



Request for Proposals (RfP) Restoration Opportunities Assessment in Uzbekistan

ATTACHMENT 1: TERMS OF REFERENCE

The present Terms of Reference seek to obtain the services of a consultant team to conduct an assessment according to the Restoration Opportunity Assessment Methodology (ROAM) and to design restoration interventions for the FOLUR project in Uzbekistan.

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1. FOLUR project. The “Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration Impact Program in Uzbekistan” (FOLUR) child project (hereinafter the “project”) has been designed under the FOLUR Global Impact Program funded by the Global Environment Facility. The objective of the Global IP is to promote sustainable integrated landscapes and efficient food value chains at scale across 27 countries and eight key agricultural commodity value chains.

The objective of FOLUR Uzbekistan is to scale up best practices and innovations for sustainable and inclusive wheat-based production landscapes and value chains the country. The project aims to trigger wide-scale adoption of efficient land management technologies and conservation approaches and promote green value chains to change the trajectory from ecosystem degradation to sustainable management for multiple benefits. It will apply an Integrated Landscape Management (ILM) approach, supported by Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) principles, Agroecology and Nature-based Solutions. As a result, the project plans to sequester 1M tonnes of CO₂, restore 50,000 hectares and play a key role in placing 350,000 hectares under improved land management within the wheat-dominant landscapes of the project regions of the country.

The FOLUR project in Uzbekistan is led by Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations and co-executed by the Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Uzbekistan, with expert support from IUCN and the International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas.

1.2. Ecosystem restoration. IUCN supports the implementation of the FOLUR project by developing and piloting measures to restore and sustainably manage degraded ecosystems and habitats of high nature value in target areas. The design and execution of these restoration measures will incorporate [Nature-based Solutions \(NbS\)](#) and involve Public Private Producer Partnerships on the ground in wheat- dominated landscapes. Additionally, the proposed solutions will help mitigate human-wildlife conflicts predators and Bukhara deer.

Overall, the restoration efforts aim to cover 50,000 hectares of land in habitats of high nature value, such as protected areas (PAs) and riparian zones, to enhance biodiversity conservation, ecosystem connectivity and species conservation. The wider focus area of the project includes six districts in three provinces of Uzbekistan (hereinafter the “Focus Area”):

- Qashqadaryo province – Qamashi and Shahrisabz Districts;
- Khorezm – Yangibazar and Urganch Districts;
- Karakalpakstan Autonomous Republic – Beruniy and Qorao’zak Districts.

As the focus area include a variety of landscapes and land uses; the project interventions should address different situations, including:

- Restoration of biodiversity rates within cropping landscapes;
- Restoration of degraded areas in non-cropping regions;
- Improvement of management in PAs to ensure ecosystem service flow to local communities.

The PAs in focus include the Hissar State Strict Nature Reserve, the Khorazm National Nature Park and the Lower Amu Daria Biosphere Reserve (hereinafter the “PAs in focus”).

The specific sites for restoration interventions are to be selected by applying a specialized [Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology \(ROAM\)](#). ROAM provides a flexible framework and approach for conservation actors to identify and assess landscape restoration opportunities as well as to select highest value and priority interventions at national or sub-national levels. Important components of the ROAM process are the cross-sectoral stakeholder engagement, gender mainstreaming, inclusive governance, identification and development of financial and social incentives for implementation. The assessment methodology combines geospatial analysis, biodiversity analysis and economic modelling within a framework that evaluates social, political, and institutional readiness to implement restoration.

Read more about the guidelines and tools used during application of ROAM:

- 1) [Handbook on ROAM](#).
- 2) [Gender-responsive restoration guidelines](#).
- 3) [Biodiversity guidelines for FLR opportunities assessments](#).
- 4) [A Cost-Benefit Framework for Analysing FLR Decisions](#).

2. SCOPE OF WORK

2.1. Specific tasks. The consultant team will need to provide expert support for the ROAM process within the FOLUR project by performing the following tasks:

- Conduct the ROAM assessment for the Focus Area to identify suitable restoration options and priority sites for restoration interventions, with a specific focus on areas near valuable and threatened ecosystems, including PAs and adjacent areas, to support ecosystem integrity and ecological connectivity;
- Develop a detailed technical design for restoration interventions at the prioritized sites, covering a total area of 50,000 hectares and including 3 types of measures: restoration of biodiversity rates within cropping landscapes, restoration of degraded areas in non-cropping regions and improvement of management in PAs;
- Provide support for the implementation of restoration measures.

Additionally, the ROAM assessment will need to provide inputs for the study on current and potential PPPs options for NbS in the Focus Area conducted by IUCN experts. Expected inputs include, but are not limited to, collecting data on socio-economic activities and stakeholders in the Focus Area, as well as preparing maps and graphs for the report on PPPs.

The restoration interventions should be designed to fit within the project’s timeframe and budget constraints, ensuring that all proposed measures are feasible and achievable within the allocated resources and schedule.

The ROAM assessment and design of restoration interventions will require desk research complemented by field visits to conduct stakeholder consultations, surveys, assessment of land conditions and degradation. The consultancy team may also propose additional research methods.

To support the ROAM assessment, IUCN will provide the consultancy team with preliminary findings from the project preparation phase, which includes: an overview of environmental conditions, ecosystems and biodiversity within the Focus Area; an initial assessment of significant biodiversity and areas of importance for its conservation; a description of threats to natural values and impact on local communities; suggestions for restoration interventions suitable for the context.

IUCN will also facilitate communications with national authorities to support the collection of additional information required for the ROAM assessment and the design of restoration interventions. In a case of delays in the data provision, the project time schedule may be adjusted accordingly. If necessary and justified by the project’s needs, data sets may be obtained from external sources, with IUCN covering the associated costs within budget limits.

2.2. Expected results, deliverables and time schedule. The assignment is expected to be completed within a maximum of 15 months, as follows:

Assignment Component	Deliverables / deadlines
1. ROAM assessment	
1.1. Preparatory phase. Key tasks and activities: a) Participate in a ROAM induction workshop with key national stakeholders organized by IUCN. The workshop aims to present and discuss the NbS approach and ROAM methodology, as well as to specify the objectives, priorities, and expected outcomes of the ROAM assessment. b) Conduct preliminary analysis to identify: ▪ a list of specific questions to be addressed by the ROAM assessment; ▪ potential restoration sites and methods as well as criteria and indicators that will be used to assess and prioritise restoration measures in the Focus Area; ▪ available data and knowledge, data gaps and solutions to address identified gaps within the project timeline; ▪ capacities for restoration interventions, including available resources (seedlings, materials, equipment, etc.) and service providers for conducting restoration fieldwork within the project timeframe. c) Coordinate and facilitate ROAM inception workshops for 3 project provinces – Qashqadaryo, Khorezm, Karakalpakstan. The ROAM inception workshops aim to gather all relevant stakeholders to: ▪ share an overview of the strategy, parameters and plan for the ROAM assessment; ▪ discuss the restoration opportunities in the Focus Area and share information on existing restoration activities; ▪ invite feedback on the presented ideas and plans. Expected results: A preliminary list of restoration sites and methods, supported by preliminary assessment of available resources (seedlings, materials, equipment, etc.) and service providers for conducting restoration fieldwork. The best locally sourced available species should be prioritised for restoration.	The ROAM inception report which outlines the structure of the final ROAM report, describes the methodology and highlights the results of the preliminary analysis. A set of presentations for the inception workshops along with the inception workshops reports. Deadline: within 2 months from the Effective Date of the Consultancy Agreement
1.2. Data collection and analysis. Collect data and conduct geospatial, biodiversity, socio-economic and legal analysis. The analysis should include, but not limited to, the following aspects: ▪ a geospatial analysis of physical, ecological and socio-economic characteristics of the Focus Area; ▪ a review of the management plans for the PAs in focus, including their zoning and buffer zones as well as community engagement and benefit sharing aspects of PA governance; ▪ an analysis of the potential increase in ecosystem connectivity among the PAs in focus and other key habitats and natural area ▪ an analysis of human-wildlife conflicts with predators and Bukhara deer in the Focus Area (the analysis should be built upon earlier studies and outcomes of previous conservation projects in the Focus Area);	The draft ROAM report. A set of analytical maps of the Focus Area. Maps should be compatible to national geospatial standards and/or requirements to be accessible and editable be national geospatial agencies. Shape file formats need to be delivered. Deadline: within 4 months from the Effective Date of the Consultancy Agreement

Assignment Component	Deliverables / deadlines
▪ an economic analysis of the cost and benefits associated with the identified restoration interventions, including a gender component; ▪ an analysis of the carbon sequestration potential and the associated co-benefits; ▪ a legal analysis that will determine the willingness of public authorities to mainstream restoration actions in their strategies and action plans; ▪ a preliminary list and cost estimate of resources (such as seedlings, materials, equipment, etc.) and services needed for conducting restoration fieldwork. Expected results: A draft complex assessment of restoration potential of the Focus Area, including: ▪ a set of analytical maps and graphs, presenting restoration sites and methods, including: – general maps illustrating physical, ecological and socio-economic characteristics of the Focus Area; – a degradation map(s): maps of degraded lands and the individual proxies used to identify degradation, including a calculation of degraded hectares and presentation of the degradation drivers; – an opportunity map(s): maps presenting restoration opportunities and a calculation of available hectares for restoration; – a priority map(s): maps of priority sites recommended for the restoration actions; – an intervention map: maps of potential restoration interventions, including sites/land plots, their physical parameters and corresponding intervention types. ▪ a list of priority restoration interventions (sites and methods) both suitable and feasible for the local context; ▪ a quantified costs and benefits analysis of each intervention type and priority site; ▪ recommendations for mainstreaming gender in the restoration interventions proposed; ▪ estimated values of additional carbon sequestered by the restoration interventions; ▪ recommendations for improved governance, zoning and community engagement for the PA in focus; ▪ management recommendations on how to minimize human-wildlife conflicts in the Focus Area by improving land use and PA management practices.	
1.3. Results and recommendations. Key tasks and activities: a) Coordinate and facilitate ROAM validation workshops for 3 project provinces. The validation workshops aim to share the draft ROAM Report with all relevant stakeholders and collect their inputs. b) Incorporate the feedback and inputs received at the validation workshops to the ROAM assessment results and deliver a final ROAM Report. Expected results: A final complex assessment of restoration potential of the Focus Area, updated in accordance with the feedback and inputs received at the validation workshop.	The final ROAM report. A set of presentations for the validation workshops along with the validation workshops reports. Deadline: within 5 months from the Effective Date of the Consultancy Agreement

Assignment Component	Deliverables / deadlines
2. Design of restoration interventions	
Key tasks and activities: Building upon the ROAM process, develop a detailed technical design for restoration interventions at the prioritized sites, covering a total area of 50,000 hectares and including 3 types of measures: restoration of biodiversity rates within cropping landscapes, restoration of degraded areas in non-cropping regions and improvement of management in PAs. The restoration interventions should comply with national / local regulatory requirements. Expected results: ▪ A detailed description of the restoration actions to be implemented on the ground, including the mechanisms, human resources, materials, equipment, plant species with quantities, and cost estimates needed to achieve the project target of 50,000 hectares. ▪ The full list of administrative steps and documentation needed to obtain all necessary approvals for the proposed restoration measures. This should include a workflow of all anticipated permits and approvals, with corresponding timeline and responsibilities. ▪ An operation and maintenance plan for the restoration intervention(s), which should contain an indication of seeding survival rate considering microsite condition. The operation and maintenance plan should be accompanied by cost estimations and clear roles and responsibilities for operation and maintenance. ▪ A monitoring and evaluation framework for restoration intervention(s).	The restoration intervention design report. Deadline: within 6 months from the Effective Date of the Consultancy Agreement
3. Support for the implementation of restoration measures	
Key tasks and activities: Provide advisory support for the restoration works upon requests of IUCN or national partners. This advisory support will include, but not limited to issues that may arise during the procurement of goods and services for the restoration works, permitting, field works and project event. Expected results: requested clarifications and/or correction to the project outputs are provided in a timely manner.	Additional / updated materials according to the project needs. Deadline: upon request during the period up until 31 December 2025

2.3. Coordination. The consultants will work closely with IUCN's project team (hereinafter the "PMT") and in cooperation with the relevant national and local authorities. To ensure cross-sectoral stakeholder engagement, a temporary multi-stakeholder group will be created and consulted in the different stages of the ROAM process. The group will have representatives from public authorities and municipalities, scientific institutions, local communities, CSOs, etc.

The induction, inception and validation workshops will be organised with full support from the PMT and funded by IUCN. This implies the PMT team will be involved in providing all logistical support for the workshop organisation.

Tasks, deliverables and timeframes may be adjusted in accordance with adaptive project management and updated yearly work plan and logframe. This will be done in consultation between the PMT and the expert team.

3. DURATION OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The duration of this assignment will last over the period from the signing of the contract to **31 December 2025**.

4. MEETINGS AND TRAVEL

The consultants will participate in a number of physical meetings and consultations as a part of the ROAM process. Travel to the Focus Area and to key project meetings and consultations in the region will be required as necessary.

Where possible in-person meetings will be prioritised, but if these are not possible due to travel restrictions, then virtual meetings will take place.

All travels will be subject to IUCN's travel policy and potential travel restrictions in place at the time of planned travel.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES AND COMMUNICATION

The consultant team 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.

6. PRICING INFORMATION

The maximum available budget for this consultancy is estimated at USD 95,000 (including VAT/other applied taxes and all travel costs of the consultant team).

7. EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

The consultancy is open to an organisation or a team of experts¹ with the following expertise:

- Ten (10) years of experience in ecosystem restoration, agriculture, forestry, and other related fields of expertise.
- An additional thematic expertise / experience in GIS, biodiversity conservation, socio-economic and gender aspects of conservation interventions.
- Demonstrated experience in both restoration opportunities assessment and design of restoration interventions.
- Excellent analytical skills and proven record of preparing similar project design studies and reports.
- Experience in implementing projects in Uzbekistan and understanding of the national regulatory context.
- Excellent English, Uzbek and Russian language proficiency².

¹ The contract will be concluded with the team lead.

² While it's not necessary for each individual member, the expert team as a whole is expected to have the ability to effectively communicate in spoken and written English, Uzbek, and Russian languages.