



TERMS OF REFERENCE

Title of Assignment	Consultant to conduct a gap analysis and design a connectivity conservation plan for Jordan Protected Areas Network	
Location	Jordan Protected Areas	
Project	Enhancing Climate Resilience of Biodiversity Hotspots in Jordan	
Duration	8 months	
	From: Upon signing contract	To: 31 April 2024

Background

The initiative "Enhancing Climate Resilience of Biodiversity hotspots in Jordan " aims to improve the resilience to the adverse impacts of climate change of vulnerable ecosystems and vulnerable communities dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods. Protected areas, when well designed, well-connected, and effectively managed, deliver important ecosystem services to human populations in general, and specifically to neighboring communities. In Jordan, local communities living around protected areas are benefiting from employment opportunities, eco-tourism development options, provision of healthy rangelands, medicinal plants, and development of socioeconomic projects that provide economic benefits. Climate change is one of the major threats on biodiversity, accelerating the loss of species and degradation of habitats, and the well-being of local communities, while well-designed protected areas are one of the main Nature-based Solutions to mitigate the impacts of climate change, and sustain ecosystem services for human societies and to generate economic benefits for local communities that rely heavily on them.

The ecosystems vulnerability assessment conducted through Jordan's Third National Communication (TNC) Report showed that forests and water ecosystems are among the most vulnerable, highlighting the priority need to perform adaptation interventions within these two kinds of ecosystems. (http://www.moenv.gov.jo/ebv4.0/root_storage/ar/eb_list_page/jordans_third_national_communication_report-0.pdf). The TNC proposed to adopt a national wide protected area system, using diverse conservation governance forms including protected areas (PAs), "Hima" and special conservation areas (SCAs) that empowers local communities to conserve natural resources and improves their livelihoods by enhancing their adaptive capacity, in addition to involve them in restoration actions of degraded ecosystems, and encouraging the establishment of community forests to control soil erosion. Currently, Jordan's protected areas network covers only 5.3% of the country, while the international conservation community is trying to promote the adoption of the 30x30 initiative by conserving 30% of terrestrial and marine ecosystems globally by 2030. (<https://www.mdpi.com/2073-445X/11/1/56>). Critical gaps in the current national network of protected areas include the lack of integration of the current and projected impacts of climate change on ecosystems, as well as the lack of comprehensive representation of some ecosystems.

Based on this, the project will contribute to enhancing the resilience of vulnerable ecosystems and vulnerable communities on two geographic scales:

1. National scale: by aiming to increase the "percentage of critical climate-vulnerable ecosystems within the National Protected Areas Network". The project will also integrate climate change metrics within the design of the protected areas management effectiveness tracking tools to help tracking and achieving an effective protected areas network that is better resilient to the impacts of climate change.
2. Sub-national scale: by applying pilot interventions in Shoubak and Petra Districts from Ma'an Governorate southern Jordan that aim to achieve "increased areas of restored forest ecosystems in Shoubak and Petra southern Jordan", and an "increased percentage of women, youth and marginalized groups engaged in and benefiting from the implementation of Nature-based Solutions in Shoubak and Petra districts". The project will focus on pilot interventions targeting forest ecosystems in Shoubak and Petra, in southern Jordan, which are some of the most vulnerable ecosystems. It also tackles the impact of climate change on vulnerable local communities, especially women, girls, and youth, sectors of the society most affected by the degradation and reduced productivity of these ecosystems.

The project's ultimate outcome will result in conserved and sustained ecosystem services for the benefit of local communities dependent on protected areas and the ecosystems conserved through these protected areas, which will contribute to poverty reduction across all sites where protected areas exist. The project's pilot interventions including Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) and Nature based Solutions (NbS) in the target locations in Petra and Shoubak will have a direct impact on enhancing the livelihoods and income of vulnerable communities through an extensive capacity building program that will target women, girls, and youth, and by engaging them in the FLR and NbS activities. This will not only enhance their income but will also improve their skills to achieve sustainable financial income.

Scope of Work and Objectives

Under the supervision of the Protected Areas, World Heritage and Biodiversity Programme Manager at IUCN ROWA, the selected service provider shall provide the following:

Contribute to and support the implementation of Output:

Three scenarios for revising protected areas network developed with the integration of climate change and gender including the following specific activities:

- Conduct a situation analysis and gap assessment of the current PA network.
- Conduct stakeholder consultations to agree on the PA network revision criteria with the integration of climate change and gender.
- Compile and develop a GIS database on the inputs and variables related to planning units, biodiversity targets, threats, and other related datasets.
- Advise on priority locations for conducting gap filling field survey.
- Run and produce results for at least three PA network scenarios using Marxan Systematic Conservation Planning. The consultant shall propose the PA design scenarios (including conservation targets and limitations) based on a consultation with stakeholders in coordination with IUCN.
- Propose connectivity corridors and buffer zone to enhance the design, connectivity, and climate resilience of the protected areas network in Jordan. The corridors will be assessed for possible designation as part of the PA system or as Other Effective Conservation Mechanisms (OECMs). The corridors will aim to effectively connect PAs within Jordan.
- Design a connectivity conservation plan for Jordan based on current PAs and ecosystem gap analysis with the support and under the supervision of IUCN and in coordination with the MoEnv. The connectivity conservation network should aim to cover the following aspects:
 - A network of ecological corridors will be designed in accordance with IUCN best practices, to enable functional and structural connectivity. This is a critical component to realize the goal of having an effective and climate resilient PA network.
 - The corridors will be assessed for possible designation as part of the PA system or as Other Effective Conservation Mechanisms (OECMs). The corridors will aim to effectively connect PAs within Jordan.
 - The process will include setting objectives, choosing an appropriate governance model, delineating boundaries.
- Conduct field validation visits and revise the PA scenarios and connectivity corridors based on the results of the field validation.
- Develop the final revised PA network report and submit it to IUCN.

- Conduct training on systematic conservation planning for PA planners and practitioners (introductory for planners, and practical training for practitioners)

The consultant shall ensure the delivery of the outputs and activities and shall refer to the activity description in the project PIP (version August 2023).

Deliverables

The consultant shall submit the following to IUCN-ROWA:

Deliverable	Subject	Deadline
D1	Inception report: including literature review, workplan, methodology.	1 week after signing the contract (estimated workload: 2 days)
D2	Situation analysis and gap assessment including Ecosystem representation and gaps in the PA system. (Report covering ecosystem representation and gap analysis).	6 weeks after sending D1 (estimated workload: 11 days)
D3	Marxan Scenarios for revising the PA network including the design of connectivity corridors. (Report covering the 3 scenarios for reviewing the PA network and the design of connectivity conservation proposal for Jordan PAs at the wider regional landscape level / maps and GIS layers resulting from the connectivity conservation design)	10 weeks after sending D2 (estimated workload: 15 days)
D4	Validation Visit report	3 weeks after sending D3 (estimated workload: 7 days)
D5	Training Material and training Report for two trainings	3 weeks after sending D4 (estimated workload: 5 days)

Payment Schedule

The consultant is expected to conduct the work within **7 months / 8 months**, through fieldwork, interviews and consultation with the IUCN ROWA and relevant stakeholders if needed (In total **40 working days distributed through the 7 months**) are estimated to conduct the tasks. The consultant shall submit an invoice according to the schedule of payments described below:

1. 20% upon submitting and approval of the inception report (D1)
2. 20% upon the completion and approval of deliverable (D2).
3. 30% upon the completion and approval of deliverable (D3).
4. 30% upon the completion and approval of the remaining deliverables (D4-D5), and all tasks and delivery of all relevant deliverables and reports.

If the consultant is subject to tax in the territory of Jordan in respect of the consideration received under this agreement, the consultant hereby acknowledges that IUCN is entitled to deduct 5% for residents of Jordan and 10% for residents outside Jordan, in addition to 1% as national contribution for non-residents, as income tax arising or made in connection with this agreement. Also, IUCN will deduct a 5% amount as admin and review cost arising or made in connection with this agreement.

Qualifications of Successful Candidate

IUCN is seeking for qualified organization / firms with the following qualifications and expertise:

- MSc or PhD degree in environmental sciences, environmental management, biodiversity

- conservation, or any other related fields (a PhD degree is preferred).
- Extensive and practical knowledge of main environmental agreements and environmental policies.
 - Extensive experience, proven record of applying systematic conservation planning models and tools like Marxan.
 - Extensive experience, proven record of designing connectivity networks for conservation planning.
 - Between 15 to 20 years of experience with conservation planning and protected areas.
 - At least 10 years of experience with project implementation in large-scale regional projects or with international organizations.
 - Demonstrated expertise and experience in the field of protected areas management, specifically in West Asia.
 - Experience in communicating and collaborating with management agencies, academic institutions, and local, national, and regional stakeholders to achieve agreed collective outcomes.
 - Experience in biodiversity and/or protected areas information management, ideally involving terrestrial ecosystems, at national and/or regional levels.
 - Ability to compile large amounts of information succinctly into a coherent document for conservation practitioners and government officials.
 - Excellent facilitation and coordination skills, with the ability for managing the timely and effective delivery of both quantity and quality work on time.
 - Strong communication and presentation skills, and an ability to prepare appropriate and timely reports to a wide range of audiences and cultures.
 - Excellent time management skills, including an ability to work effectively under pressure and to meet tight deadlines.
 - Excellent writing and speaking literacy in English (Arabic is an asset).
 - Proven ability to liaise and work with a range of stakeholders including government agencies, the private sector, and local communities, and in support of regional and national institutions.
 - Demonstrated commitment to achieving biodiversity conservation and livelihoods goals.
 - A team player able to contribute effectively to collaborative issues, and to demonstrate innovation and leadership.
 - A good understanding of IUCN's mission, and a general attitude of being of service to others.

Nature of penalty clause in contract

If the requested deliverables are not submitted within the timeframe stated in this ToR, the payments will be withheld.

International Union for Conservation of Nature – Regional Office for West Asia (IUCN-ROWA) reserves the right to withhold all or a portion of payment if performance is unsatisfactory, if work / outputs is incomplete, not delivered, or for failure to meet deadlines. All materials developed will remain the copyright of IUCN, and IUCN will be free to adapt and modify them in the future.

Important notes:

1. All the deliverables from the consultant, whether reports, presentations, documents, etc. should include (IUCN, GAC), and the two institutions should be mentioned whenever an activity is mentioned.
2. Any pictures, figures, charts, etc. used in this consultancy must include the copyrights.
3. The final compiled reports for this assignment will need to follow IUCN's visual identity and publication guidelines, which will be provided by IUCN.