# Request for Proposals (RfP)

## *Fostering Water and Environmental Security in the Ma and Neun/Ca Transboundary River Basins and Related Coastal Areas*

*Welcome to this Procurement by IUCN. You are hereby invited to submit a Proposal. Please read the information and instructions carefully because non-compliance with the instructions may result in disqualification of your Proposal from this Procurement.*

1.1. A detailed description of the services and/or goods to be provided can be found in Attachment 1.

2.1. During the course of this procurement, i.e., from the publication of this RfP to the award of a contract, you may not discuss this procurement with any IUCN employee or representative other than the following contact. You must address all correspondence and questions to the contact, including your Proposal.

Dr. Rien Dam, Chief Technical Advisor, Fostering Water and Environmental Security in the Ma and Neun/Ca Transboundary River Basins and Related Coastal Areas, rien.dam@iucn.org

### *3. PROCUREMENT TIMETABLE*

3.1. This timetable is indicative and may be changed by IUCN at any time. If IUCN decides that changes to any of the deadlines are necessary, we will publish this on our website*.*

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| 8/1/2024 | Publication of the Request for Proposals |
| 18/1/2024 | Deadline for submission of questions |
| 25/1/2024 | Deadline for submission of Proposals |

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| | Evaluation and clarification of Proposals |

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| | Planned date for contract award |
| 1/4/2024 | Expected contract start date |

4.1. Your Proposal must consist of the following four separate documents:

- Signed Declaration of Undertaking (see Attachment 2)
- Pre-Qualification Information (see Section 4.3 below)
- Technical Proposal (see Section 4.4 below)
- Financial Proposal (see Section 4.5 below)

Proposals must be prepared in English.

4.2. Your Proposal must be submitted by email to the IUCN Contact (see Section 2). The subject heading of the email shall be [RfP Reference – bidder name]. The bidder's name is the name of the company/organisation on whose behalf you are submitting the Proposal, or your own surname if you are bidding as a self-employed consultant. Your Proposal must be submitted in PDF format. You may submit multiple emails suitably annotated, e.g., Email 1 of 3, if attached files are too large to suit a single email transmission. You may not submit your Proposal by uploading it to a file-sharing tool.

Submitted documents must be password-protected so that they cannot be

Only Proposals that meet all the pre-qualification criteria will be evaluated.

5.3. *Technical Evaluation*

5.3.1. *Scoring Method*

Your Proposal will be assigned a score from 0 to 10 for each of the technical evaluation criteria, such that 0 is low and 10 is high.

5.3.2. *Minimum Quality Thresholds*

Proposals that receive a score of 0 for any of the criteria will not be considered further.

5.3.3. *Technical Score*

Your score for each technical evaluation criterion will be multiplied with the respective relative weight (see Section 3.4) and these weighted scores added together to give your Proposal's overall technical score.

4.3.4 Only Technical Proposals scoring 75% and above will be considered further.

5.4. *Financial Evaluation and Financial Scores*

The maximum price that will be considered is 1,000,000 USD. Bidders proposing more than 1,000,000 USD will not be considered.

The financial evaluation will be based upon the full total price you submit. Your Financial Proposal will receive a score calculated by dividing the lowest Financial Proposal that has passed the minimum quality thresholds (see Section 5.3.2) by the total price of your Financial Proposal.

Thus, for example, if your Financial Proposal is for a total of 100 USD and the lowest Financial Proposal is 80 USD, you will receive a financial score of 80/100 = 80%

5.5. *Combined Score*

Your Proposal's combined score will be calculated as the weighted sum of your technical score and your financial score.

The relative weights will be:

Thus, for example, if your technical score is 83% and your financial score is 77%, you will receive a combined score of 83 x 70% + 77 x 30% = 58.1% + 23.1% = 81.2%.

4.6 *Interviews*

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6.3. All Proposals must be received by the submission deadline in Section 3.1 above. Late Proposals will not be considered. All Proposals received by the submission deadline will be evaluated by a team of three or more evaluators in accordance with the evaluation criteria stated in this RfP. No other criteria will be used to evaluate Proposals. The contract will be awarded to the bidder whose Proposal received the highest Total Score. IUCN does, however, reserve the right to cancel the procurement and not award a contract at all.

6.4. IUCN will contact the bidder with the highest-scoring Proposal to finalise the contract. We will contact unsuccessful bidders after the contract has been awarded and provide detailed feedback. The timetable in Section 3.1 gives an estimate of when we expect to have completed the contract award, but this date may change depending on how long the evaluation of Proposals takes.

- It is unacceptable to give or offer any gift or consideration to an employee or other representative of IUCN as a reward or inducement in relation to the awarding of a contract.

IUCN provides a neutral space in which diverse stakeholders including governments, NGOs, scientists, businesses, local communities, indigenous peoples' organisations and others can work together to forge and implement solutions to environmental challenges and achieve sustainable development.

Working with many partners and supporters, IUCN implements a large and diverse portfolio of conservation projects worldwide. Combining the latest science with the traditional knowledge of local communities, these projects work to reverse habitat loss, restore ecosystems and improve people's well-being.

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management, and resolving conflicts at the food, energy, and environment nexus. The project will adopt the source-to-sea (S2S) approach, link with ongoing initiatives dealing with sectoral aspects, and directly inform the design, assessment, and planning of a range of investments in these sectors. It will represent a basis upon which to build transboundary cooperation, sound river basin management frameworks, strengthen water and environmental security and gender equality.

***Proposals are being sought to complete the five outputs that contribute to Outcome 1.***

***The price for this activity shall not exceed 1,000,000 USD.***

Under this Outcome, the main result will be the transboundary diagnostic analysis reports for each of the two shared river basins and agreed corresponding Environmental Status Indicators (ESIs) endorsed by both governments. To achieve this Outcome, the following Outputs will be delivered:

*Science-based assessments of the current state of freshwater resources (surface and groundwater) and of their dependent ecosystems, including technical assessments (e.g., sediments, fisheries, biodiversity, and forest fire risk), governance, and gender.*

The assessments will be conducted in the two basins and related coastal areas by the Consultants in close consultation with a Joint Technical Committee (JTC) composed of Lao and Vietnamese specialists. It will adopt a methodology harmonized across the national segments of the basin in the two project countries and will focus on the surface and groundwater resources both unconfined and confined. Adopting an S2S approach, it will aim at providing a systematic and homogenous review of the existing resource base and of its current state and utilization. The work will consist of the collection of information by national and regional expert teams. They will focus on:

- Existence and spatial distribution of aquifers (and, in the case of transboundary aquifers, their mutual recognition by countries sharing them). The imperative of making aquifers “visible” requires that each aquifer system is, to the extent possible, represented two dimensionally on a map. Such a map contains its approximate boundaries, and recharge and discharge areas including dependent ecosystems, and three dimensionally in geologic cross-sections of the subsurface, indicating the approximate geometry of the aquifer, its varying depth, its relations with aquitards and aquicludes, the major tectonic discontinuities and preferential permeability pathways and barriers.
- Current state (quality, quantity, including sedimentation and determined using best-practice water accounting approaches) of the freshwater resources (surface and groundwater) and of their dependent ecosystems (lakes, wetlands, coastal lagoons, humid zones, inland fisheries).
- Uses of water: those based on formal rights, generally held by larger users (industry, large farms, etc.); indications of the minor uses based on customary rights to abstract small quantities of water.
- Impacts at both the transboundary and the national levels of floods (including flash floods) and drought dynamics (including agricultural drought and forest fires) under current and likely future scenarios.
- Point and non-point pollution sources and hotspots, with emphasis on nutrients.
- Socio-economic assessments, including poverty, gender, and governance.
- Driving factors of deforestation.
- Status of climate change and biodiversity.
- Competing water-food-energy-ecosystems uses and nexus dimensions.

In addition to the information derived from national and regional sources and expert networks, newly collected data from satellite image processing will in some cases be utilized to fill gaps in information coverage, complementing/extrapolating available information, producing projections and scenarios, and identifying parameters to be monitored over time.

This activity can utilize relevant FAO tools and methodology, including the FAO sourcebook on water accounting and auditing (http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5923e.pdf), the irrigation-focused MASSCOTE method (Mapping System and Services for Canal Operation Techniques; http://www.fao.org/land-water/news-archive/news-detail/en/c/267321/) and the complementing MASSMUS method (http://www.fao.org/3/i3414e/i3414e.pdf), FAO's Collect Earth tool (http://www.fao.org/land-water/land/land-governance/land-resources-planning-toolbox/category/details/en/c/1026549/) for land monitoring, and the FAO model MOSAICC for the assessment of climate change impacts on agriculture (http://www.fao.org/in-action/mosaicc/en/).

*Comparison analysis of current trends and projected scenarios*

Current climate change trends and existing development plans and strategies, with a particular focus on hydropower and irrigation, will be assessed against the imperatives of flood mitigation, drought preparedness and mitigation, protection of environmental values and of ecosystem services, and resolution of nexus conflicts, considering both national and transboundary implications.

Scenario development typically involves the following elements:

(i) Characterization of the current situation, including gender issues, with a diagnosis of the starting state of the scenarios, focused on the focal issue or problem under consideration (water and climate adaptation in this case);

(ii) Identification of ma

for the Lao provinces of Huaphanh and Xieng Khouang compared to the Vietnamese provinces. During the project preparation phase, both countries emphasized the relevance of the Ma and Neun/Ca river basins for national conservation and biodiversity strategies, and the need to understand the complexity of social-ecological dynamics for developing sustainable basin development plans. Designing in this context effective strategies for responding to increasing flood and drought risks was identified of paramount importance to both countries. Addressing droughts was a topic that gained relevance for both countries if compared to the initial PIF consultations. Consequently, Lao PDR requested adding forest fire risk and forest fire management to the scope of the TDA.

This step can build on a wide range of FAO methods and tools, including MASSCOTE, MASSMUT, and the MOSAICC model. The project will aim to complete TDA early in the project, preferably by end of year 1 and at least by mid-term of the project to allow digestion of its content and then serve as the base for consultations and agreement on the Strategic Action Program (SAP). The project will ensure that the process strongly builds on available local experts/ institutional information in Viet Nam and Lao PDR. The execution agency will assemble a team of best suited local and international experts. TDA process will also be used as a process to build national capacities and for south-south cooperation between two countries.

*Agreement reached on a limited number of key Environmental Status Indicators (ESI)*

Agreement is reached for both basins among relevant governmental entities, the science community and all major stakeholders, on a limited set of indicators characterizing the status of the freshwater environment, including the baseline conditions/values as they emerge from the assessments and the TDAs, covering water quality and quantity, health of dependent ecosystems, governance and socio-economic factors including gender aspects. These indicators will allow us to assess long-term impacts of human interventions and mitigation measures and will stay in use beyond GEF- funded intervention.

Examples of ESI (from GEF, 2002):

- Improved (measurable) ecological or biological indices.
- Improved (measurable) chemical, physical (including flow regimes), or biological parameters.
- Improved recruitment classes of targeted fish species, diversity, or keystone species.
- Demonstrable reduction of persistent organic pollutants (POPs) in the food chain.
- Changes in local community income and social conditions because of improvements in environmental conditions.
- Demonstrable recovery of key flagship species or values because of changed rule (operating) curves for dams or vegetative response from wetland re-inundation.
- Increased stakeholder awareness and documented stakeholder involvement.

The Consultants will work with the JTC to discuss and prioritize issues under this Output. During the project preparation phase, stakeholders emphasized the relevance of biodiversity indicators in the context of development pressures (e.g., irrigation expansion, hydropower) and climate change (e.g., droughts). The governments of both countries agreed that this project would need to reduce habitat loss for key species. The specification of indicators can be guided by FAO's agro-ecology knowledge hub (http://www.fao.org/agroecology/overview/our-work/en/), the MASSMUT method, and IUCN's Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) protocol (https://www.iucn.org/commissions/world-commission-protected-areas/our ar

*Declaration of Undertaking (select 2a for companies or 2b for self-employed as applicable to you)*

*Contract Template*