Terms of Reference (TOR) for Consultancy Call

For

Development of Database of Biodiversity Important Areas and Existing, Ongoing, Upgrading and Proposed Linear Infrastructure Projects in Nepal

1. Background:

Nepal is known for its diverse physiographic zones, ranging from alluvial plains to rugged mountains and snow-covered Himalayas. The country’s unique geographical location and diverse climatic conditions have created a rich ecosystem, making Nepal a biodiversity hotspot. However, the development of linear infrastructure projects, such as roads, railways, irrigation canals, and electricity power transmission lines poses a potential threat to biodiversity important areas and their ecological integrity. To address these issues, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) USAID funded ALIGN Project aims to enhance the development and implementation of effective, high-quality linear infrastructure safeguards that protect people and nature from potential harm which is supported by three objectives – i) strengthen natural resource safeguards for linear infrastructure implementation practices and related laws, policies, regulations, frameworks, and standards of government agencies, national and international financial institutions, and the private sector by aligning them with international best practices ii) enhance partnerships with government agencies, donors, investors, private companies, civil society organizations, academia, and workforce training institutions and iii) increase capacity of government agencies, national and international financial institutions, private companies, and civil society organizations.

Infrastructure development and biodiversity conservation, mutually inclusive, are imperative for the country, a database comprising of both biological hotspots and linear infrastructure could be an important planning tool for complying with mitigation hierarchy for natural resource safeguards. The ALIGN Project aims to develop a comprehensive database that maps biodiversity important areas (BIAs) and existing, ongoing, upgrading, proposed, and any other potential linear
infrastructure projects in Nepal, The details on the classification of linear infrastructure projects in Nepal in Annex 2. Proponents should follow this classification throughout the projects.

2. **Rationale of the Assessment**

Existing, ongoing, upgrading, proposed, and any other potential linear linear infrastructure projects passing through BIAs (e.g. protected areas, wildlife corridors, and forest conservation areas, wetlands of international importance, critical watersheds and micro-refugia etc.) are impacting natural resources including wildlife population. These ecologically sensitive areas are also home to indigenous communities and other marginalized groups with strong economic, cultural, and religious ties to their natural resources. Hence, integrated database with mapping of biological hotspots and linear infrastructure could be an effective planning tool for proposing new infrastructure or upgrading them from the starting of the project cycle i.e., project selection stage to avoid hotspots and find alternative options or recommend appropriate mitigation measures.

3. **Objective:**

The primary objective of this consultancy is to develop a comprehensive database of BIAs and linear infrastructure (LI) projects interacting these areas in Nepal. The database will facilitate decision-making regarding the infrastructure projects and add value to the conservation efforts.

**The specific objectives include:**

i. Mapping of the geographical space as per agreed criteria for identification of BIAs.

ii. Identifying and map existing, ongoing, upgrading, proposed, and any other potential linear infrastructure projects in Nepal.

iii. Developing a spatial database that consolidates information on BIAs and linear infrastructure projects.

iv. Recommend appropriate safeguard measures for the LI projects passing/likely passing through biodiversity important areas.
4. **Scope of Work:**

The consultant will be responsible for the following tasks:

- Develop a standard criterion for identifying areas within the country as BIAs.
- Develop a standard format/structure to produce a comprehensive database on the BIAs.
- Review existing data sources and conduct additional surveys and fieldwork, if necessary, to map BIAs.
- Review existing data sources to identify and document wildlife migratory routes passing through biodiversity areas.
- Consult with government agencies and stakeholders on identifying areas BIAs and gather the necessary information (ecological, spatial, and social and others) accordingly.
- Consult with government agencies and stakeholders to identify and gather information existing, ongoing, upgrading, proposed, and any other potential infrastructure projects.
- Develop a comprehensive database (spatial and compiled information) that integrates the collected data on biodiversity important areas, migratory routes, and linear infrastructure projects.
- Provide a demonstration of the database and finalize it based on their feedback.
- Recommend appropriate safeguard measures for the LI projects passing/likely passing through biodiversity important areas.

5. **Methodology:**

The consultant will employ the following methodology:

i. Consultant to provide detailed methodology on addressing the objectives and clarify on the criteria for identifying BIAs.
ii. Consultant should provide detailed structure of database along with proposal.
iii. Prioritize the identification of BIAs along the provincial and federal jurisdictions.
iv. Coordination with relevant stakeholders for required information and utilize freely available data sources, including satellite imagery, biophysical variables, biodiversity and species distribution data, and remote sensing software, to map biodiversity important areas.

v. Define and identify biodiversity important areas as per agreed criteria (based on ecological, biodiversity-related criteria, such as species richness, endemism, ecosystem rarity and connectivity etc.)

vi. Recommend appropriate safeguards measures for the LI projects passing/likely passing through biodiversity important areas.

vii. Conduct consultations with government agencies to identify linear infrastructure projects and gather relevant information.

viii. Utilize GIS and any other pertaining software to develop the database.

ix. Database development.

x. Finalization and handover of the database to ALIGN Project/WWF Nepal

After the selection of the proponent for the work, initial coordination meeting will be held with WWF Nepal/ALIGN team for the clarification on scope of work and requirement of database on BIAs and infrastructures projects. Then proponent will be called for development of the inception meeting that presents all the requirement of the projects.

6. Deliverables:
The consultant is expected to deliver the following:

a) Comprehensive database of BIAs as per agreed criteria, including spatial information, ecological significance, threats, and safeguard actions.

b) Database of existing, proposed, planned, and potential linear infrastructure projects, including precise spatial information and relevant attributes.

c) Meta data developed for the comprehensive database.

d) Demonstration of the database to key ministries and stakeholders.

e) Finalized and operational database handed over to the ALIGN Project/WWF Nepal and relevant ministries.
7. Timeline for Key Deliverables:
The consultancy is expected to commence from September 2023 and should be completed, including the final presentation of findings, by December 2023. The total duration of the consultancy is estimated to be 5 months.

The timeframe: Total 5 months are allocated for this consultancy work.

- Desk review, inception report preparation and presentation (1 and 1/2 month)
- Consultation meeting with related ministries and departments for data acquisition (1/2 month)
- Development of database including field visits (2 month)
- Draft report submission and presentation in interaction workshop (1/2 month)
- Finalization of database report (1/2 month)

Key deliverables and due dates are:

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<th>SN</th>
<th>Key deliverables</th>
<th>Due date</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Inception report with detailed methodologies and source for data acquisition and overall timeline for the accomplishment of tasks</td>
<td>1/2 month from date of agreement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Draft database and presentation in the interaction workshop</td>
<td>4 and 1/2 months from date of agreement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Final database report with overlaid map submission</td>
<td>5 months for date of agreement.</td>
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The consultant will provide hard copy and electronic versions of written deliverables. The consultant will be responsible for communication and coordination with all concerned stakeholders for data accessibility.

8. Qualifications and Experience:
The consultant should possess the following qualifications and experience:
✓ Master’s degree and expertise (at least 10 years) in biodiversity conservation, ecology, wildlife science and other related field.

✓ Master’s degree and expertise (at least 5 years) in GIS, remote sensing and other related fields.

✓ Experience in conducting surveys, fieldwork, and data collection related to biodiversity mapping and infrastructure projects.

✓ Proficiency in remote sensing software and GIS tools.

✓ Familiarity with the environmental and biodiversity context of Nepal.

✓ Previous experience in developing spatial databases and conducting sensitivity analysis.

✓ Excellent analytical, communication, and report writing skills.

9. Budget:

The budget for this consultancy will be covered by the ALIGN Project (NP214000-01095402). The specific budget breakdown and financial details will be discussed and finalized with the selected consultant.

10. Branding and Marking

The ALIGN Project Branding Strategy and Marking Plan will be ensured in all the publications and reports and will follow the branding guidelines.

11. Supervision and Coordination

The consultant will work closely with the Sustainable Infrastructure Specialist of WWF Nepal.

12. Reporting and Communication:

The consultant will report to the ALIGN Project/WWF Nepal and maintain regular communication throughout the consultancy period. Progress updates, reports, and deliverables should be submitted as per the agreed-upon schedule.

13. Proposal Submission:

Interested consultants are requested to submit a detailed technical and financial proposal outlining their understanding of the ToR, methodology, work plan, timeline, team composition, relevant experience, and a breakdown of costs. WWF is inviting
qualified firms and consultants to submit a hard copy of a technical proposal in a sealed envelope, along with a cover letter. A hard copy of the financial proposal should be submitted in a separately sealed envelope.

A. Technical Proposal:

- Present proposed contents, methodology, approaches, and overall workplan
- A clear demonstration of capabilities and expertise in carrying out the requirements.

In addition, the following document/information should be provided along with the proposal:

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<td>1</td>
<td>Organization registration certificate with the latest renewal if applicable</td>
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<td>VAT registration certificate</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Latest Audit Report</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Signed Curriculum Vitae of all team members involved</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Role and relevant years of experience of each team member for this assignment (in addition to CV). All experience must be counted from the date of completion of the degree with which the experts have applied.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Organizational profile focusing on relevant work experience</td>
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B. Financial Proposal:

- A clear and detailed layout of costs is required to perform this assignment with itemized budgets and explanatory notes. Please refer to Annex 1 for preparing the financial proposal.
- The payment is subject to a tax deduction as per prevailing government rules.

Both envelopes should indicate the consultancy applied for, and be submitted together to the following address:

**WWF Nepal, ALIGN Project**

**PO Box: 7660 Baluwatar, Kathmandu, Nepal**
14. **Deadline and Submission:**

The proposals must be submitted by 5:00 pm **20th December 2023**. Interested consultancy firms/institutions should ensure that proposals are delivered in a timely manner and to the correct address as indicated above. In case of late submission, the submitted proposal will not be considered for evaluation.

15. **Intellectual Property:**

The intellectual property rights of the developed database and related materials will belong to the ALIGN Project/WWF Nepal. The consultant will not have any claim or right over the intellectual property.

❖ Please note that the final ToR may be subject to changes and revisions in consultation with the selected consultant.

**Annex-1: Financial Details/Budget Template:**

The Consultant should submit a financial proposal that includes a detailed breakdown of the budget. The payment is subject to a tax deduction as per prevailing government rules. Please use the following budget template and may revise the description as per the applicability.

**Estimated budget template (can be changed as appropriate)**

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<td>Development of Application and Database</td>
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<td>Development of Manual</td>
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