Terms of Reference

For

International Consultant

Desk Study on Ecosystem Services provided by Freshwater Networks in the Kura-Aras River Basin (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia) and the Black Sea Catchment Basin (Georgia)

Work Commence Date *(date when the selected candidate is expected to start the work)*	11 November 2013
Work Completion Date *(date when the selected candidate is expected to complete the work and provide final deliverables)*	31 May 2014
Language Required	English
Location / Work Area	Home Office with visits to the Southern Caucasus region
Reporting to	WWF Caucasus Programme Office

I. BACKGROUND

1. Thematic Introduction

The Southern Caucasus is covered by a freshwater network of more than 43,000 rivers. A high number of freshwater lakes of the Ecoregion are located in the Southern Caucasus part and they significantly contribute to reach biodiversity in the region.

Freshwater ecosystems, representing highly important areas for biodiversity conservation, play a vital role in humans` life providing key ecosystem services and benefits. Freshwater ecosystems contain some of the most threatened habitats in the Caucasus Ecoregion due to anthropogenic pressures mainly stemming from unsustainable urban water use, industry and infrastructure development projects, agriculture and increasingly developing hydropower sector. Unsustainable development of dams (hydropower, water security, irrigation) is disrupting environmental flows at river-basin-scale. Key negative impacts on freshwater ecosystems ultimately lead to decreasing the landscape integrity and biodiversity as well as to degrading key ecosystem services and benefits to people.

2. Project Background

The Desk Study on Ecosystem Services of Freshwater Networks in the Kura-Aras River Basin (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia) and the Black Sea Catchment Basin (Georgia) is planned to implement in the frame of the regional project – "Promoting Sustainable Dam Development at River-Basin-Scale in the Southern Caucasus" financially supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway and led by WWF Caucasus Programme Office, WWF Armenia and WWF Azerbaijan. The regional project aims (i) to demonstrate biodiversity and ecosystem services of freshwater networks in two targeted basins; (ii) to introduce a Sustainable Dams Assessment and Planning Methodology; and (iii) to mobilize key stakeholders, secure their support and launch the Caucasus Sustainable Dam Initiative. The project stresses that joint-effort of key stakeholders and players at the river-basin-scale can promote sustainable dam development in the Southern Caucasus and thereby significantly mitigate cumulative negative impacts of dams on environmental flows, biodiversity and ecosystem services of the targeted river basins.

II. DUTIES AND TASKS

Main Duties are (i) identification and analysis of ecosystem services provided by freshwater networks in the Kura-Aras River Basin (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia) and the Black Sea Catchment Basin (Georgia); and (ii) elaboration of a set of recommendations to establish a policy-mix[1] approach to improve ecosystem-based integrated water resources management in both targeted basins.

Main tasks[2] of the international consultant are:

1. Guide and lead the overall study process on the ecosystem services at national and regional levels.

2. Identify and analyze healthy ecosystems services provided by the targeted basins which are critical to maintain existing benefit to people, sustain productivity and economic growth, and improve equity.

3. Demonstrate the importance of identified key ecosystem services and where possible define their value.

4. Provide a set of recommendations to establish a policy-mix approach to improve ecosystem-based integrated water resources management and a set of smart indicators to assess the impact of the proposed policy reforms.

5. Present overall results of the study at a regional stakeholder workshop[3].

The main tasks of the international consultant shall be performed through the following activities in close collaboration with national consultants[4]:

Activity 1: Define a Terms of Reference of the study covering, but not limited to, the scope, structure, thematic directions, overarching methodology as well as a study work-plan for each targeted country of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia.

Activity 2: Develop a Terms of Reference for the national consultants including, but not limited to, a work-plan/schedule, a list of required data and information materials to be gathered, as well as standards for information gathering, analysis and presentation.

Activity 3: Establish close cooperation with the national consultants, agree on ways and schedule for effective coordination, and provide technical back-up throughout the duration of the study.

Activity 4: Guide the national consultants in gathering, review and analyzing all relevant data and documented materials required for the study in order to identify key ecosystem services.

Activity 5: Establish cooperation with a consultants` team working on a biodiversity desk-study[5] for the same targeted basins in order to ensure consistency and complementariness between these two studies ongoing in parallel.

Activity 6: Coordinate the study and ensure consistency with other ongoing corresponding efforts that contribute to integrated resource management and transboundary river basin management in the targeted basins.

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[1] Policy-mix consists of multiple policies interacting together, e.g. freshwater, hydropower/dams, ecosystem management policies etc.

[2] Tasks and all envisaged activities shall be implemented in close cooperation with WWF Caucasus PO.

[3] In the frame of the respective project, WWF Caucasus PO is planning to organize a regional stakeholder workshop to be held in Georgia in May 2014 (exact venue and precise dates will be confirmed later on).

[4] The national consultants will be hired in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia to support the study and assist the international consultant. Development of detailed ToR for the national consultants is under the international consultant`s responsibility.

[5] In parallel of the ecosystem services study, a complementary desk-study on biodiversity of two targeted basins will be implemented in the frame of the same project.

Activity 7: Review the relevant data and materials (reports, analysis, research, case-studies etc.) about targeted basins, their ecosystems, ecosystems management, ecosystem services, dam analysis, hydropower sector analysis, TEEB reports, and other related material available in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

Activity 8: Identify, classify and analyze ecosystems services, provided by the targeted basins in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, which are critical to maintain existing benefit to people, sustain productivity and economic growth, and improve equity.

Activity 9: Demonstrate the importance of identified key ecosystem services and where possible define their value. Also, where possible, highlight areas of special value regarding freshwater ecosystem services in relation to dam/hydropower-plant development.

Activity 10: Visit the region during the study to (i) meet the national consultants; (ii) review a study progress; (iii) meet key players and stakeholders as needed; and (iv) plan further steps for the study.

Activity 11: Prepare the first draft report for each country separately and obtain agreement from key stakeholders through a national level experts` workshop[6] to be held in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

Activity 12: Develop the final report[7] for each country and an integrated summary of the two targeted basins through considering and incorporating received comments and feedbacks, and submit all four final documents to WWF Caucasus PO.

Activity 13: Provide a set of recommendations to establish a policy-mix approach to improve ecosystem-based integrated water resources management and a set of smart indicators to assess the impact of the proposed policy reforms.

Activity 14: Present overall results of the study at a regional stakeholder workshop to be held in Georgia, May 2014.

III. MAJOR DELIVERABLES

1. A Terms of Reference of the ecosystem services desk-study for the Kura-Aras River Basin (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia) and the Black Sea Catchment Basin (Georgia).

2. A Terms of Reference for the national consultants to be hired in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia for the ecosystem services desk-study.

3. The first draft report for each country: Armenia (the Kura-Aras River Basin), Azerbaijan (the Kura-Aras River Basin) and Georgia (the Kura-Aras River Basin and the Black Sea Catchment Basin).

4. The final report for each country (Armenia: the Kura-Aras River Basin; Azerbaijan: the Kura-Aras River Basin; and Georgia: the Kura-Aras River Basin and the Black Sea Catchment Basin) and an integrated summary for the two targeted basins (the Kura-Aras River Basin and the Black Sea Catchment Basin).

5. A set of recommendations to establish a policy-mix approach to improve ecosystem-based integrated water resources management and a set of smart indicators to assess the impact of the proposed policy reforms.

6. A presentation about overall final results of the study delivered at the regional stakeholder workshop.

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[6] A national experts` workshop will be organized in March 2014 in each country in order to review and complement the data and to derive a common understanding of identified ecosystems services provided by targeted areas.

7 The final report should also address existing information/data gaps, if any, that need to be filled for more thorough further research and analysis.

IV. WORK SCHEDULE

The planned activities shall meet the following time-frame:

- ✓ Activities 1 through 3 – by 20th of November 2013
- ✓ Activities 4 through 11 – by March 2014
- ✓ Activities 12 and 13 – by April 2014
- ✓ Activity 14 – by May 2014

V. PAYMENT MODALITY

Consultancy payment is based on assigned tasks. The consultancy fee shall be finally discussed and agreed with the selected international consultant.

The detailed payment schedule and conditions will be defined by the Contract to be concluded between WWF Caucasus PO and the international consultant.

In addition to the consultancy fee, WWF Caucasus PO will cover all costs *(such as flight tickets, airport transfers, daily allowance, accommodation, and visa fees)* related to Consultant's visit to Georgia and / or Caucasus related to the assigned tasks under the given ToR.

VI. REPORTING

The international consultant, in close cooperation and coordination with the national consultants, will report in written form to Nugzar Zazanashvili, WWF Caucasus PO Conservation Director (e-mail: nzazanashvili@wwfcaucasus.org) and Maka Bitsadze, Project Regional Coordinator (e-mail: mbitsadze@wwfcaucasus.org), on the status and results of the assigned tasks under the given ToR.

Details on a reporting time-line will be defined by the Contract to be concluded between WWF Caucasus PO and the Consultant.

VII. REQUIRED SKILLS, EXPERIENCE AND COMPETENCIES

- ✓ Minimum Master's or equivalent degree in environmental science, environmental resource management, environmental economics or a related discipline.
- ✓ Minimum ten years of working experience in environmental resource management, environmental economics or a related discipline.
- ✓ Demonstrated practical experience related to (i) identification and valuation of ecosystem services; and (ii) ecosystem services provided by freshwater.
- ✓ Publications in the relevant fields are in plus.
- ✓ Ability to work constructively with different stakeholders in a complex environment and under strictly defined time-line.
- ✓ Strong and proven research and analytical skills.
- ✓ Excellent writing and presentation skills.
- ✓ Excellent command of written and spoken English.