

Terms of Reference:

Qualitative Research Consultancy – Assessment of policy reform processes in the Indian Sundarbans

Background

Landesa is an international nonprofit dedicated to ending global poverty by securing land rights for rural communities around the globe. Founded in 1981, Landesa has worked in more than 66 countries throughout the world, with central office staff in the U.S. (Seattle, Washington and Washington, DC) and regional programming in China, India, Liberia, Tanzania, Kenya, Rwanda, Indonesia, Cambodia, and Thailand. Landesa partners with governments, civil society, and companies to develop pro-poor and gender-sensitive laws, policies and programs that have helped strengthen land rights for more than 720 million people in the last 5 years. The organization is supported by NGOs, foundations, donor agencies (USAID, World Bank, etc.), world leaders, educational institutions, and individual supporters around the world. Landesa has been consistently ranked one of the top ten international NGOs in the world and has received numerous awards for its work. Landesa's annual budget of approximately \$20 million is supported by private foundations (e.g. Ford, Rockefeller, Skoll), public donors (e.g. USAID, World Bank), individuals (including MacKenzie Scott) and corporate contracts.

Since 2022 Landesa has been carrying out the [Coastal Livelihoods and Mangroves Project](#), an ambitious law and policy initiative in the Bay of Bengal and Southeast Asia to lay the foundation to strengthen the coastal tenure and resource rights of up to 73 million of the most at-risk people living in the region's mangrove forests. Stronger resource rights, inclusive governance systems, and duty bearers' capacity strengthening will better protect the 4.6 million hectares of mangrove forests where these communities live and make their livelihoods. If successful, the project would provide a significant boost in the global effort to slow climate change, shaping policies that would help mitigate up to 943 million metric tons of carbon in these coastal mangroves. The project includes four countries in Southeast Asia (Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand, Myanmar), and two in South Asia (India and Bangladesh).

In the Indian Sundarbans in West Bengal, the project's objective is to empower the community to protect and restore the mangroves in collaboration with the government, with the goal of mitigating the adverse effects of escalating climate change. Project work over the last two years has focused on four pilot villages in two blocks: Boserchak and Debipur of Kultali block; and Pakhiralaya and Mathurakhanda of Gosaba block. In subsequent years, the project plans to scale pilot-level results through policy reform that would affect all 13 administrative blocks of the Sundarbans region. Policy advocacy in West Bengal has focused on: integration of climate resilience activities in Gram Panchayat Development Plans; and government programming to support Self-Help Group involvement in climate resilience, alternate livelihood development, and mangrove conservation.

Assessment overview

Landesa is seeking applications from individuals to conduct qualitative research that will assess processes of policy and program reform achieved due to the project's influence in West Bengal. Half-way through the 5-year project, the assessment findings will help understand roadblocks



along change pathways and identify elements of success to build upon in the project moving forward. Landesa will design the assessment, including data collection tools, and the consultant will be responsible for executing the assessment.

Main responsibilities

- Participate in briefings led by the Landesa Sr. Research and Evaluation Specialist on the data collection tools.
- Provide suggestions and inputs to the assessment design based on viable field conditions.
- Translate data collection tools into local languages.
- Coordinate travel logistics for 5 days of fieldwork: 1 focus group discussion per each of 4 villages; and a total of 15 in-depth interviews including officials and leaders at the block-level (two blocks), Sangha-level (three Sanghas), and district-level (South 24 Parganas).
- Coordinate with the Landesa-West Bengal team to schedule and identify/confirm places for carrying out data collection activities.
- Carry out in-person data collection, ensuring quality control and safe, secure storage of all data collected.
- Analyze the qualitative data collected.
- Prepare a report summarizing the findings from the assessment of policy and program reform processes.
- Hold regular debriefs with the Landesa-West Bengal team and the Landesa Sr. Research and Evaluation Specialist over the course of the consultancy.
- Ensure that all activities related to data collection and management follow Landesa's Ethical Guidelines for Research.

Deliverables

- Detailed field notes from the qualitative research activities stored in a secure online folder provided by Landesa.
- Report of assessment findings (10-12 pages)

Anticipated timeline and level of effort (LOE): Late February to late March 2025 with anticipated LOE of 12-15 days.

- Late-February: Briefing on data collection tools and planning of data collection activities.
- Early- to mid-March: Data collection and processing.
- Mid- to late-March: Data analysis and report writing.

Preferred qualifications

- Candidates with minimum 5 years' experience conducting research on policy advocacy and reform will be given high preference.
- Proficiency in Bengali.
- Strong skills in qualitative research methods (i.e., facilitation of key informant interviews, analysis of rich qualitative data).
- Familiarity with gendered livelihood concepts.
- Strong understanding of government organizations and agencies involved in rural development and environmental sustainability in West Bengal.



Application instructions

Qualified candidates may submit applications by January 3rd to Dr. Tatiana Gumucio tatianag@landesa.org with copy to Pinaki Halder pinakih@landesa.org. Applications should include the following information:

- CV (no more than 5 pages)
- Letter of interest describing relevant experience and expertise
- Descriptions of past projects relevant to the assignment, including contact information of clients for at least two projects
- Estimated budget in USD for the work. The budget should include all costs for field data collection and related travel costs.