



## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

# External Mid-term Review of RRI's Strategic Program IV February 2025

## 1.0 Description of the Rights and Resources Initiative

### 1.1 RRI Background

RRI was established in 2005 as a partnership among international NGOs, community organizations<sup>1</sup>, and donors<sup>2</sup> to set global goals and scale up awareness and action to support forest tenure reform that recognizes the forest land rights and livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities, and Afro-descendant Peoples (IP, LC, and ADP). At its creation, RRI was a unique and novel entity in the forest and conservation sector designed to monitor global progress, coordinate the actions of donors and actors engaged in this arena, catalyze innovations, and seize strategic opportunities that could not be leveraged by others. The collective concern of these founding partners led to the development of RRI's framework programs, strategic plans, and annual global strategy meetings, instigating two decades of sustained influence.

Twenty years later, in 2025, the RRI Coalition now consists of over 200 organizations with a common mission to protect and elevate the rights of IP, LC, and ADP to own, develop, and protect their traditional territories and ecosystems. Over the years, the Coalition has expanded and reformed to privilege Indigenous, community, Afro-descendant, and women's organizations in our strategies, programming, and governance. RRI Partners, who are responsible for the overall governance and direction of the Coalition, are now majority rightsholders, reflecting the demands and strengthened capacities of Indigenous and community organizations globally.

To deliver on its mission, the RRI Coalition catalyzes the recognition and respect of local peoples' land and resource rights through the synergistic combination of evidence generation, convening and connecting, country-level engagement and incubation. In terms of **evidence**, RRI provides a global baseline from which to measure and promote progress on land and resource rights. The information and strategic analysis RRI generates, in support of communities, partners, and collaborators to advance their rights claims, livelihoods and conservation ambitions.

Through **convening and connecting**, RRI provides opportunities for stakeholders – private, public and IP, LC and ADP communities – to come together to develop credible pathways and solutions for sustainable development that respect customary tenure and land rights. Through strengthened

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<sup>1</sup> Forest Trends, The Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), the World Conservation Union (IUCN), The Regional Community Forestry Training Center for Asia and the Pacific (RECOFTC), The Centre for People and Forests, ACICAFOC, and the Foundation for People and Community Development

<sup>2</sup> UK Department for International Development (DFID, now FCDO), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), and the Ford Foundation.

coalitions and networks, participating in national, regional and global convenings, the influence of IP, LC and ADP are amplified.

Through **country-level engagement**, RRI aims to improve the enabling environment for tenure reform and the advancement of community tenure rights for IP, LC and ADP. It does so by responding to priorities identified from the bottom-up by these communities, enhancing collaboration around crucial reform processes, providing research in accessible formats, and linking local-level efforts to key climate and development processes at national and global levels.

Through **innovation and incubation**, RRI has a track record of fostering the creation of new initiatives that fill gaps in the ecosystem of efforts to recognize community land rights. These innovations include global networks such as MegaFlorestais (government forestry agencies), the Interlaken Group (private sector actors), and the Path to Scale and Transformation (donors and philanthropies). Also included here are funding mechanisms to mobilize greater support from key constituencies at national and international levels. RRI launched the Tenure Facility and, has more recently created the [Community Land Rights and Conservation Finance Initiative](#) (CLARIFI). RRI is also responsible for developing signature Tenure Tracking tools and a database that have expanded over the years to encompass key facets of land and resource tenure, including water, carbon, and livelihood rights, the extent of customary claims, and opportunities to advance reforms. Alongside these initiatives, RRI has also supported the LandMark (a global platform of Indigenous and Community Lands), Land Rights Now (an international alliance campaign to secure community land rights).

By supporting targeted networks, expanded baselines and new tools, in tandem with RRI's bottom-up planning and coordination approach, the Coalition aims to identify and act upon the strategic priorities of rightsholders at national, regional, and international scales. The RRI Coalition has grown over time in the belief that there is a critical need for a trusted convener to raise ambitions, mobilize coordinated action, foster strategic partnerships, and catalyze the innovations needed to accelerate and monitor progress towards global climate, conservation, and sustainable development priorities.

## 1.2 RRI Strategic Program IV

The RRI Coalition undertakes a collective and inclusive process every five years to review and renew its strategic program. Based on inputs from IP, LC and ADP, including women within these groups, as well as those of our allies and experts. Each five-year strategic program is reviewed at midline and endline of their implementation. The current strategic program (SP IV) covers the period of 2023 to 2027. We are currently at the midpoint of SP IV implementation.

### *Theory of Change*

RRI's theory of change (ToC) associated with SP IV is grounded in the proposition that the legal recognition and enforcement of community land and resource rights, including the freedom to exercise and benefit from those rights, and the broadscale adoption of rights-based approaches and reforms rest upon three determining variables:

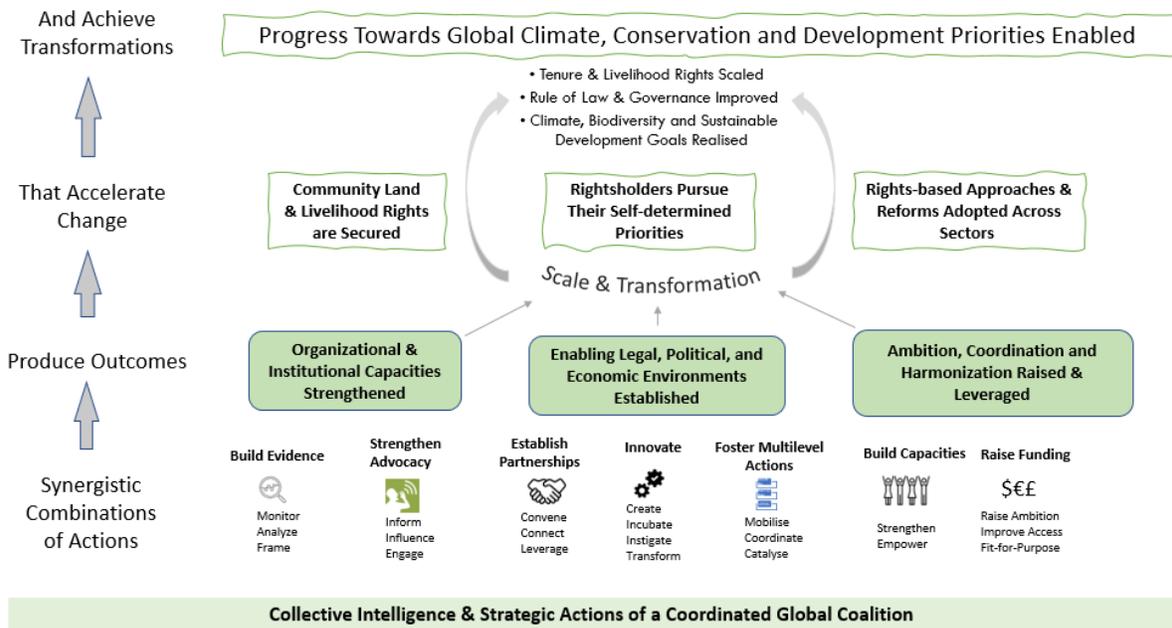
1. The creation of enabling legal, political, and economic environments across scales and sectors.

2. The building of organizational and institutional capacities to drive change at local, national, and international levels.
3. The pursuit of coordinated and synergistic actions that can demonstrate feasibility, strengthen ambition, and mitigate risks.

Together, these contributions provide the necessary foundation for supporting the actions and investments needed to scale up the implementation of rights and accelerate system-level transformations towards global climate, conservation, and sustainable development priorities (see Annex 1).

At the heart of this ambitious agenda lies the recognition that the pursuit of a more just, equitable and sustainable future requires the collective intelligence and strategic actions of a coordinated global coalition, capable of seizing opportunities and overcoming threats. This is the essence and purpose of the RRI Coalition, including its structure, business arrangements, and joint approach to advancing its collective ambition. Together, they employ synergistic combinations of evidence (analysis and data), capacity (tools, solutions, and innovations), interactions (strategic partnerships and coordinated actions), and advocacy (awareness raising and evidence-based engagements) to realize the core outcomes that can drive the aspired changes or transformations across scales and sectors.

**Figure 1: RRI Theory of Change**



### SP IV Goals and Strategic Objectives

For the 2023–2027 period, RRI’s work program aims to contribute to the following **goals**:

1. Advance the legal recognition of community land and forest tenure rights, raising the total area owned by or designated for IPs, LCs, and ADPs by at least 400 million hectares by 2030.
2. Secure the rights of IPs, LCs, ADPs, and particularly the women within these groups, to manage, conserve, use, and trade all ecosystem products and services in areas under their control, and ensure they are protected from rollbacks, land grabbing, and criminalization.
3. Mobilize at least \$10 billion of new funding—prioritizing local initiatives and organizations—to advance the above targets over the 2023–2030 period in tropical forest countries.

Within the context of our ongoing SP IV, these goals are achieved by:

- Scaling up in-country engagement to support local organizations and advocacy in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.
- Catalyzing global ambitions, coordination, and innovation to scale up rights-based actions and investments to achieve 2030 global climate and conservation goals.
- Mobilizing key constituencies and leverage networks, data, and tools to drive support for community land tenure, governance, and self-determination.

The full SP IV document with further details on its theory of change, core assumptions, risk analysis, and associated Results Framework, can be found at:

<http://www.rightsandresources.org/fourth-strategic-program/>

## 2.0 Terms of Reference

### *Evaluation Background and Rationale*

When originally planned in 2024, this mid-term evaluation of RRI’s Strategic Program IV was part of a regular accountability and learning exercise. This mid-term review happens to coincide with RRI’s 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. In addition, RRI is conscious that the Global Goals and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are fast approaching. Considering this pivotal deadline for the planet, and building upon two decades of sustained engagement, RRI is looking to take stock of its learning to date, build on its current performance, and use insights from this mid-term program evaluation (and other internal review processes currently underway<sup>3</sup>), to review and revise the current SP IV up to 2030.

Past evaluations of RRI’s Strategic Program III sought to assess its performance against OECD-DAC evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability criteria were selected for the most recent SP evaluation). Given the timing of this evaluation, combined with significant evolutions in RRI’s external context (new issues, risks and actors emerging), as well change in its internal context (expanded membership, priorities, staffing, scope and focus of program), RRI is interested in conducting a more strategic evaluation at this time. The focus would be to examine RRI’s fit within a volatile eco-system and its readiness to engage in dynamic change processes in a sustained and

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<sup>3</sup> RRI undertook a final evaluation of SP III in 2023 and provided a management response to evaluation recommendations at the end of 2024. In addition, RRI has recently completed or will be undertaking reviews of its livelihoods programming, Tenure Tracking Initiative, MegaFlorestais and Interlaken Group Networks, and the Strategic Response Mechanism before end 2025. The RRI Board of Directors will also be reviewing the nature of coalition membership as well as RRI past performance and future directions in the context of RRI’s 20<sup>th</sup> annual celebrations in 2025, among other initiatives planned.

effective way. This evaluation would focus on strategic positioning and organizational fit-for-purpose to achieve SP IV goals. Assessing RRI effectiveness and results achievement, against the SP IV theory of change and results framework, will be the focus of the SP IV final evaluation, to be conducted in 2030.

Since January 2025, the global context has changed dramatically and continues to evolve at a dizzying pace. While the rationale for this mid-term review of SP IV presented above remains pertinent, it is overshadowed by the dramatic shifts in the global political and economic environment currently. Analyzing risk – to the Coalition, our partners, and collaborators - and helping to identify relevant mitigation strategies in the short-to-medium term, in keeping with SP IV, will be an equally important focus of this evaluation.

### **Evaluation Purpose**

The **purpose** of this review is to assess the extent to which RRI is well-positioned in its eco-system and possesses the relevant capabilities to advance its mission and achieve its program goals in a sustained, coherent, and effective way. Put another way, the review is intended to address the following key question: Is RRI doing the right things, with the right actors, in the rights ways, to advance its mission and goals, given its external context, and in light of the Coalition’s particular history, values, strategic leadership, program focus and structure, capabilities and resources?

This review is intended to inform an extension of the current SP IV to 2030 and review its current theory of change, key assumptions, and results framework. The principal users of this review will be RRI Coalition members, Board, and staff. The review will also be used by RRI to address general accountability and learning needs with partners, collaborators, and donors.

The more specific **objectives** of the evaluation include:

- To determine the extent to which RRI is strategically positioned in its eco-system as new issues, new dynamics, and new actors emerge
- To clarify the value-add and comparative advantage of the RRI Coalition in its current context, from the perspective of both internal and external stakeholders
- To gauge the extent to which RRI’s current theory of change and program strategy remain both relevant and plausible for RRI to deliver its SP IV goals (this includes validating key assumptions, internal ToC logic, and proposing modifications as necessary)
- To determine the key barriers and risks (internal and external) that RRI needs to address, along with proposed actionable pathways to address them, to improve RRI’s ongoing relevance and effectiveness.

### **Evaluation Scope**

The scope of the evaluation will cover the period of January 2023 to June 2025, although evaluators will need to understand and take stock of the historical evolution of the RRI Coalition and its program strategy since its establishment in order to put the review of its current strategic position and theory of change in context.

### **Evaluation Focus**

It is proposed that the evaluation will focus on addressing key evaluation questions outlined in the framework suggested below. Key evaluation questions will be discussed and potentially refocused

with the selected evaluator(s), while evaluation sub-questions will be carefully co-created – between RRI and the evaluator – under each key question below.

Areas of Evaluation Focus	Key Questions
<b>Relevance of Strategic Positioning in the Eco-system of Actors</b>	<p><i>To what extent is RRI well-positioned for influence within its eco-system of actors and audiences, given its mission, goals, values, history and characteristics?</i></p> <p><i>What are RRI comparative advantages and value-add in the current eco-system of actors and global context?</i></p>
<b>Plausibility of Strategic Program IV</b>	<p><i>To what extent does the logic underpinning RRI's current program strategy and theory of change continue to make sense in the current context?</i></p> <p><i>Given RRI's evolution to date and the current context in which it operates, what adaptations to the RRI theory of change and program strategy are necessary to increase the likelihood of achieving expected results?</i></p>
<b>Quality of RRI Collaboration and Complementarity</b>	<p><i>To what extent is RRI engaged in relevant collaborations given its mission and goals?</i></p> <p><i>How effectively is RRI complementing, supporting, and building on the work of other teams (internally) and actors (externally) to advance common objectives?</i></p>
<b>Appropriateness of Organizational Capabilities, Processes and Resources</b>	<p><i>To what extent does RRI possess the appropriate capabilities, processes and resources to deliver on its strategic program and theory of change?</i></p> <p><i>What additional capabilities, systems, tools, and resources, does RRI require to achieve its strategic objectives and contribute to expected results?</i></p>

**Source:** This framework is adapted from one developed by Jim Coe and Rhonda Schlagen (February 2019), in a brief entitled, “No Royal Road: Finding and following the natural pathways in advocacy evaluation.” Center for Evaluation Innovation.

### *Evaluation Methodology and Data Sources*

The suggested evaluation approach would be utilization-focused and would rely on a mixed method design, with an emphasis on qualitative data collection with key stakeholders, both inside and outside the RRI Coalition. Data sources would include documents and people. Once a contract is established with the selected evaluator, the identification of and access to key documents and stakeholders will be facilitated by RRI. The table below provides an indicative list of the type of documents and categories of stakeholders to be consulted.

Document Types	Stakeholder Categories
RRI by-laws and regulations	Coalition core partners
Policies, procedures, and strategies	Coalition allies, collaborators
Coalition partners' MoUs	RRI fellows
Board Minutes	Board of Director members
Strategic Program documents	CEO & President
Annual Program Books (workplans)	Secretariat directors and staff
Annual/mid-year reviews/reports	Funders
Recent Studies, Reviews, Evaluations	MegaFlorestais network members
Donor proposals, reporting	Interlaken Group network members
Management Responses to Evaluations	Path to Scale network members
Annual staff retreat reports	Other RRI consultants and collaborators
Recent RRI publications	Donors

*Travel*

This review will involve no travel to visit RRI programming at the country-level. Travel will be necessary for the evaluator to attend one scheduled RRI coalition meeting for up to a week, likely in Asia and in July, although details are to be determined. The cost of this trip should be reflected in the budget estimate submitted along with the consultant’s proposal for this assignment.

*Evaluation Reference Group (ERG)*

In order to ensure the relevance and utility of the evaluation, an evaluation reference group will be established to orient the evaluator, review and approve evaluation deliverables, and participate in regular debriefs and updates with the evaluator. The ERG will ideally include representatives drawn from the RRI Coalition partners, Board members, and Secretariat staff. ERG meetings would be held virtually according to a calendar agreed between the ERG and the evaluator.

*Evaluation Phases, Timelines, and Deliverables*

The review is planned to begin in April and to be completed by end of October 2025.

**Inception Phase** – This phase consists of preliminary discussion, document review and initial data collection with RRI and the ERG, to clarify and confirm learning needs, validate evaluation scope and focus, as well as design the evaluation and plan the evaluation process. This phase will also include a stakeholder mapping to situate RRI within its eco-system. The deliverable for this phase is a final, approved inception report including a detailed methodology with sampling strategy, evaluation matrix, level of effort, budget, and data collection instruments.

**Data Collection and Analysis Phase** – This phase consists of all data collection activities, document review and preliminary data analysis. Depending on the needs and availability of the ERG members, this phase may include several sessions with the evaluator to update the ERG on emerging findings for discussion and validation. This phase will be completed with the delivery of a detailed Power Point presentation of preliminary findings, conclusions and recommendations to the ERG for discussion, reflection, and validation.

**Reporting Phase:** Based on discussions and feedback provided by the ERG on preliminary findings, the evaluator will prepare a draft report (not to exceed 35 pages, excluding executive summary and annexes) and a proposed revision to the RRI Theory of Change. The draft evaluation report and

updated ToC will be submitted to the ERG for review and feedback. Final presentations will be delivered by the evaluator to a wider audience within RRI. Based on feedback from these processes, the evaluator will revise draft deliverables and submit a final evaluation report and ToC.

### *Timelines and Deliverables*

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Timeline/Deadline</b>
Contracting	Signed Contract	April 2025
Inception Phase	Approved Inception Report	April 22, 2025
Data Collection and Analysis	Debriefs, Presentations to ERG	April 22 – August 30, 2025
Draft Reporting, ToC Update	Draft report preparation, ToC update, presentations to RRI, report, report and ToC finalization	September 1 – October 31, 2025

All deliverables are to be submitted in English. The maximum budget available for this assignment is USD \$60,000.00.

## 3.0 Qualifications & Proposal Requirements

### *Qualifications of Evaluator*

We are looking for an evaluator (or evaluation firm) with a minimum of 10 years' experience in assessing organizational strategy and programming in the not-for-profit sector. Experience evaluating networks, coalitions, and associations involved in advocacy and influence would be important while knowledge of the climate and conservation eco-system would be a significant asset. The evaluator should be proficient in English (professional-level fluency), with an ability to collect data and review documents in French and Spanish.

### *Proposal Requirements*

We would ask that proposals in response to this RFP should not exceed five (5) pages in length and should include:

- A brief overview of the firm or evaluator's background/expertise
- Five (5) examples of recent assignments demonstrating the relevance of this experience to these TORs (including name of client, year of award, role occupied, size of contract, purpose, main activities, key recommendations and results of assignment)
- Two (2) referees that can attest to the relevance, quality of your work (with name, title, organization, email/phone coordinates)
- An estimated level of effort (calculated by person/day) broken down by phase, activity, team member (where relevant) and timeline.
- A budget proposal (up to a maximum of USD \$60,000) – budgets should include line items for professional fees (calculated as a daily rate in USD multiplied by an estimated number of person/days per team member), travel costs, any administrative or other ancillary costs, etc.
- An updated CV should be included for the lead evaluator.

The deadline for proposals has been extended to **March 28, 2025**. Proposals must be prepared as a PDF. Please include “SP IV Evaluation” in the subject line of your email and send it to Margot Rothman at the following address: [mrothman@rightsandresources.org](mailto:mrothman@rightsandresources.org)

*Reviewing, Analyzing, and Communicating the RFP Result*

All proposals received will be reviewed by a working group formed for this purpose within RRI. The knowledge, experience, and expertise of the candidate will be assessed against the intended purpose, scope, and focus of this assignment. Once proposals are prioritized in terms of the relevance of candidates’ expertise and experience, budget, and LoE components will be assessed to select the best candidate at the least cost. The successful candidate will be contacted by email at the end of the review period and will have one week to respond. All candidates will be notified of the proposal review outcome within two weeks of the review outcome.