

Terms of Reference
For
International Consultant

**Desk Study on Biodiversity of the Kura-Aras River Basin (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia) and
the Black Sea Catchment Basin (Georgia)**

Work Commence Date <i>(date when the selected candidate is expected to start the work)</i>	11 November 2013
Work Completion Date <i>(date when the selected candidate is expected to complete the work and provide final deliverables)</i>	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 biodiversity 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) analysis and synthesis of existing data on biodiversity in the Kura-Aras River Basin (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia) and the Black Sea Catchment Basin (Georgia); and (ii) demonstration of the importance of key biodiversity conservation areas in relation to dam/hydropower-plant development.

Main tasks¹ of the international consultant are:

1. Guide and lead the overall biodiversity study process at national and regional levels.
2. Analyze and synthesize available existing data on biodiversity in the Kura-Aras River Basin (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia) and the Black Sea Catchment Basin (Georgia).
3. Demonstrate the importance of key biodiversity conservation areas.
4. Present overall results of the study at a regional stakeholder workshop².

The main tasks of the international consultant shall be performed through the following activities in close collaboration with national consultants³:

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.

Activity 5: Establish cooperation with a consultants' team working on the ecosystem services desk-study⁴ for the same targeted basins in order to ensure consistency and complementarity 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 two basins.

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

Activity 8: Analyze and synthesize obtained data on the biodiversity of the Kura-Aras River Basin (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia) and the Black Sea Catchment Basin (Georgia).

¹Tasks and all envisaged activities shall be implemented in close cooperation with WWF Caucasus PO.

² 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).

³ 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.

⁴ In parallel of the biodiversity desk-study, a complementary desk-study on the ecosystem services of two targeted basins will be implemented in the frame of the same project.

Activity 9: Demonstrate the importance of key biodiversity conservation areas in relation to 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' workshop⁵ to be held in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

Activity 12: Develop the final report⁶ 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: 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 biodiversity 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 biodiversity 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 presentation about overall final results of the study delivered at the regional stakeholder workshop.

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 – by April 2014
- ✓ Activity 13 – by May 2014

⁵ 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 the importance of identified key biodiversity within targeted areas.

⁶ The final report should also address existing information/data gaps, if any, that need to be filled for more thorough further research and analysis.

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, biodiversity conservation, environmental resource management, or a related discipline.
- ✓ Minimum ten years of working experience in biodiversity conservation, environmental resource management, or a related discipline.
- ✓ Demonstrated practical experience related to (i) freshwater biological diversity; and (ii) identification of key biodiversity areas.
- ✓ 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.