CALL FOR APPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNITY TENURE LAWYERS (CTLs)

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1. Context

Deforestation, land grabbing, and environmental degradation have been steadily increasing since the 2018 food price surge, driven by the high demand for vast expanses of land for multinational investment. In Cameroon, less than 10% of land is legally titled, while over 90% of the land inhabited by local and indigenous communities is neither recognized nor managed by them, leaving them vulnerable to expropriation. Since 2019, in response to the growing demand for vast expanses of land for mining and large-scale industrial agricultural projects, COMAID and GDA have each implemented initiatives to protect the environment and strengthen the security of land rights for local and indigenous communities. These initiatives include facilitating the establishment of Sub-national Land Observatories (SNLOs) in five regions of Cameroon to monitor large-scale land acquisitions and their impacts on forest cover, biodiversity, and the lives of local and Indigenous communities. Their work have helped local communities gain secure access to land, benefit from secure access to livelihood resources, and protect the environment in the face of the multiple ecological and climate crises currently underway. Despite the significant work accomplished by the SNLOs, their members lack trained and qualified legal professionals to support communities in their legal challenges against irresponsible land investments, particularly during court proceedings. Communities struggle to afford qualified lawyers to support their legal fight against land grabs perpetrated by investors and influential political figures, who are responsible for land grabbing and climate devastation in Cameroon. In addition to prohibitive legal fees, members of Sub-national Land Observatories (SNLOs) act as land and environmental defenders (LEDs) but find themselves unprotected and vulnerable to wealthy investors and influential figures. Often, their role as land and environmental defenders is not recognized by government officials, and they face victimization (torture, arrest, and imprisonment) for raising awareness within communities and empowering them to fight for their rights. Land grabs and limited access to vital resources threaten the livelihoods of local and indigenous communities, leading to widespread poverty and climate shocks that impact both human life and the environment.

In response to this setback, Community Assistance in Development (COMAID) and Green Development Advocates (GDA) implemented a project between 2024 and 2025 in four regions of Cameroon (Littoral Northwest, South, and Southwest) aimed at reducing deforestation, protecting the environment, and strengthening the security of local development actors. Following the significant results achieved, the initiative will be expanded to seven regions (Centre, East, Littoral, West, Northwest, Southwest, and South) to broaden the contribution and impact of local development initiatives.

2. Goals

The project aims to halt deforestation and land grabbing by supporting grassroots community defenders in seven regions of Cameroon.

More specifically, the project aims to:

- To promote lawyers specializing in community land rights (CTL) so that they can provide legal support to advocates and assistance to communities in seven regions of Cameroon

- Strengthen the protection of land and environmental defenders (LEDs) in order to defend community rights and protect the environment in the seven regions of Cameroon

- Sustain the CTL initiative through fundraising and visibility initiatives in the seven regions of Cameroon.

3. Purpose of the Terms of Reference (TOR)

This terms of reference defines the required qualifications for a Community Tenure Lawyer (CLT) - legal specialists, as well as the application, selection, training, active field research , and final placement within the secretariats of the Sub-national Land Observatories (SNLOs) and other host organizations in the ten regions where the project will be implemented. Ten graduates in law, political science, or related fields will be selected and trained during this process.

3.1 Qualifications required for a CTL:

The minimum qualification required for selection is a bachelor's degree in law, political science, or a related field. Candidates with experience working in a law firm or civil society organization in the forestry, environment, and human rights sector, and who can demonstrate experience supporting a community through a legal empowerment or litigation process, will be considered an asset. Candidates must be bilingual and fluent in both written and spoken French and English. Knowledge of land policy issues and advocacy skills are an additional advantage. Applications from women are encouraged.

3.2 Application procedure

Interested candidates should submit their application, either in person or electronically, to the GDA office in Yaoundé, behind the Sic Tsinga camp, 4th floor, Harmattan building, or by email to the address contact@gdacameroon.org or at the COMAID office in Bamenda, Vilen Pharmacy Building, Ghana Street, Nkwen, or by email at info@comaidcameroon.org Candidates must prepare an application file including :

- a CV and

- a cover letter tailored to the specific job posting, with the subject line “Application for the Community Tenure Lawyers (CTLs) Training Program.”.

We encourage candidates to read the entire call for application and fully understand its purpose, objectives, and the entire selection process before applying.

3.4 Training Process

The 10 selected candidates will undergo four (4) months of intensive training to effectively defend community land and resource rights, protect the environment, improve the security of local communities, and support local communities in legal empowerment. The training topics

will be designed and adapted to meet the needs of the selected Community Tenure Lawyers (CTLs). The training modules will cover the following areas: the legal framework governing natural resources (land, mining, and forestry), stakeholder engagement, environment and climate finance, advocacy, judicial and extrajudicial mechanisms for LEDs protection, fundraising, use of the MapMe mobile application, etc. Expert trainers will be recruited to train the 10 CTLs.

3.5 Active field research

The 10 selected Community Tenure Lawyers (CTLs) will conduct field research with communities facing land disputes or problematic projects for a period of one (1) month. This research will enable the selected CTLs to strengthen their capacity to carry out remedial actions. They will work in collaboration with community leaders and members of Sub-national Land Observatories (SNLOs) and other host organizations to build trust, collect data in the field, identify gaps, and support the practical implementation of laws on the ground. Following this field research, the 10 CTLs will write field reports on their work. These reports will serve as the basis for their final selection and placement within the SNLOs and other host organization

3.6 CTL Allocation

A limited number of Community Tenure Lawyers (CTLs) will ultimately be selected based on merit and assigned to the secretariats of the SNLOs and local communities. A contract will be drawn up and signed between COMAID and the CTLs for a 17-month trial period. During this period, the CTLs will receive training in fundraising to secure more resources to sustain the work of the Sub-national Land Observatories (SNLOs) and support local and indigenous communities in redress actions.

4. Application deadlines

Candidates must send their application file, in paper or electronic format, no later than October 9, 2026 at 4 p.m. prompt, to one of the following two addresses:

1. GDA office in Yaoundé, behind Camp Sic Tsinga, 4th floor, Harmattan building; email: contact@gdacameroon .org , with the subject line "Call for applications for the selection of CTLs"

2. COMAID Office, Vilen Pharmacy Building, Ghana Street, Nkwen; email:info@comaidcameroon.org, with the subject line "Call for applications for the selection of CTLs"