

## Restoring ecosystems for sustainable development in the Tonle Sap Basin and Siem Reap/Phnom Kulen landscape (ERIP)

### JOB DESCRIPTION

#### 1. Position Information

Job Title:	<b>National consultant to support the comprehensive assessment of existing management plans across the TSB</b>
Reports to:	<b>Project Manager</b>
Contract Type:	<b>Individual Contractor (IC)</b>
Classified Level:	<b>Specialist</b>
Duration:	<b>50 days</b>
Duty Station:	<b>Home-based</b>

#### 2. Background

The Tonle Sap Basin (TSB), encompassing 85,790 km<sup>2</sup> across seven provinces in Cambodia, is home to approximately 4 million people, many of whom rely on the basin's rich biodiversity and ecosystem services for their livelihoods. However, the region faces severe environmental degradation, with over 1.7 million hectares of forest lost between 2006 and 2022 due to illegal logging, agricultural expansion, infrastructure development, and climate change. This degradation threatens biodiversity, ecosystem services, and the cultural heritage of the area, including the Angkor Archaeological Area<sup>1</sup>.

Despite government efforts—such as logging bans, protected area expansion, and reforestation targets—underlying socio-economic drivers of deforestation persist. These include poverty, unsustainable agricultural practices, weak governance, and limited financial and institutional capacity. The degradation has disproportionately impacted vulnerable groups, including women and Indigenous Peoples, who depend heavily on natural resources.

The Steung Siem Reap (SSR) watershed, which includes Phnom Kulen National Park and flows into Tonle Sap Lake, has been identified as a flagship site for restoration due to its ecological, cultural, and economic significance. The area is also central to Cambodia's tourism industry and holds spiritual importance for the Khmer people.

#### **Project Objectives**

The overarching objective of the ERIP is to generate climate, environmental, and socio-economic benefits at scale by enabling integrated, collaborative management of degraded watershed systems in the Tonle Sap Basin. This includes:

- Restoring ecosystem functionality and biodiversity conservation.

<sup>1</sup> Cambodia National BD Status Report 2016

- Enhancing community livelihoods and resilience to climate change.
- Promoting sustainable land and water uses mechanisms.
- Contributing to Cambodia's national and international environmental commitments.

The project aligns with Cambodia's Circular Economy Strategy (2023–2028) and the Pentagonal Strategy Phase I, targeting the "Green" and "Sustainable" pillars, which emphasize reforestation, conservation, and inclusive economic development.

### ***Approach and Strategies***

The ERIP adopts a three-component strategy to address the drivers of land degradation and promote sustainable watershed management:

#### ***1. Policy and Capacity Development***

- Integrated Planning: Develop an Integrated Tonle Sap Basin Management Plan (ITSBMP) and policy briefs to mainstream biodiversity and ecosystem services into national and sub-national land-use planning.
- Decision Support Tools: Enhance the Cambodia Environmental Management Information System (CEMIS) with gender-responsive indicators and data-driven tools for adaptive management.
- Coordination Platforms: Revitalize the Tonle Sap Authority and establish multi-stakeholder watershed forums to ensure inter-sectoral and vertical coordination.
- Capacity Building: Train government officials and community leaders on integrated watershed management (IWM), participatory planning, and environmental safeguards.

#### ***2. Financing and Livelihoods***

- Innovative Financing: Operationalize a Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) scheme in the SSR watershed, supported by transparent financial mechanisms and public-private-community partnerships (PPCPs) and support result-based payment.
- Restoration Investments: Implement nature-based solutions (NbS) such as reforestation, agroforestry, and wetland restoration across the SSR watershed.
- Livelihood Diversification: Promote sustainable livelihoods through agroforestry, non-timber forest products (NTFPs), and community-based ecotourism (CBET), including the development of "green destinations" linked to the tourism sector.
- Gender and Inclusion: Ensure equitable participation and benefits for women, Indigenous Peoples, and other vulnerable groups through targeted training and enterprise support.

#### ***3. Knowledge and Communication***

- Knowledge Management: Establish systems to capture and disseminate lessons learned, integrating traditional knowledge and scientific research.
- Global Engagement: Participate in the ERIP Global Coordination Project's Community of Practice to share and adopt best practices.
- Awareness Campaigns: Conduct outreach to raise awareness of ecosystem services and promote behavioral change among communities and stakeholders.

This integrated approach aims to restore ecosystem health, enhance resilience, and demonstrate scalable models for sustainable watershed management that can be replicated across Cambodia and the Mekong region.

### 3. Scope of Work

With guidance from and reporting to the Project Manager, the Consultant will work closely with the Project Coordinator. When conducting the comprehensive policy analysis, the consultant will contribute to the Output 1.2: Integrated Tonle Sap Basin Management Plan developed and following project activities:

- *Activity 1.2.1: Conduct a comprehensive assessment of existing management plans across the TSB.* A technical expert will be procured to assess the current planning framework for the management of the TSB. This will include assessing management plans for the broader TSB (for example the 2005 TSB Strategy, and the Protected Areas Strategic Management Plan (PASMP) 2017-2026 and Action plan 2018-2022), as well as for individual watersheds within the basin (For example, the Plan of Action for Siem Reap Watershed for 2011 – 2014 and the Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve Plan). In addition to reviewing current plans, the assessment will consider the history of management planning, mapping out strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for various management options, with specific focus on the approaches to conservation and restoration efforts within the basin and the level of cross-sectoral integration. The reviews will consider the needs of women, and consultation in the review process will include women's representatives.
- *Activity 1.2.2: Develop and validate the ITSBMP.* Using the outcomes of the assessment under Activity 1.2.1, and drawing on international best practice, an integrated management plan will be developed for the TSB. This plan will establish a framework for collaborative management of watersheds across the basin, outlining: i) the concepts of integrated watershed management; ii) stakeholder engagement plan; iii) land-use planning processes; iv) priority interventions and implementation plans; v) roles and responsibilities; vi) coordination processes; and vii) monitoring and evaluation. As part of the ITSBMP, an ecosystem restoration framework and strategy will be developed, considering various passive restoration approaches, including halting prior land use practices that have led to degradation in the designated restoration areas to allow the degraded forest for natural or unassisted recovery, as well as for improved management of areas with high value to biodiversity or ecosystem services. Specific consideration will be given to ensuring that the plan is fully inclusive, considering the needs and active involvement of various vulnerable groups, including women, indigenous people, youth and people with disabilities. The Plan will also take into account potential downstream risks and impacts and will include a framework for mitigation of these. Once developed, the plans will be validated through a multi-stakeholder workshop, before being officially launched. A clear timeframe for the implementation of the plan will also be agreed – expected to be initiated within the first half of the proposed project, but likely to continue beyond the project period.
- *Activity 1.2.3: Train decision makers at the national, provincial and district level on the implementation of the ITSBMP.* Following the launch of the ITSBMP, decision makers will be trained on its effective implementation, ensuring multi-stakeholder participation. Training will be done at different administrative levels, tailoring the content to the specific roles and responsibilities of entities at each level in the plan's implementation. The training sessions will bring together multiple stakeholders, including government entities, NGOs, CSOs and private sector partners to promote collaborative implementation of the plans, with an added focus on ensuring women are included in the training.

#### 4. Expected Outputs and Deliverables

The consultant will produce the following documents between 01 January – 30 April 2026:

<b>Deliverables</b>	<b>Deliverables/Outputs</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
<b>1.</b>	A feasibility study	15 Jan 2026
<b>2.</b>	An inception report including the findings from the secondary literature review, such as ERIP Project Document. The inception report will include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Key literature review findings,</li><li>• Methodologies for the policy review and</li><li>• Comprehensive assessment of existing management plans across the TSB</li><li>• A work plan, including stakeholder consultation meetings.</li></ul>	15 Feb 2026
<b>3.</b>	Develop an Integrated Tonle Sap Basin Management Plan (ITSBMP)	15 Apr 2026
<b>4.</b>	Orient PMU and project partners on the comprehensive policy review findings.	30 Apr 2026

#### 5. Institutional Arrangement

This is the home-based position. The Consultant will work under the guidance of the Project Director/MoE and in supervision of the Project Manager. The consultant will also work closely with the Project Coordinator and Project Management Unit (PMU) team members. The Project Director will approve the deliverables upon satisfactory confirmation from the reviewers. The PMU will subsequently release the payment for the respective deliverables.

#### 6. Duration of the Work

The assignment is for 50 days, spreading from 01 January 2026 to 30 April 2026.

#### 7. Duty Station

This assignment is home-based. However, the consultant is expected to organize meetings with and training for stakeholders in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap, in coordination with the PMU.

#### 8. Minimum Qualifications of the Individual Contractor

<b>Education:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ An advanced degree in relevant fields like environmental law, social science, mass communication, natural resources management, or related field.</li></ul>
<b>Experience:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ At least five years of experience in policy analysis in the natural resources management field.</li><li>▪ Demonstrated experience in writing policy briefs and organizing training.</li><li>▪ Demonstrated ability to communicate effectively and engage with a wide range of stakeholders, including government officials, the private sector, and civil society organizations as well as local communities.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Demonstrated ability to provide evidence-based inputs which contribute to formulate, draft and finalize projects related to environment, forestry, natural resources management and climate change policies.</li> <li>▪ Experience working in development partner funded nature conservation or natural resource management projects.</li> <li>▪ Experience in Cambodia is required with the knowledge of environmental, forestry, and fisheries policies and strategies.</li> <li>▪ Expertise in areas like gender and inclusion in policies, strategies and guidelines.</li> <li>▪ Experience with GEF and/or other UN assisted projects.</li> </ul>
<b>Soft Skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Communication: Excellent written and verbal communication skills in English.</li> <li>▪ Analytical and Reporting: Strong report writing, policy analysis, and policy brief writing skills</li> <li>▪ Teamwork: Ability to work effectively in a team and interact with diverse stakeholders</li> </ul>
<b>Competencies:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Results focused</li> <li>▪ Teamwork</li> <li>▪ Communication</li> <li>▪ Building effective relationships</li> <li>▪ Presentation, knowledge sharing and continuous improvement</li> </ul>
<b>Language:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fluency in written and spoken English and Khmer required.</li> </ul>
<b>Gender:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Woman is encouraged to apply</li> </ul>

## 9. Criteria for Evaluation of Level of Technical Compliance of Individual Contractor

Technical Evaluation Criteria	Obtainable Score
At least five years of experience in policy analysis in biodiversity, forest, and other natural resources management or related field;	25
Demonstrated experience in writing policy briefs (examples of at least three policy briefs) in nature conservation or natural resource management.	25
Solid understanding of Cambodia's strategies and policies, biodiversity, and ecosystem issues, including its values and functions.	20
Demonstrated experience in developing training curriculum and conducting training	20
Experience with GEF and/or other UN assisted projects.	10
Total Score:	100

## 10. Payment Milestones

The consultant will be paid on a lump sum basis under the following installments.

- 20% upon submission of the Feasibility study report
- 20% upon submission of the Inception report
- 20% Develop an Integrated Tonle Sap Basin Management Plan (ITSBMP)
- 40% upon successfully completing a training (orientation) on the comprehensive review findings and final submission

These deliverables will be certified by the Project Coordinator and approved by the National Project Director.

#### Annex 1: Summary of Policies

<b>POLICY/PROGRAMME</b>	<b>ATTRIBUTE TO THE PROJECT</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION OF POTENTIAL IMPACT</b>	<b>EVALUATION OF IMPACT (N/L/M/H)</b>	<b>RESOURCE OF INFORMATION</b>
Law on Forestry (2002)	Defines the framework for management, harvesting, use, development, and conservation of forests in the Kingdom of Cambodia	To ensure public participation in any government decision that has the potential for heavy impact on concerned general citizens, livelihoods of local communities. To control the harvesting (stock extraction) of forest products & by-products within the Permanent Forest Reserves and State Forest Plantations. To control the transportation of forest products & by-products by all transportation means. To control the stock places, selling places for forest products & by-products or wildlife hunting products.	High Impact	Forest Law (2006), Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries
National Forest Program (2019-2029)	Advance the sustainable management and development of our forest for their contribution to poverty alleviation, enhance livelihoods, economic growth and environmental protection	Maximise sustainable forest contribution to poverty alleviation, enhanced livelihoods and equitable economic growth. Adapt to climate change and mitigation its effects on forest-based livelihood. Macro-land use planning that allows for holistic planning across sectors, jurisdictions and government borders. Build conflict management system, raise awareness and capacities of institutions and quality of education to enable sustainable implementation of the program. Ensure the environmental protection and natural resources management including sustainable financing system	High Impact	National Forest Program (2010-2029), Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries
National Technical Agroforestry Guideline in Community Forestry (Drafted Version)	Promote roles and responsibilities of Agroforestry to sustain and achieve socio-economic and friendly environment at family, communities aligned with landscape management and conservation. Support local communities to achieve target of food security, sustainable growth of forest restoration, conservation, climate change	Maximise sustainable forest contribution to poverty alleviation, enhanced livelihoods and equitable economic growth. Adapt to climate change and mitigation its effects on forest-based livelihood. Macro-land use planning that allows for holistic planning across sectors, jurisdictions and government borders. Build conflict management system, raise	High Impact	Forestry Administration, Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries

	mitigation, resilient capacities and gender inclusion. Strengthening partnership in implementation of agroforestry within community forestry	awareness and capacities of institutions and quality of education to enable sustainable implementation of the program. Ensure the environmental protection and natural resources management including sustainable financing system		
Law on Environmental Protection and Natural Resources Management (1996)	Protect and upgrade the environment quality and public health by means of prevention, reduction and control of pollution. Make assessment on impact to environment before decision of the Royal Government on all submitted proposed project.	Ensure rational sustainable preservation, development, management, and the use of natural resources of the Kingdom of Cambodia. Encourage and provides possibilities to public to participate in the protection of environment, and the management of natural resources.	High Impact	Law on Environmental Protection and Natural Resources Management (1996). The Ministry of Environment
Protected Area Law (January 2008)	Defines the framework of management, conservation and development of protected areas to ensure the management, conservation of biodiversity, and sustainable use of natural resources in protected areas	The management of protected areas under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Environment, guarantee the rights of the local communities, indigenous ethnic minorities and the public to participate in the decision-making on the sustainable management and conservation of biodiversity. Take action to investigate, control, and crackdown on natural resource offences in the protected areas and file complaint to court. Promote education and dissemination to the public to participate in the conservation and protection of natural resources within the protected areas. Formulate agreements on community protected area development programmes.	High Impact	Protected Area Law, Ministry of Environment
Circular Strategy on Environment (2023-2028)	The roadmap, ensure for targeted implementation of development activities to meet the needs of the public and transform the potential of the environmental sector into the benefits of all generations of Cambodians, as well as to participate in responding to global climate change. Ensure environmental sustainability and environmental perfection responding to climate change and promoting green development.	Strengthen the functional capacity of the National Council for Sustainable Development, Technical Working Group on Climate Change. Mobilize green financing to support the development of programs and projects related to the environment, climate change, biodiversity and sustainable development. Coordinate the implementation of policies, strategies and action plans in collaboration with line ministries and institutions, local authorities, development partners and key stakeholders.	High Impact	National Strategy Circular on Environment (2023-2028), Ministry of Environment

National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan	Support and ensure numbers of measurements to reduce biodiversity loss, in particular the designation of a wide networks of protected areas, the conversion of natural forest to agricultural land, land degradation, habitat fragmentation, overharvesting, exploration of resources, particular in forest, freshwater, marine and coastal areas. Ensure environmental sustainability and environmental perfection responding to climate change and promoting green development	Organize and strengthen the capacity of the National Council for Sustainable Development to be accredited entity of the Green Climate Fund, the Adaptation Fund and other environmental funds. To preserve and conservation of biodiversity and natural resources for sustainable socio-economic growth. Improvement numbers of prevention measures to reduce biodiversity loss, natural degradation (forest and land) to achieve equitable economic prosperity and improve quality of life through sustainable use, protect and management of biological resources	High Impact	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. National Council for Sustainable Development (Feb 2016)
Guideline for Private Forest Registration in Cambodia	Promoting the taking part of people in planting tradable trees and rosewood on privately-owned land in the long term, medium term, and short term in order to create a source of supply of timber and wood fuel obtained from tree plantations and help increase people's living standards to reduce dependence on timber from natural forests.	Guide the landowners or legal entities who wish to register their private forests, either three plantation or natural plantation to understand the process of establishment and registration private forests and to have the knowledge of and skills in maintaining private forest plantation.	High Impact	Forestry Administration, 2021. Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries
Local Community Strategy Development Plan	To minimize environmental impacts, strengthen climate change resilience and contribute to goal climate change reduction to ensure sustainable development. The challenges include increasing of natural resources usage, declining of environmental quality of water, soil and air pollution, insufficient capacity in integrating environmental technology as well as limited cooperation and engagement from stakeholders along with the need of food, water and clean energy security in the long run.	Improve and strengthening capacities of challenges include increasing of natural resources usage, declining of environmental quality of water, soil and air, increasing capacity in integrating environmental technology as well as cooperation and engagement from stakeholders along with the need of food, water and clean energy security in the long run.	High Impact	Ministry of Environment, 2024-2028