



## Terms of Reference

### CNF/2024/GEO-TAGA

#### KEY INFORMATION

<b>Functional title</b>	<b>Supporting the Development and Piloting of Ecotourism Products and Services for Local Population Living Neary Protected Areas</b> <i>(Follow-up activity of the trainings conducted with the support in CNF in 2023)</i>
<b>Project</b>	UNDP-GEF PIMS6138 “Enhancing financial sustainability of the Protected Areas system in Georgia”
<b>Duty station:</b>	Home-based with missions to Tbilisi and target PAs as relevant
<b>Duration of assignment:</b>	8 months; 25 <sup>th</sup> March 2024 to 25 <sup>th</sup> November 2024
<b>Starting date:</b>	25 <sup>th</sup> March 2024, or as soon as possible thereafter
<b>Type of contract</b>	Delivery-based
<b>Application procedure:</b>	The full Application Package should be sent to <a href="mailto:recruiting@caucasus-naturefund.org">recruiting@caucasus-naturefund.org</a> , marked as “Supporting Local Ecotourism Products and Services”
<b>Application deadline:</b>	COB Tbilisi, Georgia (UTC/GMT +4h) on 11 March 2024
<b>For additional information:</b>	Ms. Mariam Sulkhaniashvili, Conservation and Social Officer <a href="mailto:msulkhaniashvili@caucasus-naturefund.org">msulkhaniashvili@caucasus-naturefund.org</a>

#### BACKGROUND OF CNF

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 WWF.

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, in monitoring flora and fauna species diversity and the health of natural ecosystems, in education of the public, and in promoting tourism and sustainable development.

#### PROJECT FRAMEWORK

The GEF/UNDP project “Enhancing financial sustainability of the Protected Areas (PA) system in Georgia” is a 5 year “technical assistance” project financed by the GEF through the United Nations

Development Programme (UNDP) in Georgia, with resources allocated from the GEF Operational Program for Biodiversity.

The project objective is “To secure long-term financial sustainability and effective management to conserve globally significant biodiversity of target protected areas in Georgia”. Through the project, GEF incremental support will significantly contribute to enhancing the financial sustainability, and with it the management effectiveness, of target PAs, as such improving the Government’s ability to improve the status of biodiversity and ecosystem services through managing an effective system of PAs, as agreed to under national plans and international commitments. By increasing financial resources, especially from domestic revenue, and improved management effectiveness of target PAs, the project will contribute to reducing threats to, and improving the in-situ conservation status of identified globally threatened biodiversity in target PAs that meet established criteria for Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs).

To achieve this, the project will provide technical support to the Government of Georgia (GoG) with the implementation of activities under its three components: (i) Financial sustainability of sub-system of PAs representing Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs); (ii) Improved management and financial effectiveness demonstrated for targeted large-scale PAs; and (iii) Knowledge Management and monitoring and evaluation.

## **OUTLINE OF CONSULTANCY**

Ecotourism products and services development around Protected Areas can be crucial for local communities as it can bring a range of social, economic, and environmental benefits. Developed ecotourism creates economic opportunities, such as generating new employment opportunities for local residents, the jobs may include: tour guides, hospitality staff, drivers, artisans producing locally crafted goods and others. Generation of income is also noteworthy economic opportunity for locals. Income may be generated through accommodations, restaurants, transportation services or others. Handicrafts, traditional art, and cultural performances can be showcased and sold, contributing to the preservation of cultural heritage. Ecotourism often involves interactions between visitors of PAs and locals, fostering cultural exchange. This exchange can help preserve and promote local traditions, languages, and customs. Ecotourism promotes environmental awareness and education. Visitors become more conscious of the importance of conservation, and the community can actively participate in educating visitors about the local ecosystem. Local communities may have a stake in ecotourism enterprises, ensuring that they have a say in decision-making processes and a share in the economic benefits. By diversifying sources of income of locals through ecotourism, communities can become less vulnerable to economic downturns possibly associated with the creation or development of PAs. Interaction with visitors can lead to increased cultural appreciation and understanding, enriching the lives of local residents. Overall, ecotourism service development, when approached responsibly and sustainably, has the potential to create a positive cycle of benefits for local communities, protected areas, the environment, and the visitors themselves.

Four thematic trainings were held in regards of local ecotourism products and services development in 2023 under the UNDP/GEF project with CNF financial support:

1. **Traditional handicraft product business and its potential on market and basic tendencies** – 3 days training was held in September 2023 in village Kvemo Alvani. It included theoretical and practical trainings, and participants visited local handicraft enterprises and met with entrepreneurs, sharing their experiences. Handicraft masters living in the vicinity of Tusheti National Park, Tusheti Protected Landscape, Vashlovani Protected Areas, Lagodekhi Protected

Areas, Machakhela protected areas, Kazbegi National Park, Algeti National Park participated in the training.

2. **Organic Agriculture and Agro-tourism** – 3 days training was held in September 2023 on different locations, training included the following themes: Protected areas of Georgia/Sami Alazni Biosphere Reserve; introduction of bio production and tourist offers in agro-tourism farms; the elements of the agrotourism system and their interrelationship, the main functions and responsibilities of the parties involved in agritourism; diversification and standards of the concept of agro-tourism destination and related activities; customer service, agritourism service quality standard and guest safety issues. The participants also visited agro-tourism facilities.
3. **Horse Tourism** – training was held in Lost Ridge ranch in village Qedeli. The training lasted for 3 days and included both theoretical and practical training. It was attended by people living in the surrounding areas of Lagodekhi, Tusheti Protected Landscape and Tusheti National Park, Kazbegi National Park, Borjom-Kharagauli National Park, who are involved in equestrian tourism.
4. **Arrangement and management of Guest Houses** - The training was held on November 18-20 in the village Kvemo Alvani. The training mainly covered theoretical and practical issues of organizing and managing guest houses. The participants also visited guest houses in the Pankisi valley and got acquainted with their offers. They were in the local brewery, which makes non-alcoholic beer from dog-rose and hawthorn. Finally, they tasted the local cuisine. They showed special interest in the issues of financial and project budgeting of family tourism business management. Owners of family hotels living in the vicinity of Lagodekhi, Tusheti Protected Landscape, Tusheti National Park, Kazbegi National Park, Algeti National Park, Pshav-Khevsureti National Park participated in the training.

At the end of the training series, one of the recommendations was to plan and support the piloting of local ecotourism products and/services in these four thematic directions (Traditional handicraft; Organic Agriculture and Agro-tourism; Horse Tourism Arrangement and management of Guest Houses amongst the participants of the trainings as a follow up activity.

## SCOPE OF WORK

Pursuant to the Project Document agreed between UNDP and the GoG, and in line with the Responsible Party Agreement signed between UNDP and CNF, for this Technical Assistance CNF intends to commission a national organization.

The **overall objective** of this Technical Assistance is to identify and support in piloting of small-scale project ideas aimed at the development of ecotourism products and/or services for the participants of the trainings conducted with the support of CNF in September-November 2023.

More precisely, the Technical Assistance will familiarize themselves with the outcomes and outputs of the training program on local ecotourism product/services development for local communities that took place in 2023 with the support of the organization “Georgia Protected Areas Friends Association” and afterwards develop approach for the piloting phase. The latter implies a) **the identification** of

concrete ideas for small scale projects to be piloted around the topics covered within the training program<sup>1</sup>, b) **support in the piloting** of selected project ideas.

NOTE: It will be the task of technical assistance provider to developed and agree with CNF the transparent and fair process while selecting the project ideas for piloting. Maximum 4 project ideas should be selected and piloted, preferably one under each topic of the training.

The following phases should be carried out by the Technical Assistance:

**Phase 1: Inception Phase:** At this stage, the Technical Assistance learns in depths the outcomes and outputs of the training program conducted in 2023 and develops approach and detailed plan for the selection and piloting of some of the small -scale project ideas that will support the development of local ecotourism products and services. The suggested approach and detailed plan should guarantee a transparent and fair process during the selection of potential pilot project ideas. At this stage, it is expected that the Technical Assistance consults with CNF, the organization that supported CNF to conduct the training program for locals on ecotourism products development (Georgia Protected Areas Friends Association), local communities, respective PA administration representatives and all other relevant stakeholders.

**Deliverable 1: Inception Report**, with a clean outline of the approach (including transparent and fair process and criteria for selection of project ideas) and action plan (including timetable) for selection and piloting; the report will summarize the consultations with stakeholders; photo and other visual materials will be provided as well.

**Phase 2: Small Grant announcement and selection of successful applicants** the Technical Assistance provider, based on the approach and action plan developed on Phase 1 and agreed with CNF, will develop and agree with CNF grant terms and conditions and prepare all the documents needed for the announcement; afterwards the applications will be reviewed carefully together with CNF and successful applicants will be selected based on a transparent and fair process. The selection process should be explained and justified in Award Memo Document. The agreement between technical assistance provider and grant recipients shall be prepared and signed by both parties.

**Deliverable 2:** Progress report describing selection process, criteria, terms and conditions for selection of the projects for piloting phase, describing grant announcement and selection process, including, justification of the selection, agreed budget per each selected project and next steps for implementation.

**Phase 3: Implementation of grant program and monitoring:** Technical Assistance provider shall support and oversight the implementation of selected pilot projects and regularly inform CNF on progress (via emails, online and physical meetings). The technical assistance provider shall prepare the final report including all the activities implemented during the project. The Assistance provider will propose and implement the appropriate format of sharing the piloting result to a wider audience (i.e. meeting, exhibition, media coverage etc).

**Deliverable 3: Final Report** on implementation of pilot projects describing in details the main outcomes and outputs as well as challenges faced during the implementation. The report should be supported with visual materials and provide details on how the results were shared with a wider public. It should also recommend the next steps for the sustainability of the piloted projects.

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<sup>1</sup> 1.Traditional handicraft; 2. Organic Agriculture and Agro-tourism; 3. Horse tourism; 4. Arrangement and management of Guest Houses

**DELIVERABLES**

The following deliverables will be submitted by the Technical Assistance Provider to CNF:

- (1) **Deliverable 1: Inception Report**, with a clean outline of the approach (including transparent and fair process and criteria for selection of project ideas) and action plan (including timetable) for selection and piloting; the report will summarize the consultations with stakeholders; photo and other visual materials will be provided as well.
- (2) **Deliverable 2:** Progress report describing selection process, criteria, terms and conditions for selection of the projects for piloting phase, describing grant announcement and selection process, including, justification of the selection, agreed budget per each selected project and next steps for implementation.
- (3) **Deliverable 3:** Final Report on implementation of pilot projects describing in details the main outcomes and outputs as well as challenges faced during the implementation. The report should be supported with visual materials and provide details on how the results were shared with a wider public. It should also recommend the next steps for the sustainability of the piloted projects.

The language for notices, instructions, and other formal messages between CNF and the Technical Assistance Provider under this Agreement shall be Georgian. The languages for the reports shall be Georgian and English languages.

**PRELIMINARY WORK SCHEDULE**

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

Activities and Deliverables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Month	March	Apr	May	Jun	July	August	Sept	Oct
Inception Phase and Inception Report								
Grant announcement and selection and Progress report								
Implementation Phase and Final Report								

**BUDGET**

For the complete and satisfactory completion of the Consultancy and tasks specified in this TOR, CNF shall agree a lump-sum payment with the organization/LLC, negotiable according to the qualifications and experience of the consultancy team in consideration of the listed requirements, as well as the further detailing of the work program and approach proposed in the Application Package.

The lump-sum shall include a detailed breakdown of costs for all fee payments to work under the assignment, per diems, travel costs, taxes, overhead, etc., as to be specified in financial offer submitted as part of the Application Package.

## **KEY REQUIREMENTS FOR ORGANIZATIONS**

The following is required for Technical Assistance providers:

- At least 3 years of experience in field of eco-tourism development;
- Demonstrated ability to communicate and work with locals (implemented projects);
- Demonstrated practical experience in consulting and capacity building on eco-tourism development, within communities close to Protected Areas is a must;
- Knowledge of socio-economic, including tourism related situation amongst the communities living nearby PAs will be an asset.

## **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.

Awarding of the contract shall be based on an evaluation by the CNF Tender Commission, consisting of representatives of CNF and third-party representatives as relevant. The Tender Committee shall evaluate information provided in the Application Package on: (1) knowledge and understanding of the subject of the tender; (2) evidence of relevant experiences in the subject of the tender; (3) demonstrated capability to deliver against timetable; (4) detailed financial proposal. The Tender Commission may interview one or more applicants to assist its evaluation process.

The Tender Commission reserves the right to cancel the procedure at any moment and not conclude any contract, without further notice to the applicants. It also reserves the right not to accept the lowest bid.

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted. If you are not contacted within 2 weeks after the closing date, please assume that you have not been successful on this occasion.

## **MODE OF APPLICATION**

Applicants are requested to submit a full Application Package in English language, including the following:

- Cover Letter, explaining the relevant qualifications, experience and skills of the Applicant making them suitable for the Technical Assistance;
- Full CV for key team members proposed and portfolio of organization with similar projects implemented;
- Detailed Financial Proposal, including a breakdown of costs – all-inclusive consultancy fees (in days and stating unit rate) per individual team member, travel (air/land roundtrips and per diem as appropriate), any applicable VAT or other taxes, other costs, etc. - in GEL.