

**Terms of Reference**

**For the local expert in support of the process terminal evaluation and closure of the Transboundary GEF Drini project**

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| **Location:** | Tirana, ALBANIA |
| **Type of Contract:** | Individual Contract |
| **Post Level:** | National Consultant |
| **Languages Required:** | English |
| **Expected Duration of Assignment:** | 30 days during June– July 2021 |

**Background**

The Drin Basin is located in the southeastern part of the Balkan Peninsula. It comprises the transboundary sub–basins of the Drin and Buna/Bojana Rivers and of the Prespa, Ohrid and Skadar/Shkoder Lakes. The Drin River is the “connecting body” of the “extended” Drin Basin, linking the lakes, wetlands, rivers and other aquatic habitats into a single, yet complex, ecosystem of major importance. The water bodies and their watersheds are spread in a geographical area that includes Albania, Greece, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Kosovo.

The complex nature of the Drin Basin -where lakes, rivers and underground flows interact in ways hard to unravel compounded by the many and often conflicting uses of water resources and by the transboundary conditions that prevail throughout the basin- determines the high fragility of the basin ecosystems and poses serious challenges to the overall sustainability of the water resources of the basin.

The main transboundary problems in the Drin Basin are:

• deterioration of water quality

• natural and regulated variability of the hydrological regime

• biodiversity degradation

• variability of the sediment transport regime.

Climate variability and change has also been recognized as a significant regional (and global) problem that influences the four priority transboundary problems.

Overall, prior to the interventions supported through the two projects, there was an absence of an overarching basin-wide policy formulation and decision-making framework grounded on scientific data and knowledge. This hindered the design of coherent strategies, legislation and regulations, and prevented the identification of investments which are aligned with the sustainable utilization of the Basin’s water resources and their integrated management.

The two Projects aim to promote joint management of the shared water resources of the transboundary Drin River Basin, including coordination mechanisms among the various sub-basin joint commissions and committees.

Each of the Projects is articulated into five -identical in content- components; they are designed to achieve the goal mentioned above, through: (i) building consensus among countries on key transboundary concerns and drivers of change, including climate variability and change, reached through joint fact finding; (ii) facilitating the agreement on a shared vision and on a program of priority actions deemed necessary to achieve the vision; (iii) strengthening technical and institutional capacities.

The Projects are aligned in content, aims and objectives with the Drin Coordinated Action, that is the framework set by the Drin riparian countries for the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding for the Management of the Extended Transboundary Drin Basin (Drin MoU; signed by the Ministers responsible for the management of water resources and/or environment, and high-level representatives of the Riparians , in Tirana, on 25 November 2011).

The Projects assist in the operationalization of the institutional structure of the Drin Coordinated Action, rendering it capable of undertaking its coordinative and executive role.

This includes:

• The Meeting of the Parties

• The Drin Core Group (DCG). This body is given the mandate to coordinate actions for the implementation of the MoU. The DCG Secretariat provides technical and administrative support to the DCG.

• Four Expert Working Groups (EWG): (i) Water Framework Directive implementation EWG (ii) Monitoring and Information exchange EWG (iii) Biodiversity and Ecosystem EWG (iv) Floods EWG.

The DCG has undertaken the role of the Steering Committee of the Projects.

The Projects are executed by GWP-Med with the involvement of UNECE. The budget is $4,5 for the full-size project and $1 M for the medium-sized project.

The Projects have been instrumental in enhancing cooperation among the Drin Riparians. In addition to the Strategic Action Programme that was endorsed by Ministers and high-level representatives in April 2021, there have been catalytic outcomes as a result of the project contributing to the enhancement of the political process under the Drin MoU:

- The DCG requested to initiate actions for the establishment of a Drin Joint Commission through the signing of an International Agreement. A draft international agreement text to be negotiated is being prepared.

- The DCG is becoming the reference point for a range of management actions supported by various donors and initiatives. Apart from the GEF Drin project, it is the SC of the:

i. Part of the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) supported Project “Promoting the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in Southeastern Europe, through the use of the Nexus approach” focusing on Drin.

ii. Adaptation Fund supported, and UNDP implemented “Integrated climate-resilient transboundary flood risk management in the Drin River basin in the Western Balkans”.

- The Lake Ohrid Management Plan was adopted by both Albania and North Macedonia.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent mitigation measures taken by the beneficiary Riparians (lockdowns, curfews etc.), have adversely affected the execution of meetings, studies for which input by the representatives of institutions is necessary (e.g. provision of information and data; input for the development of studies; approval of studies; etc.) and field activities (demonstration activities, study visits, awareness activities etc.). As are response, the PCU has used internet-based means to conclude the execution of the project activities. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in delays in the project execution but has had a small effect in its results.

The project will undergo the process of Terminal evaluation (TE) during June – July 2021. The **purpose** of the TE is to provide an impartial evaluation of the project in terms of its relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, overall performance, management and achievements. The Terminal Evaluation process will produce a technical report on the assessment of the achievement of project results against what was expected to be achieved, and draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP programming. The TE report promotes accountability and transparency and assesses the extent of project accomplishments.

**Duties and Responsibilities**

The national expert will provide technical and administrative support during the terminal evaluation and project closure.

**Main tasks:**

* Support assurance of maximum validity, reliability of data (quality) and promote use; the TE process should ensure triangulation of the various data sources
* Support the International consultant with information gathering and facilitation of the meetings (organization and translation)
* Facilitate completion of online and in person of questionnaires and interviews as needed for the project terminal evaluation
* Collection of documents in close coordination with the executing partner and UNDP of all technical and non-reports and create a datasheet system for easy access and dissemination of all knowledge product
* Any other support as needed for the final evaluation and project closure

**Reporting and delivery of outputs:**

30 July 2021 - Lump sum payment upon delivery of the final evaluation report and completion of project closure procedures

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| **Competencies** |
| **Corporate Competencies**   * Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability. * Treats all people fairly without favouritism. * Fulfils all obligations to gender sensitivity and zero tolerance for sexual harassment. * Demonstrates ability to manage complexities and work under pressure, as well as conflict resolution skills.   **Functional Competencies:**   * Strong interpersonal skills. * Ability to work independently and in teams. * Ability to provide quality assurance and attention to detail. * Excellent communication skills. * Builds strong relationships with clients, focuses on impact and result for the client and responds   **Required Skills and Experience:**  **Education:**  • Advanced university degree in environment and natural resources management, economy, engineering, or relevant field of studies.  **Experience:**  • At least 7 years of relevant work experience, with proven record of the works in hands on implementation activities in the area of environment and natural resources management as well as monitoring and evaluation.  • Former work with UN/UNDP and other international organizations will be considered as advantage.  • Demonstrated ability to deal with and build collaboration among development stakeholders.  • Strong drafting, presentation and reporting skills.  • Strong communication skills, especially in timely and accurate responses to emails.  • Strong computer skills.  **Language:**  • English and Albanian language. |