

TERMS OF REFERENCE

CONSULTANCY WORK ON SPECIES AND HABITAT RESTORATION ALONG DRINI RIVER BASIN

1. Introduction and Background

CNVP Foundation is implementing the “Integrated Forest Management along the Drin River Basin” project. It is a project managed by the Austrian Development NGO ICEP (Association for Global Development) and is funded by ADA (Austrian Development Agency).

The transboundary catchment area of the Drin River includes the countries of Albania, Kosovo, North Macedonia and Montenegro. The catchment is the home of large forest and pasture areas, rich biodiversity ecosystems and is one of the most water-rich areas in Europe in terms of freshwater ecosystems. Over the last three decades, the forest area in the four target countries along the river basin has been heavily exploited and is under threat due to increased illegal logging activities and consequences of climate change like drought and forest fires. Framework conditions have been created but there is a lack of practical scalable approaches that involve the local communities and can scientifically prove the social and economic benefits of Integrated Forest Management (IFM). Especially poor rural communities lack resources, know-how and awareness of modern sustainable Agro-forestry.

The regional project will strengthen IFM along the Drin River Basin by implementing pilots that complement the latest policy developments and integrate local communities. The project applies a multi-stakeholder approach, integrating national and international experts as well as local communities, central and local authorities, and on-going initiatives.

Project Impact and Outcome

The long-term impact is to contribute to climate change mitigation and sustainable development along the Drin River through strengthened IFM. Through the set measures, the living condition of rural communities in the target areas will be improved. The overall outcome of the project will be increased socio-economic and environmental benefits for local communities through ecosystem services, strengthened by the application of IFM methods, afforestation and the protection of biodiversity.

Project Outputs and Expected Results

The project activities will be conducted along five defined outputs with regional adaptations, whereby output two will only be implemented in Albania and North Macedonia:

1. Degraded and/or damaged areas are afforested and regenerated through IFM practices
2. Improved conservation and eco-friendly income opportunities (Albania, North Macedonia)
3. Improved know-how and capacities for IFM along the Drin River Basin

4. Regional expertise in IFM and replicable good practices of related policies are available
5. Increased awareness for gender equality and mainstreaming in climate change and sustainable development

Inputs / Activities

Besides piloting modern afforestation methods, forest rehabilitation and setting good-practices for income-generation for local communities, the regional expertise in IFM will be fostered. Academic research and analyses of the project activities will showcase the benefits of IFM and will be the basis for regional know-how exchange and collaboration. Gender equality issues, being an integral part to tackle in sustainable development in the region, will be addressed as well.

2. Objectives of this assignment

The objective of this consultancy assignment is to introduce best practices for endangered habitat and species restoration in the Drini Basin. This involves supporting and implementing restoration efforts for targeted habitats and species. The consultant will undertake restoration activities on four protected biodiversity plots, fulfill restoration and conservation measures for three endangered species, two habitats, and involve 40 local farmers and forestry workers in these activities. The assignment will include steps such as understanding the impact of climate change and threats on habitats, identifying vulnerable species and their habitat requirements, implementing measures to mitigate habitat loss and fragmentation, promoting sustainable land and resource management practices, encouraging habitat connectivity, and engaging communities in habitat conservation and wildlife protection. Specific habitats and species for restoration will be identified, diagnostic assessments of their current state will be conducted, and conservation measures will be planned accordingly. The consultancy will involve various institutions and working methods, with participation from CNVP, Administration of Protected Areas, educational institutions, local associations, farmers, and private companies. The consultant will also support the project team in developing regional expertise in IFM and replicable good practices of related policies.

3. Tasks, responsibilities and activities

The consultant is responsible to provide the following tasks related to the project activities:

1. Habitat and species selection:
Select suitable habitats (two) and species (three) for restoration based on expert knowledge and vulnerability assessment.
2. Conducting assessments:
Identify threats to habitats and species in the Drini Basin, including the impact of climate change.
Identify endangered species in the region, focusing on selected species and habitats
3. Restoration planning:
Develop detailed restoration plans for the selected habitats and species, considering conservation measures and performance standards.
Collaborate with stakeholders to ensure alignment with local needs and priorities.
4. Implementation of restoration activities:
Coordinate with local institutions, including CNVP, National Forest Agency, Agency of Protected Area, educational institutions, and local associations, to execute restoration efforts.
5. Community engagement and capacity building:

Facilitate workshops and training sessions for local farmers and forestry workers on sustainable land management practices and habitat restoration techniques.

Encourage community participation in restoration activities and raise awareness about the importance of habitat conservation and wildlife protection.

6. **Monitoring and evaluation:**

Develop monitoring protocols to track the progress of restoration activities and assess their effectiveness.

Regularly evaluate the health and biodiversity of restored habitats and species populations.

Prepare reports documenting the outcomes of restoration efforts and recommendations for future actions.

7. **Stakeholder coordination and reporting:**

Communicate regularly with project partners, stakeholders, and funders to provide updates on project progress and address any challenges or concerns.

Prepare comprehensive reports summarizing project activities, achievements, and lessons learned for dissemination to relevant stakeholders and the broader conservation community.

Prepare presentation materials and a case study for publication.

4. Specific Deliverables, outputs and indicators

The consultancy experts are expected to deliver the following deliverables

1. **Selection and Assessments:**

Species and habitats selected, their status and related threats.

2. **Planning:**

Action plans for protection and restoration.

3. **Implementation:**

Implement collaborative action plans for protection and restoration of selected species and habitats.

4. **Engagement:**

Assessment, planning and implementation with community participation. In collaboration with CNVP, Organising two workshops with overall 40 participants.

5. **Monitoring:**

Monitoring protocols, evaluation reports, data on restoration effectiveness.

6. **Reporting**

Write final report, case study for publication, presentation.

5. Timeframe

The assignment will be completed between **September 2024 and March 2025**. The consultant will have a total of **40 consultancy days** to complete the activities and outputs outlined above.

1. Requirements for application

Qualifications and skills:

- A university degree (masters level or equivalent) in forestry, forest dendrology, botany, phytocoenology, forest ecosystems and silviculture, with minimum 10 years of experience in related fields;
- Previous experience in consultancy work for international/donor based projects;
- Previous experience in drafting and delivery of participatory actions and conservation plans

- Previous experiences with participatory processes, community engagement, consultations etc.;
- Understanding of the situation as well as the relevant legislative and policy framework in the respective country/territory.

Accountability

The Consultant shall be in direct contact and ultimately supervision with the contry project manager and CNVP Albania Country Director

CNVP operates in the Balkan region. It focuses on natural resource management, forestry, agri-rural development and renewable energy, as well as the impact of climate change on the environment.

As a civil society organisation, CNVP acts as a facilitator to:

- Strengthen community capacity to achieve local development goals;
- Maximize the production and service potential of rural areas through sustainable and locally controlled natural resource management;
- Promote the use of natural resources to improve socio-economic development and rural livelihoods; and
- Conserve the bio-diversity of natural resources at a time of serious environmental and climate change.

Core Values

- **Green** - intervening to build a greener economic environment within the ongoing process of climate change
- **Clean** - promoting renewable energy and improved household/industrial waste management
- **Seen** - operating in the Balkans and the European Neighborhood Space
- **Lean** - improving the efficiency of service delivery continuously and systematically

Connecting Natural Values & People

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Active in Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia,
Montenegro, Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina