

## **CALL FOR CONSULTANCY**

**N°15/2025\_SPA/RAC**

### **TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE PROVISION OF CONSULTANCY SERVICES**

**“Assessment of nature-based technical solutions to prevent or reduce the impact of climate change on coastal and marine ecosystems and increase their resilience”**

**June 2025**

This call for consultancy document is available only in English. Proposals may be submitted in English or French.

## TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

### I. CONTEXT AND JUSTIFICATION

#### *The Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre*

The Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC) was established by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention in order to assist the Mediterranean countries in implementing the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol) of the Barcelona Convention<sup>2</sup>. Tunisia has been hosting the Centre since its establishment in 1985.

The Centre works under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP) - Barcelona Convention Secretariat, based in Athens, Greece.

SPA/RAC's main objective is to contribute to the protection, preservation, and sustainable management of marine and coastal biological diversity in the Mediterranean and the creation and effective management of marine and coastal areas of particular natural and cultural value and the conservation of threatened and endangered species of flora and fauna in the Mediterranean.

For more information, please consult: [www.spa-rac.org](http://www.spa-rac.org).

#### *Background*

The Mediterranean is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including rising sea levels, increased frequency of extreme weather events, and ecosystem degradation. Nature-based solutions (NbS) offer a sustainable approach to mitigate these impacts while enhancing ecosystem resilience and supporting biodiversity conservation.

In this context, the UNEP-MAP-SPA/RAC is seeking consultancy services to conduct an assessment on nature-based technical solutions that promote the prevention or reduction of the impact of climate change on coastal and marine ecosystems, while increasing their resilience.

This consultancy falls under Outcome 3.2 "Nature-based, technical solutions promoting prevention or reduction of the impact of climate change on coastal and marine ecosystems and increase resilience to climatic variability and change" of the Programme of Work (PoW) 2024-2025.

### II. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

For the 2024-2025 biennium, the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention tasked SPA/RAC at COP 23 (Decision IG.26/14, Portorož, Slovenia, 5–8 December 2023) with conducting an assessment of nature-based technical solutions. These solutions aim to Prevent or reduce the impacts of climate change on coastal and marine ecosystems and to Enhance their resilience. The most suitable best practices for the Mediterranean context should be identified and disseminated through a dedicated Regional workshop.

### III. TASKS TO BE UNDERTAKEN

The consultant will perform the following key tasks:

#### **1. Conduct a Comprehensive Assessment:**

- Evaluate existing nature-based technical solutions for coastal and marine ecosystems and evaluate their effectiveness in reducing vulnerability and enhancing resilience to climate change.
- Identify Best Practices by documenting case studies from the Mediterranean region that demonstrate successful implementation of nature-based solutions while highlighting lessons learned, challenges, and opportunities for scaling up NbS.

- Provide actionable recommendations for integrating nature-based solutions into climate change adaptation strategies and Suggest policy and institutional frameworks to support the implementation of these solutions.

## 2. Assist in Organizing and Facilitating the Workshop to present and discuss the assessment:

- Contribute to the preparation of the workshop agenda and present key findings and insights from the assessment to participants.
- Facilitate discussions to refine recommendations and gather expert input.

## 3. Prepare a Final assessment Report:

- Compile assessment findings, best practices, and recommendations.
- Integrate workshop outcomes into the final document.

The consultant should take into consideration the previous and ongoing works/programs on Nature-based Solutions (NbS), particularly those implemented in the Mediterranean region, as well as relevant global initiatives. This includes reviewing existing studies, policies, pilot projects, and best practices to ensure coherence and build upon past efforts rather than duplicating them.

A workshop with relevant public institution actors on Nature-based Solutions in the Mediterranean will be organized in the third quarter of 2025 (end of October/beginning of November 2025). This workshop will serve as a platform to present preliminary findings, gather feedback, and foster knowledge exchange among key stakeholders, including policymakers, researchers, environmental organizations, and practitioners. The insights from this workshop will be integrated into the final assessment report to refine recommendations and ensure their practical applicability.

## IV. TIME DURATION OF THE CONTRACT, EXPECTED DELIVERABLES & TIMELINE

The contract implementation will need about 25 (twenty- five) working days (WD) starting from the date of the contract signature, until the completion of all tasks and no later than Novembre 30, 2025, with the following tentative schedule:

Deliverables		Necessary Working days	Deadlines
<b>Deliverable 1:</b> Document (Word format) in English	<b>Inception report</b> Detailed work plan, methodology, and timeline for the assessment.	One WD	One week after the contract signature
<b>Deliverable 2:</b> Document (Word format) in English	<b>Draft assessment report</b> The report should include visual elements such as maps, graphs, and tables.	Twenty WD	45 days after deliverable 1 submission
<b>Deliverable 3:</b> Document (Word format) in English	<b>Final Document &amp; Executive Summary</b> Consolidated findings, refined recommendations, and integration of workshop outcomes.	Four days	10 days after workshop

The travel and participation to workshop in relation with the present assignment will be paid by SPA/RAC.

## V. SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED OF CONSULTANTS

The consultant should meet the following criteria:

- An advanced degree in environmental sciences, climate change policy, fisheries management, or a related field.
- At least five years of experience in climate change adaptation, coastal zone management, or sustainable fisheries.
- Proven experience in NbS and climate change adaptation strategies.
- Strong knowledge of coastal and marine ecosystems, particularly in the Mediterranean context.
- Strong analytical and communication skills, with the ability to synthesize complex information.
- Experience in organizing and facilitating workshops and meetings.
- Excellent command of English (oral and written) is required; knowledge of French is an asset.

## ADMINISTRATIVE CLAUSES

### ARTICLE 1 - CONDITIONS FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE CONSULTANCY

Are eligible for the present call of consultancy, only individual consultants.

### ARTICLE 2 – COMPOSITION, PRESENTATION OF OFFERS AND DEADLINES

The submitted offer must include separately: (i) a technical offer, (ii) administrative documents, and (iii) a financial offer.

The services provided as part of this assignment consist of an overall fixed and non-revisable cost.

#### 2.1. Technical offer

It must contain:

1. A cover letter outlining the consultant's suitability for the job.
2. Personal CVs indicating educational background (including a copy of higher education degrees) as well as all relevant experiences in the field of marine science studies and/or environmental conservation with a focus on climate change as well as the references regarding similar studies and reference.
3. A detailed methodological note outlining approach and implementation.
4. Planning and detailed time schedule and chronogram of intervention.
5. References or links to previous work.

Applicants are encouraged to send links to references of previous works completed on subjects relevant to the consultancy or share relevant documents by e-mail if those are not accessible online.

The selection process may include interviews (through a teleconferencing platform), as well as a pre-selection phase followed by requests for complementary information/negotiation if required.

#### 2.2. Administrative documents

The administrative offer should include the following administrative documents:

1. Document certifying the ability to practice this profession (registration certificate, for example) according to the legislation of their country with the tax number on it.  
In cases where the bidder has an academic profession (Researcher or University teaching staff), a sworn statement that he/she is complying with the law applicable to taxes and fees in force in his/her country would be accepted.
2. A sworn statement that the bidder is in no situation that could in any way be incompatible with the mission or compromise independence in carrying out the mission.
3. Terms of reference signed (date, signature of the provider at the end of the document).

If the original administrative documents are not in English or French, it should be provided with additional copies translated into English or French by a sworn translator. Should any of the administrative documents be missing, the tenderer will be contacted to complete the missing offer documents within a period of five (5) days. If after a period of five (5) days, the documents are still not complete the offer will be eliminated.

#### 2.3. Financial offer

The financial offer must be expressed in Euro, in both tax-free and all tax-included prices. It should include all the costs connected to the provision of the service.

The financial offer should also include the following documents:

- submission letter, using the template attached in Annex 1; and
- the details of the global price using the template in Annex 2.

### ARTICLE 3 – SUBMISSION

Offers must be received electronically at the following e-mail address: [procurement@spa-rac.org](mailto:procurement@spa-rac.org), with the date of electronic transmission as the reference, and indicating in the subject line:

**“Call for consultancy N°15\_2025/SPA/RAC - Assessment of nature-based technical solutions to prevent or reduce the impact of climate change on coastal and marine ecosystems and increase their resilience – ‘Applicant name’”.**

The deadline for receiving proposals is set for July 15, 2025, at 23:59 UTC+1 (Tunis Time). Any proposal received by SPA/RAC after this date and time will not be considered.

### ARTICLE 4 - ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Should questions or need for clarification related to these terms of reference and their content arise, bidders may submit a written request by e-mail to: [procurement@spa-rac.org](mailto:procurement@spa-rac.org); no later than five (5) calendar days before the deadline for the proposal submission.

### ARTICLE 5 - TERMS OF PAYMENT

Payment for the mission will be made as follows:

1. The 1<sup>st</sup> Instalment of 50 % will be paid upon submission of deliverables 1,2, and after their review and approval by SPA/RAC.
2. The 2<sup>nd</sup> instalment of 40% will be paid after submission of the deliverable 3 and after its review and approval by SPA/RAC.
3. The last instalment of 10% Will be paid after the completion of the work and submission of all its final version deliverables and delivery by SPA/RAC of the final acceptance certificate. This payment is also conditioned by a certificate from SPA/RAC that the service provider has accomplished all its contractual obligations and duties at SPA/RAC satisfaction.

**All payments will be made by bank transfer after the receipt of an invoice from the contractor.**

**Payments shall be made to a bank account held by the bidder in his/her resident country and where he/she pays the taxes.**

### ARTICLE 6 - EVALUATION PROCEDURE

The evaluation will be based on combined technical and financial criteria as follows:

#### 6.1. Technical evaluation

The technical offers will be first examined, while the financial offers remain sealed. Applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. Consultant capacity and expertise: **55 points.**
2. Methodology, organization, and work implementation planning and schedule: **35 points.**
3. The planning and detailed time schedule (including a chronogram of intervention): **10 points.**

Criteria			Scoring
Consultant (Expert Profile)	Experience	Relevant scientific background and experience in marine biodiversity monitoring and assessment studies, with a focus on climate change adaptation	<b>50 points Maximum</b> (8 points / study + 2 additional points/study in the Mediterranean)
		No relevant studies conducted	0 points <b>(in this case the offer is eliminated)</b>
	Diploma	Post-graduate university degree (Master's or PhD) in marine science, environmental science, or a related field	<b>5 points maximum</b>
		University degree in the above- mentioned fields	3 points
		No university degree in the above- mentioned fields	0 point <b>(in this case the offer is eliminated)</b>
Proposed methodology for carrying out the assignment		Well-developed methodology that aligns precisely with the terms of reference and provides a clear, structured approach	<b>35 points maximum</b>
		Methodology is fairly well-developed and aligns with the terms of reference	25 points
		Methodology is somewhat developed but lacks clarity or strong alignment with the terms of reference	15 points
		Methodology is not aligned with the terms of reference or is not presented	0 points <b>(in this case, the offer is eliminated)</b>
Detailed planning and timetable (including an intervention chronogram)		Well-structured, coherent, and realistic schedule and timetable that accurately reflects the scope and timeline of the consultancy	<b>10 points maximum</b>
		Moderately structured schedule and timetable that aligns with the terms of reference but lacks some clarity	5 points
		Planning and Timetable are not in line with the terms of reference or are missing	0 point <b>(in this case, the offer is eliminated)</b>

Any offer that has not attained the minimum score of 80 points will be eliminated.

In the event of no offer obtains 80 points or more, the call for consultancy process will be declared unsuccessful.

## 6.2. Financial evaluation

Once the technical evaluation has been completed, the financial offers of applicants that have not been eliminated during the technical evaluation will be examined.

The evaluation committee will check that the financial offers do not contain any obvious arithmetical errors. Any possible obvious arithmetical errors will be corrected, and the corrected figures will be taken into consideration.

The evaluation committee will then proceed to a financial comparison. The lowest financial offer that is judged acceptable will receive 100 points. The other offers will be attributed a score based on the following equation:

**Financial score = (amount of the lowest accepted offer/amount of the offer in question) x 100**

## 6.3. Conclusions of the evaluation committee

The choice of the best offer is achieved by weighting the technical and financial scores using a distribution key of 80/20 basis. To this end:

- The technical score will be multiplied by a coefficient of 0.80.
- The financial score will be multiplied by a coefficient of 0.20.

The weighted technical - financial scores thus calculated will be added to ascertain the offer with the best technical and financial score.

If two offers obtain the same weighted technical-financial scores, preference will be given to the applicant in the following order:

- having obtained the best technical score.
- having obtained the best score for methodology.
- having obtained the best total score for experience and qualifications of experts.

Note: The selection process may include interviews (through a teleconferencing platform), as well as pre-selection phase followed by requests for complementary information / negotiation if required.

## ARTICLE 7 - MONITORING, CONTROL AND VALIDATION OF THE WORK

The consultant will work under the supervision of SPA/RAC. The consultant will submit draft version of each deliverable. The consultant will submit the final version of deliverables as indicated in section 4 (Time duration of the contract, deliverables & timeline) of the technical specifications.

## Article 8 – DEADLINE FOR THE EXECUTION OF THE MISSION

The contract implementation will need about 25 (twenty- five) working days (WD) starting from the date of the contract signature, until the completion of all tasks and no later than Novembre 30, 2025, with the following tentative schedule:

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## **ARTICLE 9 - PENALTY**

In the absence of completion by the consultant of the services at his/her charge within the contractual deadlines envisaged in section 4 of the technical specifications (Time duration of the contract, deliverables & timeline), it will be applied as of right and without notice, a penalty of one two hundredths (1/300) of the total amount of the contract (All Taxes Included - ATI) for each calendar day of delay.

The amount of the late penalties will be deducted from the accounts. The amount of the penalties is capped at 5% of the total amount of the contract in ATI. When this threshold is reached, SPA/RAC reserves the right to terminate the contract at the holder's fault, in accordance with Article 13 (Cancellation conditions) below, without that the holder cannot raise disputes or claim any compensation.

## **ARTICLE 10 - INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS, OWNERSHIP OF DOCUMENT**

All legal rights throughout the world in works or inventions created by the provider in connection with the consultancy shall be allowed to SPA/RAC. The provider recognizes that such rights include, but are not limited to, copyright and other rights in written material, sound and video recordings (including films), maps, photographs, etc. as well as patents and other rights in inventions, and that the said rights enable SPA/RAC to control and authorize, where appropriate all publications, publicity material and other exploitation of the said works and inventions.

All the plans, drawings, software, photos, videos, data, presentations, study reports and any other documents, elaborated and submitted by the provider to SPA/RAC for the execution of the contract, will become and remain the property of SPA/RAC, and the consultant will submit them to SPA/RAC.

The provider does not have the right to use or copy the products resulting from this consultancy, whatever their form or their media, without the explicit written non objection of the SPA/RAC."

## **ARTICLE 11 - ARBITRAGE, DISPUTE SETTLEMENT**

Every dispute arising from or in connection with this contract execution shall be solved by way of amicable negotiations by the parties. The contract is deemed to have been made in Tunisia and to be subject to Tunisian law. In case of dispute, the Court of Tunis is competent.

## **ARTICLE 12 - LIABILITY AND INSURANCE**

SPA/RAC does not accept any liability for acts of third parties, accidents, sickness, or losses of any kind, however caused arising during the implementation of the specific actions and the production of the relative outputs expected. The bidder confirms that they or any involved staff will be covered by appropriate insurance.

## **ARTICLE 13 - FORCE MAJEURE**

Force majeure means any event outside the control of a party so that it is impossible for one party to carry out his obligations or the implementation of these obligations becomes so difficult that it is considered to be impossible to carry them out under such circumstances.

The party which invokes force majeure must inform its co-contractor within seven (7) days of its occurrence so that the contractual deadline will be suspended with a joint agreement between the parties for the period which is covered by the case of force majeure.

SPA/RAC has a right to assess the circumstances of the impediments invoked by the holder as a case of force majeure to see if they are convincing, and if this should not be the case, then the days of discontinued work will be accounted for as days of delay.

Failure by either party to fulfil any of its contractual obligations does not entail a contract termination or failure to fulfil its contractual obligations if such a failure is due to a case of force majeure, if the party that finds itself in such a situation has done the following:

- a. has taken all the reasonable precautions and measures to allow it to comply with the terms and conditions of the contract; and
- b. has informed the other party of the event, as soon as possible. Any timeline given to a party for the execution of its contractual obligation will be prolonged by a period which is equal to the period during which that party was prevented from fulfilling its obligations.

Any timeline given to a party for the execution of its contractual obligations will be prolonged by a period which is equal to the period during which that party was unable to fulfil its obligations due to the case of force majeure.

## **ARTICLE 14 - CANCELLATION CONDITIONS**

SPA/RAC could cancel this contract through a notification in writing addressed to the tenderer after one of the events indicated in the following paragraphs:

- a. no respect for the deadline of the execution in the application of Article 2 (Composition, presentation of offers and deadlines);
- b. in the case described in Article 8 (Penalty) when the amount is capped at 10% of the total amount of the contract;
- c. non-conformity to the content of the service listed in the technical specifications of the present consultancy (section 3 of the technical specifications: Tasks to be undertaken),
- d. If the tenderer goes bankrupt or into receivership.
- e. If, after a case of force majeure, the holder is unable to execute a substantial part of the Services for a period equal to at least sixty (60) days;
- f. If the tenderer was involved in corruption or fraudulent manipulations to obtain the contract or during the execution of the contract. For the purpose of the clause: a person is guilty of "corruption" if he/she offers, gives, solicits or accepts any kind of advantage in order to influence the action of a public official during the selection or the execution of the contract; and undertakes "fraudulent manipulations" which distort or denature the facts so as to influence the selection or the execution of the contract to the detriment of the borrower; by "fraudulent manipulations" is meant any agreement or collusive manipulation of the tenderers (before or after submitting the proposals) so as to artificially maintain the prices of the tenders at levels which do not correspond to prices which would have resulted from free and open competition and which deprive the borrower of the advantages of free and open competition; or
- g. If SPA/RAC, on its own initiative and for any reason whatsoever, decides to terminate the contract.

## **ARTICLE 14 – CONFLICT OF INTERESTS**

### **14.1. Prohibition of incompatible activities**

The contract tenderer, the personnel and agents must not engage, directly or indirectly, during the contract implementation period, in professional or commercial activities which could be incompatible with the activities with which they have been entrusted due to the present contract.

#### **14.2. Non-participation of the holder and his associates in certain activities**

The tenderer and his associates are prohibited, during the contract duration and at the end of the contract period, to provide good, works or services means for any project stemming from the services or closely connected with the present contract services (except for the implementation of the present contract services and their continuation).

#### **ARTICLE 15 - PROVISIONAL AND FINAL ACCEPTANCE**

The provisional acceptance is pronounced after complete completion of the services covered by this consultancy i.e., after the completion of the service described in section 3 tasks to be undertaken of the technical specifications, and Article 2 (Composition, presentation of offers and deadlines). The provisional acceptance will be pronounced only in the case of complete conformity deemed conclusive by SPA/RAC and a provisional acceptance report issued by the SPA/RAC no later than 30 days from receipt of the deliverables and at the written request of the service provider and the signing of a report of completion of the work/services jointly by the service provider and SPA/RAC. The Service Provider shall, however, correct any deficiencies identified by the SPA/RAC upon completion of the various phases.

Final acceptance will be given one (1) month after the date of provisional acceptance without reservation of the contract. The final acceptance report will only be delivered once the service provider has fulfilled all his obligations resulting from sections 3 (Tasks to be undertaken) and section 4 (Time duration of the contract, deliverables & timeline) of the "Technical Specifications" and after corrections of all deficiencies signalled by SPA/RAC.

## ANNEX 1 SUBMISSION LETTER

I, the undersigned ....., after having taken due note of the dossier documents of the call for consultancy N° ..... launched by .....,pertaining to a mission of .....

..... I hereby pledge to execute the requested services in conformity with the provisions defined in the documents referred to, for the prices as established by myself without taking into account the taxes and knowing that the stamp duties and registration are to be covered by the insurer. The total price of the bid is .....(.....) EURO ATI.

I take due note of the fact that you are not obliged to proceed with the tendering procedure and that I cannot claim a compensation. I pledge that the conditions in my offer will remain valid for a period of one hundred and twenty days (120 days) starting from the day after the date for the deadline for the receipt of tenders. SPA/RAC pledges to pay the amount after the signing of a convention into the bank current account of the Bank ..... In the name of ....

Under the number of ..... RIB (BIC – IBAN) .....

In ....., on .....

(Name, first name and function)

Right for submission (Signature)

## ANNEX 2 DETAILS OF TOTAL PRICE

The bidder, in support of its bid, should provide a breakdown of each unit price according to the following model:

Designation	Unit price	Tasks 1		Tasks 2		Tasks 3 ...		Total Tasks (1+2+3)	
		Duration	Sub-total	Duration	Sub-total	Duration	Sub-total	Duration	Sub-total
Fees									
Consultant									
Other costs									
Travel and accommodation									
Other costs necessary for the proper execution of the present consultancy									
Sub-total / task (excluding VAT)									
	TOTAL Excluding VAT								
	VAT Amount								
	TOTAL All Taxes Included								

Amount of the offer excluding Tax is fixed at the sum of ..... Amount of the VAT is fixed at the sum of .....

Amount of the offer is fixed at the sum of.....All Taxes Included (ATI).

**(Signature and official stamp of the bidder)**