

TERMS OF REFERENCE

SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL EXPERT

CLEAN AND RESILIENT ENVIRONMENT FOR BLUE SEA (CARE4BLUESEA) - ALBANIA

1. BACKGROUND

The Ministry of Environment (MoE) and the World Bank (WB) have finalized a new investment operation to enhance Albania's mitigation of land-based sources impacting the aquatic environment in specific areas of the South-West Coastal Belt, with the official approval of the "Clean and Resilient Environment for Blue Sea Project" on December 1st, 2023.

The project comprises three components:

- Promoting integrated and circular approaches for protecting landscapes and water resources in the Vlora South-Gjirokaster Waste Zone.
- Reducing water pollution in the Vjosa River through targeted interventions in municipal wastewater and stormwater, emphasizing climate resilience.
- Managing project activities, including project management, monitoring, and evaluation, covering financial management, procurement, environmental and social risk management, project audits, and training for relevant teams.

The project is envisioned to have two Implementing Agencies (IAs). MoE is responsible for overall project coordination, reporting and monitoring and, to fulfil those roles, has established a dedicated Project Management Team (PMT) responsible for day-to-day supervision of Project implementation for the MoE Parts of the Project (component 1, and subcomponents 2.3 and 3.1) and other responsibilities as set forth in the POM. At the same time, AKUK has established a Project Coordination Unit (PCU) which is also managing the World Bank-funded Program-for-Results on National Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Modernization Program. The PCU is responsible for day-to-day supervision of Project implementation for the AKUK Parts of the Project (subcomponents 2.1, 2.2, and 3.2) and other responsibilities as set forth in the POM. MoE and AKUK, through their project teams, will closely collaborate with four key local partners: (a) National Environment Agency (NEA) for Component 1, (b) Regional Directorate of Water Utilities for Component 2, (c) National Agency for Protected Areas and Vjosa Park Administration Authority for Component 2, and (d) municipalities for all three components.

The timeline for the project extends from December 1, 2023, to March 29, 2030. This span encompasses the approval date, marking the project's official commencement, to the projected closing date.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The objective of this task is to recruit a Social and Environmental Expert who will be responsible for developing a comprehensive communications strategy aimed at raising awareness among stakeholders about the nature of the current situation and the necessity for extensive measures to address it. Additionally, the Expert will emphasize the importance of effectively communicating and disseminating project-supported policies and activities throughout implementation. Furthermore, the Expert will provide crucial assistance in implementing social safeguards, including screening and mitigating any social impacts of the Project in accordance with Albanian legislation and World Bank Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) requirements. The Social and Environmental Expert will collaborate closely with the PMT Coordinator and will ensure that all Project activities across various sites adhere to Albanian legal requirements and comply with World Bank Environmental and Social Standards (ESS).

3. SCOPE OF WORK

The scope of services shall include, but will not be limited to, the following:

- Conduct awareness-raising sessions for project beneficiaries on the updated project screening form, review process, and the importance of E&S risk management-with the focus on affected stakeholders.
- Organize workshops with municipalities receiving investments to identify and mitigate E&S risks, enhancing their project preparation process.
- Support municipalities and other beneficiaries (of the respective components and subcomponents) to prepare the relevant E&S instruments as needed (ESMPs, aRAPs) and support to implement them.
- Organize and facilitate E&S risk management training for Ministry of Environment (MoE) staff.
- Support the refinement of the E&S risk management system and capacity building plans.
- Conduct field visits, both during the preparation and the implementation of sub-projects, to ensure compliance with eligibility requirements and spot check investments.
- Support the beneficiaries to perform risk management screenings and public consultations, integrating E&S considerations into project planning and implementation.
- Engage with other agencies and stakeholders to strengthen the framework for E&S risk management.
- Support the implementing agency and the beneficiary institutions to further develop and maintain the general project Grievance Redress Mechanism.
- Assist in organizing outreach activities such as press briefings, conferences, and seminars to promote project awareness.
- Lead environmental management efforts, providing guidance to project personnel on technical issues and ensuring compliance with Albanian legislation and World Bank Environmental and Social Standards (ESSs).

- Supervise MoE staff in environmental management of civil construction works, identifying and addressing any gaps in compliance.
- Ensure environmental and social framework requirements are integrated into bidding documents and contracts.
- Provide regular progress reports in line with reporting requirements, including the E&S progress report as a part of regular bi-annual project progress report for all Project (including components 2.1 and 2.2, as per inputs of the PCU Environment and Social Specialists)
- Undertake any other tasks assigned by the PMT Coordinator related to environmental and social risk management to ensure successful project delivery.

4. EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

- Regular and timely progress reports in line with work plan and reporting requirements.

5. REPORTING

The Consultant will work as part of the PMT. He / She will report to and work under direction of the PMT Coordinator and will report to him/her. The Consultant will work in close cooperation with public agencies, municipalities and other relevant stakeholders to ensure that the project is managed efficiently and in compliance with the objectives of the Project Appraisal Document (PAD), Loan Agreement and Project Operational Manual (POM) and Environmental Performance Based Investment (EPBI) Manual.

6. QUALIFICATION & EXPERIENCE

Education:

- A Master's degree or equivalent qualification in social science; Natural Resource Management, Development planning, Social Protection or Public Service Policy and Management; or any relevant field.

Experience:

- Minimum of 10 years of general professional experience.
- Minimum of 5 years of relevant professional experience in Social and Environmental Risk Management, including applied private sector experience in investment and sustainable investment policies.
- Experience in designing and delivering training and knowledge products on good practice in Social and Environmental Risk Management and/or assurance.

- Familiarity with Environmental & Social (E&S) policies of international institutions, particularly the World Bank and other relevant organizations.
- Knowledge of social development, including community development projects.

Competences;

- Excellent communication and reporting skills in English.
- Fully proficient in the Albanian language (native speaker level).
- Excellent computer skills in particular full proficiency in Microsoft Office.
- Ability to work in a multinational, multicultural environment, and proactive working style.

7. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Applicants that fulfill the qualification requirements will be further evaluated based on the below criteria:

- General Qualification – 30 points
- Adequacy for the assignment – 60 points
- Language – 10 points

8. SELECTION

The service will be selected under the provisions of the World Bank Procurement Regulations for Borrowers under Investment Project Financing” dated July 1, 2016, revised on November 2017, August 2018, November 2020 and September 2023 based on the method of Open National Selection of Individual Consultants, Time-based Contract.

9. SPECIFICATIONS OF THE ASSIGNMENT

Duration: The duration of the contract is initially for one year with the possibility of extension up to March 2030, subject to the satisfactory performance of the Consultant.

Location: The Social and Environment Expert will be assigned to work in the office of the MoE, Albania.

The Consultant will be offered opportunities to develop professionally by attending relevant training events and courses during the term of the assignment.