

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

ALBANIA
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES PROJECT

Assignment Title: DEVELOPMENT OF INTEGRATED FORESTS AND PASTURES MANAGEMENT PLANS FOR ELEVEN (11) FOREST MANAGEMENT UNITS OF KORCE MUNICIPALITY (CONTRACT III)

Reference No.: ESP-CS-QCBS-13.1

The Republic of Albania has received financing in the amount of US\$ 23 million equivalent from the World Bank toward the cost of the Environmental Services Project and intends to apply part of the proceeds for consulting services. The project is jointly financed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and Swedish Government and includes the following components:

Component 1- Strengthening Institutional Capacity to improve environmental services from integrated landscape management.

Component 2- Planning and Provision of IPARD like Grants to improve land management

Component 3- Introducing Payments for Environmental Services

Component 4-Supporting Project Implementation

With the Administrative Reform and the Law n. 115/2014, Republic of Albania has defined new administrative units (Municipalities) as aggregations of previous administrative units; in the whole territory of Albania 363 Municipalities and Communes were merged into 61 Municipalities. Due to the lack of activity in this area in recent years a large proportion of forest management plans are now either already or close to being expired and the geographic units to which they refer have now been replaced. The ESP project now seeks to pilot a new approach to planning in a limited number of municipalities.

The objectives of the assignment are:

1. Prepare multipurpose Forest and Pasture Management Plans (FPMP) balancing economic, social and ecological aspects. The plans will adhere to the FPMP Guidelines 2018 and reflect the constraints and opportunities of the forests and pasture resource in each area in a way that maximizes the benefits to municipal and local stakeholders according to their needs.
2. Raise the capacity of local and municipal staff to conduct FPMP planning and to conduct quality control tasks related to it.

The detailed Terms of Reference (TOR) for the assignment are attached to this request for expressions of interest.

The Ministry of Tourism and Environment, through the Project Management Team (PMT) now invites eligible local companies (“Consultants”) to indicate their interest in providing the Services.

In parallel to this contract, there will be implemented two other contracts; one contract targeting five other forest management units in Korca municipality and another contract targeting a number of forest management units in the municipality of Gramsh. The interested consultant can apply for all FPMPs assignments, but one consultant can win not more than one contract.

Interested Consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience in carrying out the preparation of FPMP. They should provide information demonstrating that they are qualified for the assignment as follows:

- Description of the profile of the consultant; background and personnel. (30 points)
- Proven experience in FPMP and capacity to deliver; Description of most relevant and similar work assignments and how this experience will be applied in the assignment; demonstrating appropriate experience in stakeholder engagement, gender mainstreaming, participatory planning, knowledge transfer and capacity building, inventory and assessment of forests and pastures, forest and pastures management planning, manpower management and logistics, GIS and computer-based field survey (preferably including Open Foris Collect) (60 points)
- Experience in the region or similar countries in similar assignments (10 points)

The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to Section III, paragraphs, 3.14, 3.16, and 3.17 of the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers", date July 2016 ("Procurement Regulations"), setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.

Consultants may associate with other firms to enhance their qualifications, but should indicate clearly whether the association is in the form of a joint venture and/or a sub-consultancy. In the case of a joint venture, all the partners in the joint venture shall be jointly and severally liable for the entire contract, if selected.

A Consultant will be selected in accordance with the **Consultant's Qualifications Based Selection (CQS)** method set out in the Procurement Regulations.

Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours 08:00 to 16:30 (Monday to Thursday) and 08:00 to 14:00 on Friday.

Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below (in person, or by mail, or by fax, or by e-mail) by February 26, 2020.

Attention: Erion Istrefi

ESP Coordinator

Ministry of Tourism and Environment

Address: Blvd Deshmoret e Kombit, No. 1, Tirana, Albania

Email: erion.istrefi@yahoo.com.

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Terms of Reference

DEVELOPMENT OF INTEGRATED FORESTS AND PASTURES MANAGEMENT PLANS FOR ELEVEN (11) FOREST MANAGEMENT UNITS OF KORCE MUNICIPALITY

(CONTRACT III)

ESP-CS-CS-13.1

1. BACKGROUND

The Government of Albania has received a loan of EUR 7,693,000 from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), a grant of EUR 7,692,000 from the Swedish Government and a grant of EUR 2,215,000 from the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) to finance the Environmental Services Project (ESP). The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (“World Bank”) is acting as administrator of the amount provided. The Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MTE) has overall responsibility for the Project, and the Directorate of Program Development on Environment is responsible for the implementation of the Project through its Project Management Team (PMT). These Terms of Reference serve to define the responsibilities, tasks and qualifications required by a consultant company to prepare the Forest and Pasture Management Plans (FPMP) for the Municipality according to the Guidelines for the Preparation of Integrated FPMP (2018).

The project includes the following components:

- *Component 1- Strengthening Institutional Capacity to improve environmental services from integrated landscape management.* The component aims to build a stable institutional environment that facilitates sustainable upland management, thereby improving environmental service provision.
- *Component 2- Planning and Provision of IPARD like Grants to improve land management.* The component aims to increase the provision of environment services to downstream beneficiaries and society as a whole, whilst increasing the return and livelihood opportunities to the owners/users/managers of the land through improving forest, pasture and micro-catchment management.
- *Component 3- Introducing Payments for Environmental Services.* The component will help establish financing mechanisms to reduce land degradation and support sustainable livelihoods through provision of and compensation for environmental services. This includes the potential for the payments for emission reductions and carbon sequestration.
- *Component 4-Supporting Project Implementation.* The objective of the component is to support the MOE to carry out mainstreamed project implementation and overall coordination according to agreed arrangements.

With the Administrative Reform and the Law n. 115/2014, Republic of Albania has defined new administrative units (Municipalities) as aggregations of previous administrative units; in the whole territory of Albania 363 Municipalities and Communes were merged into 61

Municipalities. The FPMP process is implemented under the overall supervision of the Ministry of Tourism and Environment. Due to the lack of activity in this area in recent years a large proportion of forest management plans are now either already or close to being expired and the geographic units to which they refer have now been replaced. The ESP project now seeks to pilot a new approach to planning in a limited number of municipalities based upon these principles:

- the management plans are applied to all forests (low and high forests, shrubs) and pasture areas, owned by the municipality and are called Forest and Pasture Management Plans (FPMP);
- each FPMP is prepared for a single Forest and Pasture Management Unit (FPMU);
- each FPMU is wholly contained within one municipality
- the period of validity of the management plan will be as per legislation in place (either 10 or 15 years);
- Forest cadaster and forest management plan data from previous plans (compiled under the old Forest Economies and the former Communes) may be used as reference information. Orthophotography and map information on forest cover and density (based on LiDAR), forest cadaster and registration may be available in some municipalities in digital form and where available, will be expected to be used.
- Protected Areas are out of the scope of this work;
- An interim central geo-database which is being established under the ESP will be a temporary repository solution for the FPMP data prior to data transfer to AIFIS.

The MTE has contracted the Consultant for preparing forest and pastures management plans in municipalities of Has, Maliq, Malesi e Madhe and Berat. The contracts are under implementation.

During 2019, the MTE has received an Additional Financing (AF), part of which will cover two additional municipalities (Korce and Gramsh) with forest and pasture management plans. This AF is a contribution under Swedish Government (around SEK 20 million) under the original project Environmental Services Project (P130492).

2. OBJECTIVES

1. Prepare multipurpose Forest and Pasture Management Plans balancing economic, social and ecological aspects. The plans will adhere to the FPMP Guidelines 2018 and reflect the constraints and opportunities of the forests and pasture resource in each area in a way that maximizes the benefits to municipal and local stakeholders according to their needs.
2. Raise the capacity of local and municipal staff to conduct FPMP planning and to conduct quality control tasks related to it.

3. ACTIVITIES

The preparation and implementation of FPMP must maintain and strengthen the long-term health of forest ecosystems, and, at the same time ensure the ecological, economic, social and cultural value of these areas is sustained for present and future generations. This applies

to the targeted Forest and Pasture Management Unit (FPMU) but also to the wider municipality and in coordination with neighboring FPMU or Protected Areas, if necessary. Preparation of management plans will initially assess the current situation of the territory, and through interaction with local stakeholders and Municipality staff at all phases of the process ensure the active participation of local stakeholders and coordination with central government authorities.

An estimate indication of the area by land use type in the relevant Municipalities are given in the table below. If the proportion of area covered by these land use types differs from that shown here the consultant will have no recourse to renegotiate contract terms.

Municipality	F&P Management Units	Land use type	Area ha
Korce (Contract III) STF Financing	Voskopoje 2,	High forest	9,090.00
	Voskopoje,	Coppice	4,538.00
	Perparimaj-Dardhe,	Shrubs	914.00
	Panarit-Treske,	Pastures	4,228.00
	Qarr-Kozel,	Others	1,038.00
	Mali Kuq-Nikolice,	Total area	19,811.00
	Lozhan,		
	Shere-Panarit,		
	Rungaje,		
	Bofje e Dusharit		
Zemblak-Qarr			

A standardized work method, defined in the FPMP Guidelines 2018, must be strictly applied to provide homogeneous and comparable results at national level. The quality standards to be fulfilled are described in the FPMP guidelines regarding the mapping outputs as well as inventory work for field data collection.

According to the Guidelines, the process of preparation of FPMP must be developed following these steps:

- Preparatory work;
- Field work;
- Office work;
- Map preparation.

External experts/Consultants must collaborate closely with Municipality and local forest staff as well as representatives of the community in the nearby areas to ensure the resulting plans are of high quality and have local support. A participatory planning process that engages all relevant stakeholders must be conducted as an integral part of the management planning from the beginning to the end of the process. The municipality it is not just an approving body of the prepared FPMP but also a very close stakeholder participating and providing support at all phases of management plan preparation.

1. PREPARATORY WORK

This step includes

- Collection of old data and documents related to FPMP
- Organization and management of Participatory Process. There is a clear guidance in the FPMP Guidelines 2018 on the Participatory Process (refer to Annex 3).
- Inventory planning, including preparation of preliminary map. Design of the network of sample plots, including description of the type and size of sample plots and logistical plan for execution of the survey.
- Local companies or experts hired by the external/Consultant team will have to be well trained for the quality standards of field data collection using the latest technology as per the FPMP Guidelines 2018. This also includes the preparatory work for insertion of the new management plan into the Albanian Forest Information System (AIFIS) and management of business processes.
- Use Zana app. provided by the Client for collection of field data.
- Training is also to be provided by the external company/Consultants on the basis of knowledge transfer, towards the municipality staff including forestry master's students regarding the maps preparation, field data collection, LiDAR data use (if available), data transfer to Postgres database further to be transferred to interim central geo-database, data analysis, etc. Check data transfer from AIFIS and their availability on the web.

2. FIELD WORK AND DESCRIPTION OF PARCEL/SUBPARCEL

This step includes

- Visits in the field
- The field work must be done using electronic devices such as: GPS of c. 1m accuracy, Ultrasound Vertex, rugged tablets to collect information from sample plots using Zana app. The equipment is to be provided by the consultant.
- Application of relevant survey methodologies for forests, pastures and shrub lands
- Data input and controls must be in compliance with the standards described in FPMP Guidelines 2018 (section D for field inventory and H for mapping preparation)
- Description of parcels and sub-parcels
- Parcels/sub-parcels data and link with Forest Cadaster entry in interim central geo-database

Training courses on the field data collection and data analyses will be held for hired local staff/companies involved in the field measurement works as well as for municipal technical staff on the transfer knowledge principle. The training courses will ensure that each field-team member is fully aware of all procedures and the importance of collecting data as accurately as possible. To achieve this, both classroom examination and field examination will have to be conducted. At least 4 field meetings are to be held within the field season to coordinate standards across survey teams.

3. OFFICE WORK – REPORT

The process of preparation of Forests and Pastures Management Plans must respect standards, to obtain homogeneous final products (reports, data, maps, etc.). Narrative sections of the reports, tables and maps should be in accordance with instructions and quality standards given in the FPMP Guidelines, 2018. The sequence of contents should be

maintained. Written material must be simple and concise. The structure of the report must be:

- Introduction
- Situation of the Management Unit in the past
- Current state of the Forest and Pasture Management Unit
- Site description
- Vegetation and biodiversity, including medicinal plants
- Roads and infrastructures
- List of all parcels/sub-parcels in the FPMU
- Data analysis about forests and pastures.
- Description of forests and shrubs
- Description of pasture and herbaceous vegetation, structure of FPMU based on age class (for forests) and production class
- Results of forests and pastures inventory.
- Analysis of the forest structure
- Management data and land tenure
- Management of forest and pastures
- Objectives of forest and pasture management
- Forest and pastures function
- Management of the forest
- Management of the pastures
- Management of the shrubs
- Annual planning of forests
- Economic evaluation of planned interventions

4. MAP PREPARATION

Maps of the Forest and Pasture Management Plan must be developed using GIS based on the official system KRGJSH 2010, which is compatible with UTM map projection system. The management plan must contain the following maps:

- i. Map of Forest and Pasture Management Unit;
- ii. Map of functions;
- iii. Map of forest, shrubs and pastures types;
- iv. Map of forest roads, infrastructures and degraded areas;
- v. Map of interventions

These maps need to be accurate at the scale of 1:2500.

4. MUNICIPAL STAFF AND CONSULTANT RESPONSIBILITIES

Participatory planning

A request should be made by the consultant for Municipality staff to attend participatory planning meetings. Municipal staff will be made available to attend these meetings if given at least 1 months' notice. All other aspects of participatory planning meetings will be the responsibility of the consultant. Regardless of Municipality involvement, it will be the consultants responsibility to ensure a high degree of local stakeholder and gender-balanced involvement in planning and setting local management objectives.

Provision of past plans and relevant data

A request should be made by the consultant to the relevant Municipalities for relevant data. In as much as these data are readily available, they should be assembled (in soft and hard copy) by Municipal staff and presented to the Consultant within 1 month of receipt of the request. The success of this information assembly step will be described in the inception report.

Field work planning

A request should be made by the Consultant prior to commencement of field work for Municipality staff to attend field survey planning meetings. The aim will be a briefing on issues or updates regarding the land use, protective functions of the land, landslide, fire, pest or other events that may have occurred in the target area. Municipal staff will be made available on a reasonable basis for this meeting, requiring 2 weeks' notice if possible.

Digital data entry facilities

High quality, fully digital record of plans in tabular and map form will be stored in the interim centralized database being established in each municipality. Exact correlation between submitted documents and digital maps will be a pre-requisite for acceptance. MTE will provide the successful consultant with a copy of the 'Virtual Machine' relevant to each Municipality. MTE will provide training on use of the Interim Database to one or two representatives of the consultant who will then train their own staff on a train-the-trainer basis. The consultant will use this software to enter data and update the FPMP datasets as required, using their own PC equipment. At the end of the consultancy, the relevant datasets will be transferred back to the Municipality in electronic form.

Quality control

The relevant quality standards need to be adhered to throughout. More than 20% 'grave errors' will prompt conducting the FPMP process again at the expense of the consultant. This and other quality control details such as timelines to remedy errors are detailed in the 2018 FPMP guidelines.

MTE will establish a joint team from the MTE and municipality technical staff to verify that the FPMP Guidelines 2018 have been followed. As per the guidelines, the key measured field indicators will be checked to ensure the error versus quality control data is no more than +/- 10%. A quality evaluation mechanism is outlined in the guidelines, including a 10% random sample of field surveys. The ultimate focus of quality control checks will be on the digital data entered in the interim database and not on any interim deliverables. A sample of local villagers will be surveyed after the FPMP process to judge the level to which they understand the process and degree to which they were involved in the participatory planning approach. Documentation of participatory planning meetings will also be inspected. During the contract the Consultant will be expected to actively participate in at least two experience sharing and quality coordination meetings (arranged by MTE) with the successful Consultants on the other ESP FPMP contract (if the Consultant is different in each). If the 2018 guidelines are unclear in any way on the quality issue this must be raised in the inception report.

5. QUALIFICATION OF CONSULTANTS

Selection of the consultant will be conducted in accordance with the Consultants' Qualifications Based Selection (CQ) method set out in the *Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers*.

The Consulting Company must be a qualified Forest Consulting Company. The following criteria will be applied for the shortlisting of the consultant companies:

- Description of the profile of the consultant; background and personnel. (30 points)
- Proven experience in FPMP and capacity to deliver; Description of most relevant and similar work assignments and how this experience will be applied in the assignment; demonstrating appropriate experience in stakeholder engagement, gender mainstreaming, participatory planning, knowledge transfer and capacity building, inventory and assessment of forests and pastures, forest and pastures management planning, manpower management and logistics, GIS and computer-based field survey (including remote electronic devices) (60 points)
- Experience in the region or similar countries in similar assignments (10 points)

6. TEAM COMPOSITION

Key Experts are listed below. There will be flexibility to allow the roles described here to be covered by one or more individuals, as long as the total resource capacity is sufficient.

- Key expert 1 - Team Leader International: Forest Management Planning Expert: Graduated in forestry at MSc level, or any other related discipline. At least 12 years' experience in natural resources planning, forest inventory and planning, participatory planning and community engagement, management of large field survey programs and associated quality control, preferably with experience in similar regions. Good understanding of statistics, data handling, satellite/orthophoto and Lidar interpretation techniques, GIS tools and technologies.
- Key expert 2 – International Expert for quality control: Forest Management Planning Expert: Graduated in forestry, at least 15 years' experience in natural resources planning, forest inventory and planning, participatory planning and community engagement, management of large field survey programs out of which 3 or more years 'experience in quality control.
- Key expert 3 - Forest statistician expert – Graduated in forestry, mathematics or any other related field at MSc level, with at least 10 years' experience in data analysis and statistics.
- Key expert 4 - GIS expert – Graduated in geodesy or any other related field with at least 10 years of experience in Image Interpretation LIDAR information analysis, map production, reporting and training..
- Key expert 5 - Agronomist at MSc level of education, or vegetation expert for pasture inventory with at least 10 years' experience. Experience in mapping agriculture land degradation and productivity and planning standards for same;
- Key expert 6 - IT expert, graduated at BSc level or above, in informatics, physics, information technology or any other related field, with at least 10 years' general experience in management of information systems/databases, and 5 years' experience

in forest information management, field data capture, preferably with experience of Open Foris Collect.

- Key expert 7 – Stakeholder engagement expert – graduated in economics, political sciences or any other related field, with at least 5 years’ experience in the field of participatory planning, community engagement and communication.

Other experts:

- Local field survey experts - for field aspects of forest and pastures inventory and planning and data entry. Minimum of forestry degree.
- Local forest and pastures planning experts – to cover participatory planning, compilation, reporting and analysis of FPMP. Individually responsible for the quality and completeness of FPMP delivered in each FPMU. Minimum of 5 years’ experience in forest and/or pastures management and community engagement.

7. OUTPUTS

- Inception report, outlining the plan for completion of the assignment, including methods, dates and milestones. The inception report must be delivered within 30 days from the effective date of the contract. The inception report must address how the consultant will control quality of outputs and advise how independent quality control mechanisms should be established in MTE and how these should work. In English and Albanian.
- Quarterly progress reports outlining the field work, quality control and participatory planning events and outputs. In English and Albanian.
- Developed three training courses in forest and pastures inventory assessment, participatory planning and in FPMP quality control procedures. Delivered to nominees of the Municipalities and MTE with an overall limit of 60 training delivery days across the three courses. This is additional to any training the Consultant deems necessary for their own staff. Materials and delivery in Albanian.
- Report on the conduct and quality of the inventory portion of the work (in May 2020). In English and Albanian.
- Report on the conduct and quality of the participatory planning portion of the work (in March 2020). In English and Albanian.
- Completed FPMP approved by Municipality and MTE. In Albanian
- Final report, describing results achieved and lessons learned. In English and Albanian.

8. PAYMENT SCHEDULE

- 20% of contract price with signing of contract by both parties, against a bank guarantee for the same amount;
- 15% of contract price upon completion of training and field survey to an acceptable quality standard
- 50% of contract price upon approval of the FPMPs for the eleven FMUs of Korca municipality;
- 15% of contract price after acceptance of the final report.

9. DURATION AND BUDGET

It is expected the assignment will be conducted over a period of 6 months with the field survey to be completed during spring and early summer of 2020 with analysis and reporting thereafter. The estimated budget is USD 330,000.

In parallel to this contract, there will be implemented two other contracts; one contract targeting five other forest management units in Korca municipality and another contract targeting a number of forest management units in the municipality of Gramsh. The interested consultants can apply for all FPMPs assignments, but one consultant can win not more than one contract.