

Evaluation of the project Green Economy in Biosphere Reserves (GEBR): A means to biodiversity conservation, poverty reduction and sustainable development in sub-Saharan Africa

Terms of Reference

1. Background

In October 2010, the Secretariat of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme of UNESCO received a strong indication from the Government of the Republic of Korea (ROK) of its interest to fund a project within biosphere reserves (BRs) in Africa. The MAB Secretariat therefore developed a concept note on the Green Economy in Biosphere Reserves (GEBR) project to be presented to the Government of ROK via the Permanent Delegation of Korea to UNESCO. In January 2011, feedback received by the MAB Secretariat from the Permanent Delegation of Korea indicated that the Secretariat had missed the deadline for presentation of project proposal for consideration and advised the Secretariat to resubmit the project concept before June 2011. A re-submission was done accordingly.

In February 2012, the Secretariat was informed that the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) was interested in funding the project. A brief project feasibility mission to Ghana was therefore undertaken jointly by a representative of the MAB Secretariat and three representatives of KOICA in March 2012. During this visit, the KOICA representatives consulted with various stakeholders and visited the proposed project site. Following this feasibility mission, the MAB Secretariat undertook extensive consultations with the beneficiary countries and this led to the elaboration of a final project document which was submitted to KOICA in June 2012.

After negotiations on various things including the modalities of the project implementation, a Funds-In-Trust Agreement was signed between UNESCO and KOICA in May 2013 for the implementation of the project to commence. The total funding approved for the project was US\$ 1,804,029.18. Each beneficiary country was allocated the same amount of funding, US\$ 430,000 for the implementation of the project activities. The remaining funds have been managed at the UNESCO HQ for the implementation of common project activities such as the inception meetings, midterm-assessment and final project workshops¹. The GEBR project officially commenced on 10 June 2013 and it is being implemented in three biosphere reserves in sub-Saharan Africa: Bia Biosphere Reserve in Ghana; Omo Biosphere Reserve in Nigeria and the East Usambara Biosphere Reserve in Tanzania. Although, the duration for the implementation of the project activities was for three years (June 2013 – June 2016), a no-cost extension approval until December 2016 was granted by KOICA. However, some implementation challenges resulted in further delays therefore a second no-cost extension request for the project to come to a final close on 30 June 2017 has been approved by KOICA. In line with UNESCO's evaluation modalities² an external evaluation was foreseen to be carried out for this project. Independent entities outside the Donor or UNESCO will be selected through a competitive process and subsequently contracted to carry out the evaluation

¹ A breakdown of the budget is included in the project document

² Per UNESCO guidelines, projects more than \$1.5 million are subject to external evaluation.

1.2 Introduction to the GEBR Project

In developing countries especially in sub-Saharan Africa, livelihoods and the security of the people are intimately linked with their surrounding biological resources. However, the diversity of these biological resources, which is termed “biodiversity”, is being lost rapidly mainly due to human population growth and its associated increase in consumption and subsequent drive to extract more rapidly resources such as timber, minerals and food. By diversifying local economies in and around biosphere reserves (BRs) the GEBR project targets the immediate adverse effects of local community reliance on biodiversity, other knock on issues such as accumulative pressure on ecosystems due to population growth, and negative social implications from restricted human activities in protected areas. UNESCO BRs are sites managed under national jurisdiction to promote biodiversity conservation, enhance the socio-economic well-being of local communities, and encourage learning and knowledge-building on sustainable development practice. The project employed a consultative approach in the selection and design of the alternative livelihood activities. Socioeconomic surveys, biodiversity inventory and market studies are among some of the activities carried out under this project. Information about the project and some activity reports can be found on the internet³.

1.3 Goals and Objectives of the GEBR Project

The Goal of this project is to conserve biodiversity, reduce poverty and contribute to sustainable development in sub-Saharan Africa through biodiversity businesses in Biosphere Reserves.

The following are the objectives:

- I. Diversification of the economy through improved and alternative biodiversity related livelihoods.
- II. Reduce the pressure on forest as a result of fuel wood extraction for heating and cooking purposes.
- III. Build the capacity of communities in a holistic manner to ensure the sustainability of the biodiversity businesses and to conserve the resource-base of their business.

1.4 GEBR Activities⁴

- Stakeholder mapping and consultation
- Project inception workshop
- Biosphere reserve assessment and inventory
- Socio economic studies and needs assessment
- Market studies
- Capacity building
- Operationalizing biodiversity businesses
- Annual local project progress review workshops
- International progress review workshops
- Project evaluation

³ <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/ecological-sciences/man-and-biosphere-programme/networks/afrimab/gebr-project/> <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/ecological-sciences/man-and-biosphere-programme/networks/afrimab/gebr-project/bia-biosphere-reserve/where-are-we-now/> <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/ecological-sciences/man-and-biosphere-programme/networks/afrimab/gebr-project/omo-biosphere-reserve/where-are-we-now/> <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/ecological-sciences/man-and-biosphere-programme/networks/afrimab/gebr-project/east-usambara-biosphere-reserve/the-gebr-project-in-east-usambara/>

⁴ Brief description of what each activity entails is provided in the project document.

- Publication of project outcomes
- In-country workshops to publicize outcome
- Final workshop in donor country

2.0 Evaluation Purpose and Scope

2.1 Purpose

The evaluation will measure the reliance and fulfillment of the project objectives, its development efficiency and effectiveness, impact and sustainability. The evaluation will also assess the effectiveness of the exit strategies that have been developed to ensure sustainability of the project impact and also measure the extent to which this project has created some visibility for KOICA and UNESCO. From this assessment the evaluator will be required to generate recommendation that could guide a possible second phase of this project or future replication in other biosphere reserves.

2.2 Evaluation Scope

The evaluation will adopt a retrospective (summative) and forward-looking perspective with action-oriented recommendations formulated on the basis of substantive findings to inform possible future phases of the project. The evaluation will be organized around several key dimensions of project performance, namely the standard evaluation criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. The evaluation will cover all three beneficiary countries; Ghana, Nigeria and Tanzania.

The questions for the evaluation will be elaborated in the evaluation's inception report by the external evaluator. The evaluation questions should be structured around the aforementioned dimensions.

The evaluation questions below are indicative only and are intended to guide prospective bidders in developing their technical proposals. The evaluation questions will be subsequently refined in the inception phase and validated in consultation with UNESCO.

I. Evaluation questions

- The relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the GEBR project
 - a) How relevant was the overall project goal and objectives to the stakeholders and direct beneficiaries?
 - b) To what extent has the approach used in the various project activities such as stakeholder consultation, capacity building, market studies etc. been relevant and effective to the project's overall goal and objectives?
 - c) How efficient were the methods adopted and used in the implementation of the various project activities?
- Impact
 - d) How has the project impacted the lives of the beneficiaries (socio-economically)?
 - e) How aware are the beneficiaries about the importance of biodiversity to their existence?
 - f) Are beneficiaries motivated to conserve and use biological resources in a sustainable way ?
- Visibility
 - g) How effective and efficient were the strategies used for creating visibility for the project, the Donor and UNESCO?
- Sustainability

- h) What structures or strategies have been put in place to ensure the sustainability of the project results?

3.0 Methodology

The evaluation will include the methodological elements below. The evaluator(s) are expected to elaborate an appropriate methodology in their technical proposal and further refine it in the inception phase.

- I. Desk study of all project documents and reports produced for all the activities and other relevant documents that will provide insight into the evaluation questions.
- II. Semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders (face to face, skype): UNESCO project team members in all three UNESCO Offices in the beneficiary countries; implementing partners; managers of the biosphere reserves; direct project beneficiaries.

The evaluation will include a mission to each of the biosphere reserves: Bia Biosphere Reserve in the Juabeso Bia District of the Western Region of Ghana; Omo Biosphere Reserve in Ijebu, Ogun State of Nigeria; East Usambara Biosphere Reserve, Meheza District of Tanga in Tanzania.

For the preparation of the proposal, the prospective external evaluator is invited to explore the project document which is provided separately from this TOR and other reports available at the project's website. See links provided in footnote 3 above. UNESCO will provide additional documentation to the selected external evaluator.

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities

An independent, external evaluator(s) will conduct the evaluation. The evaluator(s) will contribute specific subject matter expertise and knowledge. The evaluator(s) will prepare three main deliverables, an inception report, draft and final report. The evaluator(s) will comply with United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation and UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation.

The MAB Secretariat and the Science Sector programme officer in the three UNESCO Field Offices (Ghana, Nigeria and Tanzania) will assist in the preparation and organization of the evaluation exercise and will facilitate the activities of the evaluation team. The three field offices will assist with logistical support for the missions of the evaluator to beneficiary countries and the biosphere reserves. The external evaluator is responsible for all travel related costs, including transport to and from the airport and transport to and from interviews and field trips⁵. The offices will assist with making arrangements for vehicle hire and providing office space for the interviews.

A Reference Group consisting of representatives from the Accra Office (the project officer and evaluation focal point) and SC/EES in Paris has been established to guide the evaluation. The Reference Group will comment on the evaluation's main deliverables and can provide guidance throughout the evaluation process.

UNESCO's Internal Oversight Service (IOS) was consulted on these Terms of Reference and will provide technical backstopping and advisory support to the UNESCO office and evaluator, as needed.

⁵ The travel costs should be itemized in the financial proposal.

5.0 Required Qualification for External Evaluator

SC/EES will select the external evaluators. The recommended composition of the evaluation team is one senior evaluator as team leader, supported by a junior evaluator. Other proposals will be considered, in particular those that make use of national evaluation capacities. The evaluation team will possess the following mandatory and desired qualifications:

- I. At least 10 years of professional experience designing and leading project, programme and policy evaluations, especially in the context of development at the community level. (Required)
- II. At least 15 years of professional experience in a research position in the field of international development. (Desirable)
- III. Advanced degree in Natural Resource Management/ Environmental Management or an advanced degree in another field but with professional experience in sustainable development or poverty alleviation initiatives. (Required)
- IV. Knowledge of UNESCO's MAB Programme and its biosphere reserve concept. (Required)
- V. Knowledge of gender perspectives in evaluation. (Required)
- VI. Fluency in written and spoken English. (Required)

6.0 Deliverables and Schedule

There are three main deliverables: the inception report and the evaluation report (first in draft, then a final version). The following guidelines apply:

- I. The inception report (approximately 10 pages excluding annexes) will include the evaluation questions, the methodological framework of the evaluation and a detailed activity schedule. The methodological framework will include a simple evaluation matrix which shows the relationships between the main evaluation questions and the methods of data collection and analysis.
- II. The final evaluation report (of around 30 - 40 pages excluding annexes) will present in a concise manner the following elements:
 - Executive Summary (maximum 4 pages)
 - Project description
 - Evaluation purpose
 - Evaluation methodology
 - Findings and Conclusions
 - Lessons learned
 - Recommendations
 - Annexes

The evaluation assignment is expected to require approximately 30 – 40 professional working days, including the three field missions – one to each of the three countries.

Tentative schedule

Task	Responsible for Delivery	Deadline
Selection of external evaluators	Project officer in consultation with Reference Group	20 June 2017
Inception Report	External evaluator	15 July 2017
Data collection phase	External evaluator	20 July – 30 August 2017
Draft evaluation report	External evaluator	15 September 2017
Final evaluation report (after feedback and comments)	External evaluator	25 September 2017

7.0 How to submit a proposal

Your electronic offer comprising of a technical proposal and a financial proposal, attached in two separate files, shall be sent to the following email addresses no later than **Friday 9 June 2017, 23:59 GMT: accra@unesco.org; m.ocloo@unesco.org**. For any requests for clarification, please contact Ms Melody Boateng (m.ocloo@unesco.org).

Annex 1: Acronyms

BR	Biosphere Reserves
MAB	Man and the Biosphere Reserve
GEBR	Green Economy in Biosphere Reserves
IOS	Internal Oversight Service
KOICA	Korean International Cooperation Agency
ROK	Republic of Korea
SC/EES	UNESCO Natural Sciences Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization