**TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)**

**For**

**Selection of Consulting Firm for Updating Integrated Resource Management Plan (IRMP) of the Sundarbans.**

**Protection of Sundarban Mangrove Forests Project**

1. **Introduction**

This Terms of Reference (ToR) describes the process to be used for selecting a consultancy firm for updating the Integrated Resource Management Plan (IRMP) of the Sundarbans Mangrove Forest for a period of 10 years. It follows the Public Procurement Act (PPA) 2006 and Public Procurement Rules (PPR) 2008 of the Government of Bangladesh.

1. **Background of the Project**

Bangladesh Forest Department (BFD) under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has been implementing GoB funded “Protection of Sundarban Mangrove Forests Project” for the period of 4 years (01 January 2021 to 31 December 2024). Total project cost is 157,87.51 Lakh in BDT. The overall objectives of the project are to improve efficiency of Forest Department officials who are engaged in Sundarbans Forest management, improvement of infrastructure and communication facilities, use of information technologies, creation of proper work environment, strengthening forest management through strong patrolling, survey on wildlife and their habitat, status of protected areas and ecological condition, measurement of aquatic resources, survey on climate change impact through analyzing soil, salinity and other parameters, develop monitoring system and scientific Forest management.

Through scientific Forest Management and introduction of improved monitoring system, sustainable use of fishery resources, forest resources and other services have to be ensured for future generation and sustainable livelihood of local communities.

Mitigation of Climate change impacts through raising green belt in coastal areas, landscape development; meet the local fuel wood demand through plantation program.

Project will implement a number of activities which are grouped under following four components:

Component-1: Strengthening Management Capacity.

Component-2: Scientific Forest Management and Observation.

Component-3: Mitigation of climate change impact, landscape development and fulfill the demand of fuel wood through creation of greenbelt.

1. Major activities under of the project:

Training of Forest Department officials who are working in the Sundarbans to increase their efficiency on wildlife crime control, Wildlife (conservation and security) Act-2012, primary treatment, SMART patrolling, wildlife habitat observation, wildlife sanctuary management, wildlife rescue and tranquilizing, GPS, computer data entry and networking, sustainable livelihood, Co-management and PA Rules, engine boat driving and maintenance etc.

Training of tour operators, tour guides, co-management organizers and resource users of the Sundarbans to increase their efficiency and socio economic development.

Establishment of GIS lab and provide health facilities. Up to date the Integrated Resources Management Plan of Sundarbans for 10 years for scientific management of the Sundarbans.

Conduct research works and survey activities by engaging researchers and research firms. Excavation of river and canals of Sundarbans, construction of infrastructures in the Sundarbans, procurement of water vessels, vehicles, constructions of pontoon and gangways, automation of pass permits and identity cards of Sundarbans resources users, different plantation programs etc.

1. **Objective of the Assignment:**

A basic principle of forests management, including protected areas management, is that every forest area should have a management plan that guides and regulates the management of its encompassing resources, the conservation of both terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity, the sustainable land-uses, development of required facilities, supporting administration, and adequate budget resources. A ten-year “Integrated Resources Management Plans (IRMP) for the Sundarbans” was developed based on the analyses of the resources status and management situation, to provide ten strategic programs with specified goals and objectives, targeted outcomes/outputs with verifiable success criteria, framework activities, and appropriate guidelines for sustainably managing the Sundarbans Reserved Forests (SRF) and its interface landscape. The last IRMP of the Sundarbans was developed for ten years (2010 to 2020). As the period is over, there should be an updated IRMP through discussions and meetings between staff of the Bangladesh Forest Department (BFD), relevant Government Agencies; local stakeholders including Co-Management Organizations and civil society which will be implemented by the project “**Protection of Sundarban Mangrove Forests (PSMF) Project**”. Therefore, the Bangladesh Forest Department has decided to procure professional services from a national consulting firm for updating the **Integrated Resource Management Plan (IRMP)**of the Sundarbans for 10(ten) years.

1. **Scope of Services:**

Following vision statements of the existing IRMP will be reviewed and updated as the long-term vision for the management of the Sundarban Reserved Forest (SRF) and its interface landscape:

* Literature review and consultation with the Bangladesh Forest Department (BFD), relevant Government Agencies; local stakeholders including Co-Management Organizations and civil society.
* The Sundarbans shall continue to provide subsistence resources including forest produce and fish at a level in which the sustainability of the resource is ensured, though emphases will be on reducing dependency and improving current resources management practices.
* Traditional users will acquire a greater awareness and shared responsibility and a share in the financial benefits as a result of co-managing the resources and will act accordingly to help conserve them.
* The Forest Department will involve local people in the SRF Co-management and other relevant government agencies will be consulted, whenever required.
* The Forest Department will develop its capacity including infrastructure, logistics and technical capacities and seek technical assistance where appropriate in the Sundarbans Reserved Forest (SRF) management.
* Development and efficient operation of alternative income enterprises in the landscape will help adapt the local community to climate change.
* Wildlife and fish resources will prosper throughout the SRF where populations will thrive at optimum carrying capacity. The SRF landscape will be managed to ensure that essential ecological services are maintained and terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems are well adapted to climate change. The wildlife sanctuaries and wetlands will be managed to provide secure habitat for wildlife and fish resources.
* Specific sites, infrastructure and routes in designated areas of the SRF will be developed and/or maintained to provide for quality ecotourism experiences.
* In order to take advantage of the increasing eco-tourism, the Forest Department will consistent with the guidelines and principles established by the GoB to improve the ecotourism services and facilities in the Sundarbans.
* The effects anticipated to result from climate change will be recognized, and mitigation and adaptive management strategies developed and implemented in order to ensure the maintenance of ecosystem goods and services.
* Restoration and maintenance of essential ecological functions including restoring stream flows will be recognized.
* Effective SMART patrolling to ensure law enforcement and protection of bio-diversity.
* Strengthening law enforcement capacity by providing specialized training to FD field staffs.
* GIS Mapping of potential wildlife habitats, Protected Areas, FD infrastructures, Ecotourism sites etc.
* Effective conservation efforts in the SRF in tandem with a broad range of programs supporting poverty reduction and sustainable socio-economic development in the landscape.
* Readjustment of BLC numbers considering the expansion of Protected Area and local demand.
* Conduct 20 (twenty) nos. program based Focus Group Discussion.
* Conduct 1(one) national level workshop and 2(two) regional level workshops to share the proposed IRMP.
* Any other duties assigned by PD related with updating IRMP.

A Comprehensive Integrated Resource Management Plan will be prepared on the basis of the fate or implementation status of these programs during the planning period (2025-2035) and depending on the report, an effective management planning will be prepared by the consulting firm. The ten interlinked strategic management programs and related five planning goals and outcomes are as follows:

**(a) Proposed Strategic management programs:**

(1) Overall Forest Management Programs;

(2) Protected Area Management Programs

(3) Wildlife Management Programs;

(4) Fishery Management Programs;

(5) Co-management and livelihood support Program;

(6) Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART) Patrolling;

(7) Climate Change Mitigation & Adaptation Programs;

(8) Eco-Tourism Programs;

(9) Non Timber Forest Products Management Program;

(10) Conservation outreach, Conservation research, Participatory monitoring and capacity building, International collaboration Programs;

(11) Administration, Human & logistics Development and Budget Programs.

**(b) Proposed Programs related Planning Goals and Outcomes:**

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| **Goal 1:** Protect, restore, sustain and enhance the biodiversity of the Sundarbans Reserved Forest and its interface landscape.  **Outcome:** Forests and terrestrial resources, and wetlands and aquatic resources with the representative capacity to maintain their health, productivity, diversity, and resilience. |
| **Goal 2:** Provide for resilience-based food security through provision of a variety of subsistence uses including fisheries, values, benefits, products, and services, while ensuring the sustainable supply of these resources for future generations.  **Outcome:** Resources use is managed on the basis of sustainability and co-management based on best available science and through the consultation of stakeholders. |
| **Goal 3:** Provide for and enhance eco-tourism and visitor recreation opportunities.  **Outcome:** Eco-tourism revenues are sufficient to provide enhanced alternative incomes as well as provide for increased emphases on biodiversity conservation. |
| **Goal 4:** Support and improve community based co-management approaches for the activities taking place in the SRF and its surrounding landscape.  **Outcome:** The FD facilitates and engages with the landscape communities and stakeholders in determining appropriate co-management practices and benefits sharing. |
| **Goal 5:** Provide for and implement appropriate climate change mitigation and adaptation options and opportunities.  **Outcome:** The FD ensures the continuation of the Sundarbans as carbon sink (both for green carbon and blue carbon), and contributes in enhancing the ecosystems resilience for improved adaptation of local communities to climate change impacts including cyclones and storms. |

1. **Activities and Tasks to be Performed by the Firm:**

* Literature review and analysis.
* Primary and secondary data collection
* Consultation and discussion with resource users and all relevant stakeholders
* Survey and sampling of forest areas, important resources (NTFP)
* Development of a draft updated IRMP for SRF
* Sharing of Draft updated IRMP with resource users and all relevant stakeholders
* Finalization and validation of the updated IRMP for SRF.
* Quality printing of approved IRMP- 100 copies.

1. **Qualification and experiences of the Firm:**

* Minimum 10(ten) years of proven work experience in the field of Forest and wildlife related research activities especially in the Sundarbans.
* The Firm should have valid Government registration with experienced office staffs.
* The Firm should have experience to implement at least 2(two) research work related with the Sundarbans Mangrove Forest**.**
* The Firm should have experience with dealing the professional consultants.

**8. Team Composition of Consulting Firm:**

Interested consultant Firm feature at least the following key professionals along with Financial and Admin officer, HR manager and support staffs needed to accomplish the assignment.

**Experience and Qualification of the key professionals:**

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| **SI No.** | **Description** | **Qualification** | **Experience** |
| 1 | Team Leader | Masters in Forestry/ Natural Resource Management or relevant subject. Experience in research on Mangrove forest will be given preference. | 12 years experience in related field specially mangrove forests management. |
| 2 | Mangrove ecologist | Masters in Forest ecology/ Natural Resource Management or relevant subject. Experience in research/work on mangrove ecology and related PhD degree will be given preference. | 10 years work/ research experience in related field. |
| 3 | Protected Area management expert | Masters in Forestry/ Natural Resource Management or relevant subject. Experience in research on Protected Area management and related PhD degree will be given preference. | 10 years experience in related field. |
| 4 | Wildlife Management Expert | Masters in Wildlife Biology. Experience in work/ research on wildlife management and related PhD degree will be given preference. | 10 years experience in related field. |
| 5 | Fishery Expert | Masters in Fishery. Experience in research/ work on Fishery (coastal area) will be given preference. | 10 years experience in related field. |
| 6 | Non Timber Forest Products Expert | Masters in Forestry. Experience in research on NTFP will be given preference. | 10 years experience in related field. |
| 7 | Co-Management Expert | Masters in Sociology/ Forestry/ Social Science. Experience in Co-Management and livelihood support program will be given preference. | 05 years experience in related field. |
| 8 | Eco-tourism Expert | Masters in Tourism/ Forestry or relevant subject. Diploma & Experience in nature based Tourism will be given preference. | 05 years experience in related field. |
| 9 | Climate Change Expert | Masters in Climate Change/ Environment Science. Experience in climate change, adaptation and mitigation in coastal region will be given preference. | 05 years experience in related field. |
| 10 | GIS Expert | Masters in Geography/ Computer science or Geo-informatics. | 05 years experience in related field. |
| 11 | Human Resource Development Expert | Masters in Human Resource Management. | 05 years experience in related field. |

1. **Reporting Obligation:**
2. Inception Report stating clear methodology(including detailed work plan, methods of primary and secondary data collection etc.) on how to approach the updating of the existing IRMP of SRF;
3. Interim Progress Report :
4. First Status Report;
5. Second Status Report
6. Draft Report;
7. Final Report.
8. **Selection Method:**

The Consultancy firm will be selected following the Quality & Cost Based selection (QCBS) method described in the PPA,2006 and PPR, 2008.

1. **Duration of the Assignment:** Duration of the Assignment is 24 months.
2. **Institutional Arrangement:**

The Consultancy Firm will work under direct control of the Project Director or assigned DFO. Reporting will be directly to the Project Director with close collaboration with other officials of the Project. The firm will be accountable to the Project Director/PE for its day-to-day activities. The project will provide office space at Khulna.