Call for Proposals (CfP)

Contribution of the Palm Oil Industry to Community Development

1. Background

The Council of Palm Oil Producing Countries (CPOPC) is an intergovernmental organization mandated to promote sustainable palm oil development and to enhance the welfare of communities and smallholders in palm oil–producing countries. In many producing countries, palm oil operations are located in rural areas that faced limited access to infrastructure, basic services, and economic opportunities.

Observations across palm oil–producing countries indicate that the establishment of palm oil plantations and mills often acts as a catalyst for broader community development. This includes, among others, the construction of roads that improve connectivity, the creation of employment opportunities, and the development of social infrastructure such as clinics and schools. These changes can significantly contribute to improved livelihoods, access to services, and local economic growth.

In this context, CPOPC invites proposals from qualified institutions or individuals to undertake a study that systematically unpacks and documents the contribution of the palm oil industry to community development in surrounding operational areas, with particular emphasis on rural areas.

2. Objectives

The overall objective of the study is to analyze and describe how palm oil sector contribute to community development especially in rural areas.

Specific objectives include:

1. To document and analyze the contribution of palm oil operations to community development in rural areas, including infrastructure development (e.g. roads), employment creation, and access to health and education services.
2. To assess how the palm oil industry functions as a catalyst for wider socio-economic development – including women empowerment and youth inclusion - in surrounding communities.
3. To generate evidence-based findings that can support CPOPC's advocacy narratives and policy engagement with governments, international organizations, and other stakeholders.

4. To translate research findings into clear, policy-relevant messages that can be used in advocacy, communication, and diplomatic engagement.

3. Scope of Work

The selected consultant(s) or institution will be expected to undertake, at minimum, the following tasks:

- Conduct a comprehensive review of existing literature, reports, and data related to palm oil development and community development in rural and remote areas.
- Undertake primary data collection, including field visits, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and direct observation in selected palm oil operational areas.
- Identify and analyze illustrative cases that demonstrate changes following the establishment of palm oil operations.
- Describe key development dimensions, including but not limited to:

    1. Social and economic impacts, including the employment, income generation, women empowerment and youth inclusion;
    2. Access to education (e.g. schools and training facilities).
    3. Access to health services (e.g. clinics, health posts); and
    4. Transportation and connectivity (e.g. road construction and access);

- Analyze linkages between palm oil operations and broader community development outcomes. Involving related sustainability indicators and SDGs are recommended to improve the scope and quality of this study.
- Synthesize findings into a clear, balanced, and evidence-based narrative.

4. Expected Deliverables

All deliverables must comply with CPOPC's objective on aligning studies with advocacy needs and be designed for direct advocacy use.

The expected outputs of the study include:

1. An inception report outlining the study framework, methodology (including primary data collection where applicable), and work plan, with explicit reference to advocacy relevance.
2. A report presenting key findings, analysis, and preliminary conclusions.
3. A final report validated by CPOPC, incorporating feedback from the Secretariat and Scientific Committee.

4. A dedicated Key Advocacy Messages section (5–10 concise, evidence-based messages).
5. An Op-ed Article (1,000–1,500 words) focused on the relevance, implications, and policy significance of the study findings, to be published on the CPOPC website and, where possible, pitched to relevant regional or international media platforms.
6. Infographics highlighting a clear storyline or key message from the study, suitable for digital dissemination and social media.
7. Infographic presenting key findings in a simple, non-technical format, with emphasis on implications and recommendations, designed for broader common audience.
8. A Short Video translating key findings into a human-centered narrative, suitable for social media platforms and presentations.

All study outputs must be original and strictly comply with anti-plagiarism standards. The use of AI assistance and the similarity index shall not exceed 15% of the overall research, as tested by Turnitin software. The research team shall ensure proper referencing and citation of all sources and provide evidence of plagiarism screening together with the final report upon submission. Additionally, study outputs related to communication material will be developed in close coordination with CPOPC's communication unit, to meet CPOPC standard quality.

5. Methodology

The proposed methodology should be clearly described in the proposal and may include, but is not limited to:

- Literature review;
- Primary data collection through fieldwork, including interviews with community members, workers, local authorities, company representatives, and other relevant stakeholders;
- Qualitative and quantitative case study analysis; and
- Direct observation in selected operational and surrounding community areas, subject to time and budget constraints.

Proponents are encouraged to propose a methodology that is practical, robust, and aligned with the objectives of the study.

6. Duration

The expected duration of the assignment is no longer than 10 months from the date of contract signing.

7. Eligibility

This Call for Proposals is open to:

- Research institutions, think tanks, universities, or consulting firms; or
- Individual consultants with demonstrated expertise in rural development, agribusiness, sustainability, or related fields.

Applicants should demonstrate:

- Proven experience in conducting policy-relevant research or studies;
- Strong understanding of palm oil–producing countries and rural development contexts; and
- Excellent analytical and report-writing skills in English.

8. Proposal Submission Requirements

Interested applicants are invited *to submit a proposal following the attached format of proposal*, that includes:

1. Institutional profile or curriculum vitae of the consultant(s)/ team of researchers;
2. Examples of relevant previous work or publications.

9. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Relevance and quality of the proposed methodology;
- Demonstrated experience and expertise of the applicant(s);
- Clarity, coherence, and feasibility of the work plan; and
- Cost-effectiveness of the proposed budget.

10. Submission Details

Proposals should be submitted electronically to:

info@cpopc.net cc. mdaulay@cpopc.net; anindya.astari@cpopc.net

with the subject title:

"Proposal – Contribution of the Palm Oil Industry to Community Development"

The deadline for submission is: 18 September 2026