Terms of Reference for IUCN Consultancy

Title: Gap Assessment and Field Validation of Protected Areas Network in Jordan Consultancy

Objective of the Consultancy

This consultancy has the following objective(s):

1. Conduct gap-filling field assessments in selected locations within Jordan Protected Areas Network / connectivity corridors and buffer zones (PAN).
2. Collect field data and report on the occurrence of ecosystem health indicator species in six protected areas.
3. Conduct field validation of new proposed sites/ new extensions in the network (new sites, or modification to existing protected areas).
4. Develop a final report on the revised PA network in coordination with the international expert.

Background

Project Reference: P04285

Donor reference: P011547-001.

About IUCN

IUCN is a membership Union uniquely composed of both government and civil society organisations. It provides public, private and non-governmental organisations with the knowledge and tools that enable human progress, economic development and nature conservation to take place together.

Created in 1948, IUCN is now the world's largest and most diverse environmental network, harnessing the knowledge, resources and reach of more than 1,400 Member organisations and around 15,000 experts. It is a leading provider of conservation data, assessments and analysis. Its broad membership enables IUCN to fill the role of incubator and trusted repository of best practices, tools and international standards.

IUCN provides a neutral space in which diverse stakeholders including governments, NGOs, scientists, businesses, local communities, indigenous people's organisations and others can work together to forge and implement solutions to environmental challenges and achieve sustainable development.

Working with many partners and supporters, IUCN implements a large and diverse portfolio of conservation projects worldwide. Combining the latest science with the traditional knowledge of local communities, these projects work to reverse habitat loss, restore ecosystems and improve people's well-being.

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About the Project

The initiative "Enhancing Climate Resilience of Biodiversity Hotspots in Jordan " aims to improve the resilience to the adverse impacts of climate change of vulnerable ecosystems and vulnerable communities dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods. Protected areas, when well designed, well-connected, and effectively managed, deliver important ecosystem services to human populations in general, and specifically to neighbouring communities. In Jordan, local communities living around protected areas are benefiting from employment opportunities, eco-tourism development options, the provision of healthy rangelands and medicinal plants, and the development of socio-economic projects that provide economic benefits. Climate change is one of the major threats to biodiversity, accelerating the loss of species, degradation of habitats, and the well-being of local communities, while well-designed protected areas are one of the main Nature-based Solutions (NbS) to mitigate the impacts of climate change, sustain ecosystem services for human societies, and generate economic benefits for local communities that rely heavily on them.

The ecosystem vulnerability assessment conducted through Jordan's Third National Communication (TNC) Report showed that forests and water ecosystems are among the most vulnerable, highlighting the priority need to perform adaptation interventions within these two kinds of ecosystems. The TNC proposed to adopt a national-wide protected area system, using diverse conservation governance forms including protected areas (PAs), "Hima", and special conservation areas (SCAs), that empower local communities to conserve natural resources and improve their livelihoods by enhancing their adaptive capacity, in addition to involving them in restoration actions of degraded ecosystems and encouraging the establishment of community forests to control soil erosion. Currently, Jordan’s protected areas network covers only 5.3% of the country, while the international conservation community is trying to promote the adoption of the 30x30 initiative by conserving 30% of terrestrial and marine ecosystems globally by 2030. Critical gaps in the current national network of protected areas include the lack of integration of the current and projected impacts of climate change on ecosystems, as well as the lack of comprehensive representation of some ecosystems.

Based on this, the project will contribute to enhancing the resilience of vulnerable ecosystems and vulnerable communities on two geographic scales:

1. National scale: by aiming to increase the "percentage of critical climate-vulnerable ecosystems into the National Protected Areas Network". The project will also integrate climate change metrics within the design of the protected areas management effectiveness tracking tools to help track and achieve an effective protected areas network that is better resilient to the impacts of climate change.
2. Sub-national scale: by applying pilot interventions in Shoubak and Petra Districts from Ma'an Governorate, southern Jordan, that aim to achieve "increased areas of restored forest ecosystems in Shoubak and Petra, southern Jordan", and an "increased percentage of women, youth, and marginalized groups engaged in and benefiting from the implementation of Nature-based Solutions (NbS) in Shoubak and Petra districts". The project will focus on pilot interventions targeting forest ecosystems in Shoubak and Petra, in southern Jordan, which are some of the most vulnerable ecosystems. It also tackles the impact of climate change on vulnerable local communities, especially women, girls, and youth, sectors of society most affected by the degradation and reduced productivity of these ecosystems.

The project's ultimate outcome will result in conserved and sustained ecosystem services for the benefit of local communities dependent on protected areas and the ecosystems conserved through these protected areas, which will contribute to poverty reduction across all sites where protected areas exist. The project's pilot interventions, including Forest

Landscape Restoration (FLR) and Nature-based Solutions (NbS) in the target locations in Petra and Shoubak, will have a direct impact on enhancing the livelihoods and income of vulnerable communities through an extensive capacity-building program that will target women, girls, and youth, and by engaging them in the FLR and NbS activities. This will not only enhance their income but will also improve their skills to achieve sustainable financial income.

Description of the Assignment

Under the supervision of the Protected Areas, World Heritage, and Biodiversity Programme Manager at IUCN ROWA, the selected service provider shall contribute to and support the implementation of the following tasks:

1. Compile existing data and literature on the protected areas network in Jordan and identify gaps in data and representation. The consultant should refer to and integrate the findings of the international systematic conservation planning expert and the results of the Marxan analysis.
2. Conduct gap-filling rapid field assessments in selected locations within Jordan Protected Areas Network (Pan). These assessments shall be conducted in areas proposed for inclusion or extension to the existing protected areas network and where significant data gaps exist (at least 8 PAs Locations).
3. Collect field data on the occurrence of ecosystem health indicator species in at least six protected areas/ and update the findings by the end of the project.
4. Conduct field validation of the proposed revised network in coordination with the IUCN's international systematic conservation planning expert. The field validation shall include confirmation of and prioritisation of the proposed protected areas, against the criteria set for the system plan revision.
5. Participate and co-facilitate stakeholder meetings to present the findings.
6. Submit a final report on the revised protected areas network including a background introduction on the protected areas network, methodology and criteria for the PA revision, validation and prioritisation, and a brief description of the final network. The outline of the report shall be agreed with IUCN.

   The consultant shall ensure the delivery of the outputs and activities and shall refer to the activity description in the project Performance Measurement Framework (PMF).

Duration of the Assignment

From signing the document date to the 31st of May 2025

Deliverables and Activities

The consultant will provide the following deliverables and carry out the following activities:

Deliverable / Activity	Description	Deadline
D1	Inception report: including a work plan, detailed methodology, report format and timeline	10 days after signing the contract (estimated workload: 2 days)
D2	Literature review, background information and gaps assessment: Including compilation of scientific and technical literature on Jordan Protected areas network PAN, existing data, sites with gaps in data that require priority data collection	15 July, 2024

D3	Gap filling rapid assessment report covering the results of the Field visits (rapid assessment) to the identified sites (8 sites)	30 October, 2024
D4	Field validation report covering the new/ revised boundaries of the protected areas network. Participate in the meetings with national level stakeholders, after submission of the first draft of filed visits report, to: 1. Complete data collection (see D2). 2. Discuss preliminary findings and the current status of the PAs (based on the field visits and literature review). 3. Explore possibilities to structure and adopt the methods for the national gap analysis of the PAN. 4. Collect additional feedback on potential PAs sites with limited availability of scientific/technical information.	30 November, 2024
D5	Final report on the revised protected areas network including a background introduction on the protected areas network, methodology and criteria for the PA revision, validation and prioritisation, and a brief description of the final network (for at least 8 PAs locations).	31 December, 2024
D6	Report on the occurrence of ecosystem health indicator species in at least six protected areas. To be updated end of the project.	First draft submitted by 31.01.2025, final draft submitted by 31.03.2025

The consultant will have 2 working days replying to the comments and feedback remarks on the above-mentioned deliverables by GAC or IUCN.

Payment Schedule

The Timetable below summarises the chronological order of deliverables and indicates milestones at which IUCN will pay the Consultant.

Deliverable	Milestone payment
Upon submission and approval of the inception report (D1)	20%
Upon the completion and approval of the deliverables (D2 and D3)	20%
Upon the completion and approval of D4 and D5	30 %
Upon the completion and approval of the remaining deliverables (D6), and all tasks and delivery of all relevant deliverables and reports.	30%

Suppose the consultant is subject to tax in the territory of Jordan in respect of the consideration received under this agreement. In that case, the consultant hereby acknowledges that IUCN is entitled to deduct 5% for residents of Jordan and 10% for residents outside Jordan, in addition to 1% as national contribution for non-residents, as income tax arising or made in connection with this agreement.

If the requested deliverables are not submitted within the timeframe stated in this ToR, the payments will be withheld.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature – Regional Office for West Asia (IUCN-ROWA) reserves the right to withhold all or a portion of payment if performance is unsatisfactory work/outputs are incomplete, not delivered, or failure to meet deadlines. All

materials developed will remain the copyright of IUCN, and IUCN will be free to adapt and modify them in the future.

Skills and Experience

The consulting firm/ entity shall provide experts covering the following skills, education, and experience as a minimum:

- A flora expert: with at least 15+ years of progressive experience and extensive knowledge of Jordan's ecosystems.
- Avi-fauna expert: with at least 15+ years of progressive experience and extensive knowledge of Jordan's ecosystems.
- Fauna expert: with at least 15+ years of progressive experience and extensive knowledge of Jordan's ecosystems.
- A GIS expert: with at least 5+ years of progressive experience and extensive knowledge of Jordan's ecosystems.

Below are the general requirements for each of the experts:

- MSc degree in ecology, environmental sciences, biodiversity conservation, or any other related fields. A PhD degree in the above-mentioned field would be an asset.
- Previous experience in the field of Biodiversity conservation and protected areas.
- Experience within the countries of the Mediterranean basin is highly valued. Extensive knowledge of Jordan's ecosystem is essential.
- Ability to compile large amounts of information succinctly into a coherent document for conservation practitioners and government officials.
- Excellent facilitation and coordination skills, with the ability to manage timely and effective delivery of both quantity and quality work on time.
- Strong communication and presentation skills and the ability to prepare appropriate and timely reports to a wide range of audiences and cultures.
- Excellent time management skills, including the ability to work effectively under pressure and to meet tight deadlines.
- Excellent writing and speaking literacy in English (Arabic is an asset).
- Proven ability to liaise and work with a range of stakeholders, including government agencies, the private sector, and local communities, and in support of regional and national institutions.

Supervision and coordination

The consultant will report to and work under the supervision of the Protected Areas, World Heritage, and Biodiversity Programme Manager at IUCN ROWA, and in close coordination with the project coordinator and IUCN's international expert.

Important notes:

1. All the deliverables from the consultant, whether reports, presentations, documents, etc. should include (IUCN, GAC), and the two institutions should be mentioned whenever an activity is mentioned.
2. Any pictures, figures, charts, etc. used in this consultancy must include the copyrights.
3. The final compiled reports for this assignment will need to follow IUCN's visual identity and publication guidelines, which will be provided by IUCN.
4. All travel costs related to the field visits shall be included as part of the contract cost.