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PROJECT **Samvardhan** सम्बर्धन

CSO actions for a resilient ecosystem and community.

Call for Consultancy Services for an assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services in Banke and Bardiya districts

Background:

The Samvardhan project, funded by the European Union and the Austrian Development Cooperation through ADRA Austria, is implemented by ADRA Nepal, ANSAB Nepal, Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal (FECOFUN), and Bheri Environment Excellence Group (BEE Group). The project is being executed in Kohalpur Municipality and Rapti-Sonari Rural Municipality of Banke district, and Thakurbaba Municipality and Madhuban Municipality of Bardiya district. Its primary aim is to empower Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), particularly community forest user groups (CFUGs) and farmers groups, to restore and conserve biodiversity and ecosystems for sustainable use and equitable sharing. The project focuses on five main outputs:

1. Strengthened capacities of forest user groups in sustainable forest management approaches in line with National Forest Stewardship Standards (NFSS)
2. Enhanced capacities of farmer groups in climate-smart farming and wildlife-resilient farming practices
3. Increased capacities of community-based enterprises in utilizing natural resources and ecosystem services
4. Improved capacities of public and private sectors in joint development and implementation of policies, guidelines, and plans at the local level on conservation and sustainable utilization of forest and farm resources
5. Increased awareness of national stakeholders and the public on key environmental goals, frameworks, and relevant issues

In order to achieve the first output, the project is carrying out biodiversity conservation and restoration activities by: a) strengthening the institutional, organizational, and technical capacities of CSOs, government agencies, project partners, and local communities, b) engaging CFUGs in sustainable forest and ecosystem management planning in alignment with NFSS, and c) facilitating sustainable forest and ecosystem management through enhanced knowledge and capacities of CFUGs, partners, and relevant stakeholders, and the adoption of best practices. Under the scope of this component, ANSAB is seeking interested individuals or companies for the consultancy service.

Objective of the work:

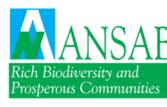
The overall objective of this consultancy service is to assess the biodiversity and ecosystem services in Kohalpur municipality and Rapti Sonari rural municipality of Banke district and Thakurbaba municipality and Madhuban municipality of Bardiya district, where the Samvardhan project is being implemented.

Scope of the work:

This study encompasses a comprehensive assessment of the current biodiversity and ecosystem services within the designated project area. The primary goal is to gather data and information



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that will support the effective implementation of activities related to sustainable forest management, biodiversity conservation, and the management and utilization of forest-based products and ecosystem services. This assessment will inform the revision of management plans for community forest user groups (CFUGs), ensuring alignment with National Forest Stewardship Standards (NFSS). Additionally, the study's findings will guide updates to project activities as recommended based on the collected data. Key tasks of this service include:

- Development of Study Framework, with the formulation of an approach and methodologies for conducting the assessment
- Assessment of general socio-demographic features, and analysis of the utilization of biodiversity and ecosystem services by local communities
- Assessment of land use and vegetation, including the evaluation of land use patterns, vegetation types
- Identification and mapping of non-timber forest products (NTFPs), wildlife, and habitats within the project site
- Assessment of the potential forest products and services based enterprises within in the project site
- Identification and mapping of ecosystem services, high conservation value (HCV) areas, biodiversity hotspots, wildlife habitats and corridors within the project site
- Identification and analysis of key threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services.
- Mapping of key stakeholders involved in biodiversity conservation and ecosystem service management
- Analysis and interpretation of the collected data and information, with the provision of recommendations for key interventions required for sustainable biodiversity conservation in the project area

Methods of the work:

The study will include the following methodology but not necessarily limited to:

- Engagement and familiarization with the project team to understand the project's objectives, activities, and the proposed work
- Review of existing project documents, including the log frame relevant to the scope of the study
- Review of secondary information, previous studies, assessments, and reports relevant to the assignment to gather background information and contextual data
- Prepare a detailed methodology for the study, including: sampling strategies to ensure representative data collection, design of questionnaires and checklists for group meetings, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews, aligned with the project document and log frame
- Share the questionnaires, tools, and checklists with the project team members and incorporate any comments received to ensure their relevance and effectiveness
- Prepare a detailed plan of action and schedule that covers: Orientation and training for enumerators (local), fieldwork timelines, data collection processes, analysis and interpretation of data, drafting and finalizing reports, and collaboration with the concerned project staff to ensure alignment with project timelines and requirements
- Specify the number and categories of respondents, ensuring a diverse and representative sample of the community and stakeholders involved
- Conduct field visits to the implementation areas for direct data collection and observations, including interviews with the local community members and stakeholders, and



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observations of the current status of biodiversity and ecosystem services. The project will support the arrangement of field visits and coordinate with community members and local stakeholders for consultations and meetings but will not provide any secretarial support

- Consult with local-level stakeholders such as Divisional Forest Offices (DFO), Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal (FECOFUN), municipalities, and other relevant stakeholders
- Prepare a draft report summarizing the findings and share it with the project team and other stakeholders, including in a validation workshop for their comments and inputs
- Prepare and submit the final report to the project team, ensuring it includes comprehensive data analysis, interpretation, and actionable recommendations

Deliverables:

The outcome of the work includes an assessment report. The following are the deliverables of the work:

- Inception report including detail methods and tools - Questionnaire and checklist
- A draft report and power point presentation highlighting the preliminary results & recommendations for discussion with the project team
- A compiled version of final report incorporating inputs and feedbacks from the project team and validation workshop
- A hard copy of collected information and e-copy of raw data

Duration:

The consultancy assignment is estimated to take 25 days and expected starting date from August 1, 2024. The exact days and duration will be agreed in consultation with the project team. The indicative number of days for the activities is presented in the following table:

SN	Activities	No. of days
1	Prepare a comprehensive study plan and an inception report jointly with the project team	3
2	Review of literatures and project documents	3
3	Field visits within the study area and consultation with stakeholders including Government agencies, target communities and, project partners etc.	9
4	Prepare draft report and presentation of findings and recommendations from the study and share it to the team for input and suggestions	5
5	Present the findings in a validation workshop (to be organized by the project)	1
6	Finalize the report incorporating input and suggestions from the team and validation workshop	4

Remuneration:

The indicative budget for this consultancy work will be NRs 450,000 including tax. It includes consultants' fee including questionnaire preparation, data collection, travel, consultation, cost of enumerators, report preparation and submission in final form. 30% of the total budget will be released in advance upon submission of the inception report; and the other 70% of the budget will be released after submitting final report.



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Required qualifications and experience of the consultant:

The consultant should have a minimum academic qualification of Masters Degree in relevant field, including natural resource management, forestry, environmental science, and at least 5-years of experience in works of similar nature. Experience on qualitative and quantitative research, and baseline study and project evaluation of similar projects/programs using participatory method is required. If a company is applying for the consultancy service, it must provide a dedicated consultant who meets the above qualifications, and the consultant's CV will be evaluated.

Evaluation of the proposal:

The proposals will be screened for their eligibility against the minimum requirements, defined in the section: Required qualifications and experience of the consultant. Proposals successfully fulfilling the eligibility assessment will undergo a qualitative assessment scored on the basis of the criteria presented in the following table:

<i>Evaluation criteria</i>	<i>Percentage point</i>
Understanding of the ToR	15
Approach and methodology	25
Specific experience of the consultant in carrying out similar assignments	40
Financial details	20

Application procedure:

Interested professionals/ institutions are requested to submit a brief proposal (including technical & financial details) outlining how you plan to achieve the objectives as stated in the TOR within the given budget limit along with a updated detailed CV of the consultant. The indicative format of the proposal is presented in Annex I.

Qualified candidates may apply for this service by **not later than July 14, 2024** by submitting the proposal along with a cover letter with the subject line as **“Application for the consultancy service – Biodiversity and Ecosystem Service Assessment”** to jobs@ansab.org.np. Short-listed candidates/organizations will be informed for further processing.

ANSAB deserves the right to cancel this call for consultancy service, or not to award any proposal.