Terms of Reference

Research consultancy: Qualitative assessment of short-term progress towards enhanced mangrove stewardship and governance in Tanzania

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 65 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.

Landesa is implementing the Coastal Livelihoods and Mangroves Project in Tanzania to strengthen tenure and resource rights of forest adjacent community members, including women and socially marginalized groups, for enhanced co-management of mangrove ecosystem resources. Since 2026 the project in Tanzania has facilitated trainings on gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) and legal literacy in mangrove ecosystem management for communities in Kilwa and Lindi districts. It has also supported policy-related efforts on tenure, GESI, and sustainable mangrove ecosystem management and the development of a multi-stakeholder platform (MSP) to this end. Over a 3-year timeline, the project seeks to contribute to community members' enhanced stewardship of mangrove ecosystem resources, prioritization of sustainable livelihood development and community stewardship by state agendas and commitments, and enhanced institutional accountability and coordination over sustainable mangrove ecosystem management.

Assessment overview

Landesa is seeking applications from research teams or firms to qualitatively assess barriers and opportunities for achieving the project's year 3 outcomes, based on an understanding of progress achieved in the project's first year.

The qualitative assessment has the following Guiding Questions:

1. Where do we see signs that the project's awareness raising and knowledge strengthening for rightsholders and duty-bearers on GESI and on their rights and duties in mangrove ecosystem

management are contributing to well-functioning, accountable institutions that promote community members' stewardship of mangrove ecosystem resources?
    a. How, if at all, are community members demanding more accountable and well-functioning institutions as a result of the project's awareness-raising and knowledge strengthening?
    b. How, if at all, are Beach Management Units (BMUs) and Village Natural Resource Committees (VNRCs) showing signs of improved functioning? (For example: are they better positioned to implement by-laws on land/forest use, facilitate more regular patrolling, equitably and inclusively represent community members' needs and interests, etc.?)
    c. What opportunities and barriers are there for more well-functioning, accountable institutions to promote community members' stewardship of mangrove ecosystem resources? (An example of an opportunity could be institutions' capacity to propagate better understanding of formal rules on forest resource use throughout the community; an example of a barrier could be community members' limited land tenure security; there could be others).
2. How has the project's policy advocacy, including policy brief and policy meetings, helped contribute to strengthening strategies and guidelines on sustainable mangrove ecosystem management? How can the project's policy advocacy lead to prioritization of sustainable livelihood development and community stewardship by state agendas and commitments?
3. How have the project's contributions to the MSP helped strengthen duty-bearers' understanding of the links between mangrove restoration, management, and tenure security? To what extent are there signs that the MSP will: remain functional well beyond year 1; and serve its purpose to clarify roles and points of coordination?

The qualitative assessment will involve 8-10 days of fieldwork to carry out approximately 12 focus group discussions (FGDs) and 5-10 key informant interviews (KIIs). Qualitative data collection will take place with women and men community members and leaders in two villages in each of Kilwa and Lindi districts; and in Dar es Salaam with MSP participants and with civil society and government stakeholders who have coordinated with the project over policy influence. The team or firm is expected to allow for women to consistently facilitate women KIIs and women-only FGDs and men to consistently facilitate men KIIs and men-only FGDs.

Prior to primary data collection, the research team or firm is encouraged to also carry out, as necessary, a desk review of existing project documents and hold interviews with Landesa staff to help familiarize with the project and its contexts.

Main responsibilities

- Design the qualitative assessment, including sampling and data collection tools, with review and feedback from the Landesa Tanzania team and the Sr. Research and Evaluation Specialist.
- Coordinate travel logistics for the qualitative fieldwork.

- Coordinate with the Landesa-Tanzania team to schedule and identify/confirm places for carrying out the qualitative data collection activities.
- Carry out in-person qualitative data collection, ensuring quality control and safe, secure storage of all data collected.
- Analyze the qualitative data collected.
- Ensure that all activities related to data collection and management follow Landesa's Ethical Guidelines for Research.
- Hold regular debriefs with the Landesa-Tanzania team and the Landesa Sr. Research and Evaluation Specialist over the course of the consultancy.
- Prepare a report summarizing the assessment findings, with review and feedback from the Landesa Tanzania team and the Sr. Research and Evaluation Specialist.

Deliverables

- Design of qualitative assessment.
- Detailed field notes from the qualitative assessment activities stored in a secure online folder provided by Landesa. The field notes will consist of:
    - Detailed notes from every KII and FGD session (in Kiswahili)
    - The consultant's general reflection notes of the fieldwork process and main takeaways (in English, maximum 5 pages)
- A report on the assessment findings in English, which will be:
    - a maximum of 15 pages, excluding annexes
    - geared towards highlighting practical and actionable insights to inform project decision-making by the Landesa Tanzania team
- Online presentation of findings to Landesa and Landesa Tanzania team

Anticipated timeline and budget: The anticipated assignment period is January-February 2027.

- Mid- to late January: Development of assessment design
- Late January to early February: data collection planning and data collection & processing
- Mid- to late February: Data analysis and report writing

Preferred qualifications

- Candidates with minimum 5 years' experience conducting evaluations of rural development projects in Tanzania will be given high preference.
- Strong skills in qualitative research methods (i.e., facilitation of key informant interviews and focus group discussions, analysis of rich qualitative data)
- Familiarity with gendered livelihood, coastal resource management, and tenure concepts
- Strong writing skills
- Experience conducting research on policy advocacy and reform in Tanzania
- Fieldwork experience in coastal Tanzania

Application instructions

Qualified teams and firms may submit proposals by 27 November 2026 to Dr. Tatiana Gumucio (tatianag@landesa.org) with copy to Godfrey Massay (godfreym@landesa.org) and Catherine Macharia (catherinem@landesa.org). Teams should consist of a maximum of 3 members. Proposals should be submitted in English and include the following information:

- 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
- Staffing information, including the roles and responsibilities of each team member
- CV for each team member
- Estimated budget in USD for the work. The budget should include all costs for field data collection and related travel costs.