

Terms of Reference
for
Recruitment of International Consultant

2024



Royal Society for Protection of Nature



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Under the Royal Patronage of Her Majesty Gyaltsuen Jetsun Pema Wangchuck

Inspiring personal responsibility and actively involving the people of Bhutan in
Conservation of the Kingdom's Environment

Terms of Reference for Recruitment of International Consultant

Assignment: Ecosystem and Socio-economic Resilience Analysis and Mapping Study in High Altitude Wetlands of Bhutan.

Organization: Royal Society for Protection of Nature (RSPN)

Duty Station: RSPN Head Office, Thimphu, Bhutan

Duration: Four(4) months (1st October 2024 - 30th January 2025)

Type of Contract: Non-Extendable

1. BACKGROUND

Bhutan is a small landlocked and net carbon-negative country. It commits to remaining carbon neutral in perpetuity to make our planet safe for both present and future generations. Due to its location in the fragile Eastern Himalayas mountainous ecosystem, Bhutan faces considerable vulnerability to climate-induced disasters such as landslides, windstorms, drought, drying of water sources, frequent forest fires, pests and diseases and Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF), among others. These climate risks pose persistent threats to crucial sectors like agriculture and livestock, energy, water, forest and biodiversity, human settlements and health, low-lying river basin areas, and ecosystems, which play significant roles in providing livelihoods and ecosystem services. In each of these critical sectors, the country also strives to maintain low-carbon and carbon-sequestering activities to remain carbon-natural. The Green Climate Fund Country Work Program (CWP) has identified capacity gaps, including a need for more reliable baseline data and technical expertise on climate change. These gaps hinder Bhutan's ability to pursue sustainable development with low carbon emissions and climate resilience. To achieve these goals, cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder efforts are necessary to identify baseline conditions and projected impacts of climate change.

At present, scientific observations and studies on the impacts of climate change on the environment, agriculture, and livelihoods across the eastern Himalayas for Bhutan are extremely limited. The absence of robust and quality data to establish historical baselines, future climate projections, and impact analyses inhibits Bhutan's capacity to identify its vulnerabilities to climate change, based on which to develop and implement climate investment projects to address risks and vulnerabilities accordingly. Therefore, this assignment seeks to conduct in gathering comprehensive data on climate change impact components through the Ecosystem and Socioeconomic Resilience Analysis and Mapping (ESRAM) approach. This ESRAM study encompasses understanding the current status of the mountain ecosystem and the socio-economic condition of the higher altitude communities in the face of Climate change.



2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives framed under this consultancy contribute to the improvement of Bhutan's access to climate finance through the availability and access to credible climate information and data. Following are some of the specific objectives for this assignment:

- I. Conduct an Ecosystem and Socio-economic Resilience Analysis and Mapping (ESRAM) study to understand the climate vulnerability of mountain ecosystem.
- II. Outline climate financing scope based on the ESRAM study.

3. STUDY AREA

The ESRAM study should cover the wetland areas and the human settlements in higher altitude areas of Bhutan.

4. SCOPES OF SERVICES

The international consultant is expected to provide high-quality service in the following areas:

- I. Design the study method and map the area for the ESRAM study.
- II. Review the available secondary data on climate, biodiversity, socio-economic conditions, and ecosystem valuation of the study area.
- III. Conduct a biodiversity assessment of the wetland ecosystem and identify the current state, trends and drivers of change with root causes, scenarios, and governance factors. This should include landuse change pattern.
- IV. Identify ecosystem services through a socio-economic survey and map key ecosystems and related ecosystem services.
- V. Undertake a 'total economic valuation' to define the economic value and ecosystem services of the study area relevant to the ESRAM study.
- VI. Conduct climate vulnerability assessment of the study area.
- VII. Recommend Nature-positive solution options to strengthen the resilience of key ecosystem services and mitigate the climate vulnerability of the communities in the study area.
- VIII. Recommend climate financing scope for the study area with fund requirement breakdown.
- IX. Develop concept notes on implementing the nature-positive solution(s) in the study area.



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5. KEY DELIVERABLES

- I. Report -Inception report within two weeks of signing the contract agreement, detailing study area, approach, clear logical framework, outputs and list of documents to be reviewed, organisations and individuals to be consulted.
- II. Conduct Workshop (2 days) consulting with relevant stakeholders of at least 20 participants in validating the study method and scope of work.
- III. Submit the report documenting a record of the discussion and list of stakeholders consulted and participants' names (disaggregated by gender).
- IV. Conduct ESRAM study; Assess the biodiversity of wetland, Assess the socioeconomic condition of the communities, Assess Ecosystem Services, and Assess climate vulnerabilities.
- V. Produce Technical Report - One package; Biodiversity assessment approach and findings, Socio-economic assessment approach and findings, Ecosystem Service Valuation approach and results, climate vulnerability assessment approach and findings, recommended nature-positive solutions and climate mitigation and adaptation activities, and climate financing scope.
- VI. Concept Note - Produced one concept note with a funding scale of \$3 - 4 million.

6. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

The consultant will work under the supervision and support of the Department of Program and Climate Change Coordination(DPCCC) of RSPN. All the administrative and financial work will be governed by Service Rules and Regulation (RSPN) under the Administration and Finance Division of RSPN. Wherever necessary, guidance will be also sought from the RSPN Management and Project Steering Committee. The work progress monitoring will be monitored by the DPCCC.

The International consultant needs to work closely with a local consultant who is recruited to assist with the same task.

7. REQUIRED SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

- I. Qualification:
Minimum Master's degree in Biodiversity, Water Management, Wetland Management, Climate Change, Natural Resource Management, Environment Management, Environmental Economics, or any other relevant specialised area.



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II. Work experience:

- Minimum of 10 years of professional experience of which five years of experience in work related to wetland assessment, climate change, Eco-system valuation, Environmental Economics, etc.
- Minimum of three years experience in consultancy services.
- A similar kind of work experience undertaken earlier will be given more preference; Expertise in Socio-economic (including culture and tradition-expert) assessment and valuation, Natural resources management and ecosystem service, and Climate change; Experience in undertaking natural resources and ecosystem service assessments, economic valuation, vulnerability and adaptation assessments or climate change assessment or related work in the Himalayan region.

III. Language:

Fluency in written and spoken English

8. APPROACH

The overall approach of this assignment is as follows:

- I. Contract signing and kick-off meeting: The methodology, timeline, staffing, and any special conditions of the contract as required by RSPN (in line with this ToR), will be discussed and a contract will be signed between the RSPN and Consultant.
- II. Inception Phase: The inception report outlining the detailed way forward of the assignment and submitted to the RSPN.
- III. ESRAM study design: Mapping the ESRAM study area, design the approach and enumerator engagement.
- IV. Consultation Workshop: Hold a consultation workshop with relevant stakeholders on the ESRAM Approach.
- V. Field Assessment: Undertake ESRAM study including biodiversity assessment.
- VI. Data Analysis and Report Formulation: Analyze data and prepare technical reports on ESRAM and the Biodiversity survey. The key findings and recommendations in line with the purpose, objective and scope of the consultancy (Climate financing scope) will be submitted to RSPN.
- VII. Concept Note Development: Based on the recommended nature positive solution and viability of the project scope in Bhutan. Final submission of the document.



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9. FINANCIAL SCOPE

The amount required for the conduct of this assignment needs to be clearly stated in the Financial Proposal as a “Lump Sum Amount” with a breakdown of the budget against each of the deliverables. It must be “all-inclusive” of various expenses incurred by the consultant during the contract period (e.g. fees, office costs, travel, logistic and any other relevant expenses related to the performance of services).

10. EXPRESSION OF INTEREST/APPLICATION PROCEDURE

- I. All qualified International consultants interested in taking this assignment need to make a formal application to RSPN with a cover letter addressed to The Executive Director, RSPN, Thimphu.
- II. The Subject should be “Ecosystem and Socio-economic Resilience Analysis and Mapping Study in High Altitude Wetlands of Bhutan”. The mode of application submission will be accepted only via email, rspn@rspnbhutan.org and copy to ttobgay@rspnbhutan.org
- III. Submission Deadline: on/before 1:00p.m.(Bhutan Time Zone), 5th September, 2024.
- IV. The application should contain:
 - Cover letter - Addressed to Executive Director, RSPN, Thimphu, Bhutan.
 - Technical Proposal - Describing the approaches and key tasks to undertake in achieving the objectives of this assignment and producing the aforementioned deliverables.
 - Financial Proposal - Describing each activity with a logical framework and budget breakdown.
 - Supporting Documents: A copy CV of the consultant.

11. EVALUATION OF PROPOSAL

The submitted proposals will be evaluated based on the existing RSPN's Procurement Rules and Regulations. Any proposal submission not compiling the policies and safeguards of RSPN will be rejected.

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P.O. Box: 325, Building No.: 25

Lhado Lam, Kawajangsa | Thimphu 11001, Bhutan

Phone: +975 2 322056 | 326130 | Fax: +975 2 323189

Website: <http://www.rspnbhutan.org> | E-mail: rspn@rspnbhutan.org

