multi-stakeholder deliberations on VPA components.

2.3 Outputs

- Output 1: To build consensus among stakeholders concerning the scope and contents of the VPA, including building their knowledge and understanding through studies and field trips.
- Output 2: To negotiate the VPA, in a way that views and concerns of stakeholders are taken fully into account
- Output 3: To conclude negotiations and ratify the VPA.
- Output 4: To develop essential systems described in the VPA, including a Timber Legality Assurance System and its components.
- Output 5: To implement the systems and issue FLEGT licences.

3. GRANT FUNDING FOR OTHER ENTITIES

A portion of the VPA Support Fund will be available as Accountable Grants to support organizations whose activities contribute to preparing for and carrying out VPA negotiations. Funding is available to Myanmar non-government organizations and private sector firms that clear Palladium's due diligence process, and also by government agencies, where the work is additional to their normal responsibilities.

There will be periodic competitions, with grants awarded to organizations which are considered to offer the best contribution to VPA preparations and negotiations in accordance with the evaluation criteria. Selection of grantees will be performed through a two stage process, based on the evaluation of Expressions of Interest, followed by an assessment of full project proposals.

In 2017, the ITF / MSG is making available GBP 400,000 for Accountable Grants from the VPA Support Fund. Each individual project may receive grant funding of up to a maximum of GBP 60,000. Grant funding can be used to support projects for a duration of up to one (1) year.

DFID understands that many organizations whose participation is critical to the VPA process in Myanmar may face barriers to completing formal registration with the national government. The ITF / MSG is therefore open to considering proposals for funding from unregistered organisations through a modified award process. Further information on the modified award process will made be available by the FLEGT Secretariat.

3.1 Eligible Activities:

Activities that are deemed necessary to support stakeholder engagement with VPA negotiations and in particular to further the actions set out in the ITF Workplan are eligible for funding. As a guide, such activities may include:

- Communication and information dissemination on FLEGT VPA activities;
- Support to the development of the Timber Legality Assurance System;
- Development of training manuals and verification and licensing protocols;
- Review of policies and laws to make them consistent with VPA requirements;
- Training and capacity building activities related to VPA negotiation process and implementation;
- Observation of the linkages between the FLEGT VPA and peace process discussions, resource sharing, regional economic development and ethnic rights;
- Publications of documents (e.g. legal definition, guidelines produced, the design of brochures to support the VPA process in Myanmar, brochures for awareness raising activities);
- Commission studies or other research to inform negotiating positions on particular issues or elements to be covered by the agreement;
- Supporting stakeholder consultations within or between stakeholder groups; including support to cover the travel costs for Myanmar's negotiating team to attend relevant meetings;
- Stakeholder consultations and analysis that address gender concerns would be of particular interest to DFID that support ITF / MSG work in Myanmar;
- Supporting visits by stakeholders to other VPA partner countries or elsewhere to draw lessons that may inform Myanmar's negotiating position; and
- Review of business processes within MONREC.

3.2 Ineligible activities:

Any activity/entity that has not received endorsement from the ITF / MSG and Bilateral Oversight Committee will not be eligible to receive grant funds. The following list illustrates the type of activities that are not eligible to receive grant funding (NB: the list is not exhaustive):

- Support for activities that bear no relevance to the VPA roadmap (e.g. a proposal to carry out tree planting);
- No retrospective funding for activities that have taken place prior to the submission of the proposal to the Bilateral Oversight Committee;
- Any activities that are aimed at providing loans or investments to other entities;
- Asset Management/Disposal;
- The use of funds to supplement existing staff salaries;

- Salary components that are directly attributed to the implementation of activities will be approved at the discretion of the Oversight Committee.

4. CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

In the first instance, organizations are invited to submit a short Expression of Interest for grant funding from the VPA Support Fund. These Expressions of Interest will allow organizations to present an overview of their ideas for projects that contribute to the VPA, and receive feedback from the ITF / MSG before committing to assembling a full project proposal.

The Expressions of Interest will be evaluated by the ITF / MSG in accordance with the criteria for eligible activities, as set out in Section 3 of this document.

Organizations having submitted a successful Expression of Interest will then be invited to attend a proposal and project management workshop, before proceeding to submit a full project proposal for Accountable Grant funding.

Expressions of Interest are to be submitted in the following format:

1. Cover Letter
2. Two-page Expression of Interest (using the template in Annex 1 of this document)

Expressions of Interest are to be submitted in soft copy format to:

The FLEGT Secretariat
No 53-54, Kyaing Tone Street, Oattara Thiri Township
Nay Piy Taw
Email: flegt.secretariat@gmail.com
Telephone: 0996 354 1351

Any questions regarding the Expression of Interest may be submitted in writing to the FLEGT Secretariat Office.

All Expression of Interests are to be submitted no later than 5th on the January of 2018.

Regards,



Kyaw Zaw

Director, Natural Forest and Plantation Division

Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation

Nay Piy Taw, 12th December, 2017

ANNEX 1: EXPRESSION OF INTEREST TEMPLATE

Project Title:	Click here to enter text.		
Organisation name:	Click here to enter text.		
Organisation type:	Click here to enter text.		
Is the organisation registered as a legal entity?	Click here to enter text.		
Applicant email:	Click here to enter text.		
Applicant telephone:	Click here to enter text.		
Project Location:	Click here to enter text.		
Partners, if any:	Click here to enter text.		
Total grant funding sought (GBP)	< GBP 6,500		
	GBP 6,500 – GBP 30,000		
	> GBP 30,000 – GBP 60,000		
Intended project outcome: Activities to be performed.			
General implementation approach: I undersigned with interest			
Declaration of Expression of Interest:			
Name:			
Position:			
Date:			

Signature:	
------------	--