Term of Reference for an External Evaluation and Impact Assessment of the MapBiomas Project

1. Introduction

The original objective of the MapBiomas project (2015) was to develop cloud-based remote sensing methods and protocols to map land cover and land use changes in the Brazilian territory on an annual basis. The main goal was to deliver reliable information on land use change to improve the inventory of greenhouse gasses (GHG) emissions related to the land use and land use change and forestry (LULUCF) sectors, which respond to almost 50% of Brazil's emissions.

Since the MapBiomas launch, in 2015, the applications of the LULUCF dataset have gone beyond the GHG emissions inventory from land use, including an understanding of impacts of land use change on biodiversity, agriculture production, climate change, protection of indigentous people, water and energy security and infectious diseases. As of2022, MapBiomas is on its seventh map collection of land cover and land use with 27 classes in the legend. In addition, MapBiomas has also released other products, such as MapBiomas Water with the mapping and monitoring surface water dynamics and assess land use, infrastructure and climate change impacts on water bodies, MapBiomas Fire that maps the fire scars, deforestation and secondary vegetation recovery data. The MapBiomas products always cover the entire country and are publically available through the MapBiomas platform (https://mapbiomas.org/).

In 2018, based on the successful experience of annual land cover/use mapping, MapBiomas Alerta initiative was created, which consists of a system of validation and refinement of deforestation alerts with high spatial resolution images. The current version is dedicated exclusively to assessing deforestation and evidence of illegality in all Brazilian biomes and will expand to other themes like degradation and regeneration of native vegetation over the next few years.

Likewise, in 2018 MapBiomas started to expand to other countries and regions, being present today in 14 countries, including all South America and Indonesia - MapBiomas Network.

This Term of Reference aims at hiring a consultancy service to assess MapBiomas' impact, and propose improvements according to the findings. The hired consultancy will assess: i) the quality, content and user-friendliness of MapBiomas platform, ii) the user profile that uses MapBiomas data; iii) the type of applications and uses of the platform; iv) Mapbiomas' communication and outreach strategy; and v) propose and assess the impact of Mapbiomas in research, behavior, decision making processes and other policy measures and actions in national and subnational level, businesses, civil society, academia and media. Based on the existing assessments the hired consultancy will suggest improvements according to the findings.

The evaluation should also consider user expectations on data accessibility and delivery and the type of additional information that is needed or is currently lacking. These recommendations will be instrumental in determining the priorities, focus, and how the project should evolve from now on.

2. Evaluation's objectives:

2.1. Assess how MapBiomas has performed considering:

- Who the users are and how the data has been utilized;
- The quality, content and user-friendliness of MapBiomas platform
- What are the type of applications.

2.2. Forward-looking in terms of how MapBiomas can be improved to meet users' needs better, increasing its impact and usefulness for civil society, national and subnational governments, and the private sector;

2.3. Propose a system to continuously assess the impact of MapBiomas in research, behavior, decision-making processes and other policy measures and actions in national and subnational level, businesses, banking sector, civil society, academia and media concerning the curtailing of deforestation and the conservation and sustainable management of land, water and biomes.

3. Scope of the assessment

3.1. Desk review of relevant documentation. Looking at how the project was set up, its governance, and how the project has involved different partners in its set-up. This part should also include an evaluation of how MapBiomas data compares to other sources of information;

3.2. Conducting survey and interview with developers, funders and most notably users of MapBiomas, including public institutions, scientific research centers, NGO's, reporters and journalists, subnational and national governments, civil society, and charities;

3.3. This should feed into a section on what has been accomplished by the project, what type of information has been accessed and utilized by users and also user satisfaction. Case studies on how information has been used or led to change on the ground should be included;

3.4. Report highlighting the findings and proposing recommendations.

The report should be organized into three main parts, each one with a specific set of questions, according to the following headings: Process and governance of MapBiomas; Users and utilization of MapBiomas; Recommendations going forward.

4. Main questions to be answered

4.1 Users, Utilization and Impact of MapBiomas:

- How is the quality, content and user-friendliness of MapBiomas platform?
- What are the type of applications in which MapBiomas has been utilized?
- Who has used MapBiomas to date? How has uptake been since its inception?
- How often is MapBiomas being used by users? Are they mainly new users or recurring ones?
- How has MapBiomas data been used to date?
- What impact has this had on the ground or within organizations/within government?
- What information do users feel is missing?
- Do users feel information is easily accessible and does it cover their needs?

4.2. Impact Evaluation of MapBiomas

- What are the options and what would be the best way to continuously assess the impact of MapBiomas in research, behavior, decision-making processes and other policy measures and actions in national and subnational level, businesses, civil society, academia and media concerning the conservation and sustainable management of land, water and biomes.
- What could be the indicators to be monitored?
- What are the baseline values of these indicators?

- What are the resources needed to implement the monitoring of impact assessment?

4.3 MapBiomas going Forward (recommendations):

- How can MapBiomas reach new users? And ensure existing ones continue to utilize the platform?
- How can MapBiomas best engage with users?
- How can MapBiomas integrate with other data sets and mapping systems - governmental and nongovernmental - that also provide information on environmental related topics (e.g. Amazônia Protege, EcoCrime, Do Pasto ao Prato, Selo Verde, etc.)
- How can MapBiomas be used to trigger change on the ground (ex:stopping illegal deforestation in Brazil)? Does MapBiomas need to take a new direction for the future?
- How is the process to expand MapBiomas to other geographies? What is working? What could be improved?

The work should start in December 2022 with a final written report submitted by February 2023. A draft report should be shared with the MapBiomas project coordinator and donors to MapBiomas prior to approval and the production of the final report.

The final report will be in English (plain English) and Portuguese.

5. Key experience

5.1. Requested:

- Experience with undertaking evaluations, in particular regarding impact assessment;
- Fluency in Portuguese and English
- Have a presence in Brazil and be able to invoice in local currency in Brazil.

5.2. Key experience desirable:

- Knowledge of remote sensing technology and or land cover and land use map;
- Knowledge of deforestation and/or land monitoring in general, and in Brazil in particular.

6. Specific activities to be undertaken

6.1. Desk based review of MapBiomas: qualitative analysis of the MapBiomas project including MapBiomas Land Cover/Land Use Maps, MapBiomas Water, MapBiomas Fire, MapBiomas Alert and MapBiomas Network;

6.2. User interviews: participatory process with as many users of MapBiomas as possible, providing an assessment representative of all different stakeholders - academia, private sector, users on national and subnational governments, civil society.This should include the most active users of MapBiomas and those that have used MapBiomas to initiate change on the ground. Collect and synthesize qualitative and quantitative user reviews/statistics. Case studies should be identified to demonstrate MapBiomas use;

6.3. Produce a system to continuously assess the impacts of MapBiomas to promote the conservation and sustainable management of land, water and biomes; present 2015 and current baselines

6.4. Produce a final report that can be made publically available and published online: synthesis of findings and recommendations for the project going forward in terms of organizational structure, scaling up, making information available, and having a larger impact on the ground (including the monitoring of those impacts);

6.5. Report must contain an executive summary of max 10 pages that can be read in a comprehensive manner even if published independently from the main report.

7. How to apply:

Interested parties should send the commercial proposal to this link, until 9th Of December 2022.

The proposal should include:

A. Proposed methodology
B. A timeline for implementation
C. Description of the team including qualifications
D. Two references to demonstrate experience
E. Price and conditions