

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (CONSULTING SERVICES – FIRMS SELECTION)

REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

RESILAND: Armenia Resilient Landscape Project

Grant No.: TF0C4647, TF0C4643

Assignment Title: Feasibility study for developing benefit sharing framework to enhance the benefits of communities

Reference No. (as per Procurement Plan): AM-EPIU-486535-CS-CQS

The Republic of Armenia has received financing from the World Bank (the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (“IBRD”), acting as an Implementing Agency of the Global Environment Facility (“GEF”) and as administrator of the Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Supporting Armenia Resilient Landscapes Project and International Development Association (“IDA”), acting as administrator of the Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Supporting Armenia Resilient Landscapes Project) toward the cost of the RESILAND: Armenia Resilient Landscape Project, and intends to apply part of the proceeds for consulting services.

This consulting services is commissioned as part of the Armenia Resilient Landscapes Project which aims to establish an effective and sustainable framework for benefit-sharing between different stakeholders including local communities, private sector entities, government institutions, and other relevant parties involved in the management of Communities’ Benefits within Lori, Gegharkunik, Ararat and Syunik regions. The feasibility study will help assess various models of benefit-sharing and recommend the most viable approach.

This consulting service has following overall objectives:

- To assess the current legal, institutional, and policy frameworks that may influence or govern benefit-sharing in development of ecotourism in both forests and wetlands. The general approach will be strong community engagement; involvement of the private sector; and development of benefit sharing between communities, forestry enterprises, state sanctuaries, and developers.
- To identify key stakeholders and determine their interests and needs related to benefit-sharing. The benefits will have the social and gender dimension considering the vulnerability of the most exposed groups and focus on reducing such vulnerability.
- To develop and analyze potential models for benefit-sharing that could be applied in the context of third component of Armenia Resilient Landscapes Project, supporting income-generating livelihoods activities such as NTFP, value addition, and alternative livelihoods.
- To evaluate the feasibility of different benefit-sharing mechanisms, considering local economic, social, and environmental conditions. Community-level activities, whether related to wetland restoration, reforestation, or ecotourism, should be well integrated and anchored within the local development planning process.

- To assess concerns of impacts to livelihoods from the changes to policy, legal, regulatory, and administrative frameworks as well as from limiting activities in forests and to grazing.
- To develop and recommend a benefit-sharing framework and mechanism that aligns with the goals of equity, sustainability, and mutual benefits, strengthening community engagement and improving their livelihoods, integrated with the improved management of forests, wetlands, and protected areas.
- To propose monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for the implementation of the benefit-sharing framework.

The duration of the assignment/contract is about 3 months, calculated from the date of contract signing.

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

The Environmental Project Implementation Unit now invites eligible consulting firms (“Consultants”) to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested Consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services.

The Qualifications criteria of the Consulting firm are:

The Consultant must have sufficient resources and capacity to carry out the services.

The selected consulting firm should have the following minimum experience:

- Minimum of 5 years of demonstrated experience in conducting feasibility studies, benefit sharing policy and institutional assessments, and designing benefit sharing frameworks related to community-based natural resource management, ecotourism, or non-timber forest product (NTFP) value chains.
- Proven experience working with government agencies on assignments related to environmental governance, forestry, wetland conservation, or rural development, preferably with involvement in participatory or community-focused initiatives.
- Experience collaborating with international organizations or donor-funded projects (e.g. World Bank, UNDP, EU, GEF) will be considered a strong asset, particularly in the context of sustainability, community benefits, or conservation-based development.
- Demonstrated ability to engage diverse stakeholders, including local communities, civil society organizations, and public institutions, through inclusive and participatory methodologies.
- Capacity to mobilize a multidisciplinary team with appropriate expertise in environmental, legal, social, and economic dimensions of the assignment.
- Proven experiences working in Armenia and/or CIS countries.

Key Experts, whose requirements are specified in the TOR, will not be evaluated at this stage.

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" September 2023 ("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 Qualification Selection method set out in the Procurement Regulations.

Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours (09:00-18:00).

Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below via e-mail NO later than April 23, 2025, 18:00.

Environmental Project Implementation Unit
Attn: Armen Yesoyan (Acting Director of EPIU)
65A Tigran Mets Ave., 3rd fl.
Yerevan 0008, Armenia
Tel: +374 96 693 911
E-mail: resiland.epiu@gmail.com

ANNEX A

RESILAND: ARMENIA RESILIENT LANDSCAPES PROJECT (P179988)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

For

Consulting Services

Feasibility study for developing benefit sharing framework to enhance the benefits of communities

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The objectives of the RESILAND: Armenia Resilient Landscape Project are: (i) to increase the area under sustainable landscape management in Selected Locations and (ii) to promote sustainable economic activities to communities in Targeted Landscapes in Armenia. RESILAND Armenia follows an integrated landscapes approach to restore forests and wetlands and will rely on four key issues: (i) reduction of forest fragmentation and increase in density of tree cover by restoring the forest land degraded due to mining and by forest enrichment planting; (ii) improving management of neglected and abandoned wetlands, (iii) increasing community economic benefits, and (iv) strengthen the institutional foundation for the sustainable management of landscapes, creating green jobs, and increasing community benefits. Project activities are grouped into four interrelated components and their respective subcomponents. Under its main three components, the project will finance consulting services, non-consulting services, goods, equipment, training, workshops, as well as small works.

The Project four Components include:

Component 1: Institutional Capacity and Policy Development.

Component 2: Landscape Restoration

Component 3: Promoting Communities' Benefits.

Component 4: Project Management, Monitoring & Evaluation, and Communication.

2. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

The Environmental Project Implementation Unit (EPIU), a State agency under the Ministry of Environment, will provide overall management of the Project preparation and implementation activities aimed at achievement of the planned results.

3. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF THE ASSIGNMENT

This consulting services is commissioned as part of the Armenia Resilient Landscapes Project which aims to establish an effective and sustainable framework for benefit-sharing between different stakeholders including local communities, private sector entities, government institutions, and other relevant parties involved in the management of Communities' Benefits within Lori, Gegharkunik, Ararat and Syunik regions. The feasibility study will help assess various models of benefit-sharing and recommend the most viable approach.

This consulting service has following overall objectives:

- To assess the current legal, institutional, and policy frameworks that may influence or govern benefit-sharing in development of ecotourism in both forests and wetlands. The general approach will be strong community engagement; involvement of the private sector; and development of benefit sharing between communities, forestry enterprises, state sanctuaries, and developers.
- To identify key stakeholders and determine their interests and needs related to benefit-sharing. The benefits will have the social and gender dimension considering the vulnerability of the most exposed groups and focus on reducing such vulnerability.
- To develop and analyze potential models for benefit-sharing that could be applied in the context of third component of Armenia Resilient Landscapes Project, supporting income-generating livelihoods activities such as NTFP, value addition, and alternative livelihoods.
- To evaluate the feasibility of different benefit-sharing mechanisms, considering local economic, social, and environmental conditions. Community-level activities, whether related to wetland restoration, reforestation, or ecotourism, should be well integrated and anchored within the local development planning process.
- To assess concerns of impacts to livelihoods from the changes to policy, legal, regulatory, and administrative frameworks as well as from limiting activities in forests and to grazing.
- To develop and recommend a benefit-sharing framework and mechanism that aligns with the goals of equity, sustainability, and mutual benefits, strengthening community engagement and improving their livelihoods, integrated with the improved management of forests, wetlands, and protected areas.
- To propose monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for the implementation of the benefit-sharing framework.

Geographic Coverage: The study will encompass both urban and rural areas in Armenia, specifically targeting the Lori, and Syunik regions. The following settlements should be under focus:

- Lori Region: Spitak (43460 people), Vanadzor (76500 beneficiaries), Stepanavan (20527 beneficiaries), Tashir (11731 beneficiaries), Halavar (111 beneficiaries), Shahumyan (2508 beneficiaries), Gugark (6567 beneficiaries), Vahagni (1103 beneficiaries), Vahagnadzor (323 beneficiaries), Yeghegnut (951 beneficiaries), Chkalov (144), Fioletovo (1512 beneficiaries), Margahovit (3449 beneficiaries), Lermontovo (1099 beneficiaries), Lernapat (1966 beneficiaries), Gargar (1349 beneficiaries), Pushkino (249 beneficiaries), Medovka (396 beneficiaries), Kruglaya Shishka (117 beneficiaries), Saratovka (414 beneficiaries), Urasar (399 beneficiaries).

- Syunik Region: Kapan (44362 beneficiaries), Vanek (59 beneficiaries), Dzorastan (73 beneficiaries), Antarashat (114 beneficiaries), Arachadzor (156 beneficiaries), Verin Khotanan (205 beneficiaries), Yegheg (102 beneficiaries), Shrvenants (69 beneficiaries), and Okhtar (94 beneficiaries).
- Gegharkunik Region: Vardenis (13917 beneficiaries).
- Ararat Region: Poqr Vedi (3389 beneficiaries), Lusarat (2686 beneficiaries), Surenavan (2700 beneficiaries), Armash (2673 beneficiaries)

This focus will allow for a nuanced understanding of regional differences and challenges, ensuring that the findings are relevant and applicable to the diverse contexts within these areas.

Target Population: The target population is the entire population of the communities included in the program (see population above).

4. SCOPE OF WORK/ACTIVITIES

The consultant is expected to undertake the following activities:

(i) Desk Review:

- Review of relevant literature, existing benefit-sharing frameworks, and best practices, especially related to ecotourism, forests and wetlands' sustainable management,
- Analysis of existing legal and policy documents related to benefit-sharing in Community-Based Forestry Management and Ecotourism.

(ii) Stakeholder Mapping, Analysis, and Consultation:

- Identification and categorization of key stakeholders and their interests regarding benefit-sharing (e.g. local communities, NGOs, government agencies, private sector etc.).
- Conduct interviews, surveys, or focus group discussions with different stakeholders to assess their needs and perspectives on benefit-sharing.

(iii) Feasibility Analysis:

- Conduct a cost-benefit analysis of different benefit-sharing models (e.g. co-management of protected areas and national parks, community-based models, profit-sharing, in-kind contributions).

- Assess the legal, social, economic, and environmental implications of various models.
- Assess the benefits to have the social and gender dimension considering the vulnerability of the most exposed groups and focus on reducing such vulnerability.
- Identification of key governance risks and recommendations on how to address the risks.
- Assess the customary and land-related conflict resolution mechanisms and weaknesses.
- Assess the dependency of target communities on forest resources, grazing and wetlands, and potential issues.

(iv) Development of a Benefit-Sharing Framework:

- Based on the feasibility study, propose a comprehensive benefit-sharing framework related to wetland restoration, reforestation, or ecotourism, co-management and NTFP.
- Design a mechanism for equitable and inclusive distribution of benefits.

(v) Consultation and Validation

Develop options papers and a draft report, and conduct consultations on potential options with key Stakeholders, socialize and validate the proposed benefit sharing mechanism, and incorporate feedback and recommendations.

5. QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

The Consultant must have sufficient resources and capacity to carry out the services.

The selected consulting firm should have the following minimum experience:

- Minimum of 5 years of demonstrated experience in conducting feasibility studies, benefit sharing policy and institutional assessments, and designing benefit sharing frameworks related to community-based natural resource management, ecotourism, or non-timber forest product (NTFP) value chains.
- Proven experience working with government agencies on assignments related to environmental governance, forestry, wetland conservation, or rural development, preferably with involvement in participatory or community-focused initiatives.
- Experience collaborating with international organizations or donor-funded projects (e.g. World Bank, UNDP, EU, GEF) will be considered a strong asset, particularly in the context of sustainability, community benefits, or conservation-based development.
- Demonstrated ability to engage diverse stakeholders, including local communities, civil society organizations, and public institutions, through inclusive and participatory methodologies.

- Capacity to mobilize a multidisciplinary team with appropriate expertise in environmental, legal, social, and economic dimensions of the assignment.
- Proven experiences working in Armenia and/or CIS countries.

1. Team Leader / Project Manager

- Advanced degree (Master's or higher) in Business Management, Green Economy, Public and Business Administration, Agribusiness, Environmental Policy or a related field.
- **Minimum 15 years of professional experience**, with at least **5 years in team leadership** of complex multi-disciplinary projects.
- Proven experience in conducting feasibility studies, particularly in the area of benefit-sharing or resource management, ecotourism development, and NTFP value chain development.
- Deep knowledge of the Armenian ecotourism sector, conducting feasibility study, relevant policies, legislation and guidelines, familiarity with working with national and international ecotourism private sector, facilitation and training skills.
- Demonstrated experience in community-based tourism activities and NTFP value chain development.
- Strong understanding of local context, legal frameworks, and policy landscape related to benefit-sharing.
- Experience with report, particularly in the context of developing regions.
- Familiar with sector policies and national policies, functioning of government/public sector, private sector organizations, including public private partnerships, producer associations, cooperation with civil society.
- Experience in stakeholder engagement, particularly in the context of local communities or marginalized groups.
- Experience in interacting with national and local stakeholders under pressure and complicated situations.
- Strong analytical, report-writing, and presentation skills.
- Strong understanding of gender-sensitive, -responsive and Leaving No One Behind approaches.
- Strong facilitation and communication skills.
- Proficient in Armenian and English.

2. Environmental and Natural Resource Expert

- Master's degree or higher in Environmental Science, Ecology, Forestry, or Natural Resource Management.
- **Minimum 10 years of experience** in forest and wetland ecosystem management, biodiversity conservation, or NTFP/ecotourism development.
- Proven experiences on biodiversity and ecosystem services understanding in Armenia is essential.

- Experience working with local communities and ecological mapping.
- Proficient in Armenian and English.

3. Legal and Policy Analyst

- Advanced degree in Environmental Law, Public Policy, Environmental Governance, or a related field.
- At least **7 years of experience** in legal and institutional analysis, particularly in the context of natural resource use and benefit-sharing.
- Proven experiences on Armenian environmental and land-use legislation knowledge is essential
- Proficient in Armenian and English.

4. Social and Gender Inclusion Specialist

- Master's degree in Social Sciences, Gender Studies, Development Studies, or Anthropology.
- Minimum **8 years of experience** in conducting social impact assessments, stakeholder analysis, and designing inclusive benefit-sharing models.
- Demonstrated experience working with vulnerable groups and applying participatory approaches.
- Proficient in Armenian and English.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Specialist

- Master's degree in Economics, Development Studies, Public Administration, or a related field.
- At least **7 years of experience** in designing and implementing M&E systems for donor-funded or community-driven projects.
- Proven experiences on defining key performance indicators for social and environmental outcomes is essential.
- Fluent in English; working knowledge of Armenian preferred.

6. Field Coordinators / Community Liaisons

- Bachelor's degree in Social Sciences, Environmental Studies, or a related field. At least **5 years of experience** in field coordination, community engagement, or data collection in rural settings. Strong track record of **producing high-quality technical reports**, policy briefs, and presentations

6. METHODOLOGY

The consultant will use a combination of the following methods:

- **Desk Review:** In depth review of documents, reports, and studies related to benefit-sharing frameworks.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Conducting interviews, surveys, or focus group discussions with stakeholders.
- **Field Visits** (if applicable): To collect data directly from the affected communities or sectors.
- **Data Analysis:** Analyzing quantitative and qualitative data to assess feasibility and propose recommendations.
- **Workshops/Meetings:** Engaging with stakeholders for validation of the findings and recommendations.

7. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

7.1 The consultant is expected to provide the following deliverables:

- **Inception Report:** A brief report outlining the approach, methodology, work plan, and timeline for the study.
- **Draft Feasibility Study Report:** A draft report containing the main-findings, analysis, and proposed benefit-sharing framework, as well as a stakeholder mapping and engagement plan.
- **Final Feasibility Study Report:** A refined and finalized version of the draft report, incorporating feedback from stakeholders and summarizing the key insights and feedback from stakeholder consultations.
- **Presentation Materials:** PowerPoint slides summarizing the study's findings and recommendations.

7.2 Report Writing and Recommendations:

The Consultants should submit a comprehensive Final Report detailing findings, methodologies and actionable recommendations for designing and implementing a feasible benefit-sharing framework.

The reports should be written in English and Armenian.

7.3 Presentation of Findings:

The Consultants should present the findings of the study to key stakeholders through workshops or seminars.

8. DELIVERABLES AND TIMELINE FOR THE ASSIGNMENT

The study is expected to be completed within 3 months from the date of contract signing. The timeline for key deliverables is as follows:

Deliverables	Timeline
Work plans, methodologies for the study (consulted with the relevant stakeholders) and for other activities.	Two weeks after contract signing
Draft Feasibility Study Report Writing:	Four weeks after contract signing
Final Feasibility Study Report:	Within four weeks after feedback and comments on the Draft Report
Canva presentation summarizing key findings and recommendations	Within two weeks after feedback and comments on the Draft Report

9. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CLIENT AND THE CONSULTING FIRM

The Consulting Company is expected to be fully self-sufficient in all respects for undertaking the assignment including accommodation, office space, equipment and supplies, communication, and transport.

The Contractor shall ensure that experts are adequately supported and equipped; in particular it shall ensure that there is sufficient administrative, secretarial and interpreting provision to enable experts to concentrate on their primary responsibilities.

The Client or the EPIU team will assist with facilitation of logistical arrangement, coordination with stakeholders, access to relevant data and documentation, and any necessary coordination and approvals required for the consultant to carry out the service effectively.

10. PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Task	Payment
Upon submission and approval by the Client of the Inception Report	20%
Upon submission and approval by the Client of Draft Report	40%
Upon submission and approval by the Client delivery of Final Report and Canva presentation	40%

11. ORGANIZATIONAL ASPECTS

All costs related to the arrangement of workshops, IT, office equipment, telecommunication, transportation, etc. shall be covered by the Consultant.