Terms of Reference
Consultant for developing a concept project on Nature based Solutions for Cities

Background

The concept of sustainability, in all its dimensions, deserves to be the main pillar of current urban development.

In a scenario of extreme complexity, with an urban population that will grow to 6,000 million by 2050, according to United Nations estimates, it is urgent to prepare our cities for the enormous demographic pressure that will sharpen the already existing challenges: provision of basic services, traffic congestion, quality of air, noise, global warming...

Ecosystems provide natural solutions to many challenges cities face by offering numerous services such as clean air, water filtration, flood prevention, noise reduction and climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as many non material benefits, for example recreation, education, aesthetic values and maintenance of social relations.

In the face of urban expansion and densification, there is a need for effective mechanisms for the planning and governance of biodiversity and ecosystem services. Such mechanisms can improve human well-being and strengthen the capacity of cities to adapt to change. Local governments can benefit from taking the leadership role in the effective integration of biodiversity and ecosystem services into land use planning, policy making and management responses.

The Nature-based Solutions (NbS) concept, as used in environmental sciences and nature conservation contexts, has emerged within the last decade or so, as international organisations search for ways to work with ecosystems – rather than relying on conventional engineering solutions (such as seawalls) – to adapt to and mitigate climate change effects, while improving sustainable livelihoods and protecting natural ecosystems and biodiversity. The NbS concept is being developed and applied by IUCN and other organisations, such as the European Commission.

The IUCN World Conservation Congress, held in September 2016 in Hawaii, adopted Resolutions WCC-2016-Res-069-EN “Defining Nature-based Solutions” and WCC-2016-Res-029-EN “Incorporating urban dimensions of conservation into the work of IUCN”, noting the importance of NbS as an underpinning element of the IUCN Programme 2017-2020

According to IUCN, Nature-based Solutions (NbS) are defined as actions to protect, sustainably manage and restore natural or modified ecosystems, which address societal challenges (e.g. climate change, food and water security or natural disasters) effectively and adaptively, while simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits.
The new circular economy could play an important role in NbS, complementarily, can also offer ideas on fields such as waste management, sharing economy, resource efficiency, or resilient urban developments. Circular economy is a central theme in the new European urban agenda.

Finally, the key contribution that Urban Ecology can provide to a more eco-systemic approach for urban development must be also taken into consideration. Urban Ecology is broadly recognized as a discipline with an enormous potential for the improvement of sustainability, health and coexistence in urban areas.

Due to the lack of integration of biodiversity and ecosystems in urban planning, cities, in Europe and in the Mediterranean area, are currently facing enormous difficulties in coping with climate change, air-quality and noise related illness, pacific coexistence or security. This could be changed through the establishment of a new urban planning model, in which a central role would be given to connectivity between urban areas and the surrounding ecosystem/landscape, new social uses of the public space and more green and biodiversity-friendly urban spaces.

The IUCN-Med programme concerns the Mediterranean region, one of the planet’s "hotspots" of biodiversity. IUCN-Med concentrates its efforts on the implementation of the three IUCN global programme areas: Valuing and conserving nature; Effective and equitable governance of nature’s use; and Deploying nature-based solutions to global challenges in climate, food, development together with a fourth new specific programme area focused on IUCN corporate development.

In the year 2025, the rate of urbanisation of the Mediterranean region as a whole could reach 72% (trend scenario). With the aim of inspiring Nature Based Solutions in the Mediterranean cities and promoting this approach, the IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation has launched a process to identify the best NbS that could be implemented in this regional area; and to offer a knowledge base for developing innovative nature-based solutions and foster cooperation on this field.

This is the framework in which this project comes into play, aiming at identifying Nature-based Solutions for cities in the fields of public space, environmental protection and public health. Specifically the project aims to identify and disseminate the most suitable NbS needed for developing a new ecosystem approach in urban policies.

**Overall goal of service**

One of IUCN’s current fields of work is related with applying NbS approach to sustainable urban development.

With this goal in mind, a consultant is invited to develop a research and development framework for this field aiming at:

- Identifying how NbS could offer strategic and ecosystem approaches to challenges that cities are currently facing in the Mediterranean region (water shortage, health, air pollution, high temperatures, water levels, extreme event…);
- Framing a potential project and a list of potential international/European funds in this subject;
- Identifying experts and partners in order to conceptualize a common framework for a project in this field.

Furthermore the consultant will have an opportunity to review and provide feedback on the contributions that partners and experts are expected to provide during the project development process (via a workshop and an international conference). As a result of the research and framing phase, a project on NbS for cities is expected to be drafted.

**Expected Methodology and Outputs**

**Step 1. Research and framing (Deadline, October 15).**

**Purpose:** Preliminary desktop analysis of current environmental policies in the face of NbS in the cities and identification of best experts in this field in the Mediterranean region.

**Deliverables:**
- A summary of the research on existing ideas and proposals for implementing NbS in the framework of an ecosystem approach to urban development in the Mediterranean region.
- A database of experts that are in position to discuss the main objectives and the most appropriate scope of an IUCN project on cities and NbS in the Mediterranean region.
- A list of potential partners in the Mediterranean region (public, academic, social or private) for a shared project in this field.
- Short analysis of the policy frameworks to boost the development of the NbS projects at European and Mediterranean level.
- National or international forums/networks/events where to give visibility to NbS and cities (such as ARLEM, FEMP...)

**Step 2. Producing and discussing ideas (Deadline, November 15)**

**Purpose:** Discussion of main ideas identified in step 1 within the framework of a specific meeting with experts and potential partners.

**Deliverables:**
- Organisation of a meeting (approximately 5-6 people) with national/international experts and potential partners, previously identified, to discuss the opportunity, the general scope, the content, and the objectives of a common project on NbS in the urban field.
- A short presentation to be discussed in the workshop, highlighting the lessons learned from the research, and summary of the main ideas discussed in the workshop.
- **Main output:** A shared framework for an NbS project on cities. Tentative roadmap for designing and implementing a project in this framework, to be submitted to European calls.
Step 3. Drafting a project *(Deadline, December 30*)

**Purpose:** Design of a project on Nature-based Solutions for Mediterranean cities in the framework of an ecosystem approach, to be submitted to European call-to-actions.

**Deliverables:**
- Draft project to be submitted to the most suitable European call for proposals for this field (Horizon2020, ENI...).

Step 4. Supporting the organisation of an international workshop *(Deadline, First quarter 2018*)

**Purpose:** Support to the organisation of an international workshop to present the main ideas, projects and results on this field of work by UICN-Med in coordination with the IUCN European regional office

**Deliverables:**
- General framework and objectives
- Drafting agenda of the event
- Draft schedule
- Proposal on contributors and participants.
- Support for searching funds for the organisation of the international workshop

Approval of Deliverables

IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation will approve all deliverables.

**Budget and Timeline**

The budget for this consultancy should be around 15,000 euros (VAT included); proposals with amounts larger than this should be clearly justified.

Travels to and from the region for one representative will be covered by IUCN-Med in relation to the organisation of the expert meeting and the international conference; all other travels should be included in the consultancy fee.

The consultant is expected to be paid 30% of the total amount agreed upon contract signing, an additional 20% upon completion of Phase 1 and the final 50% upon completion of Phase 3.

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1 This deadline could be modified depending on the dates of the potential calls.

2 This deadline is also subjected to the logistic availability to organise the international conference in that period.
The consultancy will start in September 2017 and end in the first quarter of 2018.

**Qualifications & Experience**

The consultant/s is expected to have a multi-disciplinary environmental and social science background, preferable with experience on urban development and EU policy developments and funding instruments. Demonstrated expertise in relation to the call covering one or more of the following: Nature-based solutions, urban planning, conceptual frameworks, resilience to climate change, co-benefits of natural solutions and methods for knowledge synthesis. It will also take in consideration experiences in inter- and transdisciplinary work on topics related to Nature-based solutions in cities and in science-policy interface processes.

**Documents to be Presented**

- Methodological proposal on the basis of the ToRs including timeline of actions;
- CV of the candidate/es;
- Financial offer

Working knowledge in English. Documents will have to be produced in English.

**Evaluation of the Offer**

The evaluation will be based in: (i) the expertise of the candidate/es in relation with the goals of the TORs; (ii) methodological proposal, (iii) financial offer.

**Application and Deadline**

The application pack should be sent in pdf to: Lourdes.lazaro@iucn.org and andres.alcantara@iucn.org, no later than 21st August 2017 at 00.00 CET.