



# Terms of Reference (ToR) Final Project Evaluation Consultancy Services for the project “ADAPT: Nature-based Solutions for Resilient Societies in the Western Balkans”

## 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.

Headquartered in Switzerland, IUCN Secretariat comprises around 950 staff in more than 50 countries.

Created in 1948, IUCN is now the world’s largest and most diverse environmental network, harnessing the knowledge, resources and reach of more than 1,300 Member organisations and some 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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<https://twitter.com/IUCN/>

## Background information

Climate change is increasing the frequency, intensity and magnitude of disasters, leading to a higher number of casualties as well as property and economic losses. Nature can provide cost-effective, no-regret solutions, which help increase community resilience beyond their capacity to absorb and recover from a single disaster, such as a flood or drought. IUCN has been at the forefront of developing the concept of [Nature-based Solutions](#) and has recently launched a [Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions](#). Evidence shows that beyond the positive impact on societies and improved management of disaster risks, Nature-based Solutions benefit habitats and biodiversity as well as support climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Countries in the Western Balkans are among the most vulnerable with respect to climate change impacts affecting numerous sectors and domains. Yet, while Nature-based Solutions are increasingly used and integrated into climate change policy and action planning globally, in particular, in relation to disaster risk reduction and community resilience, in the Western Balkans, the value derived from deploying Nature-based Solutions in response to societal challenges remains underexplored. The contributions of ecosystems and biodiversity towards climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction have not been recognised or sufficiently reflected in relevant strategies and policies in the region. Policies and planning approaches are often fragmented or do not consider capacity gaps with regards to their implementation.

Nature-based Solutions have been well recognised as offering untapped potential to the achievement of the multiple national and international priorities on mitigating climate change, improving livelihoods, reducing desertification and conserving biodiversity. Integrating Nature-based Solutions into national climate change policy and planning is one way to promote and create a more holistic perspective that acknowledges the role of

ecosystems and the services they provide. Also, it is critical that investments are mobilized for nature-based solutions through other mechanisms than public sector investments. Additionally, alignment with global and regional policy frameworks, including the Paris Agreement with NDCs as its delivery vehicle, the Sendai Framework, Agenda 2030, CBD and NAPs among others, supports the achievement of international commitments and reporting requirements. Overlaps between these frameworks as well as other activities, such as the work on UNCCD's land degradation neutrality should also be considered. Global post-2020 negotiations in particular offer opportunities for mainstreaming Nature-based Solutions into ongoing policy development and planning processes, such as updating and / or enhancing NDCs (including how to enhance climate resilience (adaptation), setting LDN targets, and defining the pathways to achieve the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

In addition to global frameworks, the Western Balkan countries strive to align national policies with EU acquis. The recently adopted EU Green Deal, the EU Biodiversity Strategy and forthcoming EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change provide new opportunities for Nature-based Solutions actions. The Green Agenda for the Western Balkans and its Action Plan aim to adapt the EU Green Deal's objectives and related strategies to the regional context and align goals with priorities of the Western Balkan countries. ADAPT aims to harness the potential of Nature-based Solutions for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction by capitalising on national, regional and global processes for policymaking and planning that facilitate effective implementation.

[ADAPT: Nature-based Solutions for resilient societies in the Western Balkans](#) is a project funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and implemented by IUCN. The ADAPT focuses on 6 economies - Albania, Bosnia And Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. The project works at multiple levels and involves government agencies, research institutions and civil society, which offers opportunities for knowledge exchange, wider capacity building and institutional strengthening as well as the potential for scaling up.

The *overall objective* of the project is to increase ecosystem and community resilience to climate change and environmental degradation in the Western Balkans. It is centred on Nature-based Solution (NbS) knowledge, policy and planning, implementation and scale-up. In more details, the ADAPT is pursuing the following *specific objectives* across the Western Balkans:

1. Increase knowledge and awareness of nature-based disaster risk reduction solutions among decision makers, natural resource managers and local communities;
2. Integrate NbS and equitable climate-smart planning into adaptation and disaster reduction policy;
3. Implement NbS for disaster risk reduction through pilot projects and their scale-up.

In order to demonstrate the value and multiple benefits of Nature-based Solutions, the project aims at implementing two pilot NbS field projects, one in Kraljevo municipality in Serbia and one in Elbasan municipality in Albania. Apart from the two pilot sites, the project will help prepare a tender dossier and feasibility studies for future NbS projects in selected pilot sites in the other four Western Balkans economies.

| Increased ecosystem and community resilience to climate change and environmental degradation in the Western Balkans   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| Objective 1:<br>Strengthen knowledge and awareness of nature-based disaster risk reduction solutions among decision makers, natural resource managers and local communities | Objective 2:<br>Enhance integration of Nature-based Solutions and equitable climate-smart planning into adaptation and disaster reduction policy | Objective 3:<br>Increase implementation of nature-based disaster risk reduction solutions |
| Western Balkan countries  |  |   |

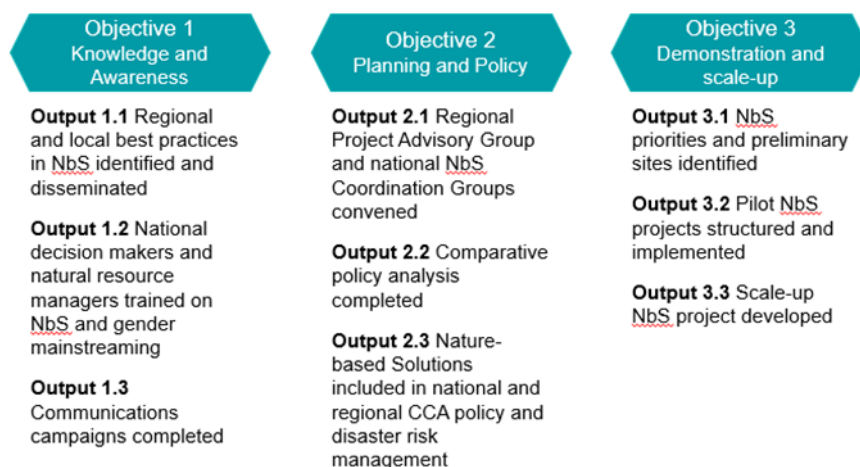


Figure 1 – the ADAPT structure and objectives

## Mid-term Review (MTR)

During the 2021, the mid-term evaluation of the ADAPT project has been conducted to provide an independent review of its progress and effectiveness in achieving expected project objectives and outputs must be conducted. This Mid-Term Review (MTR) fulfilled the requirements of both SIDA and the IUCN Monitoring and Evaluation Policy to obtain independent, evidence-based opinion for the purpose of learning and reflection on project management and early results.

The MTR was conducted at the halfway point of ADAPT implementation for the purpose of assessing best practices, and results to date, and proposing recommendations for further stages of implementation. The findings and recommendations of the MTR aimed to help the identification of any required course corrections in the ADAPT approach and activities, and to bring in valuable external reflections at the midterm point of implementation in order to help strengthen and complement the ADAPT project and the ADAPT Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) system through an adaptive management modality.

The MTR focused on assessing the progress achieved toward the overall objective and specific objectives of ADAPT, as well as highlighting the specific achievements and lesson learnt in the mid-term period. MTR findings are structured according to the evaluation criteria: coherence, effectiveness, achievements and challenges in moving towards objectives and outcomes, efficiency, and coherence. Within each criteria a set of predefined key evaluation questions is presented, and addressed, within the results of the MTR.

## Rationale and Objectives for the Final Project Evaluation

This is a summative evaluation that will focus on assessing the overall outcomes, impact, achievements, and lessons learned from the project. The evaluation will examine whether the project achieved its intended objectives, its overall effectiveness, sustainability, relevance, and its potential for replication or scaling up.

**It is expected that the findings and recommendations of the Final Project Evaluation (FPE) will help to identify any needed course corrections in the approach of the second project phase (ADAPT 2.0) and bring valuable external reflections to help strengthen the ADAPT 2.0 and complement the ADAPT MEL system through an adaptive management modality.**

The FPE will inform SIDA, IUCN, implementing partners and other stakeholders about the ADAPT effectiveness in achieving expected project objectives and outputs. In particular, the FPE is expected to allow to:

- ✓ Determine progress being made toward the achievement of outcomes in all its three key intervention areas;

- ✓ Highlight achievements and lessons learned derived from the ADAPT design, implementation, and management, including terms of design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the two pilot projects;
- ✓ Guide the identification of any issues requiring decisions and remedial actions, suggesting any mid-course corrections and/or adjustments to the ADAPT strategy, approach management and activities as necessary.
- ✓ Identify any lessons learnt to inform the design of NbS focused projects with similar scope and for the scaling up of NbS interventions.

In line the globally recognized standard OECD evaluation criteria<sup>1</sup>, the FPE should organise findings and provide recommendations around the topics of: relevance; effectiveness; achievements and challenges in moving towards the ADAPT objectives and outputs; efficiency; and coherence.

The **key evaluation questions** for the FPE are:

#### **a. Relevance**

How appropriate and relevant is the ADAPT approach and intervention logic in terms of its objectives, and within the context of the 6 targeted economies and the Western Balkans Region? To what extent is the ADAPT fit-for-purpose to promote:

- ✓ Increased knowledge, capacities and awareness on Nature-based disaster risk reduction solutions among decision makers, natural resource managers and local communities;
- ✓ Increased awareness on and commitment to gender equality, gender mainstreaming and gender-sensitive interventions, and linkages with NbS;
- ✓ The successful implementation of on-the-ground NbS for DRR through the ADAPT pilots and scale up;
- ✓ Increased capacity in targeted economies to design NbS projects for submission to global funding facilities.

Has there been any change since the project was formulated that might have affected its relevance? If so, what are these changes and to what extent the project has managed to adapt to ensure it remains relevant?

#### **b. Coherence**

To what extent is the ADAPT project coherent with country priorities and needs and in supporting mainstreaming of NbS approaches and interventions that meet NbS Standard? How coherent and complementary are the ADAPT activities vis-à-vis other policies and initiatives undertaken by country Governments and other regional and international partners engaged in promoting resilience to climate change in the Western Balkans?

#### **c. Effectiveness**

How effective the ADAPT project has been? What has and hasn't worked and why? In particular:

- ✓ How effectively has the ADAPT project engaged with national policy makers and natural resource managers in the 6 targeted economies to raise interest in and understanding of NbS?
- ✓ How effectively has the ADAPT project been to position NbS as effective solutions to address climate risks, increase resilience and enhance compliance with EU policies such as EU Acquis and other international frameworks?
- ✓ How effective has the ADAPT project been in identifying the pilot sites and engaging targeted communities – especially women and vulnerable groups - to participate in the design and development of pilot NbS interventions?
- ✓ How effective has the ADAPT approach been so far to support learning and knowledge sharing within and across the 6 economies and more broadly in the Western Balkan regions, to create synergies and to underpin and scale up local and national achievements?
- ✓ To what extent are the ADAPT MEL strategy and tools adequate and effective to keep track of progress in view of i) understanding the results and, ultimately, the impact of the ADAPT project and ii) detect any needed implementation adjustments for better progress towards results? What adjustments to the MEL system are recommended?

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<sup>1</sup> [revised-evaluation-criteria-dec-2019.pdf \(oecd.org\)](#)

#### **d. Efficiency**

To what extent are the current ADAPT operational modality and governance/management structure efficient in contributing to its overall achievements? To what extent are the ADAPT outputs in balance with the level of effort, time and resources spent?

- ✓ How efficient is the ADAPT in ensuring inputs (money, human resources, activities) are converted into the desired outputs according to the planned schedule?
- ✓ To what extent the Project Management Team (PMT), National NbS Coordination group, national field experts, Project Steering Committee (PSC) and the Project Advisory Group (PAG) worked effectively to guarantee an efficient management of the ADAPT and its good governance?
- ✓ How efficient is the collaboration between PMT, IUCN Commissions and IUCN Thematic Programmes?

#### **e. Impact**

The evaluation shall assess to which extent the ADAPT has generated significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects? What difference does the ADAPT implementation make?

#### **f. Sustainability**

The evaluation shall assess to which extent the ADAPT net benefits from continue or are likely to continue.

- ✓ Will the benefits last?
- ✓ The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue or are likely to continue.
- ✓ The extent to which the evaluand strengthened enabling conditions, in particular partnerships, capacities or policies, that can be expected to contribute to lasting change.

#### **g. Gender**

The evaluation shall assess to which extent the ADAPT's objectives and design promote and advance gender equality and gender responsiveness.

- ✓ Has the project had any positive or negative effects on gender equality?
- ✓ Could gender mainstreaming have been improved in planning, implementation or follow-up?
- ✓ How effectively has the project incorporated a participatory approach, particularly focusing on the involvement and empowerment of women in project implementation, and what impact has this had on addressing gender inequalities within the project context?

#### **h. Environment**

The evaluation should consider whether ADAPT project implementation has had impacts on the environment.

- ✓ Has the project had any positive or negative effects on the environment?
- ✓ Could environment considerations have been improved in planning, implementation or follow-up?

### **Audience for the review**

The selected Consultant shall conduct interviews, as per defined methodology, with relevant audience.

The primary audiences for the ADAPT FPE are SIDA, IUCN ECARO, IUCN Senior Management and IUCN Thematic Programmes engaged in supporting the implementation of the ADAPT. Other audiences of interest for conducting FPE are key project stakeholders such as members of the NbS Coordination Groups, the ADAPT Project Steering Committee and the Project Advisory Group.

A detailed list of the key project stakeholders and collaborators will be provided to the selected Consultant.

### **Scope of work**

The FPE will be designed and coordinated by the Consultant under the supervision of the ADAPT Project Management Team (PMT) in IUCN ECARO. However, the evaluation process will maintain independence by structurally separating from project management and implementation functions, ensuring impartiality. Findings and judgments will rely on sound evidence and objective analysis, meticulously documented in the evaluation report. Information will be triangulated where possible, with single sources explicitly mentioned when verification is unattainable. Evaluative judgments arising from analysis will be clearly articulated.

The FPE should use various methods of data gathering, proved to secure the best possible results of project evaluation. These methods include, but are not limited to:

- ✓ Review of project documentation (project proposal, logical framework, work plan etc.), project products such as studies, reports, analyses etc., as well as internal policies;
- ✓ Interviews of key project audience;
- ✓ Questionnaires, survey, focus groups etc.

**The tasks and deliverables** of this evaluation will include:

**1. Inception report:** It will include an introduction outlining the project background, objectives, and scope. It shall develop further FPE approach and adjust methodology to project specificities, including elaborated approach to data collection methods and analysis techniques, and refined key evaluation questions. The report shall also detail the proposed work plan and timeline.

**2. Intermediate version of the Final Evaluation Report:** This document will summarize the evaluation process, findings, conclusions, and recommendations for the period from Mid-Term Evaluation to end of June 2024. It will provide an overview of the evaluation objectives, methodology, data analysis, and key insights for stakeholders. Moreover, the Report should analyze the application of the recommendations from the Mid-term Review. The report will contain the following sections:

- A. Title page including project identification details
- B. Executive Summary (including at a minimum the methodology, findings and recommendations)
- C. Table of Contents
- D. List of Abbreviations and Acronyms
- E. An introduction of the project – context and description
- F. Purpose of the FPE – background and context analysis
- G. Evaluation Issues and Questions
- H. Methodology (including approach to data analysis)
- I. Findings – organized according to the key evaluation questions
- J. Conclusions and lessons learned
- K. Recommendations – actionable recommendations clearly linked to findings and lessons
- L. Annexes (ToR; Data collection instruments; MTR schedule/timetable; List of people met/interviewed; Documents consulted).

**3. Final Evaluation Report:** This document should have the same structure as the **Intermediate version of the Final Evaluation Report** and Final Evaluation Report, and should build on it by adding relevant information for the period from June 2024 until the end of October 2024. The link between evaluation questions, data collection, analysis, findings and conclusions must be clearly made and set out in a transparent manner in the presentation of the FPE findings. Conclusion and recommendations should be underpinned by a strong set of evidences.

**4. Consultations, Data gathering and Documentation analysis:** Meeting minutes, raw data, analysis tools, and list of documentation used during the evaluation process, shall be provided as separate deliverable, and annexed to the Intermediate version of the Final Evaluation Report and Final Evaluation Report, in order to ensure transparency, accountability, and the ability to replicate the evaluation if needed.

**5. Presentation:** The consultant will provide a formal presentation of the evaluation results, key findings, and recommendations in a clear and concise manner to the donor, Sida, as well as IUCN ECARO.

## Expected deliverables and tentative timeframe

|   | Task             | Deliverable  | Tentative timeline |
|---|------------------|--|--------------------|
| 1 | Inception report | - One written inception report that meets above mentioned requirements | 10 August 2024     |

|   |   |  |                  |
|---|---|--|------------------|
| 2 | Consultations, Data gathering and Documentation analysis for preparation of the Intermediate version of the Final Evaluation Report | - Meetings minutes, raw data, analysis tools, and list of documentation                          | 30 August 2024   |
| 3 | Intermediate version of the Final Evaluation Report   | - One written report that meets requirements stated in the previous section                      | 30 August 2024   |
| 4 | Consultations, Data gathering and Documentation analysis for preparation of the Draft Final Evaluation Report                       | - Meetings minutes, raw data, analysis tools, and list of documentation                          | 31 October 2024  |
| 5 | Draft Final Evaluation Report   | - One draft version written report that meets requirements stated in the previous section        | 31 October 2024  |
| 6 | Final version of the Final Evaluation Report  | - One final version written report that meets requirements stated in the previous section        | 15 November 2024 |
| 7 | Presentation  | - Power point and oral presentation of the evaluation results, key findings, and recommendations | 25 November 2024 |

## Resources

Read more about the ADAPT project, guidelines and tools related to Nature-based Solutions and Monitoring and Evaluation:

1. [IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions](#)
2. [ADAPT project](#)
3. [Integrating Nature-based Solutions into policies for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction: A regional comparative policy analysis in the Western Balkans](#)
4. [A guide to the Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology \(ROAM\)](#)
5. [Environmental and Social Management System | IUCN](#)
6. [IUCN Evaluation Policy](#)
7. Full project proposal (on request)
8. ADAPT Mid-term Review (on request)

## Duration of the assignment

The duration of this assignment will last over the period from the signing of the contract until **30<sup>th</sup> November 2024**.

## Meetings and travel

The Consultant is required to participate in meetings with ADAPT project management team on a regular bases, for the purpose of regular information sharing and reporting on conducted tasks. These meetings will be organised by IUCN ECARO and held online.

The Consultant is required to organise and facilitate meeting with relevant project stakeholders, for the purpose of gathering relevant information for final project evaluation. These meetings shall be organised online or in person, in line with best practice and methodology for final project evaluation. When meeting require travel that will be subject to IUCN Travel Policy for Non-Staff.



## Responsibilities and communication

The Consultant is mandated by IUCN for all the tasks and deliverables mentioned in above sections. All deliverables need to be submitted to IUCN ECARO in English by the given deadline.

## Pricing information

The maximum available budget for this consultancy is estimated at **EUR 25,000**, including all applicable taxes and assignment-related costs.

## Experience and qualifications

The consultancy is open to self-employed experts, team of experts or consultancy companies with the following expertise:

- At least 10 years' experience as an evaluator with demonstrated quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis skills;
- Proven experience in conducting and managing evaluations of projects which involve international science-based organisations government agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as well as in conducting evaluations of projects and programmes related to climate change adaptation and mitigation and disaster risk reduction;
- Proven knowledge of global and EU frameworks and agreements relevant for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, including the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework, Agenda 2030, EU policy etc;
- Experience in the Western Balkan region and understanding of the regional and national climate change policy landscape is an advantage;
- Knowledge and expertise on Nature-based Solutions highly desirable;
- Complete independence from IUCN;
- English language fluency in both speaking and writing. Knowledge of a local language would be considered as an additional asset

Women are strongly encouraged to apply. IUCN is an equal opportunity employer, and the successful candidate will be selected based on merit.

Consultancy companies submitting an offer, need to prove that expert(s) assigned to this task fulfil the aforementioned criteria, as stated in the RfP.

If self-employed expert or team of experts from Serbia are submitting an offer, it is necessary to have a status of legal entity in accordance with the Serbian legislation (DOO, AD, preduzetnik etc.).