REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

**SCOPING DATA AVAILABILITY AND PROCESSING OPTIONS
FOR THE LANDSCAPE STANDARD**

APRIL 2019

1. BACKGROUND

Business-as-usual models of agriculture and natural resource extraction continue to degrade water, soils, and ecosystems while poverty persists and the effects of climate change intensify. Efforts to reverse these trends within individual production areas or supply chains will not be effective if unsustainable use of natural resources continues within the wider landscape. Coordinated action on landscape-scale sustainability is imperative to achieve shared goals of sustainable livelihoods, ecosystems and supply chains.

To respond to this need, the Landscape Standard (LS) will provide a scientifically rigorous yet practical set of values, goals and indicators to assess the state and trajectory of sustainability within a landscape – which could be a jurisdiction, watershed or eco-region. The standardized framework and quality assurance will enable benchmarking and comparison across different regions. Producers, governments, businesses and investors will use the LS to track and demonstrate progress towards landscape-scale sustainability commitments. The LS will also help businesses to understand the sustainability risks and opportunities associated with sourcing from or investing in a particular landscape. By providing credible performance data to inform sourcing and investment decisions, LS will link market incentives to ongoing improvements in sustainability performance at the landscape level, motivating stakeholders to work together towards improved landscape sustainability.

The LS is a collaborative initiative led by Verra, Rainforest Alliance (RA), and the Climate, Community & Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA) in partnership with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Nature Conservation Research Centre (NCRC), Proforest, and Solidaridad, with input from a broad range of stakeholders. Further background information on the LS is available here.

2. OBJECTIVE & NEED

The LS consortium has developed a draft set of values, goals and indicators, which cover ecosystem, production, socioeconomic, and governance aspects of sustainability. (A summary table is available upon request.) Central to measurement -- occurring at the level of indicators (i.e., metrics) -- are data, required across both temporal and spatial scales.

A range of data options could support measurement of the indicators including: existing "off the shelf" datasets/tools that have pre-processed remotely sensed or other datasets (e.g., land cover change data on Global Forest Watch), existing secondary data (e.g., government census data, private sector supply chain data, satellite imagery) which require some amount of data processing, and, possibly, primary data (e.g., novel, low-cost data collection using sensors or other digital technology). Because cost of implementation must be kept in check, the LS seeks to leverage existing datasets, where possible, as opposed to requiring new data collection efforts.

3. SCOPE OF WORK

The LS consortium seeks a qualified Consultant to analyze the range of data options available to measure the draft indicators, provide guidance on feasibility, cost and possible data processing approaches or platforms.

At the outset of the consultancy, the Consultant will be provided with an internal stocktaking of LS team knowledge of data options and constraints. The Consultant will be expected to build on this analysis through the following principal tasks and responsibilities, at minimum:

- Analyze data options including:

    - **Existing "off the shelf" datasets/tools** such as land cover change data based on Global Forest Watch. These data could be made available through the LS reporting platform and/or available from elsewhere and extracted in summary form for the reporting platform.
    - **Existing secondary data**, such as government census datasets and other household microdata such as DHS or LSMS surveys agricultural production and trade data, remote-sensing based data on land cover, productivity, or agricultural production, or remotely sensed proxies for social indicators such as nighttime lights or road density, that are available but require effort to translate to useful/applicable form (e.g., due to scale issues or need for data extraction and cleaning) -- these data could be hosted on the LS reporting platform once cleaned
    - **New primary data collection** options with an emphasis on emerging, low-cost technologies or proxies

- Provide guidance on feasibility of the draft indicators, including:
  - Availability of suggested indicators in existing datasets
  - Data availability for countries and regions of interest
  - Constraints related to data quality or comparability
  - Constraints related to spatial and/or temporal resolution
  - Cost of data collection and analysis for measurement of the draft indicators.

Input from the Consultant will be used to revise the indicators to ensure a combination of rigor and ease of implementation including:

- Provide guidance on design elements that would be required to streamline data capture, processing and visualization in a centralized reporting platform.

- Provide guidance and conceptual methods on how to align landscape geographies with data sources that come from different boundaries/scales.

Considerations that the Consultant should take into account include:

- **Data availability** -- Datasets should be global in scale, or otherwise available or comparable across the regions of interest, especially the tropics/ global south.

- **Spatial nature of data** -- the LS is rooted in measurements at the scale of specific landscapes. At present, we define a landscape loosely as a jurisdiction (e.g., district, county), biophysical unit (e.g., watershed, eco-region) or user-defined unit (e.g., company sourcing area). [Note this definition may be restricted as we learn more about the feasibility of measurement.] To support measurement within these geographic units, data must be spatially explicit/ georeferenced.

- **Data scale/granularity** -- Data should be sufficiently granular to capture at a minimum average performance within the landscape. Data layers must therefore be available at the scale of the landscape unit, or have the potential to be aggregated at that scale. For identified data sources, the Consultant should provide input on data scale/granularity as it applies to landscape-scale measurement.

- **Frequency/temporal resolution** -- Data should be collected and available with a high enough temporal resolution to capture change in average condition across landscape over an X-Y year time period.

- **Data quality** -- The quality and veracity of publically available datasets ranges widely. Factors of data quality include validity, reliability, completeness, precision, integrity, availability, and timeliness. For identified data sources, the Consultant should provide input on ways to determine and score data quality.

- **Data processing** -- Some datasets are pre-processed and "user friendly" (e.g., GFW) whereas others contain raw data. The level of effort and expertise required to utilize datasets thus ranges. For identified data sources, the Consultant should provide input on requirements related to data processing.

4. DELIVERABLES

The main deliverables resulting from this consultancy will be:

1) Regular (e.g., weekly, biweekly) **updates** on progress.

2) **Ongoing consultation** with the LS Framework Development team (a subset of LS consortium partners) on design considerations and options to streamline data capture, processing, visualization, etc. in a centralized reporting platform.

3) **Preliminary report**, building off existing in-house knowledge (to be provided to Consultant at outset of consultancy) and analyzing potential datasets for the draft indicators, including their availability in key regions, spatial and temporal resolution, specific indicators assessed, data constraints, and ease of use/processing requirements. This report will inform content to be included in a public consultation document, tentatively scheduled for late July-September.

4) **Final technical report** summarizing findings on data options, feasibility, cost, etc. with a focus on balancing rigor and cost effectiveness. This report will be informed by feedback and revisions to the values, goals and indicators made after the public consultation.

5. MILESTONES & TIMELINE

The duration of this assignment will be ~6 months and will be conducted in two main tranches:
1) initial scoping and preliminary report ahead of a public consultation tentatively scheduled for July-September; and
2) final technical report incorporating feedback and new information gleaned from the public consultation. Please see previous section for deliverables associated with these two tranches of work.

An indicative timeline for meeting key milestones is given below.

Milestone	Indicative Timeline
Kick-off meeting	Late May/ early June
Preliminary report	Late June
Final technical report	October - November

6. SKILLS & QUALIFICATIONS

The Consultant should have familiarity with:

- Global-scale remote sensing data, data products, and data analysis;

- Large scale household microdata sets including national census data and DHS and LSMS surveys;

- Agricultural data, including both remotely sensed and reported data on crop extent and yields; and

- Translating datasets for data visualization and graphic design.

Further, proficiency in Spanish would be ideal but is not required.

7. APPLICATION PROCESS

Applicants are requested to submit the following documents (in English):

- Technical proposal for the scope of work and deliverables (not to exceed 6 pages) including a work plan. Note that to inform technical proposal development, the internal stocktaking of LS team knowledge of data options and constraints, and the summary table of values, goals and indicators, will be made available upon request.

- A brief summary of Consultant's recent and relevant projects.

- Cost proposal/ budget, not to exceed US$35,000, to include total estimated costs based on a daily or hourly rate.

- Resume(s) of Consultant or consulting team (not to exceed 2 pages each) including relevant experience.

All application materials must be submitted to Stefan Jirka, Manager, Verra via email at sjirka@verra.org by close of business on Friday, 10 May 2019. We will set up interviews of short-listed candidates and/or request clarifying information by 17 May with the aim to finalize selection by 31 May.

8. LEGAL NATURE OF RFP

This RFP is an invitation for proposals and Verra is under no legal obligation to accept any proposal nor proceed with the RFP. Verra reserves the right to amend the requirements at any time.