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## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### NATIONAL CONSULTANT

## REPORT ON CAPACITY AND COMPETENCY NEEDS OF PROTECTED AREAS IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

### BACKGROUND

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The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is the largest professional global conservation network dealing with the environment and sustainable development, with more than 1,400 member organizations and almost 15,000 scientists and experts, grouped in six Commissions across 170 countries. With IUCN's member organisations including states and government agencies at the national and subnational levels, NGOs large and small, indigenous peoples' organisations, scientific and academic institutions and business associations, IUCN is the global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it.

The IUCN Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (ECARO) promotes IUCN's mission and implements the IUCN Programme with the aim of long-term protection of biodiversity and sustainable use of natural resources in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, Southern Caucasus, North and Central Asia. ECARO's administrative region is part of the IUCN Statutory Region East Europe, North and Central Asia.

IUCN ECARO is a part of consortium implementing the Together for Environmental Protection (TEP) project in the Republic of Serbia. The project implementation period is September 2022 - August 2027. The project is funded by USAID.

The Together for Environmental Protection project aims to contribute to:

- Good governance of protected areas
- Sustainable financing of biodiversity
- Active citizens for a healthy environment

Environmental protection, nature conservation and biodiversity management are pressing issues in Serbia. Evidence shows that among the main threats to biodiversity conservation and environmental protection are challenges related to the protected area system, which has resulted in an inability to expand the network and meet global targets. Significant advancement in conservation is hindered inter alia by structural deficiencies, insufficient capacity and inadequate funding mechanisms in the environmental protection system. In particular, protected area (PA) management structures and funding are designed in a way that prevents effective management and fails to stimulate communities and businesses to engage in protecting the environment.

Existing information demonstrates that common gaps in PAs capacity are: a lack of resources, (mainly funding and staff), competing priorities (for example the PAs where revenue is gained from exploiting natural resources such as timber), insufficient staffing to provide the right scope of expertise etc. Currently there are no consistent capacity programs across PAs in Serbia, and the capacities for managing biodiversity conservation vary greatly. To design an efficient capacity development program for PA managers, identifying key challenges for PAs and their development needs is necessary. This needs assessment study will serve as a basis for designing a capacity and competency development program,

guided by internationally established initiative, tools and standards, such as The Strategic Framework for Capacity Development in Protected Areas and other conserved territories 2015-2025 developed by IUCN-WCPA and the IUCN-WCPA Global Register of Competences for Protected Area Practitioners. The Together for the Environment project will also analyse Serbian PA authorities to determine competencies and develop system and PA level registers. This will be assessed against the requirements for effective PA management, both at an individual PA and national level. Competencies will be assessed based on the IUCN global register of competences for PA practitioners and best international practices, modified as required to suit the individual PAs in Serbia.

Building on the assessment and the capacity development program, *the Guardians of Nature Program* will be developed to deliver tailored capacity development for PAs in the form of high-quality training programs, mentorship, knowledge exchange, innovative partnerships and cross-sectoral cooperation, with strong links to best U.S. practices.

## SCOPE OF WORK

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The purpose of this consultancy is to **prepare a report on capacity and competency needs of protected areas in the Republic of Serbia.**

The national consultant will work under the supervision of IUCN ECARO and an international consultant, which will be recruited concurrently with the national consultant under a separate ToR and contract.

The national consultant will prepare a report on capacity and competency needs of protected areas in the Republic of Serbia. The report prepared by the national consultant will form a key component of a comprehensive study that will be prepared the supervising international consultant. The national consultant must work in close cooperation and under the supervision of the appointed international consultant throughout the period of work.

The national consultant will be responsible for: a) preparing a detail methodology for the report; b) conducting consultation meetings with key stakeholders; c) preparation of summary report on interviews and focus groups with relevant stakeholders with initial findings; d) preparing a report on capacity and competency needs of protected areas in the Republic of Serbia; e) support international consultant in preparation and delivery of a session during a validation workshop for key stakeholders in cooperation with IUCN ECARO and f) providing a Serbian language translation of the summary of the comprehensive capacity and competency needs assessment study of Protected Areas managers in Serbia.

The report on capacity needs assessment should be participatory and consultative. The consultant should conduct the needs assessment using a methodology developed in partnership with IUCN. It is expected that the assessment is built around self-assessment processes as well as broad consultation with protected area stakeholders to help collect, and validate information.

The capacity assessment framework should recognize the multiple dimensions of capacity needed to effectively achieve global conservation targets. It should go beyond individual capacity (relevant skills and abilities) to include organizational capacity (governance, structures, processes, etc.) as well as the broader context and environment within which the managers functions (societal capacity).

## SPECIFIC TASKS

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The Consultant will work closely with the IUCN ECARO project management team, relevant IUCN units, project partners and the appointed international consultant to deliver the following tasks:

- Prepare a detailed methodology for the report on capacity and competency needs of protected areas in the Republic of Serbia and a detailed work plan, in consultations with IUCN ECARO team and the international consultant. In preparation of the methodology in consultations with IUCN ECARO define a sample of protected areas that will be included in the analysis. Sample has to include several examples of each category, size range, ecosystem type, geographical area and management structure; private vs public, industry vs conservation etc.
- Prepare a report on capacity and competency needs of protected areas in the Republic of Serbia. **Details of the report are listed below.**
- Support the international consultant to prepare a methodology for consultation meetings with key stakeholders, which should include protected area managers, duty-bearing government authorities, institutes, local governments and communities, non-governmental organizations, and relevant experts.
- Conduct consultation meetings with key stakeholders in order to gather stakeholders' perspectives, concerns, and recommendations to enhance capacity building efforts.
- Prepare a summary report containing the findings of consultations with key stakeholders. Present the findings for the summary report to IUCN ECARO.
- Support international consultant in defining evidence-based recommendations for addressing identified capacity needs in protected areas management that are in line with internationally established initiatives, that will be included in the final comprehensive capacity and competency needs assessment study of Protected Areas managers in Serbia.
- Support international consultant in preparation and delivery of a session during a validation workshop for key stakeholders in cooperation with IUCN ECARO. The national consultant, along with international consultant, will advise on the workshop agenda and present the capacity needs assessment results, as well as the outline of the assessment, including the capacity development plan, and lead the discussion aimed at obtaining feedback and agreements from key stakeholders.
- Provide a Serbian language translation of the summary of the comprehensive capacity and competency needs assessment study of Protected Areas managers in Serbia prepared by international consultant.

**REPORT ON CAPACITY AND COMPETENCY NEEDS OF PROTECTED AREAS IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA MUST INCLUDE:**

- A comprehensive assessment of the current state of protected areas management in Serbia based on a review of existing organizational documents, including management plans, policies, and reports.
- A detailed description of the capacities required by protected areas managers according to current legislation and regulations.
- An evaluation of the role and capacities of relevant institutions, including the Ministry of Environmental Protection, provincial and local governments, and research institutes in protected area management system.
- Identification of short-falls in capacity at both organizational and individual levels within the protected area system and individual protected areas.
- Identification of specific capacity needs and priorities for both organizations and individuals concerning protected area system and individual protected areas.
- Assessment of existing capacity development opportunities available for organizations and individuals involved in protected area management, and an assessment of the effectiveness of

those opportunities (current training programs, tools, and resources available for protected area management).

- Analysis of existing informal training initiatives and educational programs for protected areas management, and assessment of their impact on building capacity.
- Identification of potential strategic partnerships between protected areas and other institutions to enhance capacity building efforts.
- Exploration of formal education and certification options in the field of protected area management.
- Overview of the different approaches to building the capacity of institutions and provision of training for staff in relevant sectors (e.g., spatial planning, agriculture) on PA management issues.
- Clear and actionable recommendations, evidenced by the above analyses and assessments.

## DELIVERABLES

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The consultant is required to submit the following deliverables to IUCN:

Deliverable	Description	Deadline
1	An inception report including methodology, detailed workplan and timeline	One week after signing the contract
2	Summary report on interviews and focus groups with relevant stakeholders with initial findings (institutions, protected area managers)	15 December 2023
3	Draft report on capacity and competency needs of protected areas in the Republic of Serbia (in English)	15 January 2024
4	Final report (in English with summary in Serbian language)	19 February 2024
5	Presentations and participation at the validation workshop as agreed with the IUCN ECARO Office	28-29 February 2024

## LANGUAGE

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English will be the working languages for the assignment and deliverables.

The consultant should anticipate that interviews and focus groups may need to be conducted in Serbian language and plan resources accordingly.

## DURATION OF THE ASSIGNMENT

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The duration of the assignment extends over the period from the of signing of the Agreement until February 29, 2024.

## RESPONSIBILITIES AND COMMUNICATION

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The Consultant is mandated by IUCN ECARO for all the tasks and deliverables described in this TOR. All deliverables need to be submitted to IUCN ECARO in English by the given deadline.

## PRICING INFORMATION

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The maximum available budget for this consultancy is estimated at **USD 16,000.00** including VAT and assignment-related travel costs (i.e. accommodation, transport and subsistence costs).

## REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

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- Relevant education and demonstrated expertise in biodiversity conservation, natural resources management, environmental sciences, environmental law, socio-ecology or related field;
- Minimum 5 years of experience in developing and delivering capacity-building programs, focusing on institutional strengthening in the context of capacity and competency needs assessment for protected area managers;
- Knowledge of capacity development program internationally established initiatives, tools and standards such as IUCN WCPA Capacity Development Program, Strategic Framework for Capacity Development in protected areas and other conserved territories 2015-2025, IUCN's Global Register of Competences for Protected Area Practitioners etc;
- Knowledge of global and EU frameworks and conventions relevant for nature protection and protected and conserved areas management, including the Convention on Biological Diversity, EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, Agenda 2030, and EU policies i.e. EU Green Deal and the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans, etc.;
- Experience working in or with protected areas, conservation organizations, or government agencies involved in environmental management;
- Demonstrated experience of collaboration with government agencies, international and nongovernmental organisations (INGOs and NGOs);
- Experience conducting needs assessments, particularly in the context of capacity and competency development;
- In-depth knowledge of policy and legislation related to protected and conserved area governance and management in Republic of Serbia;
- Experience in data collation and analysis skills; and
- Fluent English and excellent writing skills.