

Memorandum

To: Juan Carlos Vasques Murillo
Head,
Biodiversity, People and Landscapes Unit

Ref: BPLU/CBLI/2026/RFP

From: Fabrice Inkonkoy
Programme Management Officer,
Biodiversity, People and Landscapes Unit

Date: 13 July 2026

Subject: Request for Publication of a Call for Proposals on the UNEP Partners Portal for a Technical Organization to support the IKI-funded Congo Basin Peatlands Project (CBLI)

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this memorandum is to request authorization to publish a Call for Proposals on the UNEP Partners Portal for the selection of a local technical organization to support the implementation of the IKI-funded Congo Basin Peatlands Project, under the Biodiversity, People and Landscape Unit (BPLU) as part of the Congo Basin Landscapes Initiative (CBLI).

2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The Congo Basin Peatlands Project, implemented by UNEP in partnership with FAO, WWF, WCS, UNEP-WCMC, GRID-Geneva, the University of Leeds, and other consortium members, aims to secure the Congo Basin peatlands through evidence-based decision-making and good governance.

This project recently underwent a mid-term evaluation, which highlighted a critical observation: the lack of meaningful participation of national and local organizations in project implementation. In response, the evaluation strongly recommended that the project team strengthen the involvement and capacity-building of local and national institutions—a core objective of the project.

Furthermore, the International Climate Initiative (IKI) has recently introduced a 50% local content policy, requiring that at least half of the project budget be allocated to implementation by national and local organizations. This directive further underscores the urgency and importance of actively engaging local actors in all project activities, including the assignment described herein.

3. PROPOSED ASSIGNMENT AND LOCAL ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

The proposed Call for Proposals seeks to engage a local technical organization registered in the Republic of Congo (RoC) or the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to deliver critical outputs under Activity 1.3.1 (Ecosystem Services Mapping, Spatial Monitoring, and Decision-Support). This assignment is essential to advancing the ecosystem services mapping and private sector engagement workstream, while also fulfilling a broader government uptake and sustainability function.

Key responsibilities include:

- Updating and extending existing ecosystem services analyses into a comprehensive wall-to-wall map of key ecosystem services, integrating technical deliverables from GRID-Geneva, the University of Leeds, FAO, and other partners.
- Acting as the bridge between technical data producers and national decision-makers, providing sustained technical assistance to government institutions in both countries for the uptake and application of data and decision-support tools.
- Producing all deliverables, including an inception report, draft and final ecosystem services map with accompanying information brief, training materials, validation workshops, a sustainability and transition plan, and periodic progress reports on government uptake, in both English and French.

4. ALIGNMENT WITH MID-TERM EVALUATION AND IKI POLICY

This assignment has been specifically designed to:

- Respond to the mid-term evaluation recommendation by placing a local organization at the centre of a high-impact activity, thereby ensuring direct national ownership and sustained capacity development.
- Comply with the IKI 50% local content requirement by involving local organisation in the execution of the project on the ground, thus allocating portion of project resources through local entities.
- Build long-term institutional capacity of national and local organizations in GIS, remote sensing, policy engagement, and data-to-decision workflows, aligning with the project's overarching objective of strengthening local expertise.

5. REQUEST FOR APPROVAL

We respectfully request your authorization to proceed with the following action:

- Publication of the Call for Proposals for the Organization Selection – Ecosystem Services Mapping, Spatial Monitoring, and Decision-Support for the Congo Basin Peatlands (Activity 1.3.1) on the UNEP Partners Portal.
 - Advertising period: Minimum standard period as per UNEP guidelines.
 - Application deadline: 31 July 2026.

The full Terms of Reference are attached for your review.

Assignment	Duration	Action	Sources of Funding
Ecosystem Services Mapping, Spatial Monitoring, and Decision-Support for the Congo Basin Peatlands (Activity 1.3.1)	Estimated 12-18 months, with possible extension to 31 December 2028	Publish Call for Proposals for a Technical Organization on the UNEP Partners Portal	IKI Congo Basin Peatlands Project. Total fee: [Amount TBC] Coding Block: SB-021593.01.06.01

The Call for Proposals will be published on the UNEP Partners Portal for a minimum standard advertising period, with applications due by 31 July 2026, in line with the attached Terms of Reference. As proficiency in French is mandatory for all deliverables under the project, the Terms of Reference require the applying organization to demonstrate native or near-native French proficiency within its proposed technical team, alongside the required Team Leader, GIS and Remote Sensing Specialist, and Policy and Institutional Specialist roles.

This assignment represents a strategic and timely opportunity to advance the technical objectives of the Congo Basin Peatlands Project and to operationalize the mid-term evaluation's recommendations and the IKI's local content policy. Your approval will enable us to move forward with a transparent, competitive, and inclusive selection process that prioritizes local ownership and long-term sustainability.

Best Regards

CC: Martin Okun – Finance and Budget Officer, Ecosystems Division
George Neba Akwah – Senior Programme Management Officer
Annie Claude Nsom Zamo - Programme Management Officer

Attachments:

ToR – Organization Selection: Ecosystem Services Mapping, Spatial Monitoring, and Decision-Support for the Congo Basin Peatlands