

## Terms of reference

### REF. Act.1.3 – Consultancy on spatial analysis on the status of conservation of nature and associated values

#### 1. Background

INCA has received a grant from Prespa Ohrid Nature Trust (PONT) to support the implementation of the project “Good governance for effective and equitable conservation”.

The project promotes comprehensive governance of natural resources in and around protected areas through the use and adaptation of good governance principles in order to achieve the objectives of sustainable use and conservation and protection of natural values of Albanian Alps National Park and Korab - Koritnik Managed Nature Reserve (Nature Park) and surrounding areas that serve as important ecological corridors for charismatic species. The improved knowledge and better understanding of local legal and customary rights, interests, concerns and capacities for conservation and sustainable livelihoods will definitely contribute to the improved governance quality, in line with the IUCN principles of good governance for protected areas. The project aims to enhance the role of the Management Committee for Protected Areas as a relevant forum at regional level to adequately address issues related to conservation and wise use of natural resources. Networking and capacity building activities will facilitate the transfer of lessons learned to the stakeholders and exchange about good governance practices between managers and other stakeholders.

#### 2. General considerations

As biodiversity becomes rarer and increasingly precious, protected areas—are becoming an ever more important focus of interest and concern, delight and conflict. Managing any protected area engages different actors, instruments and powers and is embedded in multiple levels of rules and decision-making – from international policy frameworks to national budgetary agreements, from regional land use plans to day-to-day decisions affecting the livelihoods of people resident in and near the protected areas.

Protected areas “governance<sup>1</sup>” is a relatively new field of analysis, but it is central in dealing with threats to nature and the rapidly evolving social context in which they need to be addressed. Indeed, many crises are, and will be, exacerbated by poor governance, and will only be solved through governance that is equitable and effective. Governance that is both appropriate to the context and “good” is crucial for effective and equitable conservation.

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<sup>1</sup> Governance refers the interactions among structures, processes and traditions that determine how power and responsibilities are exercised, how decisions are taken and how citizens or other stakeholders have their say

A governance setting is appropriate only when tailored to the specifics of its context and effective in delivering lasting conservation results, livelihood benefits and the respect of rights. In terms of governance quality, it is important to understand the processes of decision-making. The power and the capacity to take decisions have a major influence on the achievement of protected area objectives, the sharing of responsibilities, rights, costs and benefits, and the generation and maintenance of support – be it financial, political, or from the communities in and around the protected areas in question. The process of understanding and, where necessary, improving governance is at the heart of effective conservation.

There is no “ideal governance setting” for all protected areas, nor an ideal to which governance models can be compared, but a set of “good governance” principles can be taken into account. These principles provide insights about how a specific governance setting will advance or hinder conservation, sustainable livelihoods and the rights and values of the people and country concerned.

### **3. The assessment and evaluation approach**

Assessing and evaluating the governance of protected areas should help establish which governance arrangements will:

- best fit the local history, culture and society, and deliver conservation of the protected areas and sustainable livelihoods for the people who live in or near them;
- best promote the full use of available resources and capacities, and deliver decisions likely to be widely understood, appreciated and respected;
- make the current distribution of the costs and benefits of conservation more equitable and thus more acceptable;
- best affirm rights, including the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, according to national and international legislation and commitments;
- engage rightsholders and stakeholders more at different levels, including through dialogue and collaboration between traditional and modern institutions;
- be the most flexible, resilient and capable of responding to uncertainties and emerging threats, such as global financial crises and climate change.

Assessment<sup>2</sup> and evaluation<sup>3</sup> should always take account of the dynamics of social change in the area concerned. It is important to link effectively with the landscape/seascape and make sure that governance action is considered beyond the protected area borders.

Besides addressing such important issues, the actual process of assessing and evaluating governance should in itself reveal new understandings about conservation, livelihoods and their interdependence, and encourage new ways to support them.

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<sup>2</sup> Assessment is a process by which:

- relevant information is identified and shared, and more information is collected, as needed;
- the situation is understood in relation to its context;
- the situation is analyzed, identifying problems and opportunities.

<sup>3</sup> Evaluation is a process by which:

- the results of the assessment are examined vis-à-vis specific objectives, goals and values;
- needs for change are identified;
- a clear set of recommendations is developed to move closer to the desired situation.

There is a growing recognition of, and value placed upon, the rights, responsibilities and capacities of rightsholders and stakeholders in conservation. It is crucial that all legitimate representatives can effectively participate. It may be necessary to hold preliminary meetings with the rightsholders and stakeholders' groups (e.g., farmers' associations, women's groups, scientists). Moving beyond simple "consultation" and engaging such actors in decision-making can broaden social support for protected areas and thus improve management. Similarly, the perspectives of diverse rightsholders and stakeholders can bring new information to light about governance issues, problems and opportunities.

A key factor in success is the willingness to work with integrity and transparency, and to document clearly and share widely the results of the exercise. Such openness will increase confidence and improve the understanding of governance in general. The careful documentation of the information, problems, opportunities, questions, answers and uncertainties that will surface throughout the process is crucial and will be extensively used in planning and implementing the action that may need to follow.

#### **4. Objective and scope of work**

This consultancy will aim to develop a spatial analysis of the status of conservation of nature and associated values and the potential for governance innovation for the selected areas.

#### **5. Specific tasks**

##### **Task 1**

The consultant should Examine the protected area and its surroundings and identify any relevant management units and the rightsholders or stakeholders with the capacity and willingness to contribute to governing those units. Protected areas are often large and complex and, in the process of developing their management plan, they can be subdivided into sub-units characterized by different management requirements. Other management units may exist outside the protected areas, in the broader landscape/ seascape, but still playing a crucial role in support of the protected area, e.g., by providing connectivity, as a source of water for wildlife, or in meeting survival needs – for example for pasture – that would otherwise fall on the protected area. Different rightsholders and stakeholders are associated with such sub-units, both within protected areas and in the broader landscape/ seascape.

The consultant should assess the potential of these groups to assist in the governance of the units within or outside the protected area, and recommend any required action. It is relevant to address issues answering questions like:

- Are there management units or zones— within the protected area or related to it in the larger landscape/seascape—closely associated with one or more rightsholders or stakeholders?
- Have such rightsholders or stakeholders the capacity and willingness to contribute to governing such units and supporting their conservation?

This analysis offers insights on the potential for governance innovation for distinct management units of relevance for the protected area. This analysis should help to develop a deeper understanding of the protected area and its surroundings from the perspective of socio-ecological units. From this might emerge proposals for new

governance arrangements covering the whole area or, less ambitiously, one or more sub-units.

### **Task 2:**

The consultant will develop a report on the spatial analysis with thematic maps on the status of conservation of nature and associated values and the potential for governance innovation for the selected areas. A first draft of the thematic maps will be shared with INCA project Coordinator. The consultant will then review the document to integrate comments and suggestions

The consultant will get in touch and will cooperate and create synergy with other experts of this project in charge for “historical, socio-cultural and legal context for the governance” and “stakeholder analyses” according to the activities 1.1 and 1.2. Relevant contact details will be provided at the beginning of the consultancy by INCA.

### **Task 3**

The consultant has to participate and discuss the main milestones of the analyze in 12 consultations and information meetings with local stakeholders, focusing on user groups and managers of protected areas in both target areas. (Activity1.4))

### **Task 4**

The consultant has to participate and present the main findings of the assessment report in 2 workshops (one for each pilot protected area) with local stakeholders to present/discus findings of the "spatial analysis of the status of conservation of nature and associated values". (Activity 1.5)

## **6. Coordination with INCA**

The consultant will work in close cooperation and coordination with INCA project staff. A first scoping meeting will be held with the INCA team in order to discuss the methodology proposed by the consultant and to clearly define the direction and the expectations. Virtual meetings will be held with INCA team, as needed, to monitor the progress of the service.

## **7. Timeframe and deliverables**

The consultancy will be conducted in the period 10.05 – 31.12.2023, for a total of 40 working days. The consultant should provide a clear calendar of activities within the first month of the assignment.

The consultant will provide the following expected deliverables:

- thematic maps on the use of natural resources and conservation activities
- report on the spatial analysis of the status of conservation of nature and associated values and the potential for governance innovation for the selected areas - English
- A summary of the report in PPP - in Albanian

The deliverables will be reviewed and finally approved by the INCA project coordinator.

## **8. Key qualifications**

The consultant should present a team of minimum 2 experts with proven experience on protected areas governance and related issues. The team should include at least one GIS expert.

### ***Required expertise (NGO or consultancy firm)***

- Evidence of relevant experience in nature conservation and with the relevant institutions in Albania gained by consultants during the past five years (experience of the firm/NGO)
- Experience in handling similar projects (protected area management planning, forest or river basin planning)
- Experience in spatial data analysis and evaluation
- Experience in participatory methods and approaches

### **Pool of experts (minimum 2)**

#### ***General qualifications***

- Present the project with dignity internally and to outsiders;
- Cooperate with the project team members for the interest of the work if needed;
- Full availability to provide services within timeframe and with high standards.
- Respect confidentiality of the materials and discussions.

#### ***Specific qualifications***

- Master's Degree in geography, nature conservation, ecology or a related field;
- At least 10 years of practical work experience with protected areas
- Similar experience in spatial analysis of the status of use of natural resources and nature conservation activities.
- Proven experience in developing and facilitating participatory processes / discussions
- Good analytical and reporting skills
- Proven communication and reporting skills;
- Good command of English, both spoken and written, is essential.
- Mapping and GIS skills for environmental issues