



Terms of Reference

CNF/2022/GEO

KEY INFORMATION

Functional title:	National Consultant to support the development of the concept, business model and development plan for an institutionalized national or regional approach to build the technical capacity of Protected Area management and rangers of Georgia and Armenia (“Ranger Academy”)
Duty station:	Home-based with possible visits to MEPA, APA and other relevant institutions if any
Duration of assignment:	Up to 4 months (2 months for the Phase 1; up to 2 months for the Phase 2)
Starting date:	December 2022
Type of contract	Consultancy Services Provider; Lump-sum, delivery-based
Application procedure:	The full Application Package should be sent to recruiting@caucasus-naturefund.org , marked as “National Consultant – Ranger Academy Concept and Development Plan”
Application Deadline	COB Tbilisi, Georgia (UTC/GMT +4h) on November 30th 2022
For additional information:	Mr. Tobias Muenchmeyer Executive Director, at tmuenchmeyer@caucasus-naturefund.org Cc: lkalmakhelidze@caucasus-naturefund.org

BACKGROUND OF CNF AND FOCUS OF CONSULTANCY

The Caucasus Nature Fund (CNF) is a conservation trust fund founded in 2007 with the support and encouragement of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through the German Development Bank KfW, Conservation International (CI), and World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Germany.

By providing long-term funding and management assistance to help meet the core needs for Protected Areas (PAs) in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, CNF supports the conservation of the unique flora, fauna and ecosystems of the Caucasus for future generations, while at the same time improving the lives of local people today.

CNF’s support to PAs ensures that basic needs are met through supplements to operational and personnel expenses, and that capacities are strengthened to ensure an improved management of PAs in addressing poaching, logging and other illegal activities and threats, in monitoring flora and fauna species diversity and the health of natural ecosystems, in education of the public, and in promoting eco-tourism and sustainable development.

PROJECT FRAMEWORK

The Supervisory Board of the CNF has approved CNF's Mid-Term Strategy for 2022-2026 in July 2022. One of the Long-Term Objectives of this Strategy is, that "by 2030 the quality of PA management and Staff (Rangers) in CNF PAs achieve recognized and accepted international standards." And for the mid-term this objective has been translated into the following two mid-term goals: "By 2026 management quality is significantly improved, by 10 points according to METT on average across all PAs supported by CNF in 2021"; "In 2026 70% of Rangers in CNF supported PAs are qualified and trained according to recognized and accepted international standards as defined by the Chitwan Declaration."¹

To achieve this, CNF will provide technical support to the Government of Georgia (and potentially later to the Governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan) for building the technical capacity and qualifications of PA management and staff (rangers).

OUTLINE OF CONSULTANCY

One of the main challenges threatening the success of protecting biodiversity in protected areas in the Caucasus is the lack of expertise of personnel at both management and rangers' level. Since its set-up in 2008, the Caucasus Nature Fund (CNF) has taken various efforts to build the capacity of Protected Areas management and other personnel in the Southern Caucasus. Among others the following elements have improved the skills and the motivation of personnel over years:

- Professionalization of management / management plans
- Financial compensation in the form of salary top-ups, food allowances and insurance fees
- Trainings (offline and online)
- Ranger shelters for overnight stays in the field; and
- Professional equipment (cars, binoculars, better uniforms etc.)

All these measures have contributed to improving the capacity and skills of PA personnel in both Georgia and Armenia significantly in recent years. However, many PAs still suffer from a high turn-over of ranger and other staff (natural resource specialists etc) which sometimes stems from lack of opportunities to grow professionally and learn new skills within the organizations.

SCOPE OF WORK

Therefore, CNF is aiming to explore - as part of its new 2022-2026 Strategy - options for setting up a **Caucasus Ranger Academy** (working title) to be based in Georgia which should

- Train new rangers with skills and expertise (incl., in addition to patrolling techniques and skills, basic knowledge in biology and ecology, biodiversity monitoring/surveillance skills, basic understanding of legal issues, first aid and ranger safety, outreach skills, and basic knowledge of English to interact with visitors and international experts) according to recognized and accepted international standards;
- Provide advanced training to experienced rangers and to further improve, standardize and certify their skills and expertise, with official recognition from Ministry of Education and Science and IUCN;

¹ The Chitwan Declaration defines a detailed list of needs and priorities for rangers and has been adopted at the 9th World Ranger Congress in 2019. The Chitwan Declaration is also supported by WWF.

https://www.internationalrangers.org/wp-content/uploads/Chitwan-Declaration_2019_EN.pdf

https://wwf.panda.org/wwf_news/press_releases/?364767/New-Deal-for-Conservation-Rangers-Signals-a-Critical-Step-for-the-Planets-Health

- Potentially initiate networking across borders (through exchange programs with European and Central Asia countries as well as between Southern Caucasian countries (Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan)); and
- Provide advanced management training to senior PA personnel.

As a first step we want to work out a Concept for such a Caucasus Ranger Academy which

- Identifies the exact needs of such an institution
- Identifies stakeholders, partners and legal set-up
- Outlines a general “curriculum” for such a Caucasus Ranger Academy
- Identifies various options for the location of such a Caucasus Ranger Academy (potentially close to or in the territory of one PA in Georgia)
- Considers whether the Caucasus Ranger Academy is the right model or whether a base institution with a branch in Armenia and ultimately in Azerbaijan would be more effective

For this consultancy CNF intends to commission a **National Consultant/Company (NC)**, contracted under a Consultancy Service Agreement, the overall objective of which is formulated as:

To develop a Concept assessing options for introducing an institutionalized educational and training setup – working title “Caucasus Ranger Academy” - for the PA system in Georgia which can potentially be broadened or replicated to / for Armenia and Azerbaijan.

During the consultancy, the NC will assess the current practices of educational and training for the Georgian PA system at large, including the analysis of its institutional setup², operations as appropriate – protocols, indicators, outcomes, and describe the strengths and weaknesses, discrepancies and barriers. Also, the NC will analyze ongoing initiatives to improve education and training in PAs – features, extent, strengths and weaknesses, lessons learned.

The work of the **NC** will be supported by work of an **International Expert (IE)**, which should be proposed by the **NC** as a team member and considered in the budget as well, to conduct an analysis of a variety of relevant international experiences and best practice options/schemes and approaches for education and training of PA staff (incl. IUCN, WPCA Capacity Development Group (for rangers)).

Guided by in-country stakeholder consultations, the in-depth review of the current challenges – legal institutional and organizational, human, financial-economic etc. - to improve education and training for PA staff in Georgia, as well as the analysis of international best practice experiences and lessons learned in relevant countries across the world, the Contractor shall identify and elaborate a specific set of options/models (at least 3) for strengthening the education and training capacity of Georgia’s PA system, through the institutionalizing of a “Caucasus Rangers Academy”. The proposed options should aim to ensure that the management quality at PAs is significantly improved, and that rangers primarily in CNF supported PAs (and beyond) are qualified and trained according to recognized and accepted international standards.

For each of the solutions proposed, the NC shall analyze their appropriateness to effectively improve the qualification in Georgia’s PAs system, describing in detail the envisioned institutional setup, resources required (human, technical, financial, logistic etc.), organizational arrangements, as well as management, advisory and decision-making responsibilities to be designated. In this, the proposed solution is envisioned to act as the coordinating mechanism for the implementation of the government policies on education and training of PA staff.

² CNF plans to commission a separate study for the analysis of institutional set-up of Georgian PA system; NC will be expected to closely coordinate with this process in case it happens during the same time.

The consultancy is envisioned to be implemented in two phases: during **Phase-I**, the NC will (i) assess the current practices of education and training in PAs and the PA system at large (including all relevant international donor initiated opportunities; (ii) analyze ongoing initiatives to improve education and training in PAs – features, extent, strengths and weaknesses, lessons learned; (iii) support the analysis of international best practice solutions of institutionalized PA education and training set-up; and (iv) describe a set of most realistic options/models for establishing an institutionalized national and regional education and training approach in Georgia, taking the political circumstances and the local technical and financial capacities into consideration.

The work of the NC during this phase will include in-depth consultations with all relevant stakeholders, including projects, programs and major donors who support education and training for PA staff in Georgia, including but not limited to the Biodiversity and Forest Department (BFD), Environmental Information and Education Center (EIEC) of the MEPA, the Ministry of Science and Education, the APA, USAID, USFS, GIZ, CNF, WWF and others.

During **Phase-II**, the Contractor shall present the set of envisioned most suitable options/models at a stakeholder consultation workshop.

Specifically, in the framework of the Consultancy, the following activities are envisioned for implementation by the NC:

PHASE 1

- Conduct stakeholder group meetings and workshops; conduct individual key informant interviews, for which appropriate standardized questionnaires shall be designed and used.
- Collect information on ongoing or planned initiatives in relation to education and training of PA staff in PAs and on a national level.
- Oversee the analysis of relevant international experience and best practice options/schemes on education and training of PA staff for national PA systems by the IE, specifically contribute to the elaboration of strengths and weaknesses, lessons learned, and assessment of best-practice solutions potentially suitable for introduction in Georgia.
- Draft a discussion paper with general descriptions of at least 3 recommended, most appropriate options/models for achieving an institutionalized educational and training set-up – the “Caucasus Ranger Academy” - for PAs in Georgia and the Caucasus. The description of each option/model shall include a brief SWOT analysis as well as some of basics of the envisioned legal status, organizational-institutional setup, management and operational structure other important aspects that will be further elaborated at the 2nd phase.

PHASE 2

- Present the priority options/models described in the discussion paper, including a critical comparative analysis, at a stakeholder consultation workshop for discussion. Based on the presentation and discussions, stakeholders will take a decision on the preferred option for further elaboration. The NC shall prepare the minutes of the consultation workshop, including the agreed justification for the priority solution proposed.
- Draft a detailed Concept and development plan for the preferred model of institutionalized education and training set-up for PAs agreed during the stakeholder consultation meeting. The description of each option/model shall include a SWOT analysis as well as elaborated details of the envisioned legal status, organizational-institutional setup, management and operational structure and arrangements, costs-benefit analysis, financial, technical and human capacities required, sustainability, opportunities for partnerships and other important aspects.
- Support the drafting of ToRs for the implementation of development plan, as necessary.

DELIVERABLES

PHASE 1

- **Work Plan and description of approach:** The NC will prepare a concise description of the envisioned approach and methodology to implement activities under the assignment, including on envisioned stakeholder consultations planned, as well as a description of the proposed interaction with, and support required from/by, the IE, proposed timeline for consultations, draft Table of Content for any report prepared under the assignment.
- **Discussion paper proposing the most relevant options for introducing an institutionalized education and training set-up for PA staff in Georgia:** The paper will present a detailed description of the most appropriate options/models for introducing an institutionalized education and training approach for PA staff in Georgia, including SWOT analysis, description of legal status, institutional setup, organizational and operational model, costs-benefit analysis, financial, technical and human capacities required, sustainability, opportunities for partnerships and other important aspects.

PHASE 2

- **Minutes of the stakeholder consultation workshop:** The Minutes shall summarize the presentation of proposed options/models, the discussions held, and the priority solution agreed by the stakeholders for introducing an institutionalized education and training approach for PA staff in Georgia. The Minutes of the stakeholder meeting will present the justification for the priority solution proposed for further elaboration.
- **Concept and detailed development plan for the institutionalized education and training solution prioritized by stakeholders:** For the model of institutionalized education and training agreed during the stakeholder consultation workshop, the NC shall draft a Concept and development plan, providing recommendations on e.g. legal status, institutional structure, organizational and operational model, human and technical capacities required, sustainability, partnerships/potential partners, operational cost estimation and future upscaling to the PA system in the Southern Caucasus, etc.

Any qualitative descriptive information and quantitative data presented in any report shall be maximally supported by tables, graphs and (geo-referenced) maps, as appropriate, containing all available quantitative and/or geographic information on issues related to the subject of the consultancy.

Any report shall include a complete list of literature consulted, including peer-reviewed publications, project reports, internal PA reports, and others as appropriate. Also reports shall include relevant annexes with detailed descriptions of practical activities implemented: minutes of stakeholder meetings, listing of stakeholders consulted, etc.

The language for notices, instructions, and other formal messages between CNF and the Consultant under this Agreement shall be English. The language for all reports shall be English and Georgian, except Workplan and Description of the Approach which should be delivered in English.

PRELIMINARY WORK AND PAYMENT SCHEDULE

The following activities and deliverables apply according to the tentative time schedule:

Phases and Deliverables	1	2	3	4
Month	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23
1) Work Plan and description of approach	*			
2) Discussion paper		*		
3) Minutes of stakeholder consultation workshop		*		
4) Concept and detailed Development plan				*

IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

For the implementation of the consultancy, CNF intends to commission a consultancy team – one individual **National Consultant/Company** with one **International Expert** in the team.

Under the consultancy assignment, the following overall division of responsibilities is envisioned for the NC and IE, respectively:

National Consultant/Company (NC)

The NC will act as the designated coordinator of the Consultancy. The NC will appoint a Team Leader (TL) who will bear key responsibility for the successful implementation of the consultancy, providing supervision and guidance to any staff and/or National experts (NEs) engaged during the assignment, as well as providing management support to the core/coordination team. Specifically, the NC and its TL will:

- Bear overall responsibility for the contractual consultancy activities, including its technical aspects as well as administrative and logistical work, during the duration of the assignment, in close harmonious cooperation with the IE, and coordination with CNF.
- Take the lead in the assessment of current practices and projects for education and training for PA staff (incl. US experts provided trainings, GEF 2009-12, Iliya State University, Telavi State University ran a program, GIZ (for forestry rangers in Javakheti (Akhaltsikhe)), the preparation of summary descriptions of suitable options for introducing an institutionalized approach to education and training for PA staff in Georgia; and critical comparative analysis of these selected options.
- Accept a leadership role for the NC during the stakeholder consultations, presentation of results, other meetings, missions, site visits, etc. as appropriate.
- Take the lead in preparing a Concept and detailed development plan for the organizational-institutional setup model selected and agreed by the main stakeholders.
- Assume the role of coordinator and lead assembler for written deliverables, coordinating the input from the IE and additional NE(s) as needed, maintaining close contacts with CNF, BFD, APA and/or the PA authorities.

International Expert (IE)

The IE has the overall responsibility for providing backstopping support to the NE/NC during the consultancy assignment, in line with the approach and division of responsibilities to be agreed at the start of the consultancy. Specifically, the IE will:

- Provide active input and technical expertise for/during stakeholder meetings (mainly online); conduct individual key informant interviews as appropriate (mainly online);
- Provide expertise on relevant international experience and best practice options/schemes on institutional set-ups for education and training for PA staff applied in various countries;
- Provide expertise in reviewing options proposed for introducing an institutionalized education and training approach for PA staff in Georgia;
- Provide support to the NE in preparing written deliverables, specifically drafting of a Concept and detailed development plan for the model of institutionalized education and training set-up agreed during the stakeholder meeting.

BUDGET

For the complete and satisfactory completion of the Consultancy and tasks specified in this TOR, CNF shall make available a lump-sum of up negotiable according to the qualifications and experience of the Contractor in consideration of the listed requirements.

Any applicant is requested to submit a financial offer presented as a detailed breakdown of costs envisioned. The breakdown of costs shall, in addition to fees for the TL and any envisioned additional NE(s) and support staff, as relevant, as well as any taxes, overhead, any translations of reports, and other relevant costs. As relevant, the breakdown of costs shall also include any costs for the organization of envisioned workshops and presentations, for which venue facilities will be provided free-of-charge by a PA authority or APA, and APA and CNF will provide advisory and logistical support for identifying and inviting relevant participants.

KEY QUALIFICATIONS

National Consultant/Company (NC)

- MDS or equivalent in environmental science and or education sector
- At least 5 years of practical working experience in institutional review and assessment of staff capacities, training needs assessment, etc., including demonstrated active leadership and/or participation in the preparation and/or evaluation of capacity assessment studies and/or the formulation of capacity building strategies.
- The composition of the team proposed should have experts knowledgeable and experienced in organizational development and protected areas management. Ideally, the team will have a) *one expert with academic education and training background in development studies, education, social studies, human resources management or related field augmented with solid understanding of PA/natural resources management, biodiversity conservation* supported by b) *one expert with academic education in nature conservation, ecology, biodiversity, landscape management, or related field and practical experience in PA management augmented with solid understanding of capacity assessment and/or development.*
- Proven analytical skills; strong verbal and written communication skills; demonstrated technical report writing skills; experience with hands-on capacity building and training is an asset.

- Relevant knowledge on the status, organization, functional responsibilities and operationality of the system of PAs of Georgia; specific knowledge of, and working experience with, APA and target PAs is an important asset.
- Experience of working with EIEC, BFD and or MEPA as well as NGOs involved in the sector would be an asset.
- Ability to deal with multistakeholder community.
- Knowledge of national concept for vocational education would be an asset.
- Fluency in speaking and writing in Georgian; good command of English in speaking and writing.

International Expert/Consultant

- MDS or equivalent in environmental science and or education sector
- At least 10 years of working experience with international organizations, projects and donors
- Experience in conducting institutional assessment and development plans, capacity needs analyses and capacity building plan, planning and setting training centers etc.;
- Knowledge of international best practices for vocational education is a strong asset.
- Good communication skills and ability to deal with multistakeholder community
- Working experience in Georgia or in Armenia would be an asset.
- Experience of working with APA, EIEC, BFD and or MEPA as well as national or international NGOs involved in the sector would be an asset.
- Strong command and reporting skills in English.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Any costs or expenses incurred in preparing the application are at the applicant's risk and are not eligible for reimbursement by CNF.

In the Application Package, the NC shall include staff and/or NEs as appropriate, including their CV, a description of tasks and responsibilities, signed declaration on cooperation and specifying anticipated costs per NE (fees and direct expenditures) in the breakdown of costs. The NC shall also propose a TL, who, during implementation of the consultancy assignment, shall bear full responsibility for the services provided by any staff member and/or NE engaged in implementation of the assignment.

The individual NC signing an Individual Consultancy Service Agreement with CNF shall do so in the capacity of an independent contractor. Any signatory of an Individual Consultancy Services Agreement will not be considered as an employee of CNF, and accordingly will be personally responsible for the payment of taxes according to relevant legislation.

MODE OF APPLICATION

Applicants - National Consultants/Companies registered in Georgia - are requested to submit a full Application Package in the English language, including the following:

- Cover Letter, explaining the relevant qualifications, experience and skills of the applicant;
- Detailed Description of Approach (max. 3-5 pages) to deliver the outcomes sought, including an understanding of the work required, comments on the TOR and activities proposed (if any), proposed approach and methodology, main implementation activities, etc. as considered relevant;
- Full CV of the TL, IE and any NE proposed, as relevant;

- Detailed Financial Proposal, including a breakdown of costs – individual fees per NE, travel, translation, overhead, any applicable VAT or other taxes, other costs (to be specified in detail), etc. - in EUR;
- Contact details for two referees (who will not be approached without permission).