Terms of Reference

PROJECT: Enhancing Sustainability of the Transboundary Cambodia – Mekong River Delta Aquifer (CMDA)

ASSIGNMENT: Vietnam National Technical Advisor for the GEF/FAO CMDA Programme

IUCN REPORTING MANAGER: Mr. BOWER Robert
CMDA Chief Technical Advisor (CTA)

DURATION: 20 July 2024 – 30 December 2024

LOCATION: Viet Nam

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT OF ASSIGNMENT

The GEF-7 IW project between Cambodia and Vietnam focuses on improving the transboundary management of the Cambodia-Mekong Delta Aquifer (CMDA) to strengthen environmental sustainability and water security in the Lower Mekong Basin. Implemented from November 2023 to August 2028, the project involves:

- **FAO**: Implementing Agency
- **The General Directorate of Environmental Protection (MoE Cambodia) and The Department of Water Resources Manage (MONRE Vietnam)**: Government Partners
- **IUCN**: Lead Executing Agency
- **UNESCO and Mekong Region Futures Institute (MERFI)**: Implementing Partners

The CMDA programme is a bilateral GEF International Waters project between Cambodia and Vietnam focuses on the improved transboundary management of the shared Cambodia-Mekong Delta Aquifer (CMDA). The project addresses key challenges: rapid groundwater decline, land surface subsidence, increasing arsenic and other contaminants, salinity intrusion, and degrading groundwater-dependent ecosystems. Climate change and upstream development are expected to exacerbate these issues, threatening livelihoods, and ecosystems in the Mekong Delta. The project aims to strengthen environmental sustainability and water security in the Lower Mekong Basin through improved governance and sustainable utilization of the CMDA. Specific outcomes include:

- **Consensus on Key Concerns**: Achieving agreement on transboundary and national issues affecting the aquifer through joint fact-finding.
- **Improved Groundwater Management**: Testing strategies for better groundwater recharge, reduced extraction, and mitigated ecosystem/livelihood trade-offs.
- **Enhanced Transboundary Cooperation**: Improving governance of the transboundary aquifer through agreed-upon measures.
- **Legal and Policy Reforms**: Committing to priority legal, institutional, and policy reforms for the protection and equitable utilization of the shared aquifer.
- **Sustainable Mechanisms**: Implementing mechanisms for monitoring, stakeholder consultation, gender mainstreaming, dissemination, and coordination to ensure long-term sustainability.
The FAO will be the Implementing Agency, with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as the Lead Executing Agency. The Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) process will be executed by UNESCO and the Mekong Region Futures Institute (MERFI), while IUCN will lead all Strategies and Action Programs (SAP)-related steps. UNESCO WWAP will coordinate gender-focused activities. Pilot projects executed by the countries, based on TDA results, will inform the SAP formulation process.

**OBJECTIVE OF CONTRACTOR ASSIGNMENT**

The selected individually Technical Advisor (hereafter referred to as the Consultant) will provide expert advisory services to support IUCN’s role in the CMDA project, focusing on technical, legal, and government engagement-related issues across five project components. The national technical advisor role is anticipated to be required over the entire 5-year period of the project, but the contracting will be set to annually and/or by project component at the discretion of IUCN and available budgets and needs.

**TECHNICAL ADVISOR QUALIFICATIONS**

1. **Educational Background:**
   - Advanced degree in environmental science, water resources management, hydrogeology, or a related field.

2. **Experience:**
   - At least 15 years in water resources management, focusing on groundwater governance and transboundary water management.
   - Experience working on water projects in Vietnam and internationally.

3. **Technical Skills:**
   - Expertise in groundwater dynamics, environmental sustainability, and water security.
   - Knowledge of the TDA process and SAP development.
   - Familiarity with nature-based solutions, including those actions being implemented in the Mekong Delta and Vietnam more widely.
   - Specific expertise on the Mekong Delta aquifer system.

4. **Communication Skills:**
   - Strong verbal and written communication skills in English.

5. **Legal and Government Engagement Expertise:**
   - Understanding of water laws and policies in Vietnam and Cambodia.
   - Experience in providing legal advice on transboundary water management issues.
   - Experience working with Vietnam government ministries involved in water management and internationally funded programmes.

These qualifications ensure that the Consultant can effectively support the CMDA project, integrating gender inclusiveness and equal opportunity principles as per the context of GEF projects.

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

I. **Participation in IUCN Meetings**
   - Attend IUCN’s CMDA Project Meetings of the Regional Project Steering Committee (RPSC), Regional Project Management Unit (RPMU), and Joint Technical Committee once requested.
   - Join the Vietnam Stakeholder Engagement Workshop.
   - Engage in meetings with IUCN for project design, implementation plans, and proposals.
   - Participate in the in-person RPSC meeting in Ho Chi Minh City.
   - Attend other workshops and meetings as requested by IUCN.
II. Support for CMDA Technical Diagnostic Analysis (TDA)

- Assist in developing a Vietnam National Expert team for the TDA, ensuring gender diversity and equality.
- Provide recommendations and review nominees for the national expert team, with a focus on gender balance.
- Support data collection and dissemination for the TDA, incorporating gender-disaggregated data.
- Advise on communication with provincial and ministerial stakeholders, promoting gender-inclusive approaches.
- Offer technical inputs on groundwater governance and prepare annual work plans that address gender considerations.
- Review and provide feedback on technical reports, ensuring gender perspectives are included.
- Review the Detailed Technical Work Plan (DTWP) for Component 1 – TDA, integrating gender analysis.
- Conduct meetings with MERFI, UNESCO, IUCN leaders, and National Expert Teams, ensuring gender inclusivity.

III. Ad-hoc Activities Upon Request

- Provide expert review on various technical outputs and deliverables, incorporating gender analysis.
- Contribute to concept notes, media, and website information, ensuring gender-sensitive language and content.
- Participate in or lead workshops and training, promoting gender equality.
- Provide specialized technical advice (e.g., climate change, gender water issues, water security, wetlands), with a focus on gender impacts.
- Support the establishment of transboundary monitoring networks, data collection, and processing protocols, ensuring gender considerations.
- Facilitate transboundary partnership building, promoting gender-inclusive strategies.
- Provide legal and policy advice, integrating gender equality perspectives.

COMPENSATION

Due to the CMDA’s structure, the project cannot directly compensate government employees (working for state management units). Compensation and support for the Consultant include:

- **Daily Rate**: USD rate for expert advice.
- **Travel Costs and Per Diem**: IUCN will cover required travel costs outside of this contract.

Contracts will be set up on a component-by-component or annual basis, with the first contract covering the inception phase and start of the TDA development and pilot project initiation. Contract renewal will be considered as the project progresses.

IUCN REQUEST FOR EXPERT ADVICE PROCESS

IUCN will formally request advice through the process of providing the Consultant a written Technical Advisor Work Briefs (TAWBs) via email, including:

- **Scope of Work**: Detailed task description (e.g., technical review of the draft TDA).
- **Timeline**: Completion deadline for draft and final written deliverables.
- **Estimated Time and Compensation**: Required time and corresponding compensation estimate.
- **Meeting Attendance and Travel**: Details of required meetings and travel, with associated costs covered.
- **Deliverables**: Specific task requirements.
- **Confirmation of Acceptance**: Written confirmation from the advisor.

  This approach ensures clarity, efficiency, and fairness in the compensation and support process, aligning with the project's goals and guaranteeing equal pay for equal work.

**OUTPUTS/DELIVERABLES**

IUCN will provide written instructions as to the types of deliverables required for each request for technical support. These deliverables could range from physical attendance in a meeting, verbal advice and/or written review comments and/or reports.

**CONTRACT TEMPLATE**

Attached to this TOR, IUCN have provided the Contract template for consideration for final contracting.
Annex-II

Agreed Budget and Deliverables and Payments Schedule

1. BUDGET

The assignment duration from the date of contract signing (tentatively from 20 July 2024) to 30 December 2024 with the maximum of 30 consultancy days.

Travel dates and trips/destinations must be communicated and agreed with CMDA/IUCN staff(s) in advance.

2. AGREED DELIVERABLES AND DELIVERY TIMETABLE

The Consultant will hand over all deliverables/report in electronic Microsoft Office format. Other formats need the prior agreement of CMDA/IUCN. All outputs and deliverables in English language. The Consultant will keep a time sheet for each working day on the assignment, using the CMDA/IUCN’s template. Deliverables need to be approved by the CMDA Chief Technical Advisor in order to be valid. The timetable for the delivery of deliverables is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deliverable</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deliverable 1</td>
<td>31 October 2024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deliverable 2</td>
<td>20 December 2024</td>
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</tbody>
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3. INVOICING AND PAYMENT

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<tr>
<th>SCHEDULE</th>
<th>AGREED PAYMENT</th>
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<tr>
<td>Submission of an invoice after signing of this contract.</td>
<td>The Consultant will be paid a maximum of 30% of the total consultancy fee of this contract.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submission of an invoice after successful delivery of Deliverable 1 and IUCN written acceptance of this Deliverable.</td>
<td>The Consultant will be paid a maximum of 40% of the total consultancy fee of this contract.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submission of an invoice after successful delivery of Deliverable 2 and IUCN written acceptance of this Deliverable.</td>
<td>The Consultant will be paid the remaining amount of the total consultancy fee of this contract.</td>
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4. APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Interested individuals are invited to submit their application, including a CV and 1-page proposal stating their perception of the CMDA project and their approach to the assignment and the consultancy rate, by 12 July 2024 to Le Viet Minh at minh.leviet@iucn.org and copying Pham Hong Nhung at nhung.phamhong@iucn.org.

5. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Consultants will be evaluated based on their qualifications, relevant experience, the submitted proposal, and budget proposed.