



Terms of Reference for IUCN Consultancy

Title: National Consultant for Nijhum Dwip Marine Managed Area (MMA)

Objective of the Consultancy

This consultancy has the following objective(s):

1. To develop a comprehensive and evidence-based site profile for the designated marine area through the integration of remote sensing, field ecological assessments, and socioeconomic and gender-responsive data, forming a baseline for informed MPA planning and management.
2. To enhance the national and site-level capacity for effective Marine Protected Area (MPA) governance by conducting targeted trainings, management effectiveness assessments (METT4), and stakeholder workshops aligned with the IUCN Green List standard and other international best practices.
3. To support long-term strategic planning and resource mobilization for MPA management and marine species conservation, including the development of a Green List-based action plan, a grant proposal with a Theory of Change, and national-level coordination for shark and ray conservation policy alignment and implementation.

Background

Project Reference: **P03511**

Donor reference: Global Environment Facility (GEF) and Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad)

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 peoples 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 Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) is one of the largest LMEs covering 6.2 million km² with depths ranging between 2 000 and over 4 000m for most of its central area. About 66 percent of the BOBLME lies within the exclusive economic zone's (EEZ) of BOBLME countries - Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. The remainder being the high seas area. The BOBLME is rich in marine living resources that support major fisheries and forest and land resources. The BOBLME is an area of high biodiversity and of important critical habitats such as mangroves (12 percent of world mangrove resources); coral reefs (8 percent of the world's coral reefs) and extensive seagrass beds). The LME and these natural resources are of considerable social and economic importance to the bordering countries. Fisheries, aquaculture, tourism and shipping contributing to food security, employment and national economies.

The project will support the BOBLME member countries in delivering the project outcomes through a coordinated partnership including BOBP-IGO, IUCN and SEAFDEC. Each partner bringing their unique areas of competence, mandates and convening power to support delivery. The project is country led and adopts a participatory, bottom-up integrated Focus Area approach to planning and implementation at community, sub national, national and regional levels to ensure greatest impact using the limited resources available. The project gender strategy will ensure positive engagement of women and men at all levels. The adoption of free prior and informed consent (FPIC) of local communities involved in the project will ensure ownership of the project results and maximum synergy with the work of partners and government policy implementation.

Description of the Assignment

1. The consultant will review and summarize all existing site profiles—social, ecological, and scientific—related to Nijhum Dwip MMA to establish a knowledge baseline. Building on this, the consultant will implement a three-tier data collection framework using remote sensing, field surveys, and social assessments to produce an updated, integrated site profile. This will directly inform the revision of the zonation scheme, the design of sustainable livelihood interventions, and the development of community-based monitoring and habitat restoration strategies. The final profile will consolidate and update all key data into a standardized baseline to guide the Marine Management Plan and support adaptive management aligned with national priorities and IUCN standards.
2. The consultant will lead a site-level assessment of current management effectiveness assessment using tools such as the IUCN Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool

(METT4) also conduct an IUCN standards Green List gap analysis by identifying and assessing the site's key ecological, cultural, and ecosystem service values. It will evaluate how conservation success is currently measured and determine whether evidence demonstrates effective protection of natural values, essential ecosystem services, and culturally significant features.

3. The consultant will be responsible for organizing a five-day intensive training course on Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and the IUCN Green List standard. The training will include theoretical and practical components such as simulations, mock planning, and field exercises to strengthen technical and institutional capacities.
4. The consultant will organize a national-level capacity-building workshop on MPAs, OECMs, and the IUCN Green List. This event will facilitate policy dialogue, the drafting of a national MPA standards document, and the preparation of a five-year roadmap for MPA and OECM development.
5. The consultant will coordinate and execute a three-phase diagnostic and gap analysis aligned with the IUCN Green List. This will include a desktop evidence review, field verification activities, and a scoring workshop involving relevant stakeholders.
6. Following the diagnostic, the consultant will prepare a targeted business or investment plan based on the Green List findings to ensure long-term sustainability. This plan will include a Responsibility, Accountability, Consulted, and Informed (RACI) matrix to clearly assign roles and responsibilities, set deadlines, and define performance indicators for all key activities.
7. The consultant will also be tasked with drafting a grant proposal to secure resources for strengthening MPA management effectiveness. The proposal will include a Theory of Change model to link proposed actions with expected outcomes and long-term goals.
8. Upon grant approval, the consultant will coordinate the planning and initial implementation of key project activities, mainly focusing on technical support. Early tasks may include assisting with capacity development, enhancing inter-agency coordination and helping engage stakeholders for a smooth project start.
9. The consultant will support national-level efforts to address shark and ray conservation. This includes organizing stakeholder briefings, media outreach, national action plan alignment with regional frameworks, and inter-agency collaboration for policy coherence and strategic conservation outcomes. To address shark and ray conservation by coordinating stakeholder briefings, media campaigns, and alignment of the national action plan with regional frameworks. They will also facilitate inter-agency collaboration and help prioritize strategic conservation actions.

Duration of the Assignment

From January 2026 to June 2026

Deliverables and Activities

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

Deliverable/Activity	Description	Deadline
1. Deliverable 1	Nijhum Dwip MMA Site Profile, Baseline Reports (ecological, social, socio-economic), Ecological Assessment Survey, and GESI Assessment	January 2025
1.a Activity 1A	Compile and finalize site profile and baseline studies covering ecological, social, and socio-economic parameters.	n/a
1.b Activity 1B	Conduct ecological assessment survey and Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) assessment at Nijhum Dwip MMA.	n/a
2. Deliverable 2	Key deliverables addressing MPA and Green List implementation	March 2026
2.a Activity 2A	Conduct Green List gap analysis to identify areas for improvement.	n/a
2.b Activity 2B	Deliver training sessions on MPAs and the IUCN Green List, and document outcomes.	n/a
2.c Activity 2C	Develop a capacity-building framework for MPA and OECM management.	n/a
2.d Activity 2D	Organize a national workshop on MPAs, OECMs, and the Green List.	n/a
2.e Activity 2E	Prepare draft national MPA standards document.	n/a
2.f Activity 2F	Develop a five-year roadmap for OECM implementation and development.	n/a
2.g Activity 2G	Compile workshop report with policy recommendations.	n/a
2.h Activity 2H	Produce Green List-based action/business plan for sustainable site management.	n/a
3. Deliverable 3	Strengthened MPA management and regional cooperation for shark and ray conservation	June 2026
3.a Activity 3A	Prepare a grant proposal to strengthen MPA management effectiveness.	n/a
3.b Activity 3B	Provide national inputs to support regional consensus on reducing threats to sharks and rays under BOBLME.	n/a
3.c Activity 3C	Coordinate planning and implementation of technical, capacity-building, and stakeholder engagement activities.	n/a
3.d Activity 3D	Support national shark and ray conservation through stakeholder briefings, media outreach, and inter-agency coordination.	n/a

Payment Schedule

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

Deliverable	Milestone Payment
30 January 2026 – Submission of Deliverable 1 : Nijhum Dwip MMA Site Profile, Baseline Reports (ecological, social, socio-economic), Ecological Assessment Survey, and GESI Assessment	30%
30 January 2026 – 15 March 2026 – Implementation of Deliverable 2 activities: Green List gap analysis, training sessions, capacity-building framework, national workshop preparation, draft national MPA standards, OECM roadmap, and Green List-based action plan	-
16 March 2026 – Completion and submission of Deliverable 2 : MPA and Green List implementation package	40%
16 March – 25 June 2026 – Implementation of Deliverable 3 activities: Grant proposal, national and regional coordination, stakeholder engagement, and policy input for shark and ray conservation	-
26 June 2026 – Submission of Deliverable 3 : Grant proposal, shark and ray conservation inputs, and final completion report	30%

Skills and Experience

The consultant must have the following skills, education and experience as a minimum:

Education:

- Master's or Ph.D. degree in Marine Biology, Fisheries Science, Environmental Science, Natural Resource Management, or Conservation Biology.
- Specialized training in Marine Protected Area (MPA) management, spatial planning, or biodiversity assessment is desirable.

Professional Experience:

- Minimum 10 years of experience in coastal and marine conservation or fisheries management, including at least 3 years in MPA/MMA planning, governance, and assessment.
- Hands-on experience with ecological and socio-economic assessments, METT/IUCN Green List frameworks, GIS-based habitat mapping, and threatened species conservation (e.g., sharks and rays).
- Proven expertise in ecological survey design, data analysis, gender-responsive research, and policy development.
- Demonstrated experience in capacity building, workshop facilitation, and multi-stakeholder collaboration with government agencies, NGOs, and local communities.

Key Skills and Competencies:

- Ability to develop site profiles, action plans, and resource mobilization strategies.
- Excellent English writing, reporting, and presentation skills; Bengali proficiency is an advantage.
- Strong analytical, organizational, and communication skills with the ability to synthesize technical information into actionable recommendations.

Other Requirements:

- Ability to work independently under deadlines.
- Willingness and ability to travel to remote coastal and marine sites.
- Commitment to biodiversity conservation, inclusive governance, and evidence-based decision-making.

Supervision and coordination

The consultant will report and work under the supervision of National Coordinator of BOBLME II Project, Bangladesh (Programme Manager, Species and Habitats, IUCN Bangladesh Country Office).