

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF
INTEREST

January 2024

PRODUCTION OF A SYNTHESIS OF THE KNOWLEDGE GENERATED BY THE RESEARCH OF THE ECOPRONAT PROGRAMME

**ECOPRONAT RESEARCH PROGRAMME:
'ENCOURAGING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PRO-NATURE ECONOMY'**

With assistance to the contracting
authority from
e-sud développement
www.e-sud.com

Paris, 26/01/2024



Reference:

Subject: 'Request for expressions of interest – Production of a synthesis of the knowledge generated by the research of the ECOPRONAT programme'

Madam, Sir,

As part of the biodiversity research and knowledge programme, 'Encouraging the development of a pro-nature economy' (ECOPRONAT), I am honoured to inform you of the launch of this request for expressions of interest (REol).

This REol is part of the activities to capitalise on the programme and its research projects, and this document sets out the framework and terms of reference for said REol.

Your proposal must be received no later than the deadline set out in point 6.4 of the Instructions to Tenderers.

Yours faithfully,

Julien CALAS
Biodiversity Research Officer
Agence Française de Développement

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1. THE ECOPRONAT RESEARCH PROGRAMME

1.1. Presentation of the programme

In 2019, AFD developed the [ECOPRONAT research programme](#) on taking into account and mainstreaming biodiversity in all economic sectors to promote the development of a pro-nature economy based on the lessons learned from research. This programme aims to: (i) develop knowledge and methodologies to mainstream biodiversity in the AFD Group's policies and various fields of action, (ii) mobilise funding, and (iii) build the capacities of research students and researchers from the Global South.

It has four components:

- Component 1: Transformative changes of development models (development of knowledge to mainstream biodiversity in agricultural, land-use planning and urban policies and sectors);
- Component 2: Mobilisation of funding to finance a pro-nature economy.
- Component 3: Capacity building of research teams.
- Component 4: Changing models by providing change management support to AFD's beneficiaries and partners.

1.2. Governance

AFD is the Contracting Authority of the ECOPRONAT programme which was approved in December 2019 by the Foreign States Committee for a duration of four years and a total of EUR 3.5 million. In this capacity, AFD relies on a Steering Committee made up of members appointed *intuitu personae* from:

- the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE) and the French Ministry of Ecological Transition (MTE).
- the main departments concerned at AFD's headquarters (Operational Departments in charge of Agriculture, Rural Development, Biodiversity and Urban Development, as well as the Research Department) and its subsidiary for the private sector, Proparco (Environment, Social and Governance Division).
- the French Global Environment Facility (FFEM).
- Expertise France.
- various other partners mobilised for their expertise in the issues addressed.

AFD's IRS/ECO department (Economic Analysis and Public Policy Department under the Innovation, Research and Knowledge Directorate) manages the Steering Committee.

The management of components 1 and 2 of this programme has been awarded to the e-sud consultancy firm through a call for tenders. E-sud thus supports AFD in selecting and contracting research partners and monitoring the implementation of activities.

1.3. Challenges

The Global Assessment on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services published by IPBES in 2019 confirms that 'nature is declining globally at rates unprecedented in human history — and the rate of species extinctions is accelerating, with grave impacts on people around the world'. It states that human populations are suffering directly due to the loss of the ecosystem services

on which they depend, that current global responses are insufficient, and that 'transformative changes' are needed to restore and protect nature.

However, IPBES (2019) claims that it is possible to conserve, restore and use nature sustainably and, at the same time, to achieve other societal goals on a global scale – notably for food, water, energy, health and well-being for all, adaptation to climate change and the mitigation of its effects, and the conservation and sustainable exploitation of nature – through urgent and concerted efforts to implement profound changes.

Several major issues related to the IPBES report seem particularly relevant to the ECOPRONAT programme, including:

- (i) **The integration of biodiversity in all extraction and production sectors and the transformational changes of the sectors concerned** (production/agriculture, infrastructure, and the consumption of areas, urban, financial, etc.) should complement and reinforce biodiversity conservation approaches (particularly in terms of protected areas).
- (ii) The mainstreaming of biodiversity aims **to make the sectors concerned more resilient and fairer**. This is both a motivation and a condition for the sectors to consider their transformation.
- (iii) **AFD is a major international actor in biodiversity management**. With EUR 457 million invested and 140 projects committed to biodiversity in 2019, it plays a key role both through its own interventions and by its influence on all of its 'clients' and partners. The ECOPRONAT programme should bring AFD to the forefront of the response to the call of IPBES.
- (iv) While the climate change agenda and associated funding (by AFD but also the Green Climate Fund and many other actors) often tends to take precedence over the biodiversity agenda, **the convergence of the biodiversity and climate agendas, particularly through the implementation of nature-based solutions, is essential**. This is the case for both emission mitigation and adaptation.
- (v) Finally, as AFD is not a research funding agency as such, the link between research and action must be a central concern of the ECOPRONAT programme so that it contributes effectively to the transformative changes sought in economic and development models.

1.4. Presentation of the projects supported by ECOPRONAT.

1.4.1 Projects funded under component 1.

Given the diversity of economic sectors concerned by the need to mainstream biodiversity, the ECOPRONAT programme focuses its research efforts on three sectors:

- agriculture, including forestry and livestock farming.
- land-use planning in relation to the issues of infrastructure development, the consumption of areas and artificialisation of land.
- urban development.

Two calls for projects were launched to select the supported research projects.

The first call for projects '**Mainstreaming biodiversity in economic sectors**', launched in 2021, enabled two research projects to be selected:

- ['A farming system approach to mainstream biodiversity in agriculture and planning sectors: bridging between the national and local levels'](#). This project, led by Mozambique's *Observatorio do Meio Rural* (Rural Observatory) and its partners, aims to understand the interplay and complementarities between poverty reduction, food security and biodiversity in the agricultural systems of developing countries dominated by small-scale farms whose expansion (and changes in their practices) is a threat to biodiversity. The project runs from January 2022 to October 2024.
- ['Enabling agro-ecological wildlife economies that sustain people and planet'](#). Implemented by the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) and its partners, this research project aims to produce knowledge and tools to encourage a transition in agricultural land use from models that degrade natural ecosystems to agricultural models that help restore them. In particular, this project studies the development of wildlife-breeding enterprises that make it possible to link agricultural activity with conservation development in South Africa and Kenya. This project runs from March 2022 to October 2024.

The second call for projects, entitled **'Nature-based solutions (NbS) and large-scale restoration'**, selected four projects in 2022:

- ['A strategic framework for NbS: rapid assessment and collaborative identification of NbS at city scale to improve territorial ecological resilience \(water, temperatures and biodiversity\)'](#). This project, led by the World Resources Institute (WRI) and its partners, aims to encourage the scaling up of nature-based solutions in the cities of Kigali and Addis Ababa to address water- and heat-related risks, and improve ecological resilience by helping cities to identify: (i) natural risks, (ii) the potential of NbS to address them, (iii) strategies to implement and finance NbS as part of the urban planning process. It runs from October 2022 to January 2024.
- ['Enabling nature-based solution scale-up in Latin American cities \(ENSLAC\)'](#). This project, led by Yes Innovation and its partners, analyses, and explores the mechanisms that enable the scaling up of NbS in Latin American cities based on 15 selected case studies in Ecuador, Colombia, and Peru. It runs from September 2022 to October 2024.
- ['Addressing constraints \(technical, institutional and socio-economic\) for scaling up wetland restoration and management in Uganda'](#). This research project led by the IHE Delft Institute for Water Education and its partners aims, on the basis of two case studies, to facilitate and improve the scaling-up of sustainable wetland restoration in Uganda (taking account of institutional and socio-economic constraints, effects on ecosystems and sustainability, decision-making support, capacity-building). It runs from September 2022 to October 2024.
- ['Greening urban food systems: developing sustainable urban agriculture practices through nature-based solutions'](#). This research project led by the Indian Institute for Human Settlements (IIHS) and its partners aims to identify how to mobilise different combinations of co-production, between science-policy-practice and citizens to scale

up NbS around sustainable urban farming practices. It runs from April 2023 to October 2024.

In addition to these sectoral research activities on mainstreaming biodiversity, this component also aimed to produce knowledge on synthetic indicators of biodiversity protection at national level, linking biodiversity to strong sustainability¹. The aim is to work on the national level, where environmental policies (including mainstreaming) are developed and managed, and to identify one or more approaches that can be used to check whether protection (and mainstreaming) policies are effective in terms of achieving results on the state or functionality of ecosystems.

- A first batch of work was launched with University College of London on the **ESGAP (Environmental Sustainability Gap) indicator**, which enables the environmental sustainability of a territory to be assessed in the light of the international or national standards defining the 'good ecological status' of a series of functions provided by ecosystems. The programme has supported research dedicated to the development of this [strong sustainability](#) indicator. In particular, it supported case studies in [Vietnam and Kenya](#) between 2020 and 2021, as well as an analysis of the environment in terms of the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) by contributing to the UNEP report 'Measuring progress - Nature and the SDGs'².
- A call for projects was launched in 2022 to further develop the **methodology of the synthetic indicator** of environmental sustainability, ESGAP. Two research projects were selected:
 - o The first, led by University College of London, Basque Centre for Climate Change, Stellenbosch University & National University of Colombia, aims to develop indicators on biodiversity and the state of health of natural ecosystems within the methodological framework of [ESGAP in Colombia and South Africa](#) (March 2023 - November 2024).
 - o The second, led by the Vertigo Lab-ECOACT consortium, aims to [develop a monetary ESGAP](#) by mobilising abatement costs, i.e. the costs required to reduce pressures on the environment, using Vietnam as a case study. An assessment of the physical and financial risks related to biodiversity and its degradation for Vietnam is also being carried out (September 2023 - September 2024).

1.4.2 Projects funded under component 2

These research activities aim to mobilise the financial sector to fund a pro-nature economy. Two main research activities have been carried out.

- In 2022, the programme supported an assessment of the readiness of public development banks (PDBs) to use the nature-related financial risk management and disclosure framework prepared by the Task Force on Nature-Related Financial Risk Disclosure (TNFD). This work was carried out as part of France's support to the TNFD

¹ <https://www.afd.fr/fr/ressources/apprehender-les-trajectoires-de-developpement-laune-de-la-soutenabilite-forte>

² <https://www.unep.org/resources/publication/measuring-progress-environment-and-sdgs>

Development Finance Network (DFN) and its ToR were drawn up in close discussion with the TNFD secretariat so that the task force, which is mainly made up of private sector banks and companies, could also benefit from contributions from public development banks during the design phase of its recommendations framework. The study aimed to examine the extent to which the BPDs were ready to adopt a framework for assessing and disclosing nature-related risks and opportunities as prepared by the TNFD (and to support their clients in doing so), and to analyse how the TNFD could strengthen its relations with public finance and the adoption of its future framework by public and private financial institutions.

- Mobilising funding to mainstream biodiversity in economic sectors requires a better understanding of the impacts of these sectors on biodiversity, but also of their dependence on the good state of biodiversity. Quantitative metrics are currently being developed to help businesses and financial institutions assess their footprint on biodiversity. ECOPRONAT is supporting the development of research into these issues [through the use of a metrics testing plan](#) to enable a comparative analysis of different metrics in terms of implementation means, costs and complexities, as well as in terms of the results returned and the difference or concordance of the information produced. This analysis is due to start at the beginning of 2024.

1.4.3 Capacity building of researchers of the Global South (component 3)

At the beginning of 2021, AFD and the Global Development Network (GDN) launched the Biodiversity and Development Award to support researchers in their projects to preserve biodiversity while contributing to development. The award was granted to four female researchers (Ghana, Ethiopia, Madagascar, and Fiji) and one male researcher (Vietnam) along with a research grant (mid-2021 to mid-2024).

See: <https://www.afd.fr/en/actualites/afd-gdn-biodiversity-and-development-award-winners-and-their-projects>

To this end, the GDN has developed a methodology for mentoring researchers, and each award winner is in the process of producing his/her own research products, which will also be knowledge products.

1.4.4 Supporting pro-nature project leaders

Since 2021, Campus AFD has organised three support cycles for pro-nature initiatives in southern Africa as part of the Biodiversity Partners Programme (BiPP)³, in partnership with the Sustainability Institute, for 25 male and female pro-nature project leaders. This support was provided in fields as varied as taking account of local knowledge, nature-based solutions, business management, deep ecology, systemic thinking, and graphic design.

As such, Campus AFD has designed a number of trainings offers with adapted materials that are all specific knowledge products.

³ <https://www.biodiversitypartnersprogram.com/>

2. CHARACTERISTICS OF THIS REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST AND SELECTION PROCESS

2.1. Objectives

This Request for Expressions of Interest (REoI) concerns the capitalisation of components 1 (changes of models), 2 (mobilisation of financial resources) and 3 (capacity building of researchers of the Global South) of the ECOPRONAT programme. It aims to identify a group of experts or scientists with the capacity to:

- produce a document to capitalise on the ECOPRONAT programme, synthesising the knowledge products (not submitted to peer-reviewed journals) and any scientific articles (submitted to or published in peer-reviewed journals) produced during the three years of the programme.
- put these products into perspective with regard to the scientific literature in the fields concerned. A transversal analysis and thematic presentation of these results is expected, identifying the contributions of the programme's knowledge and scientific products to the advancement of scientific knowledge (How do the knowledge and scientific products examined fit into the corpus or scientific field concerned by the research carried out?).
- Identify the new avenues of research opened up by the projects/research activities/capacity building. It is expected to identify questions relevant to their subjects that these projects and activities will not have addressed, or new questions that emerge further to advances in the scientific field (What is the added value in terms of knowledge of the research products in their scientific field?)⁴.
- Identify and report on the specific contributions of the programme's knowledge and scientific products to mainstreaming biodiversity in decision-making and public policy development in the agricultural, land-use planning and urban development sectors, and the large-scale implementation of nature-based solutions. This involves questioning and studying the methodologies deployed by project leaders and taking into account the research approaches carried out beyond the production of deliverables under the ECOPRONAT programme (potentially involving interactions with research teams that will be facilitated by AFD).
- Analyse and compare the approaches and methods used to involve other stakeholders, public actors, private actors, and civil society, in particular in the development of the programme's research products, in order to take account of their knowledge and/or respond to their needs. The team in charge of this synthesis will be expected to provide an expert opinion on the practices identified in relation to the 'mainstream' practices of research programmes in the corresponding research fields (agriculture, urban development, etc.), insofar as these are documented, or general good practices⁵.

⁴ The 'knowledge gaps' identified in the IPBES work can be a useful benchmark: the 2019 global assessment, and even for certain projects the 2022 assessment on the sustainable use of wild species and the regional assessments of 2018.

⁵ See the methodology developed by Biodiversea on stakeholder engagement detailed in the 'Stakeholder Engagement Handbook', organised into Involve/Inform/Collaborate/Consult (p. 40 and following).

The request for expressions of interest will enable the shortlisting of suitable candidates to carry out this knowledge synthesis work. They will then be invited to develop a full proposal in a second phase for final selection.

NB: The candidates' attention is drawn to the fact that this is not an evaluation but a synthesis and analysis of the scientific quality or quality of the knowledge of the programme's products. In other words, although an opinion on the quality and contribution of the knowledge and research products to the advancement of knowledge is expected, this synthesis is not intended as an evaluation of the achievement of the development objectives of the ECOPRONAT programme (in the sense of the effects and impacts of the knowledge and research products)⁶.

2.2. Available budget

The total budget allocated to this Request for Expressions of Interest is €50 000 inclusive of tax.

Based on the proposals received, it is envisaged that the shortlist will consist of a maximum of three to four expressions of interest.

2.3. Indicative timetable

The work to produce the synthesis will take six months and the provisional start date for the assignment is the second half of 2024.

3. INDICATIVE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE FUTURE KNOWLEDGE SYNTHESIS

This request for expressions of interest aims to select a group of candidates with the competencies to carry out a synthesis of the knowledge products of the ECOPRONAT programme. The candidates selected at the end of this REoI will receive a detailed request for proposals file containing all the information needed to submit a detailed technical and financial proposal to AFD. The following chapter prefigures the terms of reference that should be included in said future detailed request for proposals file.

3.1. Objectives of the assignment

The aim of this assignment will be to produce a synthesis of the knowledge products of the ECOPRONAT programme based on the results of the research and work carried out during the three years of the programme. This synthesis document will highlight the results but also document the methods (particularly in terms of the involvement of local actors), and the issues and key questions addressed by the programme, particularly the mainstreaming of biodiversity into economic sectors and the scaling up of nature-based solutions.

Finally, this capitalisation document will aim to inform on how science can help decision-making and the development of public policies on biodiversity and the development of a pro-

⁶ A final evaluation of the programme (according to OECD DAC criteria) will be carried out at a later stage and separately by evaluation experts, considering this synthesis of the knowledge produced, in order to focus on assessing the potential impacts and results of the ECOPRONAT programme itself.

nature economy. Aimed at a wide audience, this work should make the results of the programme accessible and facilitate their dissemination.

3.2. Activities to be carried out

To prepare the synthesis of the ECOPRONAT programme's knowledge products, the Consultant will have to draw on the documents and results produced by each of the programme's research projects, which will be provided by AFD. Reading these knowledge products will require a good command of French, English, Spanish and Portuguese. Interviews will be held with AFD project managers and the research project leaders, as well as with certain members of the programme's steering committee, to identify the key results and recommendations to be put forward.

On the basis of the documentation produced and the interviews conducted, the Consultant will draw up a synthesis of the programme's knowledge products, which will include at least the following elements:

- Executive summary
- Context
- Presentation of the programme
- Thematic presentations of the research results and issues
- Scientific added value and contribution to knowledge
- Identification of common themes (common thread running through several research projects) and convergent and/or divergent contributions
- Identification of contributions to knowledge by type of targeted player (with recommendations for each)
- Conclusions and recommendations.

The structure of the synthesis, its form and the identification of key results will have to be validated with AFD before the document is drawn up. Provisional deliverables and milestones will therefore need to be defined in the Consultant's technical proposal.

The deliverables will be able to be drafted in French or English.

4. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

AFD's usual eligibility criteria will be applied regarding compliance with the legal and regulatory provisions in force, the fight against terrorism and money laundering, etc.

All legal entities meeting these criteria will be eligible, including universities and research centres, NGOs, private foundations, international research centres and companies (including consultancy firms and individual consultants consortia), which will make all their research public (no research involving a confidentiality agreement on the results and/or giving rise to patenting).

A given organisation may be part of several consortia at the stage of this request for expressions of interest, but may only be part of a maximum of one consortium at the time of submission of the full proposals.

5. SELECTION CRITERIA

The composition of the Consultant's team and its working methods will be specified in its brief methodological note. However, the following skills are expected:

- Diploma(s) of the expert(s) mobilised: Master 2 or equivalent in environmental economics, environmental sciences, applied sciences, development funding (how international funding agencies operate).
- Professional experience in the fields of environmental economics, environmental sciences, applied sciences and/or development finance.
- Excellent drafting skills in French or English.
- Experience in producing summaries of knowledge products or scientific and extension summaries.
- Experience in producing policy briefs or summaries for decision-makers.
- Examples (to be provided) and references from similar knowledge product and scientific synthesis assignments.
- Multiple examples of methodological approaches to scientific syntheses that have already been carried out.

6. INSTRUCTIONS TO BIDDERS

6.1. Content of the Expression of Interest

The Expression of Interest must include the following five sections:

Section I: A **brief paper** (maximum 3 pages) setting out the main technical aspects enabling the assignment to be carried out (proposed methodology for synthesising knowledge products and scientific articles, key activities, expected results) and the indicative timetable for implementation.

Section II: A sample of examples of syntheses made of knowledge products and scientific articles (with an explanation of the different methodological approaches used).

Section III: A brief presentation of the consultant or organisation and its members (skills, experience, and references on similar assignments). Scientific references of the experts or organisations (publications, areas of scientific expertise).

Section IV: The CVs of the main **personnel** mobilised.

6.2. Language of the documents

The expression of interest may be drafted in French or English.

6.3. Pre-selection process and evaluation matrix

Firstly the administrative compliance of the expressions of interest will be checked. Incomplete proposals (not including sections I to IV above) or proposals that do not comply with the eligibility criteria listed in section **Erreur ! Source du renvoi introuvable.** will be eliminated.

Administratively compliant expressions of interest will be analysed by an evaluation committee.

Shortlisted consultants will continue the selection process by submitting a complete technical and financial bid.

A contract will be established between the Consultant (consortium leader if there is a consortium) and AFD for the final selected proposals.

6.4. Procedure for submitting proposals

Tenderers must submit their expression of interest on AFD's dedicated Call for Projects page:

Link to be produced: XXX

The deadline for submitting expressions of interest is: **April 2nd, 2024 (20:00 GMT)**.

AFD undertakes to acknowledge receipt of applications by sending an automatic e-mail upon receipt on its website. If AFD does not acknowledge receipt, please consider that the application has not been received and act accordingly (resubmit on the call for projects page).

Proposals should ideally take the form of a single PDF or ZIP file.

Proposals that do not comply with the above instructions will not be evaluated.

6.5. Requests for clarifications

Tenderers wishing to receive clarifications on this request for expressions of interest are invited to send their questions to ecopronat@e-sud.net, no later than **March 15th 2024**. All questions asked and answers given will be shared on AFD's Call for Projects page.