PART 1 – INSTRUCTIONS TO PROPOSERS AND PROPOSAL CONDITIONS

1.1 About IUCN

IUCN is a membership Union uniquely composed of both government and civil society organisations. It provides public, private and non-governmental organisations with the knowledge and tools that enable human progress, economic development and nature conservation to take place together. Headquartered in Switzerland, IUCN Secretariat comprises around 950 staff in more than 50 countries. Created in 1948, IUCN is now the world’s largest and most diverse environmental network, harnessing the knowledge, resources and reach of more than 1,300 Member organisations and some 10,000 experts. It is a leading provider of conservation data, assessments and analysis. Its broad membership enables IUCN to fill the role of incubator and trusted repository of best practices, tools and international standards. IUCN provides a neutral space in which diverse stakeholders including governments, NGOs, scientists, businesses, local communities, indigenous peoples organisations and others can work together to forge and implement solutions to environmental challenges and achieve sustainable development. Working with many partners and supporters, IUCN implements a large and diverse portfolio of conservation projects worldwide. Combining the latest science with the traditional knowledge of local communities, these projects work to reverse habitat loss, restore ecosystems and improve people’s well-being.

1.2. Summary of the Requirement

IUCN is seeking an independent evaluator or evaluation team (“the Consultant”) to lead a final impact and learning evaluation (“the evaluation”) of the IUCN’s Western Gray Whale Advisory Panel (WGWAP). The detailed Terms of Reference can be found in Part 2 of this RfP.

1.3. The procurement process

The following key dates apply to this RfP:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RfP Issue Date</th>
<th>26 April 2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RfP Closing Date and Time (extended)</td>
<td>20 May 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Contract Award Date</td>
<td>1 June 2021</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PART 2 – THE REQUIREMENT (TERMS OF REFERENCE)

2.1 Background – The Western Gray Whale Advisory Panel (WGWAP)

The Western Gray Whale Advisory Panel (WGWAP) was established in 2006 and it will end on 31 December 2021. During this time, it has evolved in scope and process, and the changes have been captured by different terms of reference. The current Terms of Reference is available [here](#). For more information about the WGWAP, please see [here](#).

The overall goal of WGWAP is to promote recovery and improve the conservation status of Western Gray Whales (WGWs) which are regularly feeding near Sakhalin island, Russia. WGWAP has been pursuing this goal by providing independent recommendations on relevant research, monitoring and mitigation measures to oil and gas to Sakhalin Energy Investment Company Ltd (Sakhalin Energy) to minimise risks associated with its operations – including, for example, seismic surveying – on WGWs and their habitat.

WGWs, like several other whale species, suffered from decades of commercial whaling, that led to severe depletion of their numbers and, in the western North Pacific, to their complete disappearance in much of their historical range. In the early 1970s, small numbers of WGWs were observed near Sakhalin Island – a region with large offshore oil and gas deposits, and active exploitation of other natural resources; it was then discovered that feeding areas were used by the whales every summer and autumn and were vital for maintenance of the population. In the early 2000s, Sakhalin Energy announced the plans to move to the next stage of developments in close proximity to the WGW feeding areas. In response to the concerns raised by the conservation community, WGWAP was established and has been managed by IUCN since.

The Panel has issued over 600 publicly available recommendations to Sakhalin Energy and other actors - including other energy companies, the Russian government and the International Whaling Commission (IWC). Based upon these, Sakhalin Energy has made important efforts to limit the impact of its operations on WGWs and their habitat. During this period, the WGW population has grown 3-4% annually, from an estimated 115 individuals in 2004 to 174 in 2015. In 2018 the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ updated their classification from Critically Endangered to Endangered; however, the WGW conservation status remains threatened.

WGWs conservation importance is also recognized nationally in Russia. The April 2020 Red Data Book List of the Russian Federation classifies WGWs as in “danger of extinction” (rarity status category 1) and assigns to the WGW population a ‘Priority Status 1’, which calls for immediate implementation of comprehensive conservation measures. Since June 2020, WGWs are also included on the “List of rare and endangered wildlife taxa that require priority measures for restoration and reintroduction” of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology of Russian Federation (MNR), which includes species that are the focus of national conservation activities through 2024 (and potentially through 2030).

WGWAP is now in its closing phase; however, industrial activities and other pressures on the WGW population are expected to continue and intensify over time. Further cooperation and involvement of all companies and industries in the region are crucial to ensure best practices and the long-term protection of the WGWs. Securing WGWAP legacy by investing in distilling, synthesizing and disseminating learning and recommendations developed within the Panel process is therefore essential to ensure continuity in the implementation and wider uptake of best practices post-2021, as well as to inform existing and future ISTAPs.

The WGWAP is first independent scientific and technical advisory panel (ISTAPs) established by IUCN to deliver credible and robust advice to third parties in a manner that is independent, transparent, accountable and scientifically rigorous. In 2014, IUCN has developed the Procedures for establishing and managing IUCN-supported Independent Scientific & Technical Advisory Panels. They were developed “…to ensure that Independent Scientific & Technical Advisory Panels deliver credible and robust advice to third parties in a manner that safeguards and enhances IUCN’s reputation with all major stakeholder groups” and they apply to all IUCN’s project.
2.2 Purpose and Objectives of the Evaluation

IUCN is seeking an independent evaluator or evaluation team (“the Consultant”) to lead a final impact and learning evaluation (“the evaluation”) of the WGWAP. The evaluation should build upon the findings of previous evaluations (2008/09, 2011, 2014 and 2018); other key documents such as the Stories of Influence (2016) and the documentation produced by the Panel. The evaluation aims at:

1. Complementing and completing previous evaluations to provide a comprehensive assessment of the WGWAP process throughout the years and to build a credible and plausible narrative on the likely contribution to the conservation of WGWs;
2. Locally, providing guidance to Sakhalin Energy, national and local authorities and other key actors– including other oil and gas operators - on how WGWAP’s scientific knowledge, recommendations and lessons learnt can be best deployed by all stakeholders, once the WGWAP is dissolved;
3. Globally, identifying and promoting best practices and lessons learnt from the WGWAP process and inform existing and/or future similar processes of cooperation between the scientific community, conservation actors, governments, investors and industries or enterprises whose activities have the potential for significant environmental and conservation risks;
4. Distilling and consolidating learning on the design, mechanisms and operational arrangements governing ISTAP processes to guarantee their effectiveness in delivering their mandate and maximise their cumulative effects.

Associated objectives

1. To assess the continued relevance of the WGWAP process and its set-up to respond to WGWs conservation and recovery priorities. How relevant have WGWAP guidance, advice and recommendations been to raise oil and gas industry awareness, improve industrial practice and promote the best possible conservation outcomes – in terms of:
   - Focus and content - has the Panel focused and improved available knowledge on the most significant issues affecting the WGWs in Sakhalin?
   - Applicability to and actionability by Sakhalin Energy and by the wider oil and gas industry – including appropriateness of the approach chosen to package and communicate the advice and recommendations. Has the Panel been effective in reaching and engaging with other operators (other oil extraction companies) and stakeholders beyond Sakhalin Energy? Has it been able to influence behaviours and decision-making processes across stakeholders which are not bound by formal agreements nor contractual obligations to the WGWAP?
   - Adapting to an evolving context - how has the WGWAP process, including relationships between the Panel, IUCN and Sakhalin Energy, evolved through time to adapt to and remain relevant in a dynamic context and evolving pressures on the WGW population – including an oil sector influenced by fluctuating oil prices, as well as changes in the fishing and whaling industries? How has the Panel evolved to address recommendations from previous evaluations?
2. To assess the effectiveness of the WGWAP in a) guiding Sakhalin Energy in reviewing and changing its practices as necessary to minimize impact on the WGWs and contribute to their conservation and b) influencing other stakeholders beyond Sakhalin Energy. This will include:
   - To assess the extent to which the WGWAP process has achieved its expected outcomes and mandate. This should entail identifying and summarising successful examples of how Sakhalin Energy has implemented WGWAP recommendations and how this has led to changes in its practices and measures.
   - To assess the extent of influence of the WGWAP process – and the uptake of the knowledge and innovation it generated - on other actors and players across 1) the oil and gas industry, 2) local and national authorities, lending institutions, regulatory and key government agencies such as the MNR and other institutions such as the MMC - by looking at the effectiveness of the communication strategy and to identify any intended or unintended influence on third parties’ practices and decision-making. In particular, the evaluation should look at the effects on other oil and gas operators, which have not formally been part of the WGWAP, which was set up with a bilateral agreement with Sakhalin Energy.
   - To assess knowledge uptake in the wider scientific and conservation community.
3. To consolidate institutional-wide learning (what works and what does not) to help design new ISTAPs. In particular, the evaluation should assess whether the setup of WGWAP – in its initial form and its subsequent developments – has been the most appropriate to achieve its mandate and pursuing its overall goal, by looking at the following:
• Were the ToRs clear and fit for purposes?
• Was the mandate of the Panel and the boundaries within which it was enabled to operate clear to and fully accepted by all parties?
• What has been the contribution and added value of the services and support provided by the observers and the technical and scientific experts that have feed into the WGWAP process?
• Has the WGWAP process been able to avoid or minimise conflict of interests among the parties involved and build long-lasting trust?
• What could and should have been done differently?

4. To identify and provide an overview of how the WGWAP process has contributed to its goal and the sustainability of such contribution. Based upon the most up-to-date information and scientific knowledge of the status of conservation of WGWs – including the annual assessments of WGWs biological and demographic state conducted by the WGWAP itself - the evaluation should build a credible and plausible narrative on the likely impact of the WGWAP process and the changes it led to on the WGWs population and its conservation status.

5. To provide recommendations to IUCN, Sakhalin Energy, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation (Minprirody of Russia) and other stakeholders to explore options to continue to promote the legacy of the WGWAP process post-2021, to continue to support evidence-based conservation of WGWs.

The Consultant will also be invited to propose key questions, topics and issues that could benefit from broader and deeper exploration and analysis to generate further learning.

2.3 Evaluation Audiences

This evaluation is commissioned by the Director General of IUCN.

The primary audiences for the evaluation are: IUCN, the WGWAP Co-Chairs and Panel members, and the senior managers and research scientists working for Sakhalin Energy (as the main users of the Panel’s outputs) and for a number of aspects the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation (Minprirody of Russia). Each of these parties is expected to build upon the results of the evaluation in terms of informing their decision making, actions and strategies in their respective roles in the final months of the WGWAP closure phase and beyond 2021. In particular:

• The evaluation will provide valuable insights and lessons learnt from the longest ISTAP process to date to inform IUCN approach on the establishment and management of ISTAPs. It will provide valuable insights on promoting cooperation between conservation actors, governments, investors and industries or enterprises whose activities have the potential for significant environmental and conservation risks - on the basis of scientific knowledge;
• The evaluation will provide guidance to Sakhalin Energy on maintaining the valuable social capital built over the past 15+ years of collaboration with IUCN/WGWAP and to lead the way to promote continuity of implementation an uptake of best practices from other industrial actors operating in the region;
• The evaluation will be crucial to inform the WGWAP closure communication and outreach strategy over its final months.

The evaluation will also be of interest for other key audiences such as national and local authorities, other energy companies, lenders and investors, the Russian government, IWC and other stakeholders which will continue to need engage constructively to ensure the long-term protection of the animals post-2021 – and particularly so as WGWs have been included in the MNR Priority List.

2.4 Methodology and Deliverables

The evaluation will be designed and coordinated by the Consultant under the supervision of the IUCN Global Monitoring and Learning team (within the Nature-based Solution group). It is envisaged that the evaluation will adopt a consultative and transparent approach with the three parties (WGWAP, IUCN, Sakhalin Energy) as well as relevant external stakeholders.
The evaluation process shall start by 1 June and shall end by 30 September 2021. Given the current Covid-19 situation, no travel is envisaged.

The evaluation should use mixed methods to gather necessary information and to seek the view of the range of stakeholders who have been engaged in the process to date. This will include the review of project documents (e.g. previous evaluations; WGWAP deliverables) and of relevant external literature on the WGWs and their conservation status. Interviews or online questionnaires with key stakeholders will also be conducted. To get a full picture of how relationships and their dynamics across stakeholders and attitudes around the work of the panel have changed through time, inputs will also be sought from individuals that have been involved with the Panel at earlier stages. The evaluation will entail the following phases:

I. Scoping Phase - Framing the boundaries of the evaluation (Approximate timeframe: June 2021)
The Consultant will review previous evaluations and other available information and assess possible information gaps against the initial list of evaluation objectives listed above. In this phase, the Consultant will also engage with IUCN (Global M&E Unit Business and Biodiversity Programme - BBP), WGWAP and Sakhalin Energy to finalise the evaluation objectives, questions, criteria and methodology. Against the above, the Consultant will also identify additional evidence that needs to be gathered and synthesized to fully inform the evaluation process – as well as sources of information including key individuals to be interviewed. The output if this phase will be an *evaluation inception report* which will include a *methodological note* and *evaluation matrix* presenting how each evaluation question will be addressed, data sources and data collection methods that will be used to gather additional information needed and a set of criteria to rate the strength of the evidence collected. The evaluation matrix will be reviewed and should be approved by all three parties (IUCN, Sakhalin Energy and at least one of the two WGWAP Co-chairs).

II. Further data collection and analysis; development of draft evaluation report (Approximate timeframe: July-August 2021)
In this phase the Consultant will work with IUCN, WGWAP and Sakhalin Energy and other key stakeholders to gather and consolidate the necessary information and develop a *draft evaluation report*. Prior to circulating the draft report (see below) the evaluator will discuss key findings and recommendations for actions in the final months of the current WGWAP process and in the post 2021 phase with concerned stakeholders.

III. Presenting findings to key stakeholders and finalising the evaluation report (Approximate timeframe: September 2021)
Once the draft report has been circulated, the Consultant, IUCN, WGWAP and Sakhalin Energy will identify key stakeholders – including key experts – to be invited to attend one from an offer of on-line sessions to discuss the findings presented in the draft report. Participants will review and discuss the extent to which the evidence is adequate to meet the evaluation objectives – both in terms of assessing WGWAP impact and effectiveness as well as its legacy to inform future initiatives. Further evidence that may be needed to make a conclusive statement about the achievement of WGWAP outcomes or implications for future initiatives might be identified. The findings of the workshop will be integrated by the Consultant in the final *version of the report* and serve to finalise recommendations and to develop lessons learned.

**Evaluation deliverables** - Based on the above, the Consultant will be accountable for producing the following products:

- Inception report with methodological note an evaluation matrix;
- Draft evaluation report¹;
- Final evaluation report;
- A PPT presentation for a webinar targeted to key stakeholders.

---

¹ A template/table of content for the evaluation report will be agreed at the early stages of the evaluation
2.5 Evaluation Timeframe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Milestone/Deliverable</th>
<th>Completion Date (to be confirmed once exact starting date confirmed)</th>
<th>Lead</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appointment of evaluation Consultant (contract start date)</td>
<td>End of May 2021</td>
<td>IUCN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inception report with methodological note; an evaluation matrix discussed and finalised</td>
<td>June 2021</td>
<td>The Consultant, evaluation matrix to be agreed by all parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional data collection and analysis completed; discussion of draft findings and recommendations with concerned stakeholders</td>
<td>July 2021</td>
<td>The Consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft report completed and circulated</td>
<td>August 2021</td>
<td>The Consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments on draft report collated (unedited) and shared with the consultant ahead of the stakeholder webinar</td>
<td>August 2021</td>
<td>Lead by IUCN M&amp;E team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder webinar(s) on the draft report findings</td>
<td>September 2021</td>
<td>The Consultant; IUCN to gather comments and for quality control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finalisation of report</td>
<td>September 2021</td>
<td>The Consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Response</td>
<td>October 2021</td>
<td>IUCN with inputs from WGWAP and Sakhalin Energy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.6 Qualifications of the Consultant

The “Consultant” could consist of a team of 1-2 experts, one of whom is a senior evaluator (team leader) and another (could be) a senior expert in marine conservation – possibly with an expertise in whale conservation. A senior evaluator with significant experience in evaluating marine biodiversity conservation projects and programmes could also apply as an individual. The Consultant – either as a single individual or as a team of two - should meet the following criteria:

- At least 15 years’ experience as an evaluator with excellent quantitative and qualitative data analysis skills.
- Experience in conducting and managing evaluations of projects which involve international science-based organisations and the private sector and/or marine biodiversity conservation projects will be an asset (the latter in particular will be a must should the senior evaluator apply as an individual rather than a team);
- Should the team involve a scientific expert, he/she should have a PhD or equivalent in biological sciences, conservation or another related field - with a focus on marine biodiversity conservation; Evidence of sufficient experience in the area of marine conservation should compensate should the team not include a scientific expert;
- Complete independence from IUCN, the WGWAP and Sakhalin Energy or any other company operating in the area;
- English language fluency mandatory;
- Russian language fluency is an asset;
- Previous experience with other Independent Scientific Advisory Panels or similar process is an asset.
PART 3 – OTHER INFORMATION

3.1 Consultancy duration
The consultancy is expected to take 4 months, starting 1 June 2021 and to be completed no later than 30 September 2021.

3.2 Budget
The maximum available budget for this review is USD 25,000. The Consultant shall be paid upon completion of the following milestones:

- 30% upon submission and acceptance of an inception report;
- 30% upon submission of the draft report
- 40% upon submission and acceptance of the final report

3.3 Terms of payment
Payment will be based on service provision and is subject to the prior production of an original invoice; advance payment can generally not be granted. The consultant is required to comply with our procedures for assignments. We reserve the right to not accept expenditure beyond the agreed budget or whose supporting documentation is not in accordance with our procedures, and to suspend payments in the absence of appropriate deliverables.

3.4 Application procedure
IUCN welcomes applications from consultant teams and/or individual consultants. Submissions should include:

1. Personal CV of the Senior Evaluator, indicating all relevant past experiences and main competencies; CVs of any other person to be involved in the evaluation should also be submitted;
2. A thoroughly completed “Consultant questionnaire” (Annex A to this ToR);
3. A budget.

Interested candidates, who meet the above-mentioned criteria, may send their application to: Silvia.Guizzardi@iucn.org, with the Subject “WGWAP Impact Evaluation” no later than 09 May 2021 23:59 Swiss time (CEST).

3.5 Evaluation criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Criteria</th>
<th>Points available</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Quality of the Expression of Interest</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of the assignment</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approach and capacity to deliver on the mid term review objectives</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods proposed</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Qualifications of the evaluator(s)</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience of the evaluator(s)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M&amp;E expertise</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language skills</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Budget</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ANNEX A - CONSULTANT QUESTIONNAIRE

Western Gray Whale Advisory Panel (WGWAP) Independent Impact and Learning Evaluation

1. **At least 15 years’ experience as an evaluator with excellent quantitative and qualitative data analysis skills.** Please provide evidence through examples of how you meet this criterion [Max 200 words]

2. **Please provide evidence of experience in conducting and managing evaluations of projects which involve international science-based organisations and/or the private sector** [Max 200 words]

3. **Please provide evidence of experience in conducting and managing evaluations of in biodiversity conservation projects, and particularly of projects focused on marine biodiversity** [Max 200 words]

4. **Please illustrate any other experience or scientific qualification you might have on marine conservation, particularly highlighting marine mammal conservations** [Max 200 words]

5. **Have you ever been engaged Independent Scientific Advisory Panels o similar processes aimed at bringing together scientists, conservation actors, governments, investors and industries to address significant environmental and conservation risks?** If yes, please explain, also providing information on your role [Max 200 words]