



## TERMS OF REFERENCE – NTFP LEGAL CONSULTANT

Reporting to: Ya'axché Science Director

### Introduction

---

This consultancy is part of the FAO-GEF project (GCP/BEL/001/GFF) entitled “*Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Belize’s Maya Golden Landscape*”. The key objective of the project is to reduce the deforestation in and around the villages of the Maya Golden Landscape by proposing alternative land use options such as a transition from shifting cultivation to more permanent farming practices. The project also aims to prevent an expansion of agriculture into the protected areas by promoting and regulating the use of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) in forest reserves.

The Belize Forest Policy (2015) statement 5 acknowledges the benefits of the use and marketing of NTFPs in supporting forest sustainability and indicates that strategies for implementation are needed. However, these are lacking, including amongst others, development of a policy framework/guidelines for access to NTFPs by local communities in the forest reserves. Also, while the Forest Act (2017) does allow for indigenous communities to acquire concessionary rights for activities in the reserves that promote biodiversity, such as agroforestry and eco-tourism, NTFPs are not clearly defined. Furthermore, there is no Forest Rule to accompany the Act, nor the legal and administrative process described for acquiring these rights.

The NTFP Legal Consultant will help strengthen the legal basis for acquisition of NTFP concessions in Forest Reserves. This work contributes to project outputs **1.1.2: New national governance structures support biodiversity-friendly non-timber forest products (NTFP) use in forest reserves**, and **2.1.1: Support to Indigenous Peoples and local communities in acquiring agroforestry and NTFP concessionary rights in forest reserves**.

### **Purpose:**

The consultancy proposes to review current NTFP policy guideline and to develop further support of sustainable extraction schemes in Forest Reserves.

### Objective of the Consultancy

---

- To identify governance gaps, meet with stakeholders, review current policy, and outline clear procedures to guide future NTFP concession requests in Forest Reserves.
- To draft two legal documents, a National Forest Policy Guideline and a Forest Rule recommendation, to support sustainable NTFP extraction in Forest Reserves.

## Primary relationships

- Science Director
- Executive Director
- Project Manager
- Science Rangers

## Key areas of responsibility

- Revision of Current NTFP extraction zone methods and procedures
- Revision of present and past NTFP policies and legislation
- Communicate with Ya'axché key personnel on findings and final product

## Accountabilities

---

In communication with the Science Director, the NTFP Legal Consultant will:

- 1) Identify, outline requirements, and detail administrative and procedural tasks associated with acquiring a concession for NTFP use in Forest Reserves
- 2) Conduct NTFP governance gap assessment, discussion with GoB and relevant stakeholders
- 3) Design and draft a new biodiversity-friendly NTFP policy guideline to support the National Forest Policy (2015)
- 4) Develop a Forest Rule recommendation to accompany the Forest Act (2017) in support of integrated landscape management in Forest Reserves
- 5) Present drafted legal documents and incorporate feedback from Ya'axché and GoB Forest Department

Outcomes to be achieved by the position:

Goals/ Outcomes	Indicators / MOV
<b>1. Policy review and consultations</b>  <i>Support to Indigenous Peoples and local communities in acquiring agroforestry and NTFP concessionary rights in forest reserves.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consultancy planning meetings with Project Manager and relevant key personnel;</li><li>• Stakeholder consultation (GOB) sign-up sheets, minutes, and agendas</li><li>• Summary report on the administrative and procedural tasks for acquiring an NTFP concession for forest reserves, including assessment of NTFP governance gaps</li></ul>
<b>2. Drafting of legal documents</b>  <i>New national governance structures support biodiversity-friendly non-timber forest products (NTFP) use in forest reserves.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Agendas and minutes from meetings with GoB</li><li>• Draft Forest Policy NTFP guideline/ framework</li><li>• Draft Forest Rule recommendation report</li></ul>

## Academic Qualifications

---

The NTFP Legal Consultant qualifications include:

- Advanced degree in Forestry Management of Related Field Environmental Law, NRM, Policy

- Experience in Policy design and implementation, ideally in Belize’s forest legislation
- Excellent communication skills, both verbally and written;
- Demonstrated experience and ability to lead;
- Organizational skills to conduct work efficiently;
- Excellent interpersonal skills to build collaborative relationships.

Consultants are expected to work cooperatively with others, demonstrate flexibility in organizing work, have good communication skills and demonstrate thoughtfulness in decision making. The consultant must be non-judgmental and receptive, live up to the values of integrity, respect and professionalism while reflecting genuine concern toward both the biosphere and the communities where Ya’axché is active.

#### Characteristics of the Contractual Activity

---

**Category & Modality:** Temporal Term Contract (TTC), by deliverables defined in two phases.

**Contract Duration:** 3 months, starting in November 2025.

#### Place(s) of work:

The Consultant may choose to work remotely especially when conducting desk review but would need to conduct stakeholder consultations in-person. Consultant must be available to travel to consultation locations, which include:

1. Ya’axché Golden Stream Field Station, Golden Stream Community, Toledo District, Belize;
2. Punta Gorda, Toledo District, Belize;
3. Belmopan, Cayo District, Belize.

#### Payment and Conditions of Employment

---

Payments will be made upon receipt of deliverables, as determined by the contract and upon submission to Ya’axché Conservation Trust of an invoice and relevant supporting documentation.

#### Diversity

---

Ya’axché Conservation Trust is committed to diversity and inclusion and to providing equal opportunities in employment. We embrace diversity on the basis of gender, age, education, national origin, ethnic origin, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion, and HIV/AIDs status. We encourage women, Afro-descendants and persons of indigenous origins to apply.