Terms of Reference

Design, development and testing of a self-assessment tool for protected areas performance, aligned to IUCN Standards.

Background

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is a global organization dedicated to conserving nature and promoting sustainable development. As part of its mission, IUCN has developed the Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas, which recognizes and promotes effective management and governance of protected areas worldwide. In order to facilitate the self-assessment and verification of sites for inclusion in the IUCN Green List, an initial dedicated benchmarking tool - IBEX - has been under initial development. It is required to:

- Allow PCA managers and stakeholders to engage with, understand, and critically assess their performance against the Green List Standard and its criteria
- Provide a rapid diagnostic benchmark of 'effectiveness' and areas for improvement
- Guide investment and project-based interventions
- Simplify the verification and validation process by IUCN expert 'EAGL' members
- Allow for time-series reports on status and to track improvement and results from management

In 2023 a prototype version of the IBEX has been successfully tested on individual sites as well as on PCA networks proving itself as useful tool to outline Green List requirements, benchmark site and network level performance and has shown clear potential as a fist line of engagement towards the broader Green List Standard at site and national and regional level.

More so, IBEX has been integrated as a key component of various regional IUCN programs, initiatives, partnerships and projects (ex.GBMF-IUCN Partnership for the Green List; The 30x30 Challenge; IKI One Health In Central Asia; ESRI Partnership et al). These individual projects require support to integrate the IUCN Green List and its self-assessment tool into their operations.

Tasks

1. The consultant will support the consolidation process to harmonize a final version of the Green List IBEX self-assessment tool for further testing, including at site, network and system-level by PCA managers and authorities, as well as IUCN Green List EAGL experts. This will help advance the objectives of at least 5 IUCN projects.

2. The consultant will facilitate the development of additional assessment modules to be incorporated into the tool (eg.Whakatane Grievance Redress Mechanism GRM, IAS assessment etc.) and ensure alignment throughout the Green List standard revision process.

3. The consultant will help the integration of the tool into the IUCN Green List Dashboard provided by Esri, and support development of any additional IUCN Green List Standard focused outreach, promotion and mainstreaming concepts.

4. The consultant will conduct Green List and IBEX trainings and site level assessments (online and in attendance) in IUCN priority sites, countries and project focus regions (Saudi Arabia, Central Asia, Eastern/Southern Africa and elsewhere depending on institutional needs and requirements).

5. The consultant will, under the direction of IUCN, facilitate coordination and planning for the Green List diagnosis and assessment processes within the frame of project collaborations in Central Asia.

6. The consultant will support IUCN in the commitment to the Green List Standard of the first terrestrial PCA in Mozambique and assess potential Green List expansion plans in the region.

7. The consultant will support to IUCN in developing scientific publications and guidance documents for the self-assessment tool.

Additional activities
- Support IUCN in the promotion, trainings and project integration of the self-assessment tool at global level, ie supporting the 'Act30' campaign for 30x30, and the 2030 Green List ambitions.
- Enable, foster and where possible strengthen partnerships and institutional relations with Government focal points and central institutions responsible for promotion of IUCN tools and Standard and for Protected Area management across IUCN focal countries and scope for opportunities to initiate direct relations elsewhere.
- Ensure constant WCPA-IUCN coordination and engagement towards IBEX developments.
- In coordination with IUCN, provide advice on the integration of IBEX within the Green List Dashboard and operationalize data-sharing (with WDPA and others databases) and geo-referencing
- Help IUCN Green List Team identify and when proper pursue Green List outreach, promotion and mainstreaming concepts and innovative approaches (Online gaming, AI potentials, financial sustainability models et al)
- Support IUCN in specific project proposal development for the promotion of the self-assessment tool (GBFF, GCFF and others depending on institutional needs and priorities).

Deliverables
1. Excel Online IBEX testing report (max. 11 pages + IBEX report annexes) and recommendations (included in 1-page executive summary).
2. At least 1 assessment module for incorporation into the IBEX tool.
3. IBEX Coordination meeting reports (4-5 pages every 2 months).
4. Self-assessment reports including site specific improvement actions and specific site level needs in Central Asia and other focus regions (one report per assessed site).
5. Site visit reports for at least 2 One Health project sites in Central Asia outlining staffing, training, capacity and equipment needs.
6. Formal commitment to Green List from at least 1 site in Mozambique.
7. At least 1 peer-reviewed paper, to be further developed with other authors.

Travel
- IUCN will organize and cover any agreed travel associated with the Tasks.

Technical and IT support

- IUCN will provide a laptop (not exceeding 950.00 CHF) to be used by the consultant solely and exclusively for IUCN tasks as specified in this ToR. This will be IUCN's property and returned to IUCN at the end of the consultancy.
- IUCN will provide technical support as needed to ensure the consultant has access to an IUCN Outlook email address and to IUCN's Microsoft Teams communication channels as external staff.

Requirements
- At least an MSc in protected areas or environmental management or a similar field and/ or at least 10 years of experience in protected and conserved areas assessment, planning and management.
- Demonstrated experience in development of guidance, policy and modules for area-based conservation.
- Proven experience in capacity building and assessments related to management effectiveness of protected and conserved areas in different geographical and cultural settings.
- Recognized experience with IUCN protected and conserved area standards, tools and advisory services.
- Demonstrated experience of project coordination and management.
- Previous experience with the IUCN Green List IBEX tool will be an advantage.

Timeframe
- The consultant is expected to conduct activities within the period May 1st 2024 and January 31st 2025, or until deliverables are achieved with requisite days accounted for.