

ANNEX 2: Terms of Reference

A. Project title

Development of Local Environmental Action Plan for Municipalities Podgorica and Kolasin

B. Project Description

1. Context and Rationale

The municipalities of Podgorica and Kolašin are characterised by significant natural assets, including valuable biodiversity, diverse ecosystems, protected areas, and landscapes of high ecological importance. These territories encompass key biodiversity areas (KBAs), proposed Natura 2000 sites, important freshwater ecosystems, forests, mountain habitats, and ecological corridors that provide essential ecosystem services and support local livelihoods. These natural assets are of critical importance for biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, water security, and the sustainable development of sectors such as tourism, agriculture, and forestry.

At the same time, both municipalities are facing increasing pressures on biodiversity and ecosystems related to urban expansion, infrastructure development, unsustainable land use practices, pollution, habitat fragmentation, invasive species, and the impacts of climate change, including droughts, extreme weather events, and ecosystem degradation. These pressures are often compounded by insufficient biodiversity data, fragmented planning processes, and limited coordination among institutions and stakeholders, which can result in the degradation of natural habitats and loss of biodiversity values. Without a strategic and coordinated approach, these trends may significantly reduce ecosystem resilience and undermine the long-term sustainable management of natural resources.

In this context, there is a need for strategic biodiversity planning documents that will guide biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration, and sustainable natural resource management at the local level. The development of Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs) for Podgorica and Kolašin is intended to provide municipalities with coherent, evidence-based, and actionable frameworks for identifying biodiversity priorities, addressing key threats, and strengthening coordination among relevant stakeholders. The LBAPs will also support the alignment of local biodiversity priorities with national biodiversity and nature protection policies, EU nature acquis and Natura 2000 requirements, as well as relevant international commitments.

The preparation of the LBAPs is grounded in Montenegro's national legal and policy framework for nature conservation. In accordance with the Law on Nature Protection, local biodiversity action plans represent a mechanism for translating biodiversity conservation and sustainable use objectives into actions at the municipal level. The LBAPs are expected to contribute to the implementation of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), with which they should be aligned. They also support Montenegro in fulfilling its obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity and advancing the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, including objectives related to biodiversity mainstreaming, ecosystem restoration, conservation of important biodiversity areas, sustainable use of natural resources, and strengthened biodiversity governance.

The LBAPs are expected to establish a baseline of biodiversity and ecosystem conditions, identify key pressures, threats, and vulnerabilities, and define strategic objectives and priority conservation measures based on reliable data and stakeholder input. By integrating biodiversity conservation and ecosystem management considerations into local planning and decision-making, these documents will support more sustainable development pathways and help balance development needs with nature conservation objectives. Through a participatory and data-driven approach, the LBAPs will contribute to improved biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration, sustainable use of natural resources, and strengthened ecosystem resilience to climate change.

Furthermore, the LBAPs will play an important role in strengthening the capacity of municipalities to plan, implement, and monitor biodiversity-related actions in a systematic and coordinated manner. They will support

the identification of priority investment needs, facilitate access to biodiversity and climate finance, and enable the development of a pipeline of biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration projects that can attract funding from national budgets, EU instruments, and international donors. This is particularly important in the context of increasing availability of biodiversity and climate-related financing mechanisms, where well-prepared strategic frameworks and project pipelines are essential for mobilising resources.

By strengthening biodiversity planning, institutional coordination, and stakeholder engagement, the LBAPs will serve as key tools for improving biodiversity governance at the local level. They will also contribute to raising awareness, fostering local ownership, and promoting collaborative action among public institutions, protected area managers, civil society organisations, academia, private sector actors, and local communities. Ultimately, the preparation and implementation of the LBAPs will support the long-term conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity and ecosystems in Podgorica and Kolašin, ensuring that natural assets and ecosystem services are preserved for the benefit of current and future generations.

2. Overall Objective of the Project

The overall objective of the project is to support the municipalities of Podgorica and Kolašin in strengthening biodiversity governance and advancing sustainable natural resource management through the preparation of Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs). These plans are intended to serve as strategic tools that guide biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration, sustainable ecosystem management, and the protection of natural assets, while addressing key pressures on biodiversity and supporting long-term ecosystem resilience to climate change.

More specifically, the project aims to:

- establish a structured understanding of the current state of biodiversity and ecosystems in the two municipalities, including the identification of key biodiversity values, habitats, species, ecological corridors, ecosystem services, and major pressures, threats, and vulnerabilities affecting biodiversity and natural resources. By consolidating and analysing available data, the project will provide an evidence base for biodiversity-related planning, decision-making, and prioritisation of conservation actions;
- define strategic biodiversity conservation objectives and priority measures aligned with national biodiversity and nature protection policies (primarily NBSAP), EU nature acquis and Natura 2000 requirements, CBD-GBF and other relevant international commitments. The LBAPs will translate these objectives into concrete and implementable actions, with clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and measurable indicators, enabling municipalities to plan and implement biodiversity conservation and ecosystem management actions in a systematic and coordinated manner;
- strengthen participatory biodiversity governance by ensuring the active involvement of relevant stakeholders throughout the process. By integrating diverse perspectives and fostering inclusive dialogue, the project will contribute to stronger ownership of the LBAPs and enhance their practical relevance and feasibility. Particular attention will be given to the inclusive participation of women, local communities, protected area managers, civil society organisations, and marginalised and underrepresented groups;
- support municipalities in identifying priority investment needs and improving their capacity to mobilise financial resources for biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration. The project will contribute to the development of a pipeline of priority biodiversity-related projects derived from the LBAPs, together with the identification of potential funding opportunities. This will enhance the ability of municipalities to access national and international biodiversity and climate financing mechanisms and implement the proposed conservation and restoration measures.

C. Scope of Work

The selected Service Provider (Company) shall be responsible for providing overall technical leadership, coordination, and quality assurance for the following tasks:

Inception and planning phase

- Prepare an inception report defining the overall methodology, detailed work plan, timeline, and approach to stakeholder engagement. This phase will ensure a clear understanding of the assignment scope, alignment with municipal priorities, and a structured approach to the preparation of the LBAPs;
- Identify and map all relevant stakeholders, including public institutions, protected area managers, civil society organisations, academia, private sector actors, and local communities, and develop a stakeholder engagement plan to guide participatory processes throughout the assignment.

Data collection, analysis, and baseline assessment

- Conduct a comprehensive desk review of existing biodiversity and nature protection data, strategies, plans, studies, and reports relevant to the municipalities, covering key thematic areas such as biodiversity, protected areas, habitats and ecosystems, species conservation, ecological connectivity, ecosystem services, land use change, and climate change impacts on biodiversity. This should also include identification of data gaps, trends, and major pressures and threats affecting biodiversity;
- Undertake targeted field verification and biodiversity assessments, as appropriate and within the available resources and timeframe in order to validate the status and distribution of target species, habitats, ecosystem conditions, ecosystem service hotspots or major biodiversity pressures
- Integrate available spatial and field-based information, where relevant, to improve understanding of biodiversity values, ecosystem condition, conservation priorities, and management needs within the municipalities
- Develop a baseline assessment describing the current state of biodiversity and ecosystems in each municipality, including key biodiversity values, habitats, species, ecosystem services, ecological vulnerabilities, and major pressures and threats, providing the analytical foundation for the LBAPs

Spatial analysis and mapping

- Perform spatial analysis and develop a GIS database and set of thematic maps illustrating protected areas, important habitats and ecosystems, biodiversity hotspots, ecological corridors, environmental pressures, degraded areas, and priority zones for conservation and ecosystem restoration. These outputs will support evidence-based biodiversity planning and prioritisation of actions

Participatory engagement and consultations

- Design and implement a participatory engagement process, including interviews, workshops, surveys, and consultations, to gather stakeholder inputs on biodiversity values, threats, conservation priorities, and proposed measures. Particular attention should be given to inclusive participation and engagement of local communities and relevant biodiversity stakeholders;
- Organise and facilitate stakeholder consultations to present and validate key findings and draft LBAPs, ensuring that stakeholder feedback is systematically documented and integrated into the final documents
- Apply a gender-responsive and socially inclusive approach throughout the consultation process, ensuring adequate representation and participation of women, men, youth, elderly persons, and other relevant social groups.

Development of LBAPs

- Prepare draft LBAPs for Podgorica and Kolašin, each including a comprehensive baseline assessment, strategic biodiversity conservation objectives and priorities, and a detailed action plan with clearly defined conservation, restoration, and sustainable ecosystem management measures, indicators, timelines, and responsible institutions;
- Ensure that the LBAPs include a monitoring and evaluation framework, as well as indicative cost estimates and identification of potential funding sources for implementation of biodiversity-related actions and measures.
- Ensure that LBAPs are aligned with the national nature protection policy, EU accession process, CBD-GBF and other relevant international commitments
- Apply a gender-responsive and socially inclusive approach throughout the preparation of the LBAP, including assessment of how biodiversity-related challenges and proposed measures may affect different social groups, particularly women and vulnerable or marginalized populations.

Resource mobilisation and project pipeline

- Estimate financing requirements for the implementation of LBAP measures and identify priority investment needs related to biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration, and sustainable ecosystem management;
- Develop a project pipeline report, including a list of prioritised biodiversity-related projects and corresponding project concept notes with identified funding opportunities from national and international sources.

Finalisation and reporting

- Revise and finalise the LBAPs for Podgorica and Kolašin, incorporating stakeholder feedback and ensuring that the documents are technically sound, coherent, and ready for formal endorsement;
- Prepare a stakeholder engagement and consultation report summarising all consultation activities, participants, key inputs, identified biodiversity priorities, and recommendations, ensuring transparency and proper documentation of the participatory process.

D. Expected Outputs and Deliverables

The Company shall deliver the outputs and specific deliverables listed below in a logical sequence aligned with the process. Indicative timeframes are expressed as periods counted from the date of contract signing. Exact dates shall be confirmed in the approved Inception Report. All deliverables shall be subject to technical review and validation by the Implementing Entity and formal contractual acceptance in accordance with the agreed institutional arrangements.

Deliverable / Output	Description	Indicative Timing	Review and Approval
Inception Report	Containing methodology, work plan, timeline, stakeholder mapping, stakeholder engagement plan, consultation methodology (including the approach to gender-responsive and socially inclusive participation)	Within the first 3 weeks of the assignment	IP
Report on the State of Biodiversity	Baseline assessment for each municipality based on desk review, available datasets, spatial analysis, and targeted field verification where relevant. The report shall summarise biodiversity values, habitats, species, ecosystem services, ecological connectivity, pressures and threats, climate change impacts, data gaps, and conservation priorities, providing the analytical foundation for the LBAPs	Month 3	IP
GIS Database and Set of Thematic Maps	GIS database and georeferenced thematic maps showing protected areas, important habitats and ecosystems, biodiversity hotspots, ecological corridors, ecosystem service hotspots, degraded areas, environmental pressures, sensitive areas, and priority conservation and restoration zones	Month 3	IP
Draft LBAP for Podgorica and Draft LBAP for Kolašin,	Each containing: baseline assessment; strategic vision, objectives and priorities; biodiversity conservation, restoration and sustainable ecosystem management measures; action plan with indicators, timelines and responsible institutions; monitoring and evaluation framework; indicative cost estimates; financing opportunities; and integration of gender-responsive and socially inclusive considerations	Month 5	IP
Project pipeline portfolio	Identifying financing needs for implementation of LBAPs and containing a prioritised portfolio of biodiversity-related projects, including project concept notes with indicative budgets, implementing	Month 5	IP

Deliverable / Output	Description	Indicative Timing	Review and Approval
	partners and identification of relevant national and international funding opportunities		
Stakeholder engagement and consultation report	Summarising stakeholder engagement activities, with summary of received inputs and recommendations, description how stakeholder feedback was integrated and with participation statistics disaggregated by gender	Month 6	IP
Final LBAP for Podgorica and Final LBAP for Kolašin	LBAPs ready for endorsement and reflecting incorporated feedback, including executive summaries and supporting materials	Month 6	IP

Total estimated duration: 6 months

D.2 Quality Standards

All deliverables shall:

- Be prepared in Montenegrin (unless otherwise agreed);
- Integrate inputs from international and national experts into a single coherent proposal

D.3 Review and Acceptance

Each deliverable shall be reviewed within an indicative period of up to ten (10) working days following submission. The Company shall address comments and revise deliverables within timeframes agreed with the IP. Formal acceptance of deliverables shall be confirmed in writing by the designated approving authority.

E. Institutional Arrangement

Institutional oversight and reporting lines

The contract shall be administered and managed by Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Northern Region, which shall retain overall contractual authority, including contract supervision, performance monitoring, and formal acceptance of deliverables.

All key deliverables shall be subject to joint review by Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Northern Region and UNDP, with final contractual acceptance and payment authorization resting with Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Northern Region.

Contractor Management Structure

The Company shall designate a Project Manager who shall serve as the primary operational point of contact with IP. The Project Manager shall be responsible for:

- overall coordination of project activities;
 - day-to-day communication with stakeholders;
 - monitoring implementation progress;
 - ensuring timely delivery of outputs;
 - quality assurance of all deliverables.

The Company shall establish an appropriately qualified Project Team responsible for the execution of technical and substantive tasks under this assignment.

Progress Reporting

The Company shall submit monthly progress reports to IP.

Each report shall include, at a minimum:

- summary of activities performed;
- progress against milestones;
- risks and challenges encountered;

- mitigation measures;
 - planned activities for the next reporting period.
- IP may request ad-hoc briefings or presentations on project progress as required.

F. Duration of the Work

a) *Duration of the assignment*

The assignment is expected to be implemented over a fixed-term period, with a clearly defined start and end date, and an estimated overall duration of approximately 6 months, taking into account the scope, complexity and phased delivery of outputs.

b) *Start date and expected completion*

The assignment is expected to commence within two (2) weeks of contract signing, subject to the completion of contractual formalities and the availability of initial inputs and documentation.

The expected completion date is set at approximately 6 months from the commencement date, in line with the agreed scope of work and the phased delivery of outputs.

Any adjustments to the start date or completion timeline may be agreed in writing between IP and the Company where external factors — such as delays in data availability, regulatory changes or force majeure events — materially affect the implementation schedule.

c) *Review, feedback and acceptance of deliverables*

For each deliverable submitted under the assignment, an estimated review and approval period of up to ten (10) working days shall apply.

During this period, UNDP may provide comments, requests for clarification or requests for revisions. The Company shall address such comments within a timeframe to be agreed with the Project Implementing Partner. Formal acceptance of each deliverable shall be confirmed in writing by the designated approving authority.

d) *Time sensitivity and implications of delays*

The assignment is considered time-sensitive.

Any significant delay in the completion of the assignment may adversely affect the sequencing of subsequent project phases, the timely achievement of regulatory objectives, and the overall effectiveness of supervisory processes.

H. Qualifications of the Successful Individual Company

The selected Company must demonstrate the technical, organizational, and financial capacity required to successfully lead and coordinate the preparation of an financial plans in accordance with the ToR standards.

H.1 Corporate Registration and Relevant Experience

The Company must be a legally registered entity authorized to provide professional consulting services in fields relevant to biodiversity conservation and finance, climate change adaptation, climate finance, disaster risk reduction, environmental and social safeguards, or related disciplines.

H.2 Technical and Organizational Capacity

The Company shall demonstrate strong technical leadership, coordination, and delivery capacity for complex, multi-component assignments related to biodiversity conservation, ecosystem management, nature protection planning, and sustainable natural resource management. This includes:

- Proven ability to manage and deliver multidisciplinary assignments involving biodiversity planning, ecosystem conservation and restoration, strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, and institutional coordination;
- Experience coordinating teams of international and national experts, ensuring effective collaboration and timely delivery of outputs;

- Demonstrated capacity to lead participatory processes involving public institutions, protected area managers, local communities, private sector actors, academia, and civil society organisations;
- Strong project management and organisational skills, including the ability to deliver high-quality outputs within defined timelines;
- Established internal quality assurance mechanisms to ensure consistency, methodological rigour, and technical soundness of all deliverables.

The Company must demonstrate in-house expertise or access to qualified experts in the following areas:

Multidisciplinary knowledge in the fields of:

- Biodiversity conservation and nature protection – demonstrated understanding of biodiversity policy frameworks, species and habitat conservation, protected area management, ecological connectivity, and sustainable ecosystem management approaches;
- Ecosystem management and restoration – solid knowledge of ecosystem functioning, ecosystem services, ecological restoration approaches, and nature-based solutions relevant to local biodiversity planning,
- Climate change adaptation and ecosystem resilience – understanding of climate change impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems, and the ability to integrate ecosystem-based adaptation and resilience measures into biodiversity planning processes;
- Land use and spatial planning – familiarity with land use pressures, habitat fragmentation, ecological corridors, and integration of biodiversity considerations into spatial and development planning,
- Sustainable natural resource management – knowledge of sustainable approaches to the management of forests, freshwater ecosystems, protected areas, and other natural resources relevant to local biodiversity governance

Previous experience in preparing:

- Local or national biodiversity and nature protection strategic documents – proven experience in developing biodiversity strategies, Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs), protected area management plans, nature protection studies, or similar policy and planning documents at local or national level;
- Action plans with measurable indicators and monitoring frameworks – experience in developing strategic action plans that include measurable indicators, monitoring and evaluation systems, implementation arrangements, and reporting frameworks.

Familiarity with:

- EU nature acquis and Natura 2000 requirements – good understanding of relevant EU directives and policies related to biodiversity and nature protection, including the Birds and Habitats Directives and Natura 2000 processes;
- National biodiversity and nature protection legislation and strategies – familiarity with applicable national laws, policies, and strategic frameworks related to biodiversity conservation, protected areas, and sustainable natural resource management;
- Local governance systems – understanding of institutional arrangements, roles, and responsibilities at the municipal level, including planning, decision-making, and implementation processes relevant to biodiversity governance.

Technical expertise:

- Ability to analyse and apply the principles of ecosystem services, ecological connectivity, nature-based solutions, ecosystem restoration, climate resilience, and sustainable ecosystem management – demonstrated capacity to integrate these concepts into biodiversity planning and identify practical conservation and restoration measures;

- Ability to conduct biodiversity baseline assessments and analyse pressures, threats, and ecological trends – experience in collecting, analysing, and interpreting biodiversity and ecosystem-related data to identify conservation priorities and inform planning processes;
- Experience in biodiversity field assessment and verification (planning and conducting field visits and rapid biodiversity assessments, including habitat assessment, species observations, ecosystem condition assessment, identification of ecological pressures and threats, and validation of existing biodiversity information using appropriate field methodologies)
- Experience with GIS and spatial analysis – practical experience in using GIS tools to analyse spatial biodiversity data and produce maps that support biodiversity assessments, conservation planning, and decision-making;
- Proven experience in stakeholder engagement – demonstrated ability to design and facilitate participatory processes, including consultations, workshops, and surveys with diverse stakeholder groups relevant to biodiversity governance;
- Proven experience in biodiversity and environmental financing – experience in estimating costs of biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration measures, identifying relevant funding sources, and developing project pipelines to support implementation of biodiversity action plans.

H.3 Human Resources and Key Personnel

The Company shall propose a core expert team, contracted under the Company, at a minimum including:

- Team Leader / Biodiversity Planning Expert
- Conservation Specialist
- GIS and Spatial Data Analyst
- Finance/Project Development Expert

Optional:

- Biologist(s)
- Stakeholder Engagement Specialist
- Climate Change and Ecosystem Resilience Specialist
- Policy and Legal Expert
- Socio-economic / Sustainable Development Expert
- Ecosystem Restoration or Nature-based Solutions Expert

Key experts shall have:

- A university degree in a relevant field (e.g. biology, ecology, environmental sciences, biodiversity conservation, forestry, geography, natural resource management, sustainable development, spatial planning, environmental policy, or related disciplines). Higher level degrees are considered an asset.
- A minimum of 7 years of professional experience relevant to the assignment for the Team Leader and 5 years for other key experts, including experience in biodiversity conservation and planning, ecosystem and protected area management, preparation of biodiversity strategies and action plans, baseline biodiversity and ecosystem assessments, fieldwork assessments, stakeholder engagement and participatory processes, as well as development of biodiversity-related projects and resource mobilisation initiatives;
- Proven experience in preparation of high-quality analytical and strategic documents, including biodiversity action plans, protected area management plans, conservation strategies, assessments, reports, and policy documents;
- Experience in applying data-driven and science-based approaches, including the use of biodiversity indicators, GIS and spatial analysis, evidence-based assessments, and monitoring frameworks;
- Experience working in multidisciplinary teams and contributing to the coordinated delivery of complex assignments related to biodiversity conservation, ecosystem management, and sustainable natural resource governance.

The Company shall demonstrate its capacity to ensure continuity of services throughout the contract period. Where third-party experts or short-term consultants are engaged, the Company shall retain full responsibility for coordination, quality, and timely delivery of outputs.

H.4 Financial and Legal Capacity

The Company must demonstrate adequate financial and legal standing to perform the contract, in accordance with applicable procurement requirements. Documentary evidence of financial capacity and legal eligibility shall be provided as part of the proposal submission.

The Company must not be subject to any legal, financial, or contractual restrictions that would prevent it from fulfilling the obligations under this assignment.

H.5 Ethical Standards and Compliance

The Company shall comply with applicable ethical standards, including:

- Integrity and transparency in professional conduct;
- Absence of conflicts of interest;
- Commitment to gender equality, inclusiveness, and respect for environmental and social safeguards.

The Company shall confirm its willingness to comply with the policies, procedures, and contractual requirements of the contracting authority and the Implementing Entity.

J. Recommended Presentation of Offer

As requested in the RFP

K. Criteria for Selection of the Best Offer

As described in the RFP