



Mekong River Commission

For Sustainable Development

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. CONSULTANCY SUMMARY:

Consultancy Title:	Financial and Administrative Officer to support implementation of the GEF Mekong Fisheries Project
Consultancy type:	Service Contract (SC), 12 months duration with the possibility of a renewal, subject to satisfactory performance
Consultancy level:	Level C
Division:	Environmental Management Division (ED)
Duration:	1 June 2026 to 31 May 2027
Duty station:	Office of the MRC Secretariat in Vientiane, Lao PDR.
Reporting to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Director of the Environmental Management Division (<i>overall supervision</i>); and ➤ MRCS Fisheries Management Specialist/Project Manager of the Mekong Fisheries Project (<i>direct supervision</i>).
Expected Deliverables:	Please refer to Section 3 and 4.

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

2.1. Introduction

The Mekong River Commission (MRC) was established under the 1995 Agreement on Cooperation for the Sustainable Development of the Mekong River Basin, signed by the governments of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, and Viet Nam. The role of the MRC is to coordinate and promote regional cooperation in the sustainable development, utilization, management, and conservation of the water and related resources across the Mekong River Basin.

The MRC Secretariat (MRCS) serve as the operational arm of the MRC and its four Member Countries (MCs). It provides technical and administrative support to the MRC Joint Committee (JC) and the MRC Council to help deliver the organization’s mission and strategic objectives.

Within the MRC, the Environmental Management Division (ED) is responsible for environmental monitoring, assessment, planning and management. It plays a central role in supporting basin-wide planning and ensuring that development in the Mekong River Basin is environmentally sustainable.

The ED is responsible for implementing “the **Enhancing Transboundary Fisheries Management in the Lower Mekong Basin**” project (hereafter referred to as the “**Mekong Fisheries Project**”) over the period 2026 – 2030, with financial support from the GEF IW-8, and implemented in collaboration with the IUCN. The project is implemented under the framework of MRC and contributes directly to the MRC Strategic Priorities for 2026–2030.

2.2. Project summary

The Lower Mekong Basin (LMB) is home to the most productive inland fisheries on the planet, and one based on the most diverse range of species, generating an estimated annual value of \$8-\$9 billion from fish and Other Aquatic Animals (OAAs). They make a substantial contribution to the economics of Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam, while also supporting food security, cultural identity, and local livelihoods. Freshwater fish provide a major share of national animal protein intake and play a vital role in untrient, particularly for children, contributing directly to health and development outcomes.

The LMB's extraordinary productivity stems from a complex mosaic of dynamic freshwater ecosystems, with fish species diversity per unit of catchment estimated to be roughly three times higher than that of the Amazon. These ecosystems rely on interconnected wetland landscapes that serve as crucial habitats for fish throughout their life cycles. The resilience of these biodiversity hotspots is a critical indicator of ecosystem health, sustainable livelihoods, and economic stability.

However, the LMB's fisheries are facing a growing and widely recognized crisis.. Since 2018, fish catches and related incomes have declined significantly due to habitat fragmentation, degradation, and loss. The constructions of dams and irrigation structures have disrupted connectivity between the Mekong River and its tributaries, impeding fish migration, altering reproductive cycles and affecting nutrient flows. At the same time, wetland conversion has reduced critical habitats, while unsustainable agriculture, forestry and urban development practices have further diminished water quality, nutrient dynamics, and wetland recharge.

The “**Enhancing Transboundary Fisheries Management in the Lower Mekong Basin**”, also known as the **Mekong Fisheries Project**, responds directly to these challenges by strengthening the connectivity, productivity, and resilience of transboundary capture fisheries, aquatic biodiversity, and the broader ecosystem services provided by the LMB. The project will strengthen fisheries co-management systems, support value chain development, and promote income diversification. Through the MRC, it will also integrate fisheries conservation into key sectoral policies, particularly in hydropower, irrigation, and agriculture.

The project contributes to the GEF focal area of International Waters, Biodiversity, and Land Degradation. it aligns with the GEF 8 Programming Direction, particularly the objective of advancing sustainable fisheries management, and supports key regional frameworks, including the MRC Basin Development Strategy (2021-2030) and the MRC Mekong Basin-wide Fisheries Management and Development Strategy (2018-2022).

Field activities focus on six landscapes spanning 2.7 million hectares: the Lower Songkhram River Basin and Ing River Mouth in Thailand; Siphandone in Lao PDR; Kratie-Stung Treng and Eastern Tonle Sap in Cambodia; and the Upper Mekong Delta in Vietnam. These areas were selected based on their importance role for supporting regional fisheries and the opportunity to rapidly scale up successful community fisheries models. Work in these landscapes will generate the evidence needed to strengthen public investment in capture fisheries, while also encouraging more active participation from national fisheries agencies.

The project's outcomes are also aligned with its theory of change, aiming to restore fish stocks and fish habitats, conserve and enhance biodiversity, improve livelihoods through sustainable value chains, and embed ecosystem-based fisheries management into policy. By reconnecting critical habitats, incentivizing sustainable practices, and fostering knowledge-sharing across stakeholders, the project provides a scalable and replicable model for transboundary fisheries management.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE CONSULTANCY:

The main objective of this assignment is to provide the necessary support for the effective implementation of project activities. This includes detailed responsibilities related to procurement, financial operation, administration, and management, as well as the preparation of annual and semiannual work plans and financial progress reports for review and monitoring by the Project Manager (PM), MRCS and Donor.

4. REQUIRED TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

To achieve the aims and objectives of this consultancy, the **Financial and Administrative Officer** is expected to carry out the following key tasks and responsibilities during his/her period of consultancy services.

- **Financial disbursement, payment, reimbursement and fund requests and processes:**
 - Operate day-to-day financial transactions for the Project.
 - Facilitate advance requests and clearance processes.
 - Prepare and submit financial requests for payments to the GEF Implementing Agency/IUCN using the Fund Authorization and Certificate of Expenditures (FACE) form.
 - Follow up on the provision and release of financial resources and reimbursement claims as required.
 - Ensure timely acquittal of advances and payments in accordance with project procedures, activities implementation.
- **Budget monitoring, evaluation and control**
 - Assist the PM in monitoring project budgets.
 - Review budget utilization against planned activities.
 - Support budget monitoring, evaluation and revision as appropriate and when necessary.
 - Monitor project expenditures within the approved budget to ensure the achievement of expected outputs.
- **Financial reporting**
 - Prepare project financial reports for review and clearance by the PM, and submit to the Project Steering Committee and IUCN, as required.
 - Update MRCS and IUCN on financial progress, outputs, and outcomes.
 - Highlight key challenges, risks, and proposed follow-up actions as appropriate and when necessary.
- **Financial management of project activities**
 - Facilitate, guide, and monitor the financial aspects of both regional and national project activities.
 - Liaise with national executing partners to ensure proper financial monitoring.
 - Ensure advances and payments are adequately tracked, justified, and acquitted.

- **Accounting records and reconciliations**
 - Establish and maintain an expense ledger for the Project.
 - Prepare monthly project account reconciliation statements.
 - Keep accurate and up-to-date financial records for audit and reporting purposes.
- **Procurement and asset management support**
 - In collaboration with project Specialists and under the supervision of the PM, prepare required documents for procurement processes.
 - Support the implementation of procurement of goods and services in line with MRC procurement policies.
 - Maintain an up-to-date inventory file for all project equipment and assets.
- **Internal control and compliance**
 - Continuously improve financial systems and procedures.
 - Strengthen internal controls to meet audit requirements.
 - Ensure all project financial operations comply with donor rules, IUCN Guidelines, MRC policies and project procedures.
- **Other assigned duties**
 - Undertake any other relevant tasks assigned by the Project Manager.
 - Provide supports in organizing Project Steering Committee and other relevant events/meetings under the Project activities.

5. PAYMENT MODE:

The payment is made on a monthly basis at the end of each completed month, subject to an approved monthly timesheet and signed invoice. The payment of the final amount payable is subject to certification of satisfactory performance by the PM or authorized staff.

Note: Consultancy rate is defined by the MRCS consultancy rate policy and the level of consultancy. MRC is a tax-exempted agency for the work done for the MRC. Consultant, in case mission is required, will be covered with a return ticket to and from the assigned duty stations with a daily related subsistence allowance of 75% of the UN for the mission days.

6. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS:

Intellectual property rights - IPR: Information, data, database, knowledge resources in the forms of briefings, reports, proceedings, articles, essays, etc. issued by and for the MRCS will be the MRCS property.

Any utility, announcement and disclosure that are without MRCS highest levels of authority' permission is considered illegal and will be charged by relevant local and international legal procedures.

7. DECLARATION OF NON-FRAUDULENCE AND PROTECTION OF PERSONAL DATA:

The Consultant shall adhere to the MRC's relevant rules and regulations of the MRC on personal data protection, business exclusion, and fraud prevention and anti-corruption principles, and shall be under strict disciplinary measures should any violation occurs.

8. WORKING ARRANGEMENT:

- Overall supervision: The consultant will be working under the overall supervision of the Director of the Environmental Management Division.
- Communication line: The consultant will be working under the direct supervision of MRCS Fisheries Management Specialist/Project Manager of the Mekong Fisheries Project.

9. QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS:

- A Bachelor's degree of higher in management, finance, economics, environment or closely related field or equivalent relevant work experience;
- A minimum of 10 years of professional experience in financial management; experience working with the MRC Member Countries' National Line Agencies and/or familiarity with MRC financial systems is an advantage;
- Proven experience in dealing with national experts and international institutions is an advantage;
- Exposure to environmental issues and/or biodiversity is desirable, but not mandatory;
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office programs and general computer literacy;
- Demonstrated experience in providing a streamlined financial service role to a project management team, including experience in preparation and delivery of financial reports;
- Familiarity with financial and procurement process of the MRC is advantage;
- Demonstrated initiative in carrying out duties and ability to work independently and meet tight deadlines;
- Ability to operate standard office equipment; and
- Familiarity with accounting principles and standard office practice.

10. SIGNATURE BLOCK

MRCS:

Name and Title:

Theerawat Samphawamana

**Director of the Environmental Management
Division**

Incumbent's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____