

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Research Assistant

1. Background

Forest Trends' Communities and Territorial Governance Initiative is supporting the Engagement Forum and the Integrity Council for the Voluntary Carbon Market (ICVCM) in the design and implementation of the first learning cycle of a Community of Practice focused on the experiences of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and Afro-descendant Peoples with carbon market initiatives.

The project will document and analyze three selected case studies through a combination of desk research, stakeholder and community engagement, community validation, and peer learning exchanges. The research will generate practical insights related to governance, participation, benefit sharing, stewardship, and community engagement and will contribute to the Engagement Forum's learning resources and to ICVCM's broader continuous improvement processes.

Forest Trends is seeking a **Research Assistant** to work under the technical guidance of the Lead Researcher and in close coordination with the Communities and Territorial Governance Initiative project team throughout the implementation of the research cycle.

2. Scope of Services

The role requires demonstrated experience in territorial governance, qualitative research grounded in community protocols, and the ability to engage with Indigenous knowledge systems on their own terms. It also requires the standing and relationships to navigate FPIC processes with participating communities, recognising that meaningful Indigenous research partnership is built on accountability to Indigenous peoples and organisations, not only on technical credentials.

The Research Assistant will:

- 2.1. Provide technical inputs to the research design and methodology, including inputs to the analytical framework, case study template, research protocols, ethics, FPIC, community engagement, and validation approaches.
- 2.2. Assist in the selection of the three case studies through background research, review of submissions, documentation of relevant information.
- 2.3. Conduct desk research and contextual analysis for the selected cases, including research on projects, territories, communities, governance arrangements, relevant policies and regulations, carbon market information, and key stakeholders.
- 2.4. Undertake case study research and stakeholder engagement, including preparation of interview guides, participation in interviews and consultations,

- preparation of research notes and thematic summaries, identification of information gaps, and triangulation of evidence.
- 2.5. Provide substantive inputs to project outputs, including the three Context Briefs, three Case Study Reports, Comparative Synthesis, Community Insights Brief, Integration Recommendations, and Cycle Evaluation.
 - 2.6. Document and organize community review and validation, including documentation of feedback, corrections, confidentiality or attribution requests, and other conditions related to the use of community information.
 - 2.7. Assist with the delivery of the three virtual peer learning exchanges, including preparation of materials, participation in sessions, rapporteuring, and documentation of key themes, lessons, and community perspectives.
 - 2.8. Conduct research quality assurance and project coordination, including fact-checking, organization of research records and sources, participation in relevant technical meetings, incorporation of feedback, and revisions to research outputs as requested by the Lead Researcher and Forest Trends.

3. Required Qualifications and Experience

Candidates should demonstrate the following qualifications and experience:

- 3.1. Demonstrated experience conducting qualitative research, including desk research, document review, interviews, consultations, evidence organization, and synthesis of findings.
- 3.2. Demonstrated experience working with Indigenous Peoples, local communities, community organizations, or territorially based organizations.
- 3.3. Experience engaging with community governance structures, representative organizations, customary authorities, or community-led processes.
- 3.4. Understanding of rights-based approaches to research and engagement, including FPIC, community protocols, informed participation, confidentiality, and the appropriate treatment of community knowledge and sensitive information.
- 3.5. Experience with climate finance projects is desirable, particularly projects involving carbon markets, REDD+, benefit-sharing mechanisms, or community-based climate finance initiatives.
- 3.6. Fluency in English is required, as all research outputs, written deliverables, and substantive project documentation will be prepared and submitted in English. Proficiency in Portuguese, Spanish, and/or French is desirable.

Forest Trends strongly encourages applications from Indigenous Peoples or members of Traditional, Local or Afrodescendant Communities. Priority will be given to qualified candidates from these communities.

4. Duration

The consultancy will have a duration of approximately nine (9) months, most likely beginning in October 2026.

This is a deliverable-based consultancy. The distribution of activities across the nine-month period will depend on the implementation schedule of the broader project, including the timing of case selection, stakeholder engagement, interviews, community validation, peer learning exchanges, and preparation and review of project outputs.

The assignment will be conducted remotely. No travel is currently anticipated unless separately agreed in writing by Forest Trends.

5. Consultancy Fee and Payment Conditions

The total professional fee for the assignment is **USD 4,500 (four thousand five hundred United States dollars)**.

Payments will be delivery-based, to be agreed upon payment schedule and invoicing requirements established in the Consultancy Agreement and will be subject to satisfactory completion of the corresponding agreed activities and deliverables.

The fee is denominated and payable in United States dollars. Forest Trends will not be responsible for any loss or additional cost resulting from fluctuations in exchange rates or currency conversion. The Consultant will be solely responsible for any applicable taxes, bank charges, currency conversion fees, exchange fees, or other costs associated with receiving or converting payments.

6. How to apply

Interested candidates should submit the following materials:

1. A current CV or résumé, highlighting relevant research and professional experience.
2. A brief cover letter (maximum two pages) describing the candidate's relevant experience, particularly in qualitative research, territorial or community governance, work with Indigenous Peoples and other traditional or local communities, and, where applicable, climate finance or carbon markets. The cover letter should indicate:
 - a. If the candidate is part of an Indigenous or Local or Traditional Community, and which one.
 - b. Language proficiency, including level of English and any proficiency in Portuguese, Spanish, and/or French, if applicable.

Applications should be submitted in English to **ctgi@forest-trends.org** with the subject line **“Research Assistant – ICVCM Community of Practice”** by **October 4th, 2026**.