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TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)

International consultant to analyze international experience in developing national policy, institutional frameworks and the implementation of OECMs

Category:	<i>Consultancy Service</i>
Report to:	<i>Nguyen Thi Thanh Hai, Project Manager</i>
Location:	<i>Flexible</i>
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1. BACKGROUND

WWF is one of the first international non-governmental organizations to work in Viet Nam. In 1985, WWF began implementing its national conservation strategy and has since cooperated closely with the Government of Viet Nam on a wide range of environmental issues, as well as field-based activities across the country. Over more than three decades, WWF has made significant contributions at the national level, and in particular has left a strong footprint in priority landscapes such as the Central Annamites and the Lower Mekong Delta.

The Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) was adopted by 196 Parties at the second part of the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP15) in December 2022, following a four-year consultation and negotiation process. This landmark framework aims to achieve the global vision of “living in harmony with nature”, with four long-term goals for 2050 and 23 targets to be achieved by 2030. The GBF not only builds on but also strengthens previous strategic plans under the CBD, and plays a key role in supporting the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Within the GBF, Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) are recognized as a feasible and complementary solution alongside Protected Areas (PAs) to achieve Target 3, commonly known as the 30×30 target. Unlike PAs whose primary objective is conservation, OECMs may be governed and managed for other purposes, while still delivering effective and long-term conservation outcomes.

OECMs were first mentioned under Aichi Target 11 in 2010, but were formally defined at the CBD COP14 through Decision CBD/COP/DEC/14/8 of 30 November 2018. Annex III of Decision 14/8 also sets out guiding principles and the key characteristics and criteria for identifying OECMs (including 4 main criteria, 10 specific criteria and 26 detailed sub-criteria), which can be applied across all existing or potential ecosystems of importance for biodiversity.

Decision 14/8 also clearly sets out the role of international organisations in promoting the development of OECMs. The Decision invites the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) to expand the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA) by creating a section for OECMs, thereby laying the foundation for the establishment, systematisation and operation of the World Database on OECMs (WD-OECM). This global database has since been developed and hosted on the Protected Planet platform, with OECM records made available from late 2019 onwards.

Building on this mandate, IUCN and the IUCN WCPA Specialist Group for OECMs have gradually developed a series of global guidance documents, beginning with the publication “*Recognising and reporting other effective area-based conservation measures*” (2019), followed by technical papers, site-level identification tools and good practice guidance. These are intended to help countries interpret and apply the criteria of Decision 14/8 in identifying, assessing and reporting OECMs for recognition.

According to statistics from the Protected Planet database, as of the most recent data update in November 2025, 6,594 OECMs^{1,2} cover more than 2.34 million km², contributing around 4% of the global area that is managed for conservation objectives. These OECMs are distributed across 16 countries and territories that have been officially recognised, namely: **Guernsey, Sweden, Bhutan, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Cook Islands, the Philippines, Algeria, Morocco, Eswatini, Colombia, Peru, Canada, Oman, the United Kingdom and Ecuador**. Sweden currently reports by far the highest number of OECMs worldwide, with 5,365 sites - almost 16 times more than Morocco, which ranks second with 338 OECMs. The Philippines is a regional pioneer in Asia, and one of the few countries globally that has successfully registered OECMs in the database; it also has the highest number of recorded OECMs in the Asia–Pacific region and the third highest worldwide, with 178 sites.

OECMs are increasingly recognised as a highly promising tool to formally acknowledge areas and values that are already contributing to biodiversity conservation beyond traditional PAs. At the same time, they help to recognise and safeguard the contributions of local communities, the private sector and other stakeholders who manage natural resources sustainably, in ways that are consistent with local cultures, social equity and livelihood development, and aligned with the principle of respecting human rights and “leaving no one behind” in conservation.

According to official statistics from the Protected Planet database, the total area of terrestrial, inland water, coastal and marine protected areas in Viet Nam accounts for just over 8%³. To contribute to achieving the more ambitious targets of the GBF agreed at COP15, Viet Nam will not only need to improve management effectiveness and expand the coverage of existing PAs, but also promote and enhance in-situ conservation outcomes in OECMs beyond formal PAs. Viet Nam’s National Biodiversity Strategy to 2030, with a vision to 2050 (NBS), has begun to refer to “*Promote other effective conservation measures in areas outside protected areas*”, thereby laying the groundwork for future OECM-related conservation efforts.

In recent years, conservation organisations and development partners in Viet Nam – including WWF, GIZ, IUCN and UNDP – have proactively engaged, bringing forward initiatives and providing technical support to work with the Government of Viet Nam in clarifying the concept, potential and roadmap for developing OECMs. This has included initial studies on potential OECM sites in Viet Nam, capacity-building and advocacy activities to support OECM implementation, and contributions to the development of a national OECM roadmap.

To provide a solid basis for formulating national recommendations on OECM development, the WWF-Viet Nam “*Strengthening the engagement of local communities in Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) implementation*” project in Hue City, Da Nang, and Quang Tri province (MiB-GBF) is seeking an international consultant to conduct the assignment “**Analyze international experience in developing national policy, institutional frameworks and the implementation of OECMs**”. The consultant will carry out a synthesis study and analysis of international experience in developing policies, institutional arrangements and guidance on the criteria, procedures for recognition, operation and management of OECMs in different countries, with particular attention to those sharing similar natural, socio-economic conditions with Viet Nam, so that relevant elements can be adapted and applied to the Vietnamese context. This is a necessary step to operationalise national biodiversity objectives and contribute to Viet Nam’s efforts to deliver on its international commitments, particularly the 30×30 target under the GBF.

2. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF WORK

2.1 Objectives

To provide a comprehensive and systematic analysis of international experience in developing and implementing policy, legal and institutional frameworks, as well as technical guidance related to

¹ UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2025), Protected Planet: The World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA) and World Database on Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (WD-OECM) [Online], November 2025, Cambridge, UK: UNEP-WCMC and IUCN. Available at: www.protectedplanet.net.

² UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2025). “November 2025 update of the WDPCA and GD-PAME”. Available at: <https://www.protectedplanet.net/en/monthly-release-news/november-2025-update-of-the-wdpc-a-and-gd-pame>

³ UNEP-WCMC (2025). Protected Area Profile for Viet Nam from the World Database on Protected Areas, November 2025. Available at: www.protectedplanet.net

OECMs, linked to the practical processes of identifying, assessing, reporting, recognizing, operating and governing OECMs in different countries. Based on this analysis, the consultant will develop and propose policy-oriented recommendations for Viet Nam, to be used by WWF-Viet Nam and relevant government agencies and partners in OECM implementation in the coming period, thereby supporting Viet Nam to achieve its national conservation objectives and contribute to the 30×30 target of the GBF by 2030.

2.2 Scope of work

The consultant's tasks will focus on the following specific components:

(i) Synthesis and review of international materials on OECMs

- Review existing reports and studies analyzing policy, legal and institutional frameworks and related proposals for OECM development in Viet Nam.
- Systematically compile and review international materials related to OECMs, including but not limited to: CBD Decisions; global OECM guidance developed by IUCN and WCPA; technical materials produced by UNEP-WCMC/WD-OECM and other stakeholders; synthesis papers on lessons learned and case studies; international, regional and national reports; as well as legal documents, policies and technical guidelines related to the identification, assessment, recognition, operation and management of OECMs.
- In the process of collecting materials, identify countries that share certain similarities with Viet Nam in terms of natural, socio-economic conditions and OECM development orientation, as well as countries that are pioneers in OECM implementation, in order to build a robust evidence base for the analysis of country experiences under section (ii).

(ii) Identification, review, assessment and analysis of other country experiences

- Based on the literature review under section (i), select at least 8–10 countries for in-depth analysis, giving priority to countries that have policy, legal and institutional systems, levels of development and natural and socio-economic conditions similar to those of Viet Nam and/or that are pioneers in OECM implementation (for example: South Korea, Japan, the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, India, Peru, Costa Rica, South Africa, Canada, Australia, etc.).
- For each selected country, carry out a systematic analysis under the following main themes:
 - **Legal and institutional framework:** Compile and analyze relevant laws, subordinate legislation, strategies, policies, plans and other regulatory instruments or equivalent documents related to OECMs; clarify the mandated lead agency, competent authorities, coordination mechanisms among stakeholders (including inter-sectoral coordination), as well as the allocation of roles and responsibilities between different actors and between national and subnational levels.
 - **Criteria and procedures for identifying, assessing and reporting OECM recognition:** Describe and analyze the steps in the process for identifying, assessing, reporting, validating data, making recognition decisions and reporting OECMs, including criteria and tools applied. Clarify the requirements and workflows for recording, aggregating and validating data to ensure data quality for reporting recognized OECMs to the WD-OECM.
 - **Governance models, coordination mechanisms and participation of different actors:** Analyze how coordination is organized among government agencies at different levels, local communities, civil society organizations, the private sector and other non-state actors in identifying, proposing, assessing, reporting and managing OECMs; clarify the roles, levels of participation and consultation mechanisms of different actors; and analyze governance models such as co-management or governance based on local rights and knowledge, where applicable.
 - **Operational mechanisms for OECMs (including financial mechanisms and measures to ensure sustainability):** Compile and analyze how OECMs are operated, including financial mechanisms and measures to ensure long-term sustainability (such as conservation funds, payments for ecosystem services, community- or locally-managed finance models, technical support, etc.); assess strengths, weaknesses and key enabling conditions for maintaining OECM operations over the long term.

(iii) Comparative analysis and lessons for Viet Nam

- Based on the detailed country analyses under section (ii), compare and clarify the strengths, limitations and key enabling conditions for OECMs to be effectively identified, recognized and operated in each context.
- Identify elements and approaches that could be adapted, referenced or applied to the Vietnamese context, including: scale of OECM implementation, existing institutional frameworks, level of participation of communities and other stakeholders, national reporting systems to the CBD and contributions towards the 30x30 target; with particular attention to experiences that are relevant to the dual-track approach (“top-down” and “bottom-up”) that Viet Nam is pursuing.

(iv) Policy recommendations for Viet Nam

- Building on the comparative analysis and lessons learned under section (iii), develop and propose oriented policy recommendations for OECM implementation in Viet Nam regarding:
 - The national institutional and regulatory framework for OECMs, including the coordination role of the lead agency, identification and allocation of roles and responsibilities among competent authorities, clarification of responsibilities between national and subnational levels, and coordination mechanisms among stakeholders;
 - A suitable national procedure for OECM recognition in Viet Nam: from site identification, assessment and domestic reporting to submission to the world database, data validation and official recognition of OECMs;
 - Local-level governance models and mechanisms to promote meaningful participation of local communities in OECM governance and management;
 - Appropriate operational mechanisms for OECMs, including recommendations on feasible and sustainable financial mechanisms and measures to ensure the long-term operation of OECMs.

(v) Consultation and reporting

- Participate in at least 03 online meetings/discussions with WWF-Viet Nam and relevant stakeholders throughout the assignment, including: an inception meeting, a meeting to present and discuss the draft report, and a meeting to present the final report.
- Prepare and submit all written deliverables, including: (i) an inception report/analytical framework; (ii) a draft report and PowerPoint presentation on the draft report; (iii) a set of proposed recommendations for Viet Nam; and (iv) a final report, accompanied by an Executive Summary and a PowerPoint presentation of the final report.

(vi) Work in close coordination with WWF-Viet Nam staff throughout the assignment to ensure timely delivery and quality of all outputs.

3. DELIVERABLES AND SUBMISSION SCHEDULE

This section sets out the scope of work, expected deliverables, timelines and required level of effort. The consultant is expected to work in close coordination with WWF-Viet Nam to achieve the objectives and results outlined below.

#	Tasks	Deliverables	Working days	Deadlines
1	Review Vietnamese and international documents; develop analytical framework and inception report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inception Report (analytical framework and methodology) - Synthesis and review of international documents - List of selected countries (8–10 countries) for in-depth analysis 	5	15/12/2025

2	Analyze experiences from 8–10 countries and draft the synthesis report	- Content of the review and analysis of country experiences	11	26/12/2025
3	Conduct comparative analysis, extract lessons learned and develop policy recommendations for Viet Nam	- Policy recommendations for Viet Nam - Draft report - Presentation on the report	5	12/01/2026
4	Finalize the report based on feedback; prepare the Executive Summary and final presentation	- Final report with Executive Summary - Final presentation	2.5	30/01/2026
5	Participate in meetings/exchanges with WWF-Viet Nam (inception, input on draft report, presentation of final report)	- Tổng hợp các góp ý (nếu có) Summary of comments/inputs (as applicable)	1.5	Throughout the assignment period
Total number of working days			25	

4. BUDGET FOR THE SERVICES

All costs, including consultancy fees, travel, accommodation and per diem shall follow WWF's cost norms.

The costs for travel, accommodation and per diem are not applicable in this assignment.

5. REQUIREMENT

- Education and professional experience

- Master's degree or higher in a relevant field such as biodiversity conservation, natural resource management, environmental law/policy, public policy, environmental economics or other closely related fields.
- At least 10 years of international experience in one or more of the following areas: conservation, natural resource governance, biodiversity/protected area policy and institutions, or related sustainable development programs.

- Experience on OECMs and policy / institutional frameworks

- Solid understanding of OECMs and the GBF, including key global definitions, criteria and guidance.
- Demonstrated professional and research experience related to OECMs.
- Proven experience in policy and institutional analysis and in contributing to the development or formulation of proposals and frameworks in the field of environment and conservation.

- Analytical, comparative and report-writing skills

- Strong ability to conduct comparative analysis and systematically synthesize international literature and experiences (on institutions, legislation, technical procedures, governance models, etc.).
- Proven track record in drafting high-quality technical reports, institutional and legal analyses and policy recommendations at national, regional or international level.

- Language and coordination skills

- Excellent command of English for reading and understanding technical documents, report writing and professional communication.
- Ability to work flexibly and coordinate closely with the WWF-Viet Nam team, ensuring timely and high-quality deliverables; willingness to participate in online meetings/consultations to discuss, update and present research findings as needed.

6. WORKING ARRANGEMENTS AND SUPPORT FROM WWF-VIET NAM

WWF-Viet Nam will:

- Provide core background materials on the Viet Nam context, including information on pilot OECM models, current related legal and policy frameworks, existing situation analyses and related technical documents.
- Facilitate access to relevant documents, reports, internal guidance and lessons learned from the WWF Network (from countries that have advanced OECMs or supported development of policy frameworks).
- Designate a technical focal point to maintain regular communication, review the inception report, provide comments on draft outputs and agree on the content of final deliverables throughout the assignment.

7. REQUEST FOR COMPETENCY PROFILE AND PROPOSAL

Based on the contents of the assignment described in the Terms of Reference, the candidates are requested to submit the Application, according to the following forms:

NO	Contents	
1	Letter of interest	Annex 1
2	Technical Proposal (TBD by applicant)	Annex 2
3	Curriculum vitae (CV)	Annex 3
4	Release Letter (if expert is working full-time at a unit)	Annex 4

The candidate can submit a soft copy to the email address of the WWF's representative, anh.phamhai@wwf.org.vn, cc: duc.dominh@wwf.org.vn with the email title "**FY26-0534-CV/Proposal-[name of consultant]-"International consultant to analyze international experience in developing national policy, institutional frameworks and the implementation of OECMs"**

Annex 1. LETTER OF CONFIRMING INTEREST AND AVAILABILITY

Date _____, 2025

To: World Wide Fund for Nature-Viet Nam (WWF-Viet Nam)

Dear Sir/Madam,

I hereby declare that:

- a) I have read, understood and hereby accept the Terms of Reference (ToR) describing the duties and responsibilities of *Individual Consultant to provide assistance to(name of assignment)*;
- b) I hereby propose my services and I confirm my interest in performing the assignment through the submission of the CV which I have duly signed and attached hereto as Annex 1;
- c) In compliance with the requirements of the ToR, I hereby confirm that I am available for the entire duration of the assignment, and I shall perform the services in the manner described in the *proposed work plan with timeline to carry out the assignment*.
- d) I hereby propose to complete the services based on the following payment rate:
 - An all-inclusive daily fee ofUSD/VND for the daily rate of USD/VND/working day.
 - A total lump sum of payable in the manner described in the ToR:USD/VND
- e) I recognize that the payment of the abovementioned amounts due to me shall be based on my delivery of outputs within the timeframe specified in the TOR, which shall be subject to WWF-Viet Nam's review, acceptance and payment certification procedures;
- f) This offer shall remain valid for a total period of days after the submission deadline;
- g) If I am selected for this assignment, I shall sign an Individual Contract with WWF-Viet Nam;
- h) I fully understand and recognize that WWF-Viet Nam is not bound to accept this proposal, and I also understand and accept that I shall bear all costs associated with its preparation and submission and that WWF-Viet Nam will in no case be responsible or liable for those costs, regardless of the conduct or outcome of the selection process.

Full Name and Signature:

Date Signed: _____, 2025

Annex 2. Technical Proposal

Proposed methodologies, approaches, describe your relevant experience and capabilities, and suggest a plan for carrying out the tasks from the consultant (if selected)

Criteria	Consultant briefing on meeting requirements
1. Relevant experiences for the mission	
- Understanding of the mandate	
- Methodology	
- Experience in the field of study	
2. Qualifications	
3. Implementation schedule	

Full Name and Signature:
2025

Date Signed: ,

Annex 3. CURRICULUM VITAE (CV)

(The experts may use their existing CV template or this attached form, provided that they supply sufficient information for the evaluation)

1. **Proposed Position** (*only one candidate shall be nominated for each position*): __
2. **Name of Expert** (*Insert full name*): __
3. **Contact email:** _____ **Contact phone No.:** _____
4. **Date of Birth:** _____ **Citizenship:** __
ID tax code: _____
5. **Education and Trainings** (*Indicate college/university and other specialized education and trainings of expert, giving names of institutions, degrees obtained*):
Type of degree: _____
Institution/University: _____
Date of graduation (month/year): _____
6. **Membership in Professional Associations:** _____
7. **Areas of expertise:** (*List out as much as possible your professional expertise*)
8. **Previous working experience with WWF, if any** (*List out assignments which expert has worked with WWF*):
From (Year) : _____ To (Year): __
Project name and location: __
Positions held/main assignment : _____
Focal point that you worked with: _____
9. **Previous working experience with INGOs, bi-lateral or multi-lateral international organizations, if any** (*List out name of the organizations you have worked with*)
10. **Relevant Professional Record**
(*Describe work undertaken that best illustrates capability and experience to handle the Tasks Assigned*)
From (Year) : _____ To (Year): __
Employer: _____
Positions held: _____
11. **Relevant Researches, Publications**
(*List and Describe researches and publications that best illustrates capability and experience to handle the Tasks Assigned*)

Certification:

I, the undersigned, certify that to the best of my knowledge and belief, this CV correctly describes my qualifications, and my experience. I understand that any misstatement or misrepresentation described herein may lead to my disqualification or dismissal by the Purchaser.

I accept that WWF-Viet Nam can use my data to update WWF's consultant list and send bid invitations to me when properly. *(Optional: Expert delete this statement if you do not accept to be recorded into WWF's consultant list).*

Representative of the bidder submitting the proposal
(Signature, full name, position and official stamp)

Name of consultant
(Signature, full name)

Date (dd/mm/yyyy)

Date (dd/mm/yyyy)

Annex 4. Release Letter

(if expert is working full-time at a state-owned units or non-state agencies)

(Applied for an individual consultant who is a full-time employee of an organization and only be requested to submit before the signing of consulting service contract)

[LETTERHEAD OF CONFIRMATION LETTER ISSUED]

RELEASE LETTER

Date & Time

To: WWF-Viet Nam

The [Name of the Organization] agrees that:

Mr/Ms. [Name of Consultant], [Job title in the organization]

ID Number: issued by: dated:

Has been approved by [Name of the Organization] to provide independent consulting services for WWF-Viet Nam on [Name of the consultancy assignment] under [Project name] during the time, tentatively from [when] to [when].

During this consultancy assignment, Mr/Ms. [Name of the Consultant] commits to:

- Implement the consultancy services outside of the official working hours of his/her employer or during his/her approved annual leave.
- Implement the consultancy services outside of his regular duties assigned by his/her employer.

Sincerely,

(Sign or seal according to the internal authority of the certifying organization)