REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (EOI) (CONSULTING SERVICES)

TOR for rapid scoping of benefit sharing opportunities in the Meghna Basin

Research Objective: Scoping study to identify benefit sharing opportunities between Bangladesh and India in the Meghna Basin, including opportunities for cross-border interactions between communities to gain in an economically beneficial manner

Duration of the Contract: 21 May to 30 June 2018

Estimated days of work: 20 days (for a person with reasonable experience and knowledge of water governance issues in South Asia and good analysis and writing skills)

Contact Person:

a) Dr Haseeb Md. Irfanullah, Programme Coordinator, IUCN Bangladesh (HaseebMd.Irfanullah@iucn.org)
b) Mr. Vishwa Ranjan Sinha, Program Officer, Natural Resources Group, IUCN Asia Regional Office (vishwaranjan.sinha@iucn.org)

1. Background

Building River Dialogue and Governance (BRIDGE) in the Ganga-Brahmaputra-Meghna (GBM) basin, or BRIDGE GBM, is a project facilitated by IUCN and funded by Oxfam Novib through its Transboundary Rivers of South Asia (TROSA) project. The goal of the BRIDGE GBM project is to create an enabling environment for cooperative governance of shared river basins for poverty reduction and ecological conservation.

The project is funding a rapid assessment/scoping study to examine current and future opportunities for bilateral cooperation and integrated water resource management in the Meghna basin, using 'benefit sharing' as an approach and framework.

The outcome of the scoping study will help improve the understanding of the 'basket of benefits' from the Meghna river basin that could be shared tangibly among the stakeholders across borders. The study will help improve the understanding of stakeholders on how cooperation between Bangladesh and India could help to enhance the benefits for better economic and social development of communities living in the Meghna basin.

The outcomes of the scoping study will be used as an input to trigger dialogue on benefit sharing and opportunities for transboundary collaboration planned with the stakeholders from Bangladesh and India, under the BRDGE GBM project, in late June 2018. Based on the feedback received at this dialogue forum, the report will be finalised. The final version of the scoping study will identify clear thematic areas for further research and generation of tangible information and data that could support the development of agreements for sustainable management of the basin.

The Meghna Basin

The Meghna is formed inside Bangladesh by the joining of the Surma and Kushiyara rivers originating from the hilly regions of eastern India in the states of Meghalaya and Tripura. Down to Chandpur, Meghna is hydrographically referred to as the Upper Meghna. After the Padma joins, it is referred to as the Lower Meghna.

The Upper Meghna Basin, situated in one of the rainiest regions in the world, has annual rainfall of up to 5,800 mm. The Meghna River is estimated to have a peak flood flow of 19,800 m^3/sec. It receives a huge amount of sediment inflow (approximately 13 million tons are deposited in the Upper Meghna Basin every year) and experiences a high frequency of

flash floods. In addition, there are concerns about the impact of climate change on the lives and livelihoods of the communities living within the Meghna basin.

Since the Meghna river basin is shared by Bangladesh and India, there are opportunities for collaboration between the two countries to improve the management and sustainable utilization of the variety of ecosystem services provided by the basin. Within the Meghna basin, there are 29 transboundary river systems and therefore, opportunities for trans-boundary collaboration between the governments and communities across the borders. One example is the Umngot River, where there are opportunities for trans-boundary navigation and trade.

However, there is a dearth of knowledge and information on the consumptive and non-consumptive values of the Meghna basin, and the various types of benefits that could be shared among the stakeholders across borders. This knowledge gap is a hindrance to effective trans-boundary dialogue and development of agreements between the two countries and stakeholders for the sustainable management of the Meghna basin.

2. Desired experience and qualification

- Demonstrated high level of skill and experience on river basin management issues, and an understanding of the transboundary water governance challenges and opportunities between Bangladesh and India
- Experience in planning and designing participatory workshops and consultations
- Proven experience of developing strategies for effective river basin management
- Excellent communication skills and fluency in written and spoken English.

Qualifications

- Master's Degree on issues and themes relevant to this consultancy - social/community issues, natural resource management, river basin governance, international relations
- At least 8 years of experience working on water governance or river basin management issues in India/Bangladesh

3. Deliverables and timeline:

The consultancy services under this assignment include (main deliverables):

a) Presentation of initial findings at the Bangladesh-India Joint Consultation in June 2018
b) Final scoping report, providing an overview of the different types of benefits that could be shared and managed jointly by Bangladesh and India for improved management of the Meghna basin (Full Report, max 20 pages).

Outline of Task:

No.	Tasks	Timeline
1.	1st draft of the 'Scoping Report', based on a review of published/ unpublished literature, websites, and communications with relevant stakeholders	5 June 2018
2.	Revised draft based on comments received from IUCN	15 June 2018
3.	Present the outcomes at the dialogue on evolving a transboundary water governance cooperation framework, Shillong (India)	25-26 June 2018
4.	Final scoping report incorporating inputs from the dialogue	29 June 2018

Suggested Annotated Table of Contents of the Scoping Report

Scoping study to identify benefit sharing opportunities and trans-boundary cooperation in the Meghna Basin

Table of Contents
Executive Summary

1. The Meghna Basin: An Introduction (3 pages)
This chapter will describe the prevailing major hydrological, geographical, political, economic, social, and cultural issues that should be considered while discussing the Meghna basin. What are the major historical issues we should be taking into account? This chapter will essentially characterize the Meghna basin and the variety of ecosystem services provided by it.

2. Stakeholders, Relationships and Engagement (3 page)
This chapter will identify the major pertinent stakeholders/actors in Bangladesh and India in relation to the Meghna basin (local-provincial/state-national-regional; formal-informal; internal-external; primary-secondary). Their roles, interests and inter-relationships will be summarised, and the possible processes that could be used to engage them in dialogue on trans-boundary water governance (using benefit sharing as a framework) will be described.

3. Benefit Sharing opportunities in the Meghna Basin (10 pages)
This chapter will identify and describe the basket of benefits relevant to the trans-boundary cooperation and benefit sharing context in the Meghna basin. These benefits should be as exhaustive as possible and should follow the framework outlined in IUCN's Publication SHARE, *available at: https://portals.iucn.org/library/efiles/documents/2008-016.pdf. Each benefit listed will be supported by data, with references, preferably publicly available ones. If unpublished data/reports or personal communications are used, the sources should be detailed in the text or as footnotes.*

5. Knowledge Gaps and Research Opportunities (2 pages)
This chapter will explore the major challenges and constraints in using benefit sharing as an approach to building trans-boundary cooperation and integrated basin management. It will identify what research outcomes will better support the development of trans-boundary benefit sharing agreements and joint management of the Meghna basin. It will also identify possible topics for joint research involving experts and academics from Bangladesh and India.

6. The Way Forward (1 page)

References

Annexes