

CONSULTANT TOR FOR MANAGING TOURISM AND MAINSTREAMING OF LOW-IMPACT ECOTOURISM IN CHFP PILOT SITES (“Ecotourism consultant”)

Brief Description:

The project will conserve biodiversity in key landscapes within the Caspian broadleaf deciduous forest ecoregion. The ecoregion is recognised for its high levels of endemism; it is also an important storehouse of threatened species. It will do this by strengthening the national and local policy framework governing land use in the Caspian forests (which cover an area of approximately 1.8 million hectares), enhancing the rights and roles of the local communities in their management and demonstrating ways and means of improving management (including land use planning, zoning, compliance monitoring and enforcement).

The project will trigger a paradigm shift from sector-focused management to multiple use management, to reduce the conjunction pressures arising from different land uses. It will put in place the necessary policy and regulatory mechanisms needed to mainstream biodiversity conservation considerations into land use plans and build the capacities of key institutions to implement the reformed planning and management approach. The project is thus consistent with GEF Strategic Objective 2 of GEF 5: Mainstream biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into production landscapes, seascapes and sectors and in particular Outcome 2.1: Increase in sustainably managed landscapes and seascapes that integrate biodiversity conservation. The successful implementation of this project will set the foundations for replication of the approach in other important forest ecosystems across the country.

The project will be responsible for achieving the following project objective: “To put in place a collaborative governance system and know-how for managing a mosaic of land uses in the Caspian Hyrcanian forest that provides habitat integrity and helps maintain landscape level ecosystem functions and resilience”. The proposed project is designed to lift the barriers to establishment of a landscape approach to the management of biodiversity. The project comprises three complementary Outcomes, which will be cost-shared by the GEF and co-financing:

- Outcome 1. An enabling policy and regulatory framework
- Outcome 2. Institutional and staff capacity strengthening for multiple-use forest management
- Outcome 3. Community piloting of integrated forest management

Scope of Work

This consultancy will develop specific and implementable plans for managing tourism and mainstreaming of low-impact ecotourism in each of the four project pilot sites, and will then support the implementation of those plans. The plans will give priority to reducing the impacts of tourism on biodiversity by better management of existing tourism and improved planning of new ecotourism, as well as improving the livelihood opportunities for local communities from ecotourism. It will incorporate and build upon the findings of the previous “Feasibility study for low impact eco-tourism development”. The entire process will be conducted in a highly participatory manner, involving all relevant stakeholders including particularly the local communities, FRWO, CHTO and private tourism businesses. It will be conducted with supervision and support of the **National Project Manager (NPM) and his deputy, the International Project Advisor (IPA) and the Senior National Advisor (SNA)**, and in collaboration with other project consultants, particularly the Local Community Mobilisation Consultants.

Tasks to be undertaken

1. Roadmap

The consultant will finalise the roadmap and methodology for ecotourism development as described in this TOR, in close consultation with NPM, IPA and SNA.

2. Ecotourism Committee and inter-sectoral cooperation

The consultant will facilitate establishment and effective operation of an Ecotourism Committee in each pilot landscape (as a sub-group of the Local Coordination Committee (LCC)). Each Committee will comprise at minimum 3 representatives of the local community, and at least one representative each of FRWO, CHTO and the relevant local authority, and at least 2 private sector tourism representatives. The consultant will facilitate meetings of each Committee (agendas, presentations, minutes etc.), which will occur at least monthly during the first 6 months of the contract, bi-monthly during the second six months, and quarterly thereafter (or as frequently as needed).

In order further to strengthen inter-sectoral cooperation, the consultant will also: a) establish and maintain effective communication with the CHTO in both national and provincial levels to support the development of tourism activities; b) communicate and follow up with other governmental organizations to nominate and support villages in the pilot sites as official tourism destination, as appropriate.

3. Situation assessment

Building on the results of the previous “Feasibility study for low impact eco-tourism development” and with support of the Ecotourism Committee, the consultant will complete in a participatory way a rapid situation assessment of tourism in each basin. This will include: a) a brief assessment (including maps) of current tourism use (including challenges), b) a list, description and map of all tourism-related businesses (guest houses, restaurants, handicrafts production, recreational businesses); c) a list, description and map of all natural and cultural features of relevance to tourism potential; d) an assessment of opportunities for tourism (particularly better management of existing tourism, and development of low-impact ecotourism), including mapping and identifying possible cooperation between local communities and private sector investment; e) a market analysis including competitors, the demand for the product or service, and the strengths and weaknesses from a market standpoint of the development of ecotourism. The situation assessment will be reviewed and supported by the Ecotourism Committee.

During preparation of the situation assessment, the consultant will identify some “quick wins” for each pilot landscape, such as measures to improve parking or waste management of tourists, better signage, linking communities to tourism businesses etc.. These “quick wins” will be shared with the Ecotourism Committee and PCO for rapid implementation.

4. Ecotourism Plans

The consultant will facilitate and lead the participatory development of a simple and specific ecotourism plan for each pilot landscape based on the situation analysis. This will arise from consultations with various stakeholders in the tourism industry, local communities, and public sector to elicit proposals and

strategies for the plans. Each plan will be developed in an iterative way with and through the Ecotourism Committee, and will be submitted for approval to the LCC.

The plans will be structured according to, and will follow international best practices, and will take a green development and market-focused approach covering the following elements: zoning and access, infrastructure development, marketing and promotions, training, cooperatives, community benefits, standards and certification, regulation and licensing. The plans will also include a financial analysis and budget for the required investment costs and financing mechanisms, and return on investments in view of the most promising tourism destinations, products and services, as well as defining rules and procedures for integration between businesses and communities. Finally each will include a Visitor Impact Monitoring Framework to serve as a mechanism to monitor and manage visitor numbers and assess impacts on integrity of the forests

5. Supporting implementation of the Ecotourism plans

The consultant, working closely with the LCMC team and other relevant consultants and stakeholders will provide support to the implementation of the Ecotourism plans through the following activities:

- preparation and delivery of training and communication materials
- define and support mainstreaming of codes of conduct for tourists
- Facilitating an active ecotourism business network
- Support the development of quality certification and assurance schemes for tourism businesses
- incorporation of the plan measures into the Integrated Management Plans (IMPs) and Forest Management Plans (as necessary)
- Regularly updating and maintaining the support of the LCCs and provincial authorities
- Assistance with securing financing and insurance
- Development and implementation of a budgeted marketing plan including market segmentation analysis, as well as (written and internet-based) advertising, educational and promotional materials to be used by pilot sites tourism initiatives
- Develop a pricing strategy for tourism businesses

Deliverables

#	Deliverable	Timeline
1.	Roadmap for ecotourism development	2 weeks after contract signature
2.	An active Tourism Committee in each of the 4 project pilot landscapes - as evidenced by Minutes of meetings	2 months after contract signature and ongoing
3.	Good inter-sectoral coordination for eco-tourism as evidenced by notes of meetings with key local, national and provincial agencies	3 months after contract signature and ongoing
4.	Rapid situation analysis and “Quick wins” for each pilot	3 months after contract

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	landscape	signature
5.	Approved Ecotourism plans for each pilot landscape	6 months after contract signature
6.	Support to implementing the ecotourism plans, as measured by: active ecotourism business networks, implemented marketing plans, codes of conduct for tourists	From 6-12 months after contract signature
7.	Short Quarterly progress reports, and comprehensive report at the end of Year 1.	Quarterly and after 12 months

Institutional Arrangements

- The contract for the National Ecotourism Consultant will be issued by FRWO (NPD) as the Implementing Agency;
- The authority to directly supervise the National Consultant lies with the Implementing Agency (NPM/NPD);
- The National Consultant will directly report to, seeking approval/acceptance of outputs from the Implementing Agency (NPM/NPD) with a copy to IPA and SNA;
- All reports provided by the National Consultant should be in compliance with requirements of UNDP/GEF formats and standards;

Duration of work and payment modality

The National Consultant will provide support to the project during a period of maximum 12 months. Table below illustrates expected timing to receive deliverables. The table also shows the share of each deliverable from the whole financial package of the work.

Time after issuance of the contract	Deliverables	% of the whole contract
2 weeks	Roadmap	10%
3 Months	Situation analysis and quick wins for each pilot	20%
6 months	Approved Ecotourism plans for each pilot	30%
12 months	Facilitation of implementation of plans	20%

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	(business network, codes of practice, marketing plan	
12 months	Final report	10%

Qualifications

- Advance university degree (PhD or Masters' degree) in ecotourism development, environmental management or any other relevant field;
- Proven national and international experience of Low-Impact Eco-Tourism Activities;
- Proven experience on business planning;
- Proven ability in working with international teams;
- Experience of working in the Caspian Area is an asset;
- Excellent command of written and spoken English is a must.

Financial Proposal:

Interested candidates should send their CVs along with the motivation letter to the project email address at: info@chfp.ir. They also should send their financial proposal in closed envelopes to the Project Central Office.