Terms of Reference

Consultancy – Scoping Study on Ecosystem Services and their role in Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation

Project:	"Towards strengthened conservation planning in SEE"
Position:	Consultant
Duration:	8 weeks (between 23 January 2017 and 17 March 2017)
Contact at IUCN:	Ms Sanja Pokrajac, Programme Officer, Ecosystem Management
Geographical scope:	Serbia
Value:	€ 12,500.00

The overall objective of the project "Towards Strengthening Conservation Planning in South-Eastern Europe", funded by MAVA Foundation, is to strengthen the implementation of conservation standards in South-Eastern Europe by supporting institutional development and creating a regional platform for nature conservation planning. The project addresses nature conservation priorities in the region, and works in partnership with nature conservation authorities.

The Scoping study is a part of the activities for implementation of nature conservation priorities. This particular priority was identified by Serbia. The activities are designed to improve knowledge on ecosystems, their services and roles, and their integration into decision making.

Background

The well-being of people depends on healthy ecosystems to provide goods, like food and water, and services like climate regulation and protection from natural hazards. However, the awareness of the role of ecosystems and the services they provide is not very high in general, and in the region of SEE in particular. While incorporated in the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), it is at present not clear to what extent the concept of ecosystem services has been mainstreamed into legislation and regulations, if it has been adopted by institutions or implemented in a structured manner. Through continuous discussions within the project "Towards Strengthening Conservation Planning in South-Eastern Europe", partners from institutions in Serbia identified ecosystems and the services they provide as an issue of a national importance where knowledge and baseline data needs to be improved. As a result, IUCN has initiated an on-going training programme on Ecosystem Services Assessment and Valuation and its use in policy making for the region of SEE, and a Scoping Study on Ecosystem Services and their role in Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation.

Environmental degradation reduces the capacity of ecosystems to provide important services, such as clean water, air or resources, and increasingly impacts their role in reducing risk from disasters. The environment in whole South-Eastern Europe, including Serbia, has suffered from activities related to urbanization, agriculture, industry, energy, transport have led to detrimental effects on ecosystems, which in turn influenced provision of their services. Restoring degraded ecosystems is becoming a necessity in many different ways. Ecosystems such as wetlands or forests reduce vulnerability to hazards and increase resilience to hazards by acting as physical barriers that reduce the impact of hazard events; they improve the water and air quality and influence the resilience of the community. Well-maintained and preserved ecosystems not only protect lives and livelihoods, but at the same time offer opportunities for sustenance and good quality of life. Engineering solutions to the natural hazards have showed their limits in times of climate change, and are costly to construct and maintain. Alternative solutions via the delivery of ecosystem services such as flood protection, protection against weather extremes, climate regulation through maintenance and restoration of ecosystems can contribute to significant reduction in costs in avoided damages, and are considered "no-regret" measures.

Ecosystem services are yet to be mainstreamed into decision-making. Many of the sectors that depend on ecosystem services have a huge negative impact on them, but little appreciation of their importance. Inadequate research and data, public education and lack of awareness on the linkages and dependences between ecosystem services and societal well-being at all levels of governance in the region are major issues at present. It is important that ecosystem services are mainstreamed across sectors and to all levels of governance.

This Study will increase knowledge on how ecosystems can be managed for maintaining their services for immediate and long-term resilience of communities as well as ecosystems**,** and bring closer environment and disaster risk reduction community. IUCN's experience on Nature-based Solutions, as an umbrella concept for ecosystem-based approaches, will be used to guide the process.[1] The Scoping Study will involve consultations with all relevant institutions to obtain information and ensure their support for the process, and the use of the study in the future. The study will involve desk research, visits to institutions, interviews with stakeholders and field visits.

Building on the considerable knowledge-base and networks already built up by IUCN through its engagement in the region, a study will illustrate the current situation in regards to impacts and dependencies on ecosystem services, stakeholder interests and concerns, opportunities and entry points to leverage decision-making change and recommend action.

The Study will be performed by an individual consultant, or a consultancy company, selected through a public call. The consultant/company will work in close cooperation with IUCN ECARO and main stakeholders. Visit to Serbia is required, for consultations with IUCN, main stakeholders and field visits.

Content of the study

In continuous cooperation with IUCN ECARO and main stakeholders, the consultant will prepare the study following the content below as a guideline.

[1] Cohen-Shacham, E., Walters, G., Janzen, C. and Maginnis, S. (eds.) (2016). Nature-based Solutions to address global societal challenges. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. xiii + 97pp.

1. **Introduction**

- Background
- Scope of the study
- Definition of ecosystems, ecosystem services and their roles
- Main stakeholders in field of nature conservation and disaster risk reduction, and their roles

2. **Up-to-date information and data on policy and institutional framework in relation to Ecosystem Services**

- Are ecosystem services taken into consideration in relevant strategies (for example, National Strategy in the field of emergency management and disaster risk reduction Serbia; the final Draft of the Nature Conservation Strategy of Serbia; etc.)
- Are they considered in relevant laws (for example, Laws on Nature/Environmental Protection, Law on Water, Law on Forestry etc.) and strategies
- Status of Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in Serbia

3. **Hazardous events in the region**

- Type of hazardous events, their extents and frequencies
- Analysis of the reasons for increasing risks of hazardous events becoming disasters (i.e. land use change, land degradation, deforestation, river damming, changing the river flows, climate change)
- Identify which regions are most affected and potential sites for case studies and application of Nature-based Solutions

4. **Identification of sites for restoration/Nature-based Solutions activities**

- Identify potential sites for restoration for enhancement of Ecosystem Services, in particular for Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation
- Identify actions required to implement Nature-based solutions
- Identify possible risks and ways to reduce them

5. **Conclusions and recommendations**

- Conclusions based on the knowledge acquired through compiling the study
- Recommendations for future steps

Methodology

The consultant will conduct desk research to review existing documents (policies, strategies, programmes and any other relevant information for the assignment), using indicative content for the Scoping Study as a guide.

With support from IUCN ECARO, the consultant will meet all main stakeholders in person, to consult them and gather further information, and discuss potential sites for application of Nature-based Solutions. Consultant will prepare a list of questions for stakeholders, as well as ideas for consultation prior to the meetings. Field visits will be organised as necessary.

Based on gathered information and consultations with IUCN ECARO, consultant will produce a draft and, incorporating comments, final version of the Study within a given deadline.

Indicative Plan of delivery:

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
Initial consultations with IUCN ECARO; Desk research	Preparation for country visit and consultations with stakeholders (list of questions, initial ideas for discussion)	Visit to Serbia, meeting main stakeholders, gathering necessary data, working on the draft of the Study	Consolidating the draft, sending to IUCN ECARO for comments	Review by IUCN ECARO and main stakeholders	Addressing the comments and preparing the final version of the study	Final version of the study sent to IUCN ECARO	Any remaining issues to address, adoption of the report by IUCN ECARO

Location:
Consultant will be home-based, with visit to Serbia (minimum 4 working days)

Deliverables:
Draft Scoping Study in electronic form delivered to IUCN office 20 working days after the signature of the contract.
Final Scoping Study in electronic form delivered to IUCN 35 working days after the signature of the contract, at latest.

Payment:
First instalment of Euro 5,000.00 upon receipt of the signed and initialled contract and invoice by IUCN ECARO
Second instalment of Euro 7,500.00 upon receipt of the Final Scoping Study and its acceptance by IUCN ECARO

Timeframe:
The assignment will last for 8 weeks, between 23 January and 17 March 2017.

Criteria

No.	Summary of Criteria	Weight (%)
1	**Education** Advanced university degree (Masters or higher) in natural resources management, environment studies, development studies, forestry, geography, environment economics or other relevant discipline	20
2	**Experience and knowledge** Minimum of 7 years professional experience in the field. Demonstrated experience in assignments relevant for the Scoping Study. Demonstrated knowledge of advanced concepts in natural resources management, such as Nature-based solutions, in particular Ecosystem-based Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Change Adaptation and/or Mitigation, Ecosystem-based Restoration, or other related concepts. Experience in conducting policy and legislative analysis. Demonstrated understanding of the task at hand.	65

3	**Experience and knowledge of the region** Experience in projects/assignments in Serbia, or demonstrated knowledge of main issues in nature conservation in the country/region	15
	Total	100

The application should contain brief description of the approach consultant is planning to take, demonstrate understanding of the task at hand and related experience, as well as the qualifications, following the criteria described above. Application letter and CV(s) should be sent to ecaro@iucn.org no later than 15 January 2017.