

UNDP-GEF/MNP

“Conservation and sustainable use of globally significant biological diversity in Hazar Nature Reserve on the Caspian Sea Coast”

Technical Specialist (TS)

Terms of Reference

Objective(s) of the assignment:

The TS will provide support and advice in technical aspects to the Project Administrator (PA), the Project Steering Committee (PSC), and the National Project Director (NPD), based on his/her experience and knowledge of the Hazar Nature Reserve and the Protected Areas System in Turkmenistan, as well as best practices globally, and as required advise on strategic and reporting issues to the UNDP Programme Officer.

Project Background:

The project is to strengthen Turkmenistan’s National System of Protected Areas by demonstrating effective protected area management and biodiversity conservation in Turkmenistan’s Hazar Nature Reserve (HzR) on the Caspian Sea coast. Two of the world’s major flyways converge on Turkmenistan’s Caspian coastal region. This fact makes the coastal wetlands of HzR especially important for migratory birds. The area also includes important wintering areas for the Caspian sturgeon and some of the most important habitats for the Caspian seal, the only Caspian an endemic species.

The conservation and sustainable use of such a wide range of biological diversity requires more integrated approaches to conservation and coastal resource management in Turkmenistan. This project is designed to provide the tools, the expertise, and the arena for stakeholders to adopt these new practices in ways that are appropriate for Turkmenistan and that strengthen Turkmenistan’s National System of Protected Areas. In so doing, the project will generate substantial global environmental and national sustainable development benefits.

Key tasks and responsibilities

Under the general supervision of the Project Administrator to whom he/she will report, the TS will provide necessary technical support for the successful achievement of the Project Objective and Outcomes. More specifically, the TS will perform the following duties:

A) Planning, monitoring and reporting

A.1 Assist the UNDP Programme Officer, PA and Project Team with the quarterly planning of project activities to ensure that specified tasks are undertaken in as organized and planned a manner as possible.

A.2 Provide necessary planning and reporting functions for the UNDP Programme Officer and the Project, including preparation of:

- the Project Implementation Review (PIR)
- implementation reports for UNDP
- quarterly project plans and reports

A.3 Assist the PA with the monitoring of performance and progress.

B) Technical advice

B.1 Attend the PSC as required, report on technical aspects of the project and provide required technical advice.

B.2 Provide overall technical guidance, advice and support to the Project Team.

B.3 Provide advice to the PA in strategic planning for project coordination and implementation so as to achieve the project Objective, including the proper planning of workflow and efficient utilization of project resources.

B.4 Provide policy advice to the NPD and the PSC.

B.5 Actively liaise with Project personnel, including Consultants and Experts, on matters pertaining to the implementation of project interventions and provide advice as necessary.

B.6 Certify the reports of international and national consultants/experts.

B.7 Provide advice and guidance for effective outreach activities by the Project.

C) Other implementation advice

C.1 Provide the necessary technical advice and assistance in the organization of key project events in accordance with the quarterly and annual plan.

C.2 Support the work of consultants and contractors and provide technical input where appropriate.

C.3 Provide advice to the PA on the technical aspects of ToRs for key personnel in order to improve performance and facilitate the achievement of the Objective.

C.4 Assist the Project Team with the mobilization of co-financing.

C.5 Facilitate the building of effective working relationships with the Project's key partners at the local level: (i) Municipalities; (ii) Village leaders and communities; (iii) private sector, resource users, etc, to ensure that project activities proceed with the full support and involvement of local stakeholders.

C.6 Work with co-funding partners to ensure that their activities/programmes are integrated and complementary with those of the GEF project.

4. Time-frame

The TS position is not full-time. Subject to revision by mutual agreement, the position is envisaged as being 50% of full time. The initial contract will be for a period of 12 months renewable, following satisfactory performance assessment, for a further year or until project closure, whichever comes first. The combination of the scope of work and UNDP salary scale (service contract or other) will be applied to determine TS's quarterly remuneration. Quarterly work plans and progress reports will serve as basis for quarterly payments.

5. Duty station and travel arrangements

The TS will operate from the Project Office in Ashgabat and the sub-Office in Turkmenbashi. He/she will also be expected to travel to project field sites along the Caspian Coast.

6. Project inputs

The project will provide the TS with office space in Ashgabat and Turkmenbashi, a valid ID card, domestic transportation, and access to electronic mail and the Internet.

7. Required skills and competencies

- A postgraduate degree in one of the areas such as Environmental Policy, Environmental or Natural Resource Management, or Protected Areas Management
- At least 5 years experience in protected areas (PA) management projects or equivalent, preferably within the UN system or other development agencies
- High level of technical expertise in the management of PAs; high credibility among scientific and technical colleagues
- Broad experience in working at the central and local levels in Turkmenistan
- Decisiveness, independence, good judgment, ability to work under pressure
- Good analytical and planning skills; ability to set forecasts and refine/review them in the light of experience and further analysis
- Excellent inter-personal skills; good communicator at all levels from political decision-makers to grassroots communities
- Excellent networking and partnering competencies and negotiating skills
- Ability to use information technology as a tool and resource
- Fluency in written and spoken Russian and English. Knowledge of Turkmen will be an asset