

TERMS OF REFERENCE

PROJECT MID-TERM REVIEW

Title: 01 International Consultant and 01 National Consultant for conducting the project Mid-Term Review

Project: Conservation of Critical Wetland Protected Areas and Linked Landscapes

Reporting to: UNDP CO in Viet Nam

Duty Station: Home-based, Hanoi, with possible travels to Thai Binh province, Thua Thien Hue province

Contract Type: Individual Contract (IC)

Duration: 20 working days each in April-May 2018

1. INTRODUCTION

This is the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the UNDP-GEF Midterm Review (MTR) of the *full* sized project titled “*Conservation of Critical Wetland Protected Areas and Linked Landscapes*” (PIMS#4537; GEF ID#4760) implemented since September 2015 through the *Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment* (MONRE). The project started with the signing of the Project Document signed on 9 June 2015 and is in its *third* year of implementation. In line with the UNDP-GEF Guidance on MTRs, this MTR process was initiated before the submission of the third Project Implementation Report (PIR). In the current TOR, the expectations and detailed tasks of the MTR are described. The MTR process shall follow guidance outlined in the document *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* (UNDP, 2015)¹.

2. PROJECT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The project was designed to develop systemic, institutional and operational capacity for effective wetlands biodiversity management in Viet Nam nationally and at provincial level at selected sites. The project’s immediate objective is to establish new wetland protected areas (PAs) and create capacities for their effective management to mitigate existing and emerging threats from connected landscapes. Component 1 will address gaps and weaknesses in the current PA system, institutional capacity and the current policy and regulatory framework in relation to wetlands conservation. Component 2 seeks to ensure that the wetland values are better understood and appreciated and that the principles and know-how for conservation and sustainable use of wetlands are enshrined both at the local level, by strengthening incentives for conservation-friendly livelihoods, and at the landscape level, by promoting wetlands-friendly land use and development planning.

The project is implemented at the national level and undertakes pilot activities in two sites: the Tam Giang - Cau Hai coastal lagoon and surround landscape in Thua Thien Hue province, central Viet Nam, and the Thai Thuy coastal area and surrounding landscape in Thai Binh province, Red River delta, northern Viet Nam. The total budget of the project amounts to US\$ 18,071,887, of which US\$ 3,180,287 is provided by the GEF and US\$ 14,891,600 is co-financing.

Project documentation, including the PIF, GEF CEO Endorsement Request and Project Document signed between the Vietnamese Government and UNDP Viet Nam Country Office is available at <https://www.thegef.org/project/conservation-critical-wetland-pas-and-linked-landscapes>.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE MTR

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

¹ Available at: http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/GEF/mid-term/Guidance_Midterm%20Review%20_EN_2014.pdf

necessary changes to be made in order to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results. The MTR will also review the project's strategy, its risks to sustainability.

4. MTR APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

The MTR must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. The MTR team 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, national strategic and legal documents, and any other materials that the team considers useful for this evidence-based review). The MTR team 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 team is expected to follow a collaborative and participatory approach² 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.

Engagement of stakeholders is vital to a successful MTR. Stakeholder involvement should include interviews with stakeholders who have project responsibilities, including but not limited to national government executing agencies (MONRE, MARD, others as relevant); provincial, district and commune authorities and subordinate organizations of national ministries in two pilot provinces; project senior officials and task team/component leaders (ISPONRE, BCA), key experts and consultants in the subject area; Project Board members; relevant project stakeholders, academia, CSOs, etc. Additionally, the MTR team is expected to conduct field missions to the pilot Wetland Protected Areas under development in Thai Thuy district, Thai Binh province, and Tam Giang – Cau Hai Wetland Protected Area in Thua Thien Hue province.

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.

5. DETAILED SCOPE OF THE MTR

The MTR team 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.

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)?

² For ideas on innovative and participatory Monitoring and Evaluation strategies and techniques, see UNDP Discussion Paper: Innovations in Monitoring & Evaluating Results, 05 Nov 2013.

- 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).

Table. Progress Towards Results Matrix (Achievement of outcomes against End-of-project Targets)

| Project Strategy | Indicator ³ | Baseline Level ⁴ | Level in 1st PIR (self-reported) | Midterm Target ⁵ | End-of-project Target | Midterm Level & Assessment ⁶ | Achievement Rating ⁷ | Justification for Rating |
|-------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Objective | Indicator (if applicable): | | | | | | | |
| Outcome 1: | Indicator 1: | | | | | | | |
| | Indicator 2: | | | | | | | |
| Outcome 2: | Indicator 3: | | | | | | | |
| | Indicator 4: | | | | | | | |
| | Etc. | | | | | | | |
| Etc. | | | | | | | | |

³ Populate with data from the Logframe and scorecards

⁴ Populate with data from the Project Document

⁵ If available

⁶ Color code this column only

⁷ Use the 6 point Progress Towards Results Rating Scale: HS, S, MS, MU, U, HU

Indicator Assessment Key

| | | |
|-----------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Green= Achieved | Yellow= On target to be achieved | Red= Not on target to be achieved |
|-----------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|

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 MTR team will include a section of the report setting out the MTR’s evidence-based conclusions, in light of the findings.⁸

Recommendations should be succinct suggestions for critical intervention that 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 “Conservation of Critical Wetland Protected Areas and Linked Landscapes” (PIMS#4537)

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

⁸ Alternatively, MTR conclusions may be integrated into the body of the report

6. TIMEFRAME

The international consultant is required to work home based and in Viet Nam – in Hanoi, and the two pilot sites in Thai Binh province and Thua Thien Hue province. The total duration of the MTR will be approximately 20 days over a time period of 8 weeks starting 10 April 2018, and shall not exceed 2 (three) months from when the consultant(s) are hired. The duration of working in Viet Nam covers 12 working days in April-May 2018. The tentative MTR timeframe is as follows:

| TIMEFRAME | ACTIVITY |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 05 April 2018 | Application closes |
| 08 April 2018 | Select MTR Team |
| By 10 April 2018 | Sign contracts, handover of Project Documents to MTR Team |
| 12 April - 20 April 2018: 3 days | Document review , preparation of MTR Inception Report |
| 20 April-11 May: 12 days | MTR mission: validation of MTR Inception Report, stakeholder meetings, interviews, field visits, MTR report drafting |
| 11 May 2018 | Mission wrap-up meeting & presentation of initial findings (Hanoi) |
| By 25 May 2018: 5 days | Preparing draft report |
| May 2018: 1 day | Incorporating audit trail from feedback on draft report/Finalization of MTR report |
| May 2018 | Concluding Stakeholder Workshop (not mandatory for MTR team) |
| June 2018 | Preparation & Issue of Management Response (UNDP) |
| By 15 June 2018 | Expected date of full MTR completion |

7. MIDTERM REVIEW DELIVERABLES

| # | Deliverable | Description | Timing | Responsibilities |
|---|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | MTR Inception Report | MTR team clarifies objectives and methods of Midterm Review | Before the start of the MTR mission | MTR team submits to the Commissioning Unit and project management |
| 2 | Presentation | Initial Findings | End of MTR mission (tentatively: 11 May 2018) | MTR Team presents to project management and the Commissioning Unit |
| 3 | Draft Final Report | Full report (using guidelines on content outlined in Annex B) with annexes | Within 2 weeks of the MTR mission (tentatively: by 25 May 2018) | Sent to the Commissioning Unit, reviewed by RTA, Project Coordinating Unit, GEF OFP |
| 4 | 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 (one) week of receiving UNDP comments on draft (tentatively 10 June 2018) | Sent to the Commissioning Unit |

8. MTR ARRANGEMENTS

The principal responsibility for managing this MTR resides with the Commissioning Unit. The Commissioning Unit for this project's MTR is UNDP Vietnam CO.

The Commissioning Unit will contract the consultants and ensure the timely provision of per diems and travel arrangements within the country for the MTR team. The Project Team will be responsible for liaising with the MTR team to provide all relevant documents, set up stakeholder interviews, and arrange field visits. Field visits will be arranged by the Project Management Unit to the project sites.

9. TEAM COMPOSITION

A team of two independent consultants will conduct the MTR – one International Consultant works as a team leader (with experience and exposure to projects and evaluations in other regions globally) and one national consultant as a team expert. The consultants cannot have participated in the project preparation, formulation, and/or implementation (including the writing of the Project Document) and should not have a conflict of interest with project’s related activities.

The selection of consultants will be aimed at maximizing the overall “team” qualities in the following areas:

International Consultant

| | Criteria | Score |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. | At least Master’s degree in environmental sciences/economics, biodiversity conservation, wetland management or other closely related field | 100 |
| 2. | At least 10-year experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies | 100 |
| 3. | Experience applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios | 100 |
| 4. | Competence in adaptive management, as applied to biodiversity conservation | 100 |
| 5. | Experience working with the GEF-funded project monitoring and evaluations process | 200 |
| 6. | Proven knowledge and expertise in technical areas relevant to wetland biodiversity conservation, protected areas management/financing, sustainable livelihood, | 80 |
| 7. | Demonstrated understanding of issues related to gender and biodiversity conservation; experience in gender sensitive evaluation and analysis | 100 |
| 8. | Excellent communication skill | 50 |
| 9. | Demonstrable analytical skills | 100 |
| 10. | Project evaluation/review experiences within United Nations system will be considered an asset | 50 |
| 11. | Experience working in Viet Nam | 20 |
| | Total | 1000 |

National Consultant

| | Criteria | Score |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. | At least Master’s degree in environmental sciences/economics, biodiversity conservation, or other closely related field | 100 |
| 2. | Recent experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies | 150 |
| 3. | Proven experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies | 150 |
| 4. | Experience applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios | 200 |
| 5. | Fluent in written and verbal English | 200 |
| 6. | Experience working with the GEF-funded project monitoring and evaluations process | 100 |
| 7. | Project evaluation/review experiences within United Nations system will be considered an asset; | 100 |
| | Total | 1000 |

10. PAYMENT MODALITIES AND SPECIFICATIONS

10% of payment upon approval of the final MTR Inception Report

40% upon submission of the draft MTR report

50% upon finalization of the MTR report

11. RECOMMENDED PRESENTATION OF PROPOSAL:

- a) **Letter of Confirmation of Interest and Availability** using the template⁹ provided by UNDP;
- b) **CV** and a **Personal History Form** (P11 form¹⁰);
- c) **A sample of similar report (MTR, Evaluation) done before** of why the individual considers him/herself as the most suitable for the assignment, and a proposed methodology on how he/she will approach and complete the assignment (max 1 page);
- d) **Financial Proposal** that indicates the all-inclusive fixed total contract price and all other travel related costs (such as flight ticket, per diem, etc.), supported by a breakdown of costs, as per template attached to the Letter of Confirmation of Interest template. If an applicant is employed by an organization/company/institution, and he/she expects his/her employer to charge a management fee in the process of releasing him/her to UNDP under Reimbursable Loan Agreement (RLA), the applicant must indicate at this point, and ensure that all such costs are duly incorporated in the financial proposal submitted to UNDP.

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<https://intranet.undp.org/unit/bom/pso/Support%20documents%20on%20IC%20Guidelines/Template%20for%20Confirmation%20of%20Interest%20and%20Submission%20of%20Financial%20Proposal.docx>

¹⁰ http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/Careers/P11_Personal_history_form.doc