



## TERMS OF REFERENCE

- A. Job title:** Natural Resources Policy Expert for Strengthening the Institutional and Organizational Framework for Sustainable Harvesting and Trade of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP)
- B. Type of position:** Local consultant
- C. Duty Station:** Home based/Podgorica, Montenegro
- D. Contract type:** Individual Contract
- E. Duration of appointment:** 40 working days (a day will be calculated as 8 hours and could be prorated to the hours worked) in the period 1 December 2025 – 31 October 2026
- F. Deadline for application:** 10 November 2025, 12:00h

### I Background

The project “Biodiversity Mainstreaming into Sectoral Policies and Practices and Strengthen Protection of Biodiversity Hot-spots in Montenegro” is geographically focused on the Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) of Montenegro and includes various types of interventions and involves both ecosystem protection and work with production sectors, such as tourism, agriculture, and forestry.

Component 1 of the proposed project deals with the management constraints associated with the Protected Areas (PA's) estate and unprotected biodiversity hot-spots. The project provides for the improved management of the pilot PA's in order to ensure compliance with the international requirements for the protection of valuable biodiversity within the KBAs and other international biodiversity hot-spots. Through spatial planning instruments, the project promotes concrete solutions for valuable and threatened biodiversity conservation outside the PA's.

The Component 2 targets the productive landscape outside PA's and in the vicinity of KBA's, where the project addresses the sectoral threats to biodiversity via mainstreaming biodiversity-friendly practices and adjust the sectoral development scenarios for tourism, agriculture and forestry to take into account the potential impact on biodiversity.

The tasks outlined in this ToR fall under *Component 2, Output 4.1. Output 4.1: Best-practice standards for mainstreaming biodiversity-friendly forestry practices have been developed*, aiming to revitalise the NTFP sector through support for the creation of an NTFP harvesters association, capacity-building programs, and policy recommendations for sustainable forest product management in Montenegro.

### II Objectives of the assignment:

The objective of this assignment of the Natural Resources Policy Expert is to address the key challenges facing Montenegro's Non-Timber Forest Product (NTFP) sector, including regulatory gaps,





unsustainable harvesting practices, market inefficiencies, and economic and social constraints, while promoting ecological sustainability and socio-economic development.

The assignment focuses on developing a comprehensive framework to establish a functional and inclusive NTFP association to organize and empower stakeholders, raise their capacities, support sustainable practices, and enhance value chain efficiency.

### **III Job content**

Under the supervision of the Project Manager and Chief Technical Adviser, the Natural Resources Policy Expert will support the establishment and strengthening of an association of non-timber forest product (NTFP) harvesters to enhance collective organization, market access, value addition, and sustainable resource management. The assignment will focus on assessing the existing context of NTFP collection and trade, identifying appropriate organizational models, and building the technical and managerial capacities of NTFP harvesters and key stakeholders. In this process, the consultant will ensure the integration between policy, institutional, and field-level activities.

The consultant will work closely with the project team, relevant institutions, and local communities to ensure that the proposed model is feasible, inclusive, and aligned with national legislation and local socio-economic conditions. During the period 1 December 2025 – 31 October 2026 the assignment will include the following tasks:

- **Stakeholder Identification and Engagement:** Identify and actively engage stakeholders relevant for the NTFP sector, ensuring meaningful participation of marginalized groups, particularly women and rural communities. Conduct stakeholder interviews and focus group discussions to assess needs, interests, and barriers to collective organization
- **Review the current legal, institutional, and market framework** relevant to the establishment and operation of producer associations or cooperatives in the forestry sector
- **Data collection and integration:** Support the collection and analysis of data to facilitate the integration of NTFPs into forest management systems contributing to national reporting and planning processes
- **Organizational and Governance Support:** Analyze potential NTFP association models based on stakeholder input, feasibility, and international best practices, and propose at least three possible organisational and governance models (e.g. cooperative, association, social enterprise etc). Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages, legal feasibility and sustainability of each model;
- **Define potential revenue streams, membership structures and partnership opportunities;**
- **Support the design of an accountable and transparent governance structure, including procedures for membership, internal regulations, communications, business templates, and its formal establishment by preparing legally required documentation;**
- **Capacity Building:** Together with the rest of the Project team, develop and deliver a tailored training





programs for NTFP harvester association members, including:

- Training on association management and governance – including modules on organizational management, resource mobilisation, financial management record keeping, strategic planning, monitoring, evaluation and adaptive management for the duration of at least 2 days for at least 5 participants interested in the managing the proposed association;
- Support to capacity building event on sustainable harvesting practices for the duration of at least 2 days for at least 15 harvesters, The event will be delivered by an external expert engaged by the project, with the consultant ensuring content alignment.
- Support to capacity building event on product development and marketing for the duration of at least 1 day for at least 15 stakeholders. The event will be led by an external expert contracted by the project, with the consultant contributing to contextualization of the content and ensuring active engagement of participants.
- **Institutional Setup for Engaging Trained Harvesters:** In collaboration with key regulatory agencies and companies, develop and propose a standardized protocol mandating the engagement of trained harvesters in commercial operations, while integrating the capacity-building program into stakeholder activities. The protocol should define clear criteria for certification, outline verification and compliance mechanisms, and ensure that the capacity-building programme for harvesters is formally integrated into company operations, licensing procedures, and stakeholder training activities.

Throughout all tasks, gender mainstreaming will be a cross-cutting priority, ensuring gender-sensitive approaches, meaningful and active participation of women, promotion of leadership of women in NTFP related activities, and the collection of gender-disaggregated data to foster inclusivity and equity. The consultant will analyze the specific impacts of proposed models and interventions on women and marginalized groups and address identified inequalities through targeted, gender-responsive measures that promote equal access to opportunities, resources, and decision-making.

#### IV Deliverables:

- Established association and support organization of one capacity building event on association management delivered in person for the duration of at least 2 days for at least 5 participants interested in the managing the proposed association, which will be conducted by an external expert engaged by the project;
- Support organization of one capacity building on sustainable harvesting practices for the duration of at least 2 days for at least 15 harvesters, which will be conducted by an external expert engaged by the project;
- Support organization of one capacity building event on product development for the duration of at least 1 day for at least 15 stakeholders, which will be conducted by an external expert engaged by the project;





- Training materials, including presentations, tools, reading materials, guidelines, etc., compiled as a package that can be used in future trainings, developed in cooperation with external experts engaged by the project;
- Proposal of the protocol that mandates NTFP companies to engage only harvesters who have completed recognized training and capacity building program. Protocol verified by the relevant stakeholders;
- Proposal of the most feasible model for integrating the capacity building program into the operations of the key stakeholders (NTFP trade companies, national institutions and regulatory bodies); and
- Final report documenting the process and lessons learned with recommendations for long-term sustainability and institutionalization of the NTFP association

#### **V Competencies:**

- Demonstrates integrity and ethics and a commitment to transparency and accountability in all professional activities;
- Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability, ensuring inclusive and respectful engagement with all stakeholders;
- Approaches work with energy, positive and constructive attitude;
- Demonstrates the ability to manage complexities and resolve conflicts constructively;
- Strong organizational and time management skills, with the ability to prioritize tasks and meet tight deadlines while maintaining high-quality outputs;
- Ability to provide constructive input;
- Responds positively and constructively to feedback and demonstrates a willingness to adapt and improve;
- Ability to work independently and in a team, fostering collaboration and mutual support;
- Excellent analytical, report-writing and presentation skills, with the ability to communicate complex findings clearly and effectively to diverse audiences;
- Fluency in local language (writing, speaking and reading) and working knowledge of English language.

#### **VI Qualifications and expertise:**

- University degree in forestry/biological sciences/, environmental sciences/natural resource management/ sustainable development/management/law or other relevant for this call;
- Masters or PhD degree, as well as specialist certificates of relevance to this ToR will be considered as an advantage;
- At least 7 years of managerial experience in projects and/or companies in the area of forestry, nature protection, natural resources management, sustainable and/or rural development;



- Demonstrated understanding of international regulatory and policy frameworks and best practices in the context of forestry-NTFP/management of natural resources/sustainable and/or rural development;
- Proven expertise in overseeing the document preparation process in accordance with the ToR;
- Demonstrated familiarity with Montenegro and/or its forestry/nature protection context is a strong advantage;
- Strong leadership and organisational skills;
- Excellent report writing and analytical skills, with experience producing technical reports;
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills;
- Ability to manage multiple stakeholders, including government entities, public institutions, civil sector, private sector, local communities and others.

#### **VII Application procedure:**

Candidates must submit their applications, via email to the following email address [irena.krivokapic@mers.gov.me](mailto:irena.krivokapic@mers.gov.me) and [irenakrivokapic@gmail.com](mailto:irenakrivokapic@gmail.com) clearly specifying the job for which the candidate is applying for.

For the application to be valid, the following needs to be provided:

- A Curriculum vitae CV (Europass format is preferred);
- Filled in reference form (Annex 1);
- A signed declaration (Annex 2).

Applications must be delivered/drafted in English. Incomplete applications will not be taken into consideration. Applications must be sent by email no later than 10 November 2025, 12h CET.

Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted for the interviews.

The Project Implementation Unit reserves the right to request additional documentation and/or to schedule a written test for candidates, should they deem necessary for the evaluation process.

Term of reference approved by:

Name and title: Zoran Dabetić, National Project Director

Signature:

Date: 23 October 2025