



TERMS OF REFERENCE

Job title:	National Consultant to support in development of the Project Identification Form (PIF) for the Project on Conservation and sustainable management of wetland ecosystems in the Prut river basin for GEF7
Type of Contract:	Individual Contract (IC)
Duty station:	Chisinau
Section/Unit:	Environment and Energy Cluster
Languages requirement:	Romanian, Russian and English
Contract Duration:	December 2019 – July 2020, 35 working days

I. Background

The Republic of Moldova is encircled by two transborder aquatic arteries: the Dniestr River and the Prut River, the latter being the tributary of the Danube River. Both rivers host wetlands, whose importance has been recognized internationally. Currently, three wetlands with a total area of 94,751 ha (2,6% of the country's territory) are registered under the Ramsar Convention: (i) Unguri - Holoşnita in the middle part of the Dniestr River, (ii) Lower Dniester the south-east of the country, (iii) the Lower Prut - in the south of the country.

With the economic development of the districts along the Prut River, there is a danger of increasing anthropogenic pressure on the natural ecosystems of wetlands. Recently, the development trend of tourism in the Middle and Lower Prut region has evolved, with all its components: development of constructions, development of transport infrastructure, development of services, increase of the volume of waste especially between localities in the region, the emergence of first eco-pensions, etc. However, these anthropogenic pressures exert risks that may negatively affect the biological diversity and rural population wellbeing in the region, especially those socially/economically vulnerable, which are heavily dependent on local natural resources (especially fishing, biomass, wood, grazing, household water, etc.).

In this context, one of the primary tasks of the central and local authorities becomes the elaboration and implementation of a set of measures to minimize the anthropogenic impact and the creation of the conditions for adaptation of the river basins and the aquatic ecosystems to climate change. The interaction between the social factor (the local population) and the ecological component (biological diversity, ecosystems) is the object of intervention based on environmentally friendly solutions.

The ecosystems in the Prut basin are of strategic interest, including being the focus of regional and international organizations and projects. It is worth mentioning that in July 2018, as a result of the implementation of the EU/CBC project between Romania-Moldova-Ukraine, the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve (14,771 ha) was officially designated and registered in the UNESCO World Heritage Site. It incorporated the lands of the Lower Prut Scientific Reserve and the Ramsar Wetland - "Lower Prut".

This important step for the Republic of Moldova contributed to attracting at least 2 large projects funded by Rewilding Europe and the Government of Romania in a total amount of over 1.6 million US dollars. The projects will support the elaboration of the feasibility study and the technical-economic and ecological argumentation of the rehabilitation of the Beleu and Manta lakes, the carrying out of the hydrotechnical works to reduce the clogging processes of the respective lakes. At the same time, in 2019, the regional project "Hydro morphology and river restoration in the Danube basin" (DYNA) is launched, with the involvement of 5 non-EU countries - Bosnia-Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Ukraine. The project will be funded by GEF and implemented by WWF and ICPDR in cooperation with the Water Agency of Moldova and local public authorities in the Beleu lake area. It is worth mentioning that UNDP aims to ensure synergy with ongoing projects for the conservation of natural resources on the Prut River and to coordinate its activities, so that the projects are complementary, to generate a cumulative impact in the Prut Basin. As a result, the sustainability of project implementation in a unique cross-border area is ensured.

The project idea is in accordance with:

- (i) international treaties (conventions, agreements, protocols) in the field of biological biodiversity to which the Republic of Moldova is a Party, in particular pertaining to wetlands;
- (ii) the national strategic framework in the field of biodiversity in the field of sustainable development of the environment, biodiversity, and forestry.

Thus, the project is aiming to contribute to the achievement of the general objective of the Strategy on biological diversity of the Republic of Moldova for the years 2015-2020, but also of each specific objective, in particular A2, B1, C2 and E1. UNDP proposes, in particular, as a result of the implementation of the project:

- to create the "Pădurea Domneasca" wetarea in the river basin of the Middle Prut (B1), with the preparation of the set of documents to be recognised as a Ramsar site;
- to ensure the sustainable management and the efficient institutional framework for the conservation and management of the biodiversity of the wetlands in the Prut river (A2);
- providing measures to minimize the degradation of aquatic biological diversity (C2); and,
- increasing the benefits for the local population through the use of natural resources and ecosystem services (D2).

At the same time, the project idea will contribute to the realization of the National Development Strategy "Moldova 2030", Chapter 10 "Ensuring the fundamental right for a healthy and safe environment", the priority action "Extending the areas of natural areas protected by the state, as well as ensuring the efficient and sustainable management of natural ecosystems". The project will also contribute to the implementation of activities 83, 87 and 88 of the Action Plan of the Environmental Strategy for the years 2014-2023, which are assigned to the Specific Objective 6.4 "Expansion of forest areas up to 15% of the territory of the state, protected areas up to 8% of the territory and ensuring the efficient and sustainable management of natural ecosystems". The project will contribute to the implementation of the actions included in the Management Plan of the Danube-Prut and Black Sea (2018) river basin district.

The following are the envisaged project components:

1. Conservation and sustainable management of wetlands on the Prut River
 - a. Starting the procedure for creating the Wetland of International Importance (Ramsar) "The Middle Prut - Domestic Forest";
 - b. Support to the central as well as to the local public authorities and the scientific institutes in carrying out the tasks in the field of biodiversity conservation and the sustainable management of the natural areas protected by the state, with special focus to the wetland "Prutul de Jos" and "The Middle Prut" (proposed for creation);
 - c. Pilot actions for innovative practices of combining management and conservation (ex. restoration of ichthyofauna, ecological reconstruction, species migration corridors, green economy on biomass, supporting the ecological reconstruction of the riparian protection strips as elements of the ecological corridors for species migration, creation of new pastures in buffer zones and protected areas, etc.);
 - d. Awareness and involvement of the general public, local communities, private sector, in biodiversity conservation measures and on the importance of wetlands.
2. Capitalizing on the economic potential of ecosystems by supporting environmentally friendly activities in adjacent localities

Within the given component it is proposed to promote the green economy in the area of Lower and Middle Prut through the use of local natural resources and the enhancement of ecosystem services, as well as its promotion based on the local traditions).

The activities proposed in the project are in accordance with the objectives set in the "Biodiversity" Focal Area of the Programming Cycle 7 of the Global Environment Fund (2018-2022). Thus, the project will contribute to the achievement of all the objectives identified by CBD COP13 to be financed by GEF in the period 2018-2022 as its financial mechanism of the Convention on biodiversity conservation:

1. Integration of biodiversity provisions in all sectors and territorial planning
2. Direct approach to the protection of habitats and species
3. Continuous development of the political and institutional framework in the field of biodiversity conservation

Against this background, UNDP is seeking to recruit a national consultant who will support preparation of the Project Identification Form for GEF 7 programming cycle.

II. Scope of work and responsibilities

The main function of the national consultant is to provide support to the International Consultant responsible for development of the Project Identification Form (PIF) for the Project on Conservation and sustainable management of wetland ecosystems in the Prut river basin for GEF 7. The national consultant will liaise with the national stakeholders to identify the national priorities relevant for the project proposal and which are in line with the GEF 7 objectives, will ensure proper consultations on the draft PIF and addressing of the GEF comments together with the International Consultant.

In particular, the PIF must demonstrate consistency with the emerging strategy for GEF-7 and with GEF eligibility criteria (e.g. incrementality, scale-up and partnerships, mobilization of co-financing, cost-

effective greenhouse gas mitigation, etc). The proposed project will also demonstrate that it contributes to the implementation of Moldova's priorities and related national policy strategies and action plans.

Under the guidance of the UNDP Programme Specialists on Environment, Climate Change and Energy, UNDP CO, and as informed by the UNDP IRH Regional Technical Advisor, the UNDP Officer is expected to support the International consultant with the following tasks:

Major Tasks:

1. Support the International Consultant in his/her contact and consultations with governmental and other relevant stakeholders, local donors and other potential implementing agencies on national priorities, when applicable. Assist in interpretation and translation when and if necessary.
2. Assist the International Consultant in the identification and revision of relevant background documents on current baseline situation (reports, plans, acts, legislation, procedures, studies/assessments), and assist with support in translations, when and if needed.
3. Assist the International consultant during a one-week mission to Moldova to collect any additional information for PIF formulation, and/or to have required consultations with the national counterparts and potential project partners in terms of direct meetings, on behalf of the international consultant. These consultations will involve the design of future project, elaboration and search for potential co-finance support, partnerships and scale-up opportunities as would be required by the PIF development process;
4. Provide the International Consultant with strategical support, background information and local knowledge aimed to identify entry points for the UNDP, ideas for projects and proposals;
5. Assist the International Consultant with regional knowledge and support for the identification of other donors' agendas in Moldova, to use emerging partnership opportunities, and if such do not exist, to avoid duplication off GEF effort.
6. Building on the scoping mission, assist the International consultant in the development of the baseline situation that could serve as a baseline project for future GEF investment.
7. Provide support to the International Consultant when needed in the consultative processes with regional and international partners and other stakeholders as part of the creation of the project proposal;
8. Work in close cooperation with the International consultant, the UNDP CO and other stakeholders in order to define the project budget.
9. Assist the International consultant in the formulation of a draft PIF addressing the following issues:
 - Development of the problem tree and sketching of the intervention strategy;
 - Identification of several possible scenarios for intervention and identification of the most cost-effective approach within the GEF strategic objective;
 - Preliminary identification of key areas for piloting and implementation;
 - Preparation of the project results framework– including indicative indicators – and GEF tracking tool;
 - Identification of main risks and associated mitigation measures according to the UNDP typology and approach to risk management.
 - Identification of partnerships for scale-up opportunities, co-financiers and indicative amounts of co-financing.

10. Based on the collected information from the consultations with the national stakeholders support in formulation of 3 additional biodiversity-related project concepts

Expected deliverable and timeframe

The key products to be delivered are as follows:

- Deliverable 1: Provide inputs to Mission agenda and assignment approach;
- Deliverable 2: Provide inputs to Mission Report includes proposed objectives, scope and strategies for new project, and draft PIF;
- Deliverable 3: Final PIF, with UNDP comments addressed.
- Deliverable 4: PIF with GEF comments addressed and integrated.
- Deliverable 5: Three project concepts in biodiversity-related projects

The timeframe and duration of activities are estimated to be broken down as follows:

Activity	Duration (estimated) / days	Estimated Timing and deadline
Provide inputs to Mission Agenda and assignment approach	2	December 2019
Provide inputs to Mission Report includes proposed objectives, scope and strategies for new project, and draft PIF	9	End January 2020
Final PIF, with UNDP comment integrated	7	End February 2020
PIF with GEF comments addressed and integrated	2	July 2020
Three biodiversity-related project concepts	15	December 2019 - March 2020
TOTAL working days	35	

Prior to approval of the PIF a draft version shall be submitted for comments to UNDP and national stakeholders.

UNDP and the stakeholders will submit comments and suggestions within 10 working days after receiving the draft.

III. Management Arrangements:

Responsibility for Managing the Consultant

The principal responsibility for managing the consultant will lie with the Programme Specialists within the Environment, Energy and Climate Change Cluster of UNDP Moldova and with the Regional Technical Advisor in Istanbul Regional Hub.

Payment for Services

The Expert shall be paid in three instalments as follows:

Deliverable schedule		
Milestone 1	Provide inputs to Mission Agenda	20%
Milestone 2	Provide inputs to Mission Report includes proposed objectives, scope and strategies for new project, and draft PIF	40%
Milestone 3	Final PIF and Project concepts	40%

Responsibility for Expenses and their Reimbursement

The Consultant will be responsible for all personal administrative and travel expenses associated with undertaking this assignment including office accommodation, printing, stationary, telephone and electronic communications, and report copies incurred in this assignment.

IV. Requirements for experience and qualification

Academic Qualification

- Advanced university degree in natural resources management, biodiversity conservation, environmental economics and related areas;

Experience:

- At least seven (7) years of professional experience in developing and/or managing projects related to biodiversity conservation and planning financed by external donors;
- Previous working experience with GEF projects;
- Proven working experience with UNDP on biodiversity conservation projects is an advantage;
- Demonstrated ability of analytical and report drafting work.

Competencies:

- Good communication and presentation skills;
- Extensive experience analysing data and preparing analytical reports;
- Ability to work with a broad range of individuals of diverse institutions and levels;
- Proven experience in undertaking similar assignments. Demonstrated written and spoken proficiency in English;
- Ability to work in a team, excellent analytical and communication skills;
- Good inter-personal and facilitation skills.

Language requirements:

- Fluent in written and oral communication in English;
- Fluent in Romanian or/and Russian.

Selection criteria are shown in the Procurement Notice advertised together with this Terms of Reference.

V. Documents to be included when submitting the proposals:

Interested individual consultants must submit the following documents/information to demonstrate their qualifications:

1. Proposal:
 - Providing a brief information on each of the above qualifications, item by item
 - A brief methodology on how they will approach and conduct the work
2. CV and at least 3 names for a reference check
3. Financial proposal (in USD), specifying a fee per day and total requested amount including all related costs, e.g. fees, per diems, travel costs, phone calls etc.;
4. Offeror's Letter confirming Interest and Availability.