



Attachment 1

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Consultancy for
" National wetland inventories support mechanism
Design of training course and guidance material"
Earth observation and wetland Expert

1. BACKGROUND

The Convention on Wetlands is an intergovernmental treaty which provides the framework for national and regional actions and international cooperation for the conservation and sustainable use of wetland biodiversity and services. It was the first of the modern global multilateral environmental agreements and is devoted to a specific critical ecosystem.

Wetlands, whether rivers, lakes, peatlands, ponds, mangroves, tidal flats, coastal marshes, or even underground waters, are central to water, biodiversity and climate issues. Wetlands are key to frame water resources, biodiversity hotspots or climate adaptation and mitigation solutions. Reversely they are highly vulnerable to the effects of land-use change, pollution, direct exploitation of natural resources, invasive species, and climate change. Detrimental changes to hydrological systems such as water quality or quantity issues affect wetland ecological status including wetland functions and ecosystem services.

Data and information on the extent and condition of wetlands, and their changes over time are critical to inform the actions of governments and other actors to protect and sustainably use wetlands. Accordingly, national wetland inventories (NWIs) development is an important mechanism in providing a foundation for wetland assessment and monitoring as well as planning and decision support. It is also a key tool to support countries implementing global targets such as Sustainable Development Goals, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the Paris Agreement and the Land Degradation Neutrality targets, at national level.

National wetland inventory is recognized as a priority area in the Convention on Wetlands Strategic Plan 2016-2024. Paragraph 49 of Resolution XIV.6 encourages Parties to strengthen their efforts to complete their national wetland inventories and to report on wetland extent to report on SDG Indicator 6.6.1. It requests the Secretariat to continue working with Contracting Parties to actively support these efforts.

The Secretariat is developing a new support mechanism for Contracting Parties for completion of national wetland inventories. This includes the development of additional guidance to support Parties on designing and implementing robust data management protocols to increase data quality, consistency, and interoperability of data. A three-year programme consisting of annual training courses and associated training materials in the three official languages of the Convention is also being developed. This will be closely aligned with the development of additional guidance on national wetland inventory.

The training programme on national wetland inventories aims to support Contracting Parties to gain knowledge and know-how on how to undertake a national wetland inventory within an appropriate policy, scientific and technical framework. The training course consists of a series of one-week on-site training modules over three consecutive years. Participants will be required to enrol for the whole training course over three years. This will allow participants to progressively deepen knowledge and action on NWIs. Participants will be given some form of homework between the on-site sessions, to ensure their continued engagement. Quarterly online check-ins will be proposed.

The three training modules will be organized between 2024 and 2026, with the following focus:

Module 1: Introduction to national wetland inventories

Module 2: Earth observation techniques and knowledge: best practices to support national wetland inventories; and

Module 3: Long-term ecological knowledge: managing and updating national wetland inventories.

More information on the proposed support mechanism for completion of national wetland inventory is provided in [SC63 Doc.10](#) and in [SC63 inf.2](#).

2. THE CONSULTANCY SERVICES

The Earth observation and wetland Expert will provide earth observation and wetland expertise within the consultancy team. She/He will particularly:

1. lead the development and organisation of Module 1 and Module 2 training courses and associated training material, in English.
2. contribute to the elaboration of two guidance documents related to, respectively, NWI structured process and Core elements of NWI.
3. contribute to the organisation of the consultation process while developing the two guidance materials and the training material.

The services required skills and experience in:

- Research and analysis,
- Strong teaching skills,
- Facilitation, engagement, and networking,
- Clear and concise writing.

The consultancy team will also comprise the following members: a Wetland inventory Expert, a Coastal wetland Expert and a Biodiversity data management Expert.

Consultancy timeline

Phase 1 of the Consultancy is to commence as soon as possible and will conclude upon satisfactory and timely completion of all tasks to be undertaken, but no later than 30 August 2024.

Timeline for Phase 2 is from 1st July 2024 to 30 September 2024.

Phase 3 is planned from 15 September to 15 June 2025.

Phase 4 is planned from 1st May 2025 to 30 September 2025.

Detailed task description

Phase 1. Preparation Phase / June 2024 - 30 August 2024

- Contribution to the elaboration of the team workplan.
- Contribution to the drafting of a 2 to 4-page description of the content of the 'NWI structured process' guidance document and the listing of the most relevant literature.
- Contribution to the drafting of a 2 to 4-page description of the content of the 'Core elements of NWI' guidance document and the listing of the most relevant literature.
- Leading the drafting of the training course Module 1 structure and organisation.

The Earth observation and wetland Expert will participate in four to five online meetings during Phase 1.

Outputs for Phase 1

- Team workplan until 30 September 2025
- Draft content of the 'NWI structured process' guidance document,
- Draft content of the 'Core elements of NWI' guidance document,
- Draft content of the training course Module 1.

Phase 2. Elaboration of training course, Module 1 / 1st July 2024 – 30 September 2024

- Finalisation of the training course Module 1 structure and organisation.
- Leading the implementation of the training course Module 1 on site and providing teaching sessions.
- Drawing lessons learned and adjustments to be brought to draft contents of the two guidance documents (see phase 1) further to feedback from training course participants.
- Support to the elaboration of video training material extracted from the on-site training course sessions.

The Earth observation and wetland Expert will participate physically to the training course, Module 1 in Seochon, South Korea, from 9 to 13 September 2024.

Outputs for Phase 2

- One-week training material for training course Module 1 (PPTs, course structure and organisation).
- Support to the design of video training material built upon the training course sessions.

Phase 3. Elaboration of guidance materials / September 2024 – June 2025

- Contribution to the drafting of the 'NWI structured process' guidance document.
- Contribution to the drafting the 'Core elements of NWI' guidance document.
- Contribution to the organisation of consultation processes with STRP members, Convention's partner organisations, including the organisations with some institutional arrangements with the Convention in the field of national wetland inventories and Contracting Parties to collect inputs into each of the draft guidance documents.

The Earth observation and wetland Expert will participate to several online meetings during Phase 3.

Outputs for Phase 3

- 'NWI structured process' final guidance document.
- 'Core elements of NWI' final guidance document.

Phase 4. Elaboration of training course, Module 2 / 1st May 2025 – 30 September 2025

- Finalisation of the training course Module 2 structure and organisation.
- Leading the implementation of the training course Module 2 on site and providing teaching sessions (1 per day minimum).

The Earth observation and wetland Expert will participate physically to the training course, Module 2 in Seochon, South Korea, in September 2025.

Outputs for Phase 4

- One-week training material for training course Module 2 (PPTs, course structure and organisation).
- Support to the design of video training material built upon the training course sessions.

3. EXPERTISE AND THE PROFILE OF THE CONSULTANT

The Consultant should have the following qualifications, experience, and skills:

Education

Postgraduate degree in ecology, natural resources management, environment policy, earth observation and remote-sensing or another relevant field.

Required Experience

- Minimum 15 years of experience in working/doing research in the earth observation and remote sensing field applied to wetlands, with specific experience in environmental impact assessment, ecological monitoring and ecosystem restoration.

- Proven experience in conducting wetland inventories and providing appropriate recommendations for mitigation and restoration of wetland habitats, and ecosystem services.

- Experience in similar projects is desirable.

Required Skills

- Excellent knowledge of wetland ecology.

- Excellent knowledge of the policy frameworks as well as the scientific and technical underpinnings of the Convention on Wetlands

- Demonstrated ability to analyse and interpret both qualitative and quantitative data.

- Demonstrated experience in developing methodologies and writing concise reports on complex subjects.

- Strong teaching skills.

- Ability to give and receive effective feedback.

Fluency in spoken and written English is required.

4. DATA SOURCES

The Consultant should consider, among other things, the following:

- Grey literature and academic papers, including existing assessments related to global and national wetland inventories, for all wetland types.
- Standards / guidelines / legal documentation from the Convention on Wetlands.
- Interviews with competent international organizations' representatives, national authorities, experts and stakeholders, as per the need.

5. SECRETARIAT RESPONSIBILITIES

The Secretariat of the Convention is responsible for:

- Organizing the Consultant recruitment process for the four consultancy team members.
- Providing material requested and/or comments on deliverables to the Consultant in a timely manner.
- Facilitating engagement with relevant international organisations and other partners of the Convention.
- Administering this consultancy and managing payments.

6. CONSULTANT RESPONSIBILITIES

The Consultant is responsible for:

- Organizing/participating to all necessary meetings (with systematic brief minutes) and tracking the mission progress.
- Ensuring the provision of the mission outputs as per the deadlines, see section 2.
- Liaising with relevant institutions and partners
- Regularly updating the Secretariat point of contact about work progress and notifying him/her as soon as practicable of any issues in carrying out the responsibilities of this consultancy or any unforeseen delays.