

Request for Proposals

Terms of Reference for the Evaluation of the Project "Conserving Aquatic Biodiversity in African Blue Economy" " Funded by SIDA and implemented by AU-IBAR

1. Context

1.1 Programme's background and overview

The African Continent is adjacent to highly productive marine ecosystems including the seven African Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) viz., Agulhas Current LME, Benguela Current LME, Guinea Current LME, Canary current LME, Mediterranean Sea LME, Red Sea LME and Somali Current LME. The Continent is also endowed with networks of Rivers and Lakes. The Seas, Oceans, Lakes and Rivers inhabit significant number of biodiversity and the ecosystems provide sources of livelihoods, food security and wealth. These African aquatic ecosystems inhabit living and non-living resources; however, the unsustainable exploitation of these resources is threatening the aquatic biodiversity and its resources as well as negatively impacting on environmental sustainability.

Aquatic biodiversity encompasses freshwater systems, marine (sea and oceanic) environment, floodplains, aquaculture ponds and wetlands. Several factors are threatening aquatic biodiversity in Africa aquatic ecosystems. These include; overexploitation of living species, pollutions from several sources (land-based municipal and agricultural activities), uncontrolled introduction of exotic species in aquaculture systems, effluents from mining activities; among others. Consequently, important aquatic resources are becoming increasingly susceptible to both natural and artificial environmental changes. Thus, conservation strategies to protect and conserve aquatic life are necessary to maintain the balance of nature and support the availability of resources for future generations.

The African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR), a specialised technical office of the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (DARBE) of the African Union Commission (AUC), is mandated to support and coordinate the utilisation of livestock, fisheries, aquaculture, and wildlife as resources for both human wellbeing and economic development in African Union Member States.

DARBE requested AU-IBAR to coordinate the development of the Africa Blue Economy Strategy that was endorsed at the summit of African Union Heads of State and Government, highest political level of the Continent. The Strategy incorporates key critical vectors for promoting Blue Economy development of the Continent, including fisheries, aquaculture, and ecosystem conservation; shipping, maritime safety and trade; climate change, environmental sustainability and ecotourism; sustainable energy and extractive mineral resources; governance, institutions and job creation. Towards the implementation of the Africa Blue Economy Strategy, AU-IBAR, is implementing a Continent-wide project on 'Conserving Aquatic Biodiversity in African Blue Economy', with assistance from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). The overall objective of the project is to enhance the Policy environment, Regulatory frameworks and institutional capacities of AU Member States and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to sustainably utilize and conserve aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems.

The specific objectives of the project are as follows:

- i. Ratifying and/or aligning relevant International/Regional Instruments related to Blue Economy themes (with specific reference to protecting and conserving biodiversity);
- ii. Optimizing conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity while minimizing conflicts among Blue Economy sub-themes;

- iii. Strengthening measures for mitigating the negative impacts of coastal and marine tourism, oil, gas, deep Sea mining and climate change on aquatic biodiversity and environment; and,
- iv. Strengthening gender inclusivity in aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management.

1.2 Implementation Modalities:

The African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) is responsible for the overall management and coordination of the project, under the political leadership of the AU Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (DARBE) who provides political leadership. AU-IBAR is responsible for grant management and reporting to the Funding Partners.

In order to dispense its functions effectively, a project management unit is established. A project management unit (PMU) comprising of the Director of AU-IBAR, the Project Coordinator supported by other technical, administrative and financial staff members of the Project is in place. The PMU is responsible for managing the day-to-day implementation of the project.

A Project Steering Committee (PSC) was established to oversee and validate the overall direction and Policy of the project including adoption of annual work-plans and related implementation reports. A Project Technical Committee (PTC) was also established to ensure coherence in the implementation of activities by the implementing partners and other institutions. The project technical committee findings and recommendations support informed decision-making by the project steering committee.

1.3 Stakeholders

The key stakeholders to the project include African Union Member States (the Ministries or departments in charge of fisheries, aquaculture, aquatic biodiversity, environment, Blue Economy, energy, coastal and marine tourism, marine time trade and transport), Regional Economic Communities, Regional Fisheries Bodies, Water Basin Authorities, Institutions, Regional Sea Conventions (Abidjan Convention, Nairobi Convention), private sectors, Non-State Actors, Women organizations, Development partners, Universities, Research Institutions,

1.4 Key Achievements to date:

- i. A mechanism for effective participation in Continental and Global Fora related to aquatic biodiversity and environment management was developed. The mechanism was adopted by the Highest AUC Policy Organ. Stakeholders have also been trained on how to operationalize the mechanism for effective participation in Global Fora
- ii. The project has supported Djibouti, Egypt, Tunisia, Cameroon, Burkina, South Sudan to domesticate Continental and Global Instruments related to aquatic biodiversity and environment management;
- iii. AU Member States (Benin, Liberia, Togo, Cote D'Ivoire, Ghana and Nigeria) of the fisheries committee for West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC) were trained and their capacities on Monitoring, Control and Surveillance systems for combating Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported fishing and protection of aquatic biodiversity and environment enhanced;
- iv. In collaboration with IUCN, the project supported the Dusornoo Community resource management areas (CREMA) in Ghana to develop Gender-sensitive management plans for conservation of aquatic biodiversity and environment;
- v. In collaboration with Kenya Marine Fisheries Research Institute (KEMFRI), the project supported capacity building of coastal communities in nature-based solutions and identified and mapped degraded mangrove areas in Gazi Bay;
- vi. Collaborated with the West Indian Ocean Science Association (WIOMSA) to develop a roadmap and draft MOU between Kenya and Tanzania for joint management of Transboundary Marine Conservation Area (TMCA) in the Indian Ocean;

- vii. Supported Benin and Togo to ratify the report on State of the Marine Environment which is a giant step towards establishing a transboundary Marine Spatial Planning between the two Countries;
- viii. The project developed a Continental Strategy for mainstreaming gender in the conservation of aquatic biodiversity and supported Ethiopia and Malawi to mainstream continental strategy-aligned gender-sensitive actions into their National Instruments for conserving aquatic biodiversity and environment; and,
- ix. The project supported Nigeria, Gabon, Egypt and Kenya to develop Masterplans and Regulatory frameworks for sustainable coastal and marine tourism, mining and oil and gas exploration.

1.5 Key Challenges:

- i. Delayed recruitment of project staff;
- ii. During the first year, project implementation was negatively impacted by the coronavirus pandemic, as the project was designed to conduct studies mainly during the first year of implementation; and,
- iii. The outcomes of the projects have been piloted in very few AU member states due to limited budget. However, there have been overwhelming expectations from AU Member States for support to strengthen capacity for aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management.

2. Proposed Evaluation

2.1 Description of the Assignment

This assignment aims to undertake the Evaluation of the Aquatic Biodiversity Project, particularly to evaluate the process and achievements of the project to date and recommend adjustments and actions that will enable the project to fully realise its objectives and consolidate achievements in the remaining time of the project phase. The Evaluation will enable AU-IBAR and SIDA and their partners to have:

- a) An independent assessment of the performance of the project to date paying particular attention to what needs to be done to optimise the relevancy, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact of the project;
- b) An independent review of processes, procedures and tools as well as an independent documentation of the key lessons and best practices for replication and upscaling; and,
- c) Recommendations on necessary actions and adjustments to fully attain project achievements and consolidate the achievements of the project; and, how to sustain the positive outcomes on the Continent.

2.2 Tasks

In line with the above objectives, the consultant(s) will be required among other things to:

- i. Assess/review relevant programme documentation, including progress/monitoring reports/financial reports/narrative reports;
- ii. Consult internal monitoring and evaluation framework, indicators and the M&E reports so far;
- iii. Assess the achievements of the project to date against the overall project work plan;
- iv. To map the project outcomes realised so far and emerging benefits;
- v. Assess the progress made towards the achievement of expected results (outputs, outcomes and impact) since the project started;
- vi. Get key stakeholder feedback and perceptions of the project implementation and make appropriate recommendations;
- vii. To assess the communication and visibility of the project and to make appropriate recommendations;
- viii. Document the lessons learnt and best practices in conservation of aquatic biodiversity and environmental management in Africa as well as to come up with recommendations for strengthening the implementation of the project within the remaining period and the proposed extension phase;
- ix. Make recommendations on project sustainability beyond the current project; and,

- x. Prepare and present the project evaluation report to key stakeholders.

2.3 Expected Outputs

The key expected outputs are.

- i. Assessment and judgement on the quality of performance against agreed parameters and efficiency of resource utilization for project implementation
- ii. Lessons learnt and best practices identified and documented
- iii. Review of project documents and documentation of stakeholder (beneficially) feedback for recommendations on project effectiveness and impact
- iv. Practical recommendation on the implementation of the project for the remaining period and an extension phase, if necessary
- v. Practical recommendations to sustain benefits beyond the current project

2.4 Proposed Methodology

The evaluation should be undertaken by a team of experts. The evaluation should focus both on results achieved so far based on the project theory of change; the log frame's indicators; and on the processes, procedures and tools put in place for achieving the results.

The consultants will execute the activities below in close coordination with the AU-IBAR. Moreover, the implementation should ensure close and constant coordination with the relevant stakeholders notably the AU Member States, specialized regional institutions, RECs and NSAs including women organizations (African women fish processors and traders' network – AWFISHNET).

The consultants are expected to use both quantitative and qualitative evaluation techniques leveraging technologies to ensure sufficient coverage of all project components and stakeholders. T

3. Location and Duration

The consultancy will largely be conducted working from home with limited field missions by the consultants to Nairobi, Kenya (AU IBAR), Zanzibar, Tanzania (West Indian Ocean Marine Science Association), Accra, Ghana (IUCN) and Tema, Ghana (Fisheries Committee for West Central Gulf of Guinea – FCWC).

The assignment is expected to begin in June 2024 and should be completed within two (2) calendar months from the start date.

4. Supervision

The consultancy will be under the supervision of the Director, AU-IBAR. The project co-ordinator and the project team will be the contact persons to facilitate access to documentation and to project partners and member states.

5. Reporting

Reports will be submitted to the project coordinator for review and approval by the Director. The language for reporting shall be English. AU-IBAR may translate the final evaluation document as deemed necessary.

Reports will be submitted in accordance with the schedule below:

Report	Due Date
Contract Signature	Day 0
An inception report detailing an understanding of expectations and highlighting the approach to fulfilment of the assignment. (maximum 5 pages)	Day 5
Interim report will be submitted for review by AU-IBAR on the progress made	Day 25
Draft final report which will be submitted to AU-IBAR for review.	Day 45
AU-IBAR will circulate this draft final report to key stakeholders for comments	Day 45-Day 52
AU-IBAR will submit consolidated comments on draft final report to Consultant	Day 52
Final evaluation report incorporating input from AU-IBAR and key stakeholders to be submitted by Consultant to AU-IBAR	Day 60

The reports should provide clear information regarding:

- i. The activities undertaken including key stakeholders and Institutions/ Member States or Regional Economic Communities, specialized regional institutions where fieldwork was undertaken
- ii. The targeted beneficiaries interviewed
- iii. Outcomes, both planned and emerging, resulting from activities implemented.
- iv. Key recommendations for project adaptation including the revised log frame, implementation plan and budget
- v. During the evaluation, the consultant shall be required to give regular verbal feedback on the progress being made.

6. Responsibilities of AU-IBAR

AU-IBAR will provide the necessary support to ensure the Consultant is able to access documentation, reports, stakeholders and beneficiaries. AU-IBAR shall provide logistical support as needed including provision of travel expenses for approved missions in accordance with the AUC Travel Policy.

The following documents will be availed to the Consultant on commencement of the contract:

- Contracts documents
- Aquatic Biodiversity Project Document and Reports to Date
- Africa Blue Economy Strategy
- Updated Indicator tracking tool
- A list of key stakeholders to be interviewed, developed in consultation with the consultants
- Any other relevant document(s) requested by the consultants

7 Remuneration

The maximum budget available for professional fees under this Consultancy is US\$ 18,000.

Expenses for travel on official and approved missions (including flights and daily subsistence allowance) will be covered separately by AU-IBAR in accordance with the applicable African Union Commission rules and regulations. The Consultant firm or team will be responsible for medical and travel insurance cover for the individual experts for the duration of the consultancy.

8. Requirements

Applications are invited from eligible firms or consortiums to undertake this consultancy. The firm or team of experts should be experienced in evaluating complex projects relating to natural resources

and Blue Economy, particularly on aquatic biodiversity, aquatic ecosystems and environment at National, Regional and Continental levels in Africa; The consultants should have Africa-wide knowledge of the Blue Economy Sector in Africa.

The team proposed should consist of no less than two key experts whose qualifications, experience and skills are stated below.

8.1 Team Leader

8.1.1 Responsibilities

As a Team Leader, s/he will be responsible for all aspects of the Evaluation and will be the focal point for the rest of her/his team. The team leader should ensure close and regular communication with and timely reporting to the Contracting Authority (AU-IBAR). The Team Leader is also responsible for quality of the evaluation process and the required outputs required.

8.1.2 Academic qualifications

Master's level or equivalent in Marine resources, Fisheries and Aquaculture, Natural Resources, Climate change or related disciplines. A PhD in the above qualifications will be considered an added advantage

8.1.3 General Professional Experience:

- i. At least 10 years of professional experience in the field of aquatic sciences
- ii. At least 5 years' experience project management, programmes, and projects design, formulation, implementation and evaluation
- iii. Familiarization of mandates and functions of Regional Economic Communities and specialized regional institutions with mandates in aquatic ecosystems, biodiversity and environmental management
- iv. Familiarization of Non-State Actors, Research, Training Institutions in aquatic biodiversity and National institutions in charge of Blue Economy, conservation of aquatic biodiversity and environmental management
- v. Proven knowledge on Regional and Continental Instruments relating to promoting blue growth in the Continent

8.1.4 Specific professional experience:

- i. Africa-wide knowledge of the Blue Economy Sectors in Africa
- ii. At least 10 years' experience in capacity building on conserving aquatic biodiversity, ecosystems management or related disciplines
- iii. Familiarization with Global Instruments or frameworks related to conservation of Aquatic Biodiversity and Environmental Management
- iv. Experience in implementation arrangements, results/performance assessment and in managing evaluations
- v. Evidence of practical experience in conducting assessments on implementation of Blue Economy Sectors' Policies, regulatory frameworks and initiatives towards conservation of biodiversity and environmental sustainability

8.1.4 Language skills

The team leader should be fluent in at least two AU official languages.

8.2 Expert in Monitoring and Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis for programme evaluation in the sector

8.2.1 Responsibilities

- i. To assist the team leader conduct stakeholder's analysis, and categorize and map stakeholders
- ii. Assist the Team leader to develop appropriate questionnaires for conducting online and in-person interviews of identified stakeholders
- iii. To collect information and data based on the project logical framework matrix and the objectively verifiable indicators,
- iv. To support the Team Leader in collecting and organizing information and data, conducting the analysis and performance assessment based on defined evaluation criteria and questions,
- v. To contribute to drafting of the deliverables to be submitted.

8.2.2 Qualifications

A master's degree at academic level in Social Sciences, Economics, Statistics or other related fields,

8.2.3 General Professional Experience:

- i. At least 6 years of professional experience in areas such as programme cycle management and design
- ii. Proven experience in statistical, data collection, M&E in agriculture/ and natural resources systems
- iii. Record of experiences in partners' and stakeholders' consultations and engagement

8.2.3 Specific professional experience:

- i. Sound knowledge of use or application of quantitative and qualitative methods and tools for collecting evidence-based data and information,
- ii. Familiarization of the Blue Economy sector in Africa
- iii. Proven experience in conducting monitoring and evaluation of donor funded projects
- iv. Familiarization with stakeholders in the Blue Economy Sector (including fisheries, aquaculture, environment,

8.2.4 Language skills

Fluency in at least two AU official languages.

9 Gender Mainstreaming

The AU Commission is an equal opportunity employer and teams including qualified women and young African professionals are strongly encouraged to apply.

10 Evaluation criteria

The applications will be evaluated based on the relevant technical qualifications, experience and competence of the candidates.

Criteria	Scores (%)
General experience of the firm/consortium/team	5
Approach & Methodology	10
Qualifications of the team	20
General Experience	25
Specific Experience	35
Language	5
Total	100

12 Submission of the application

Applications are open to firms or consortiums or a team of experts, of eligible nationalities.

Applications from individual experts will not be accepted.

Applications should be submitted to procurement@au-ibar.org and should include the following documents:

Technical Proposal

- Brief description of the firm/consortium highlighting suitability for the assignment
- Brief (3-5 pages) description of approach and methodology of the firm
- Detailed curriculum vitae with references and relevant experience to be provided for each key expert
- Copies of academic and professional certificates of key experts
- Signed declaration on exclusion criteria (format provided in website) to be signed by the firm and each of the proposed experts
- Copy of registration documents of the firm and/or identification documents of key experts

The deadline for receipt of applications is 20th May 2024 at 1700 hours Nairobi local time.