**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**(Individual Contractor Agreement)**

**Title:** Mid-Term Evaluator

**Project: ‘’**The Caspian Sea: Restoring Depleted Fisheries and Consolidation of a Permanent Regional Environmental Governance Framework” –Caspeco.

**Duty station:** Home based with travel to the region

**Section/Unit:** EMO IWC

**Contract/Level:** International ICA, Level 3

**Duration:** **November 2010 through** January 2010

**Supervisor:** Ms. Katrin Lichtenberg, Senior Portfolio Manager, Mr. Vladimir Mamaev, Regional Technical Advisor

**1. General Background**

The project entitled “The Caspian Sea: Restoring Depleted Fisheries and Consolidation of a Permanent Regional Environmental Governance Framework”, for short the CaspEco , is the third tranche of the Global Environment Facility(GEF) support towards the preservation and sustainable environment of the Caspian Sea under the Caspian Environment Programme ( CEP) . Under the first GEF supported project, launched in 2000 in Baku and internationally implemented by UNDP and UNEP and executed by the UNOPS and the World Bank, the efforts of the five littoral countries were supported to a) build a regional structure and mechanism for regional environmental cooperation and coordination ;b) to develop a knowledge-based Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA), a Caspian Strategic Action Programme (SAP) complemented with five National Caspian Action Plans ( NCAPs), one for each country, and c) mobilize national and international resources improving the Caspian environment. Under the second GEF supported project, initiated in 2004 in Tehran, the activities initiated under the first phase were pursued and the partial implementation of the SAP and the NCAPs began. Simultaneously the TDA, SAP and the NCAPs were updated and a number of thematic Regional Plans including POPs Regional Action Plan, Public Participation Strategy, Seals Conservation Plan , Regional Pollution Monitoring Programme were developed and initiated. Both phases of the support were formally evaluated in line with the GEF and UNDP requirements and were found to be satisfactory.

Caspeco therefore builds upon a solid foundation of knowledge- based research, analysis and planning and of regional cooperation for Caspian environmental conservation put in place by the five Caspian states and the Caspian Environment Program over a period of more than 10 years with substantial catalytic support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF). Building on these achievements Caspeco‘s objective is to apply new thinking to the sustainable management and conservation of the Caspian’s bioresources , which the transboundary analytical work has pointed out as a major area of environmental concern, and to strengthen the regional environmental governance, which the previous phases of GEF support have helped to establish. The project supports the littoral states' efforts tohalt the decline in bioresources and to restore depleted fisheries in the Caspian Sea, through the implementation of agreed actions defined in the Caspian Strategic Action Plan (SAP), and to fully operationalize and make the Caspian Sea’s regional environmental governance mechanism sustainable.

In line with the new GEF priorities, the major focus of the GEF involvement under the Caspeco project is to assist the countries to agree on the political commitments made to ecosystem-based joint action on sustainable fisheries and bioresources and introduce institutions and reforms to catalyze implementation of policies reducing over-fishing and benefiting communities. There are two main components of the project: 1) Ecosystem based management of aquatic bioresources; and 2) Strengthened regional environmental governance.

**Need of Evaluation**

In line with the GEF and UNDP requirements concerning monitoring and evaluation the Caspeco is to be evaluated mid-term as well as towards its completion. Caspeco project began its ‘formal’ life in March 2009 when it was endorsed by most of the Caspian countries and the Project Management and Coordination Unit (PMCU) moved from Tehran to Astana. The Project Inception Meeting was held in April 2009 when the detailed Work-Plan was approved and the project activities started in full. The MTE will begin during the last quarter of 2010.

The present draft TOR outlines the objectives, scope, methodology, timeframe, deliverables and the required follow ups to the MTE.

**2. Objectives of the Mid-Term Evaluation**

The MTE is initiated by the UNDP Bratislava in line with the GEF/UNDP M& E requirements reflected in the Caspeco project document. The Caspeco PMCU will manage the exercise in cooperation with the UNDP country office in Astana. The exercise is undertaken to establish a) if the project design including objectives, execution arrangements and the course of activities are still of relevance to the major stakeholders, b) has the project been able to efficiently meet its targeted objectives, including the intended impacts, within the established timelines and earmarked resources and c) what factors have impeded /accelerated the project progress towards its objectives. The evaluation will look at the gender balance, equity consideration and stakeholders engagement, countries ownership, donors coordination and sustainability of results and impacts.

The evaluation will aim to assess progress with a view to develop constructive, doable and cost effective measures and recommendations to enable the project adjust design, if so required, and improve its course of action to achieve the intended impacts and objectives. The evaluation will suggest concrete activities that are needed to implement the recommended measures. The evaluation will also compile lessons learnt from the project that could be of value to GEF International Water projects.

**Stakeholders**

These inter alia include the Caspian coastal and fishing communities ; the governments of the five littoral countries in particular the national agencies in charge of environment and bioresources management; Tehran Convention ( Interim ) Secretariat(TCIS): Aquatic and Bioresources Commission ; private sector in particular the oil, transport and fishing industries; regional and national environmental NGOs and academic institutions, UNDP Country and Regional offices and donors. To identify major stakeholders the evaluation may wish to consult the Stakeholders Analysis Report that the previous phases of GEF supported have helped to produce and update.

**3. Scope and Questions of the Evaluation**

# **The exercise** **will examine the relevance efficiency of execution , impact and sustainability of project’s products . Each of these issues will be examined in the Component I of the project which seeks to introduce new thinking and approach to the regional and national management of bioresources of the Caspian Sea and to the Component II which aims at strengthening and consolidating the regional environmental governance . The exercise will answer the following questions:**

* Has the project been able to *efficiently* meet its intended objectives? If *yes* what factors have been most helpful ? If *not* what have been the root causes? Can lessons be learnt from this success or failure ?
* Has the *design* of the project been amongst the major reasons for the success/failure ? Has the ‘ design” and the supporting *facts and assumptions* including those pertaining g to *risks* have lost their *relevance ?* Can the design be meaningfully *adjusted* mid term ?
* Has the modality of using UNEP under the IAA agreement proved to be successful? Has all the deliverables described in the IAA were successfully achieved? Has the use of the project funds through the IAA been inline with UNDP and UNOPS procedures and most efficient?
* Has the project been *efficiently* carried out? Has it received sufficient *leadership, backstopping and support*, as the case may be, from the major partners inkling the national governments , UNDP Bratislava , UNDP Cos, UNOPS, TCIS and other donors ?
* Have proper management arrangements been established for implementation of the project?What are siginificant shortcomings of the management capacity? How can these be remedied (recommendations). Are appropriate management tools applied for the management of the project? If not, which are recommended tools to approve management performance. Is the management team appropriately capacitated? Where are weaknesses? What are recommendations to address the weaknesses? Are there weaknesses in the supervision of the project management team. What are recommendations to address these weaknesses if any? Has the project been properly managed? What were the major successes/failures of the project team? Has the PMCU been led and capacitated to meet the expected results ? What changes, if any could be recommended in the project management?
* Has the project received full support and buy in from the participating governments? What measures could be taken from the project ‘ s side to strengthen government commitment and gauge a stronger involvement form the governments. Was the project awareness adequate and information about project activities widely shared and easy accessible? What can be learned from the approach used.
* Has the project been able to coordinate its activities with other major environmental players and partners in the Caspian region ? Could this be improved and how?
* What have been the *impacts* of the project in the region with regards to bio resources management approach and environmental governance? Are these *sustainable* ? *What remedial and corrective measures* , if any , can be recommended at this stage ?
* Has the project been successful to *effectively engage* the major stakeholders to carry out its activities and to enable them *benefit* from these activities ?
* Has the project *contributed* towards the GEF/UNDP overarching goals including gender mainstreaming, and equity consideration?

**4. Methodology**

Evaluation will begin with a thorough desk-study of the literaturepertinent to its objectives. The literature, inter alia, will include the project PIF and Full Size Project Document, the Project Implementation Report (PIR), Quarterly Progress Reports as well technical reports produced by the project. Simultaneously the views of the major stakeholders, TCIS, PMCU, other donors and the UNDP Bratislava and Cos as well as UNOPS will be sought through written and oral communications. Evaluation Reports on the previous phases of GEF/UNDP support to the Caspian will be of use at this stage. The consultant will receive an initial  *briefing from UNOPS and UNDP/GEF RTA at the beginning of the evaluation.*

It is expected that the Consultant will provide a brief Progress Report or Inception Report at the end of this stage. The report will detail his/her understanding of what is to be evaluated and how this is to be done. The report will include a sample of questions he /she would propose to find answers to during the full fledged evaluation as well as the criteria he/she will be using to assess and evaluate the work. The report will also include a proposed scheduled of tasks, future activities, deliverables and timelines for the balance work.

The second stage of the exercisewill be a visit to the regionto dialogue with major players and stakeholders including the PMCU , UNDP Cos, national governments, industry, NGOs and coastal and fisheries communities to the extent possible. The Consultant will be invited to travel to Astana in November for COP-III when and where a plethora of meetings are planned to take place involving representatives of the littoral countries , UNDP, TCIS , UNOPS, NGOs , industry and donors. During the visit he/she will have the opportunity to meet and dialogue with a high number of players and stakeholders and seek answers to his /her questions .he/she will also directly observe the project and the stakeholders in operation. The visit will provide the Consultant sufficient information and analysis to draft the Final Evaluation Report.

The final stage of the exercise will be home- based. During this period the Consultant is required to draft the Final Report based on the Scope of Work in line with the GEF/UNDP reporting requirements and submit and finalize same in full consultation with the UNDP Bratislava and PMCU in their capacities as the Initiator and Manger of the Evaluation Exercise .

**Evaluation Team :** The exercisewill be carried out by a highly qualified Consultant, preferably a fisheries expert or an environmental expert, fully familiar with the GEF and UNDP work and thinking on international waters related issues; with sufficient exposure to the issues, opportunities and challenges of the Caspian Sea; alert to the cultural, political and social sensitivities of the region. The consultant should have not been involved in the design and implementation of the Caspeco and /or the other UNDP supported project related to the Caspian.

**Evaluation Ethics:** Evaluation in UNDP will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the ‘’UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation”.

**Implementation Arrangements:** The Consultant will directly report to UNDP Bratislava as the Initiator of the Evaluation. Logistical support for the exercise including the mission to the region will be provided by the PMCU as the Manager of the Evaluation. Activities will be carried out in close collaboration with the UNDP CO Astana and UNDP COs in the region. PMCU will also provide when possible the information required by the consultant

**Deliverables: These will include**

1. The Inception Report to be submitted after the initial desk study phase, 5th day of the Evaluation Exercise
2. Periodic updates via email and telephone.
3. Final Evaluation Report at end of exercise

# Period of Performance & Timeline

1. The tasks will be implemented over a 30 days period .The total work days under the TOR is 15 days including a five days initial desk - study , a five days mission to the region and a five days period for the production of the final report.

1. The work is to start November 2010 .
2. Visit to the region is November 2010 to coincide with the TC
3. The Final Report is to be finalized incorporating all reasonable views comments by UNDP and PMCU by end-December 2010 .

**4. Qualifications and Experience**

The exercise will be carried out by a highly qualified Consultant with a minimum of 11 years relevant working experience, preferably a fisheries expert or an environmental expert holding a Masters degree or equivalent in relevant area, fully familiar with the GEF and UNDP work and thinking on international waters related issues; with sufficient exposure to the issues, opportunities and challenges of the Caspian Sea; alert to the cultural, political and social sensitivities of the region. The consultant should have not been involved in the design and implementation of the Caspeco and /or the other UNDP supported project related to the Caspian.

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| Project Authority (Name/Title):      | Contract holder (Name/Title):      |
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