

Terms of Reference (TOR)

A. *Mid-Term Review of the UNDP-GEF Project (PIMS 5038: Establishing integrated models for protected areas and their co-management in Afghanistan) (biodiversity project) and collection of data for the preparatory phase of the GEF project Conservation of Snow Leopards and their Critical Ecosystem in Afghanistan (Snow Leopard Project)*

B. *Project Description*

UNDP Global Mission Statement:

UNDP is the UN's global development network, an organization advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. We are on the ground in 166 countries, working with national counterparts on their own solutions to global and national development challenges.

UNDP Afghanistan Mission Statement:

UNDP supports stabilization, state-building, governance and development priorities in Afghanistan. UNDP support, in partnership with the Government, the United Nations system, the donor community and other development stakeholders, has contributed to institutional development efforts leading to positive impact on the lives of Afghan citizens. Over the years UNDP support has spanned such milestone efforts as the adoption of the Constitution; Presidential, Parliamentary and Provincial Council elections; institutional development through capacity-building to the legislative, the judicial and executive arms of the state, and key ministries, Government agencies and commissions at the national and subnational levels. UNDP has played a key role in the management of the Law and Order Trust Fund, which supports the Government in developing and maintaining the national police force and in efforts to stabilize the internal security environment.

UNDP Livelihoods and Resilience Unit:

The UNDP Livelihoods and Resilience Unit supports the government of Afghanistan to create livelihood opportunities and reduce poverty, especially among the most vulnerable groups. It works with businesses to create jobs and economic growth, and with government to build infrastructure, link rural areas to markets and develop new forms of employment, including in the sustainable mining sector.

Since most people depend on the land for an income, the Unit works on livelihoods is closely linked with efforts to protect the environment, bring sustainable energy to rural areas, and prepare for natural disasters. The Unit supports the government to mobilize resources from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) that finances environment projects focusing on climate change and adaption, climate change induced risks, land degradation and biodiversity focal areas.

Project Context

1. The Biodiversity project:

The UNDP-GEF Project (PIMS 5038: Establishing integrated models for protected areas and their co-management in Afghanistan), Hereinafter called the Biodiversity Project, with financing from the GEF has been designed to strengthen the Protected Area (PA) system by creating a legally and institutionally empowered PA authority, gazetting three new protected areas (total 1,098,190 ha), operationalizing management at four PA sites, and developing replicable sustainable livelihood and rangeland management solutions. The project will support the National Protected Area System Plan by making a major contribution towards achievement of its long-term objective, taking critical first steps in this regard and building strong foundations for the future. The project has three outcomes that directly address barriers to sustainable ecosystem management:

- A National PA system is established with legal, planning, policy and institutional frameworks for expansion and management for the PA estate in the country;
- Protected area coverage and protection status is improved to increase biodiversity representativeness and ecological resilience, and;
- Management effectiveness is enhanced within existing and new Protected Areas and climate resilient SLM applied to reduce threats in and around PAs.

Project results will include the creation of a centralized parks and wildlife agency, increasing the protected area system by a further 1,098,190 ha by facilitating the creation of the Big Pamir and Teggermansu Wildlife Reserves and the Wakhan Conservation Area, and building successful and replicable PA and SLM co-management models.

A copy of the project document which provides more information about the project can be found at the following link:

<https://www.thegef.org/project/establishing-integrated-models-protected-areas-and-their-co-management>

The project has a duration of 5 years and has been planned to last from Jan 2014 to Dec 2018. The half way point in the project was June 2016 and in accordance with UNDP and GEF requirements, the project should have been mid-term reviewed in 2016, but due to low delivery it was decided to undertake a mandatory mid-term review (MTR) during April to June 2017.

The total budget of this UNDP GEF project is US\$7,441,819 including one million from UNDP Core fund.

2. The Snow Leopard Conservation Project:

Afghanistan encompasses the far western range extent of the snow leopard's distribution in Asia. The snow leopard (*Panthera uncia*) is the top predator of Asia's great mountain ranges and is listed Endangered (C1) on the IUCN Red List. Snow leopard population has been estimated to have declined by at least 20% over the past 16 years with the wild population currently estimated to be between 4,500 and 7,500 individuals and declining. Threats include poaching for the fur and for the traditional medicine trades, capture for the pet trade, retaliatory killing by livestock herders, and loss of their prey – primarily wild mountain sheep and goats – from over-hunting. Included within Afghanistan's range is the Wakhan Corridor – recently designated as Wakhan National Park - which is also the "corner" of Asia's great mountains, and is globally important as a corridor connecting snow leopard ranges in the east such as the

Pamirs, Karakorams, and Himalayas with the Altai, Kunlun, Tien Shans and other ranges to the north. The Wakhan region therefore, is identified as a global priority Snow Leopard Conservation Unit and recognized as one of the 20 critical snow leopard landscapes by the Global Snow Leopard Ecosystem Program (GSLEP) in 2013.

To conserve this critical landscape, the Government of Afghanistan has requested assistance from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) through UNDP for the preparation of a full-sized project on “**Conservation of Snow Leopards and their critical ecosystem in Afghanistan**”. The project aims to strengthen conservation of the snow leopard and its critical ecosystem in Afghanistan through a holistic and sustainable landscape approach that addresses existing and emerging threats. This project seeks to address major threats to snow leopard survival in Afghanistan, while implementing priority snow leopard conservation activities identified in the national strategy and action plan, that will be realized through two interrelated components: 1) Illegal take and trade of snow leopards and human-wildlife conflict are reduced through greater community involvement; and 2) Landscape approach to conservation of snow leopards and their ecosystem that takes into account drivers of forest loss, degradation and climate change impacts.

C. Scope of Services, Expected Outputs and Target Completion

Objective of the Assignment:

The assignment consists of two tasks: a. The **Mid-Term Review (MTR)** for the Biodiversity project; b. the field data collection from Wakhan District for the **Project Preparation of Snow Leopard Conservation Project (PPG)**.

Scope of Work for MTR:

The Mid-Term Review will assess the following four categories of project progress. See the Guidance for Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects for extended descriptions.

The MTR will assess progress towards the achievement of the project objectives and outcomes as specified in the Project Document, and assess early signs of project success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made to set the project on-track to help achieve its intended results. The MTR will also review the project’s strategy, its risks to sustainability and make recommendations on how to improve the project over the remainder of its lifetime. Since both project target areas (Wakhan, Badakhshan and Band-e-Amir, Bamyan) are in-accessible and located in remote areas, the MTR is being assigned to a 3rd party evaluation firm.

MTR APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

The MTR must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. The Team Leader will review all relevant sources of information including documents prepared during the preparation phase (i.e. PIF, UNDP Initiation Plan, UNDP Environmental & Social Safeguard Policy, the Project Document, project reports including Annual Project Review/PIRs, project budget revisions, lesson learned reports, project progress reports, national strategic and legal documents, and any other materials that the team considers useful for this evidence-based review). The Team Leader will also interview all relevant stakeholders including all parties who have been contracted by the project or participate in meetings and discussions with the project.

The MTR will review the baseline GEF focal area Tracking Tool submitted to the GEF at CEO endorsement, and the midterm GEF focal area Tracking Tool that must be completed before the MTR field mission begins.

The MTR is expected to follow a collaborative and participatory approach¹ ensuring close engagement with the Project Team, government counterparts (the GEF Operational Focal Point), the UNDP Country Office(s), UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Advisers, and other key stakeholders. The MTR team will need to explain in detail their methods for quality assurance and control and the options for triangulation of data in order to make sure that the data collected is valid and accurate.

Engagement of stakeholders is vital to a successful MTR² Stakeholder involvement should include interviews with stakeholders who have project responsibilities, including but not limited to: UNDP Afghanistan, UNDP Bangkok regional Hub, Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA), Ministry to Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), key experts and all consultants in the subject area who have been hired by the project, Project Board, project stakeholders, academia, local government and CSOs, etc.

The final MTR report should describe the full MTR approach taken and the rationale for the approach making explicit the underlying assumptions, challenges, strengths and weaknesses about the methods and approach of the review.

i. Project Strategy

Project design:

- Review the problem addressed by the project and the underlying assumptions. Review the effect of any incorrect assumptions or changes to the context to achieving the project results as outlined in the Project Document;
- Review the relevance of the project strategy and assess whether it provides the most effective route towards expected/intended results. Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated into the project design?
- Review how the project addresses country priorities. Review country ownership. Was the project concept in line with the national sector development priorities and plans of the country (or of participating countries in the case of multi-country projects)?

¹ For ideas on innovative and participatory Monitoring and Evaluation strategies and techniques, see [UNDP Discussion Paper: Innovations in Monitoring & Evaluating Results](#), 05 Nov 2013.

² For more stakeholder engagement in the M&E process, see the [UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results](#), Chapter 3, pg. 93.

- Review decision-making processes: were perspectives of those who would be affected by project decisions, those who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the process, taken into account during project design processes?
- Review the extent to which relevant gender issues were raised in the project design. See Annex 9 of Guidance for Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects for further guidelines;
- If there are major areas of concern, recommend areas for improvement.

Results Framework/Logframe:

- Undertake a critical analysis of the project's logframe indicators and targets, assess how "SMART" the midterm and end-of-project targets are (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound), and suggest specific amendments/revisions to the targets and indicators as necessary;
- Are the project's objectives and outcomes or components clear, practical, and feasible within its time frame?
- Examine if progress so far has led to, or could in the future catalyse beneficial development effects (i.e. income generation, gender equality and women's empowerment, improved governance etc...) that should be included in the project results framework and monitored on an annual basis;
- Ensure broader development and gender aspects of the project are being monitored effectively. Develop and recommend SMART 'development' indicators, including sex-disaggregated indicators and indicators that capture development benefits.

ii. Progress Towards Results

Progress Towards Outcomes Analysis:

- Review the logframe indicators against progress made towards the end-of-project targets using the Progress Towards Results Matrix and following the Guidance for Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects; colour code progress in a "traffic light system" based on the level of progress achieved; assign a rating on progress for each outcome; make recommendations from the areas marked as "Not on target to be achieved" (red). (Results Framework included as Annex 1)

In addition to the progress towards outcomes analysis:

- Compare and analyse the GEF Tracking Tool at the Baseline with the one completed right before the Midterm Review;
- Identify remaining barriers to achieving the project objective in the remainder of the project;
- By reviewing the aspects of the project that have already been successful, identify ways in which the project can further expand these benefits.

iii. Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

Management Arrangements:

- Review overall effectiveness of project management as outlined in the Project Document. Have changes been made and are they effective? Are responsibilities and reporting lines clear? Is decision-making transparent and undertaken in a timely manner? Recommend areas for improvement;
- Review the quality of execution of the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner(s) and recommend areas for improvement;
- Review the quality of support provided by the GEF Partner Agency (UNDP) and recommend areas for improvement.

Work Planning:

- Review any delays in project start-up and implementation, identify the causes and examine if they have been resolved;
- Are work-planning processes results-based? If not, suggest ways to re-orientate work planning to focus on results?
- Examine the use of the project's results framework/ logframe as a management tool and review any changes made to it since project start.

Finance and co-finance:

- Consider the financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions;
- Review the changes to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and assess the appropriateness and relevance of such revisions;
- Does the project have the appropriate financial controls, including reporting and planning, that allow management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and allow for timely flow of funds?
- Informed by the co-financing monitoring table to be filled out, provide commentary on co-financing: is co-financing being used strategically to help the objectives of the project? Is the Project Team meeting with all co-financing partners regularly in order to align financing priorities and annual work plans?

Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems:

- Review the monitoring tools currently being used: Do they provide the necessary information? Do they involve key partners? Are they aligned or mainstreamed with national systems? Do they use existing information? Are they efficient? Are they cost-effective? Are additional tools required? How could they be made more participatory and inclusive?
- Examine the financial management of the project monitoring and evaluation budget. Are sufficient resources being allocated to monitoring and evaluation? Are these resources being allocated effectively?

Stakeholder Engagement:

- Project management: Has the project developed and leveraged the necessary and appropriate partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders?
- Participation and country-driven processes: Do local and national government stakeholders support the objectives of the project? Do they continue to have an active role in project decision-making that supports efficient and effective project implementation?
- Participation and public awareness: To what extent has stakeholder involvement and public awareness contributed to the progress towards achievement of project objectives?

Reporting:

- Assess how adaptive management changes have been reported by the project management and shared with the Project Board;

- Assess how well the Project Team and partners undertake and fulfil GEF reporting requirements (i.e. how have they addressed poorly-rated PIRs, if applicable?);
- Assess how lessons derived from the adaptive management process have been documented, shared with key partners and internalized by partners.

Communications:

- Review internal project communication with stakeholders: Is communication regular and effective? Are there key stakeholders left out of communication? Are there feedback mechanisms when communication is received? Does this communication with stakeholders contribute to their awareness of project outcomes and activities and investment in the sustainability of project results?
- Review external project communication: Are proper means of communication established or being established to express the project progress and intended impact to the public (is there a web presence, for example? Or did the project implement appropriate outreach and public awareness campaigns?);
- For reporting purposes, write one half-page paragraph that summarizes the project’s progress towards results in terms of contribution to sustainable development benefits, as well as global environmental benefits.

iv. Sustainability

- Validate whether the risks identified in the Project Document, Annual Project Review/PIRs and the ATLAS Risk Management Module are the most important and whether the risk ratings applied are appropriate and up to date. If not, explain why;
- In addition, assess the following risks to sustainability:

Financial risks to sustainability:

- What is the likelihood of financial and economic resources not being available once the GEF assistance ends (consider potential resources can be from multiple sources, such as the public and private sectors, income generating activities, and other funding that will be adequate financial resources for sustaining project’s outcomes)?

Socio-economic risks to sustainability:

- Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outcomes? What is the risk that the level of stakeholder ownership (including ownership by governments and other key stakeholders) will be insufficient to allow for the project outcomes/benefits to be sustained? Do the various key stakeholders see that it is in their interest that the project benefits continue to flow? Is there sufficient public / stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the project? Are lessons learned being documented by the Project Team on a continual basis and shared/ transferred to appropriate parties who could learn from the project and potentially replicate and/or scale it in the future?

Institutional Framework and Governance risks to sustainability:

- Do the legal frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes pose risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project benefits? While assessing this parameter, also consider if the required systems/ mechanisms for accountability, transparency, and technical knowledge transfer are in place.

Environmental risks to sustainability:

- Are there any environmental risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project outcomes?

Conclusions & Recommendations

The Team Leader for the MTR will include a section of the report setting out the MTR’s evidence-based conclusions, in light of the findings.³

Recommendations should be succinct suggestions for critical intervention to improve the project hat are specific, measurable, achievable, and relevant. A recommendation table should be put in the report’s executive summary. See the Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects for guidance on a recommendation table.

The MTR Team should make no more than 15 recommendations total.

Ratings

The MTR Team will include its ratings of the project’s results and brief descriptions of the associated achievements in a MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table in the Executive Summary of the MTR report. See Annex E for ratings scales. No rating on Project Strategy and no overall project rating is required.

Table. MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table for (Establishing integrated models for protected areas and their co-management in Afghanistan PIMS#5038

Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
Project Strategy	N/A	
Progress Towards Results	Objective Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Outcome 1 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Outcome 2 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	

³ Alternatively, MTR conclusions may be integrated into the body of the report.

	Outcome Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale) Etc.	3
Project Implementation & Adaptive Management	(rate 6 pt. scale)	
Sustainability	(rate 4 pt. scale)	

Scope of works for Project Preparation of Snow Leopard Conservation Project (PPG)

The Firm will work closely with the PPG team for the Snow Leopard to collect the field data from Wakhan

district that will feed into project document. The PPG team will provide data collection tools to the firm. The firm will collect the data and submit it to the Snow Leopard team to analyze and summarize. The project location is remote and inaccessible, therefore, the firm elaborate the methods for quality assurance and data validation in the proposal. The firm, under guidance of UNDP, will undertake assessments of:

- The capacity of community rangers, PA managers and other stakeholders to identify gaps in inter alia gaps law enforcement, community engagement and combatting of illegal wildlife trade;
- Knowledge and awareness of local communities relating to poaching and illegal trade in wildlife products;
- Human-snow leopard conflict; and
- Land use.

D. Expected Outputs, Deliverables and Timelines:

The following key deliverables are expected from this assignment:

Deliverables/Outputs	Inputs	Payments
Deliverable 1: Submission and Acceptance of MTR Inception Report: MTR team clarifies objectives and methods of Midterm Review;	No later than 1 week after signing the contract,	10%
Deliverable 2: Submission and Acceptance of Initial Findings: Initial Findings presented on the last day of the Mission; End of MTR mission; The data collected from the field for Snow Leopard PPG will be provided to the PPG team;	End of 5 th week after signing the contract	40%
Deliverable 3: Submission and Acceptance of Draft Final Report: Full report (using guidelines on content outlined in Annex B) with annexes; Within 3 weeks of the MTR mission;	End of 7 th week after signing the contract	20%
Deliverable 4: Submission and Acceptance of Final Report: Revised report with audit trail detailing how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final MTR report; Within 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on draft;	End of 9 th week after signing the contract	30%
Total		100%

E. Institutional Arrangement

The principal responsibility for managing this MTR resides with the Commissioning Unit. The Commissioning Unit for this project's MTR is UNDP Afghanistan. The commissioning unit will contract the a 3rd party evaluation company, through this RFP process, who will be responsible to carry out the aforementioned tasks. The Contractor will be responsible for all logistical services including facility, personnel, support and security services.

F. Duration of the Work

The total duration of the MTR will be 45 working days over a time period of 9 weeks from signing of the contract. The tentative assignment for both tasks is as follows:

TIMEFRAME	ACTIVITY
1 st week after signing the Contract	Document review and preparing MTR Inception Report within 2 weeks of start of assignment Telephone Interviews with key project stakeholders Teleconference call with Project Manager, and UNDP Regional Technical Advisor on Ecosystem & Biodiversity (Bangkok Regional Hub)

End of 5 th Week	Mission to Afghanistan to conduct meetings and interviews with Project stakeholders including governmental and non-governmental organizations and communities at national-level in Kabul and at project target areas in Wakhan and Bamyan.
End of 7 th Week	Analyzed the data and present Draft MTR submitted to UNDP Afghanistan, Project Manager and UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub
End of 8 th Week	Detailed comment to the draft MTR report sent to the MTR Team by Governmental representatives, UNDP, Project Manager, and UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub. Conference Call on the Draft MTR with the MTR Team and UNDP
End of 9 th Week	Incorporating audit trail from feedback on draft report Finalization of MTR report following all revised comments

Options for site visits should be provided in the Inception Report, following discussions with UNDP Afghanistan, and the Project Manager. Also, all relevant costs should be included in the financial proposal form. UNDP shall not provide any land or air transportation services to the contractor.

G. Location of Work

The field data collection for PPG will be conducted in Wakhan District of Badakhshan. For the MTR, field data will be collected from Kabul, Wakhan District of Badakhshan and Bamyan.

H. Qualifications of the Successful Service Provider at Various Levels

- A successful proposer must have minimum 5 years of previous experience in the field of evaluation; working experience in Afghanistan is an added advantage;
 - Please provide a narrative of your organization's history and describe previous experience along with organization's location, length of time in business, experience with evaluations;
 - Submit a valid business registration document of the company along with previous registration document which dates back to 5 year or older;
 - Provide copies of your previous contracts including the scope of work for at least TWO similar projects within the last 5 years along with Value of the contract, Duration of assignment, Project owner name, address and contact details; Cumulative yearly contract value of such previous work should be more than or equal to USD 100,000.
- A successful proposer shall provide technical proposal ensuring that they understand and meet the technical requirements of the assignment, able to conduct the works within the stipulated deadline, according to required quality;
- A successful bidder shall provide CVs of their key personnel who meet the minimum qualification and experience requirement;

The Contractor or their Key personnel must not have had participated in the project preparation, formulation, and/or implementation of the above-mentioned Biodiversity project (including the writing of the Project Document) and should not have a conflict of interest with project's related activities.

Position	General Qualifications and Experience
Key Professional Staff	
International Team Leader	<p>Academic Qualifications: Master's degree in in fields related to Environment, Natural resources, or other closely related field from an accredited college or university.</p> <p>Experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 7 years of relevant experience • Recent experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies • Experience in undertaking evaluations for UNDP or for GEF • Experience working in former Asian Countries (incl. Afghanistan) • Experience working in Afghanistan • Experience working in Afghanistan (in the area of Biodiversity and Natural Resource Management) • Work experience related to Biodiversity and Natural Resource Management in any country • Work experience related specifically to mobilizing investment for Biodiversity and Natural Resource Management projects • Excellent communication and analytical skills; <p>Language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent written and oral English skills a necessary requirement
National Team Expert	<p>Academic Qualifications: Bachelor's degree in in fields related to Environment, Natural resources, or other closely related field from an accredited college or university.</p> <p>Experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 5 years of relevant experience • Recent experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies • Experience in undertaking evaluations for UNDP or for GEF • Experience working in the area of Biodiversity and Natural Resource Management)

Position	General Qualifications and Experience
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work experience related specifically to mobilizing investment for Biodiversity and Natural Resource Management projects • Excellent communication and analytical skills; <p>Language: Excellent written and oral English skills a necessary requirement</p>

I. PRICE PROPOSAL AND SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

The contractor shall submit a price proposal as below:

1. Daily Fee – The contractor shall propose a daily fee for each team member which should be inclusive of professional fees, local communication costs and insurance (inclusive of medical evacuation) and the number of working days for each team member.
2. Travel & Visa – The contractor shall propose an estimated lump sum for home-Kabul-home travel and Afghanistan visa expenses for international team members.

The total contract price, inclusive of the above elements, shall be converted into a lump sum contract and payments under the contract shall be made on submission and acceptance of deliverables under the contract in accordance with the above-mentioned schedule of payment.

J. Criteria for Selecting the Best Offer

Combined Scoring method – where the qualifications and methodology will be weighted a maximum of 70%, and combined with the price offer which will be weighted a maximum of 30%;

K. Annexes to the TOR

- Annex 1 - Biodiversity Project document: [https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/project_documents/1-22-14 -
_Rev_Prodoc.pdf](https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/project_documents/1-22-14_-_Rev_Prodoc.pdf)
- Annex 2 - UNDP-GEF MTR Report Audit Trail Template.
- ANNEX B - Guidelines on Contents for the Midterm Review Report
- ANNEX E - MTR Ratings

