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DEVELOPMENT OF HIGH CONSERVATION VALUES (HCVs) NATIONAL INTERPRETATION (NI) OF BHUTAN

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1 Contracting Authority

World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Bhutan (BT)

1.2 Project background

51.44% of Bhutan’s total geographical area is currently under a protected area network system. The remaining 48.56% of the areas outside the protected area networks are managed under different management regimes such as Forest Management Units (FMUs), Community Forests (CFs), Local Forest Management Plans (LFMPs), etc. which are managed separately, thus leading to a piecemeal approach of management. Hence to address the need for a landscape level integrated and holistic management, the project Living Landscape: securing High Conservation Values (HCVs) in Southwestern Bhutan is being implemented. The central approach of this project is securing the High Conservation Values (HCVs) areas in Southwestern Bhutan. Besides, there are on-going recognition now in country of values that need to be conserved for the benefit of the country and its people- soil and land development as a means to both mitigate and adapt to climate change and ensure continuous ecosystem services (INDC, 2015); identification and prioritization of critical forests, habitats, and watersheds (State of the Environment 2016; bring about the desired economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the citizens of Bhutan (Land Act of Bhutan 2007), etc.

The concept of High Conservation Values (HCVs) was originally developed by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) in 1999 for use in forest management certification. Gradually, the concept has widened its scope & applied to agricultural land use and is now being widely used for landscape mapping, conservation and natural resource planning and advocacy. The HCV approach consists of six Values, which cover environmental and social priorities shared by a wide range of stakeholder groups. High Conservation Values (HCVs) are biological, ecological, social, or cultural values considered outstandingly significant at the national or regional level. Areas in which these values occur need to be appropriately managed to maintain or enhance those identified values.

Through the project - Living Landscapes: securing HCVs in the Southwestern Bhutan, the concept of HCV will be applied in 9 districts in the project landscapes to ensure the long-term conservation of biodiversity & ecosystem services, and contribute to the country’s sustainable development. The project/program is envisaged to contribute to maintaining key ecological functions of the landscapes and ecosystems in Bhutan, delivering a multitude of societal benefits, including conservation, production and livelihoods.

The approach of HCVs is fairly new to conservation management in Bhutan. Therefore, the development of National Interpretation (NI) forms a critical guide and foundation for the adoption and application of the approach of HCVs in Bhutan to provide a scientific basis for good land governance and facilitate the country’s overall vision of sustainable development. The NI will define National guidance for identifying, managing and monitoring HCVs in Bhutan. This guidance will be useful
for NR users, conservation & land use planners and regulators, besides policy & decision makers.

2. OBJECTIVE, PURPOSE & EXPECTED RESULTS

2.1 Overall objective

The primary objective of this consultancy is to develop HCV NI for Bhutan, which will guide the identification, management and monitoring of HCVs in Bhutan. And the specific objectives of the current consultancy are;

1. Carry out an in-depth review and assess the application of the international Common guidance on Identification, Management and Monitoring of HCVs in the national context.
2. Carry out an in-depth review and assess the application of the NIs of the countries in the region on Identification, Management and Monitoring.
3. Assess the relevancy and applicability of the existing international common guidance on HCVs and regional NIs; and then accordingly incorporate components and processes into Bhutan’s NI.
4. Develop NI for Bhutan that best interprets the global HCV definitions as laid out in Common Guidance on HCV Identification, Management and Monitoring, but also match with what represent HCVs in the Bhutanese context.

2.2 Purpose

The purpose of this contract is as follows:

To undertake a thorough assessment of international common guidance on HCVs, and the existing NI of other countries; and then develop a robust best practice National Interpretation for Bhutan.

2.3 Deliverables or Results to be achieved by the Contractor

The consultants/firms are expected to deliver the following outputs;

1. Inception report for the consultancy, to be submitted Two weeks after signing of the contract agreement.
2. Work plan with timeline for the proposed consultancy to be included within the Inception report.
3. Assessment report on common guidance and NIs of the countries in the region (at least one country that has an approved NI, albeit more than one is preferred).
4. Minutes and reports of the stakeholder consultation meetings (at least three rounds of consultation meetings including inception and final stakeholder meeting)
5. A draft version of the NIs’ to be submitted one month before the expiry of the consultancy.
6. Final report/document of HCV NI of Bhutan for **identification, management** and **monitoring**, one month after receiving the comments from stakeholders on the final draft NI.

### 3. SCOPE OF THE WORK

#### 3.1 Description of the assignment

The Consultants/firm is expected to collect and use data from a variety of sources, including:

- **Desk research:** Using existing documents and other information sources, the consultant will undertake a literature review to filter basic information into the structure of the NI document.
- **Key informant interviews:** Specific information will be obtained through interviews with experts and stakeholders working in different agencies and areas of six HCV categories – For instance, Department of culture, Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs for HCV category 6, which is cultural values.
- **Field interviews, site visits and focus groups:** Focused discussions with individual, professionals, stakeholders (including implementing partners of this project & different diversity groups – gender, social, cultural and economic) and other relevant officials and agencies (including local governments) to gather information and for their inputs.
- Develop HCVs NI for Bhutan which not only aligns with HCV Network’s Common Guidance but also fulfils the national circumstances of Bhutan.
- NI document preparation, presentation, discussion and finalization

#### 3.2 Geographical areas to be covered

Entire country.

Although the current project covers only 9 districts in South-western Bhutan, the HCV NI developed through this consultancy must be applicable to the entire country.

#### 3.3 Target groups

All the key stakeholders and implementing partners (both government and non-government agencies) of this project and also relevant agencies and local communities are the target groups.

#### 3.4 Specific work

The consultants will work on, inter-alia, the following;

1. Carry out an in-depth review and assess the application of international **common guidance** on **identification, management** and **monitoring** of HCVs and then adopt & use appropriate processes and standards into Bhutan’s NI.
2. Carry out an in-depth review and assess the application of existing NIs of the countries in the region on identification, management and monitoring of HCVs and then adopt & use appropriate processes and standards into Bhutan’s NI.

3. Conduct at least 3 consultation meetings/workshops with all relevant stakeholders, ensuring equal representation in terms of gender and other social, cultural and economic diversity, depending on relevancy.

4. Develop HCVs NI for Bhutan, which meets the global standards on HCV identification, management and monitoring of the HCV Network.

3.5 Project management

The Programme Coordination Unit (PCU) of the WWF BT will manage this project. The responsible person is the Program Coordinator, to whom reports and correspondence should be systematically addressed in the course of the implementation of the contract.

3.6 Facilities to be provided by the Contracting Authority and/or other parties

Not Applicable

4. LOGISTICS AND TIMING

4.1 Location

The Consultants/Firm shall work/cover various locations in Bhutan since the NI document prepared through this consultancy must be applicable for identification, management and Monitoring of HCVs sites in the entire country, not limited to current project landscapes.

4.2 Start date & Period of implementation of tasks

The intended start date is 15 July 2021 and the period of implementation of the contract will be 9 months from this date.

5. REQUIREMENTS

5.1 Staff/Team compositions

Considering the approach of HCVs is new not only for Bhutan, but fairly new approach of conservation management since it was mainly applied in forest certification to begin with, there is a lack of expertise on HCVs within the Bhutanese market. Hence, the consultancy will be contracted out to a firm/team of national and international experts.

The international consultant shall bring prior experience in HCVs processes. Ideally, s/he has already contributed to and is involved in the development of NIs processes.
in different countries, particularly in the regions around the globe, besides being aware of the HCV common guidance and its application in the national context.

The national consultant will bring local, regional and national knowledge about possible high conservation values and databases in Bhutan and has institutional knowledge about policy and conservation processes and best-practice standards of natural resources governance in Bhutan.

5.2 Key experts

Key experts are defined and they must submit CVs along with the Technical and Financial Proposals as part of submission of Expression of Interest (EoI).

All experts who have a crucial role in implementing the contract are referred to as key experts. The profiles of the key experts for this contract are as follows:

**Table 1: Key expert, qualifications and roles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Qualification &amp; Experiences</th>
<th>Expected Roles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| National Expert| • Minimum of postgraduate degree in NRM, Development and/or Management Studies, Forestry and/or Environmental Studies, or Climate Studies.  
• Minimum of 10 years of working experience in the Conservation, Climate Change and NRM sector  
• Experience in policy, socio-economic, and/or environmental analysis related to Conservation Management and NRM, especially conservation, forestry and land-use dynamics  
• Good understanding and knowledge on conservation, climate change, NRM, and the approach of HCVs preferably.  
• Good experience with institutional and stakeholder assessments and consultations.  
• Good Understanding of governance and | The National Expert will be the lead Consultant and be responsible for coordinating the all tasks of the assignment, inter alia the following;  
1. Liaise with the International HCV expert and ensure delivery of all outputs defined under this consultancy.  
2. Liaise with the International expert on assessment and in-depth review of HCV common guidance on identification, management and monitoring.  
3. Set up processes and working groups with relevant stakeholders to facilitate the development of NI for Bhutan  
4. Compile relevant existing databases and other information to identify, assess, monitor and manage HCVs in Bhutan  
5. Liaise with the International expert in the development of NI document.  
6. Be the first contact point for WWF BT, entrusted with the responsibility to ensure |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>institutional system of use of natural resources, including forests in Bhutan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Good understanding of biodiversity and socio-economic assessments and databases</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Preferably have experience in land use and land classification processes</td>
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<tr>
<td>delivery of all outputs defined under this consultancy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Liaise with the international HCV expert and ensure that NI document is reviewed and endorsed by the HCV Network, as may be necessary.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>HCVs International Expert</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Minimum of postgraduate degree in NRM or related sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Minimum of 10 years of working experience in the Conservation, Climate change, Environment and NRM sector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Experience in HCVs identification, management and monitoring internationally or regionally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Experience in development of HCV common guidance and/or national interpretation (at least one NI) or been part of a team working on the development of common guidance/National Interpretation for other countries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Knowledge and skills in NRM, Gender, social aspects in project development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The International <strong>Expert</strong> for this assignment will be responsible for providing guidance to the team and also bringing in international experiences and best practices to;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Carry out assessment and in-depth review of common guidance on HCVs; appropriately apply processes and standards for NI of Bhutan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Carry out assessment and in-depth review of HCVs NIs of the countries in the region and appropriately adapt processes and standards for NI of Bhutan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Lead assessment and in-depth review of existing National Interpretations of the countries in the region and globally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. <strong>Lead collaboration and engagement</strong> with HCV Network for their inputs including <strong>review</strong> and <strong>endorsement</strong> of the NI document, as may be necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Collaborate with national experts and develop NI for Bhutan, which aligns well with requirements of HCV Network Common Guidance, while also fulfilling national requirements.</td>
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</table>
Note: At least the National Expert member of the team should be fluent in Dzongkha and the regional dialects are recommended too.

All experts must be independent and free from conflicts of interest in the responsibilities they take on.

5.3 Office accommodation

Office accommodation for each expert working on the contract is to be provided by the Contractor/firm.

5.4 Facilities to be provided by the Contractor

The Contractor/firm shall ensure that experts are adequately supported and equipped. In particular, it must ensure that there is sufficient administrative, secretarial and interpreting provision to enable experts to concentrate on their primary responsibilities. It must also transfer funds as necessary to support their work under the contract and to ensure that its employees are paid regularly and in a timely fashion.

6. REPORTS

6.1 Reporting requirements

The Contractor will submit the following reports in English:

- **Inception Report** of a maximum of 20 pages to be produced after **two weeks** from the start of implementation. In the report, the Contractor/firm shall describe the workplan/work programme, schedule, methodology, meetings, data collection process, way forward, staff travel, format (outline) of the study and the training materials. The Contractor should proceed with his/her work unless the WWF BT sends comments on the inception report.

- The contractor will submit and present a short monthly report to the Program Coordinator for monitoring the consultancy, its initial findings, progress in collecting data, any difficulties encountered or expected in addition to the work programme and staff travel.

- The contractor will submit reports and minutes of the consultation meetings/workshops.

- **Draft final NI**: The draft final NI shall be submitted no later than one month before the end of the period of implementation of tasks/this consultancy.

- **Final NI document** - with the same specifications as the draft final NI, should have incorporated any comments received from the stakeholders on the draft final NI. The deadline for sending the final report is 30 days after receipt of comments.
on the draft final NI. The NI document prepared must meet all global requirements on HCVs, besides national requirements.

6.2 Submission, approval, copyrights of National Interpretation

The NI document must be submitted to the Programme Coordinator, PCU, WWF BT. The Programme Coordinator, PCU is responsible for obtaining the necessary approval/endorsement of the NI document.

The copyright and ownership of the study/NI shall remain with the WWF Bhutan and Royal Government of Bhutan. The consultant shall nevertheless be allowed to use/quote the report as a work reference.

7. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

7.1 Monitoring

The PCU WWF will monitor the progress of the consultancy, in line with the requirements under section 6.1 cited above to ensure the success of consultancy as per the terms and conditions of this contract.

7.2 Evaluation

The draft final NI document will be reviewed and evaluated through the process of final stakeholder consultation meetings with the relevant stakeholders, to obtain the views and concerns which will be accordingly incorporated into the final NI.

The final NI document will then be presented to the HCV National Partner Group for final technical review and endorsement.

8. SCHEDULES, DELIVERABLES AND PAYMENT

The payment will be made based on the deliverables. The consultancy firm will submit an inception report Two Weeks after the commencement of the contract. This report should be accompanied by a workplan to ensure that the assignment is completed as per the agreed timeline of 9 months. The inception report must be approved by the WWF BT to proceed with the consultancy work. The tentative schedule of the deliverables and payment is as summarized in the table below and shall be formalized on the signing of the contract agreement between PCU, WWF BT and the consulting firm.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deliverables</th>
<th>Schedule (months after signing)</th>
<th>Payment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On acceptance of Final Inception Report</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On acceptance of the Draft Final National Interpretation for HCV identification</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30 %</td>
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</table>
management and monitoring for Bhutan, which is not only aligned to HCV Network’s common guidance on HCV identification, management and monitoring, but fulfils the national requirements

On acceptance of the Final National Interpretation for HCV identification, management and monitoring for Bhutan, which is not only aligned to HCV Network’s common guidance on HCV identification, management and monitoring but fulfills the national requirements

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>50 %</td>
</tr>
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</table>

9. **SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS**

As part of this contract, the consultant should also attend a national level workshop and meetings depending on the relevancy, as and when Project Management, PCU, WWF BT, conducts.