



Mekong River Commission

For Sustainable Development

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. CONSULTANCY SUMMARY:

Consultancy Title:	Knowledge Management and Communication Specialist to support implementation of the GEF Mekong Fisheries Project
Consultancy type:	Service Contract (SC)
Consultancy level	Level B
Division:	Environmental Management Division (ED)
Duration:	1 June 2026 to 31 May 2027 (12 months duration with the possibility of a renewal, subject to satisfactory performance)
Duty station:	Office of the MRC Secretariat in Vientiane, Lao PDR.
Reporting to:	<input type="checkbox"/> Director of ED (<i>overall supervision</i>); and <input type="checkbox"/> MRCS Fisheries Management Specialist/Project Manager of the Mekong Fisheries Project (<i>direct supervision</i>).
Expected Deliverables:	<input type="checkbox"/> 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 preparation and dissemination of knowledge management and communication products across all four components, especially Component 4 of the Mekong Fisheries Project. These activities will be implemented across all Member Countries. The consultant will work closely with the Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS) and Gender Specialist to support the operation of the Environment Social Management Framework (ESMF), the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) and gender-related activities across all project components. In addition, the consultant will collaborate with Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) officer to maintain and regularly update the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning system (MEL).

4. REQUIRED TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

To achieve the objectives of this consultancy, the Knowledge Management and Communication Specialist will undertake the following key tasks and responsibilities during the assignment.

A. Knowledge management:

- Coordinate with the Project Team, MRCS, national executing agencies, and partners to systematically document and consolidate gender-responsive local ecological knowledge and fisheries management best practices.
- Develop and maintain knowledge products (e.g, case studies, lessons learned, and technical briefs) to support project learning, replication, and scaling;
- Facilitate knowledge-sharing across Member Countries through appropriate platforms, workshops, and communication channels.

B. Communication:

- Develop and implement a comprehensive communication strategy and action plan, including clear objectives, key messages, target audience, stakeholders mapping, communication channels, and performance indicators;
- Lead and coordinate the execution of the communication strategy, ensuring timely delivery of planned outputs and alignment with project objectives;
- Designs the project's visual identity and communication tools, including guidelines for media engagement, press conferences, and public events;
- Provide technical guidance factsheets, website content, social media material, publications, and talking points;
- Produce and oversee the development of communication materials, including publications, briefing notes, speeches, presentations, and audio-visual content;
- Provide technical assistance to create communication materials, including publications, briefing notes, talking points, speeches, presentations and audio-visual content;
- Coordinate translation and interpretation services between English and local languages (Khmer, Lao, Thai, and Vietnamese), ensuring accuracy and consistency;
- Works closely with ESS and Gender Specialist, as well as project partners, to support effective stakeholder engagement in line with the Stakeholders Engagement Plan, and ensure compliance with ESS standards;

- Support the planning and organization of project meetings, local and national consultations, field missions, and other related activities;
- Monitor and report on communication activities and outputs, ensuring they are delivered in a timely and appropriate manner; and
- Perform other project-related tasks as assigned to support the overall implementation of the project.

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:

- Master's degree or higher in communications, journalism, international relations or closely related fields;
- Minimum 10 years of relevant professional experience in knowledge management, communications, and stakeholder engagement, preferable within regional or international development projects;
- Demonstrated experience in developing and delivering communication products across multiple formats, including press releases, websites, success stories, blogs, and social media content tailored to diverse target audiences;
- Strong understanding of communication strategies, tools, and approaches, including digital and multimedia platforms;

- Proven ability to lead and manage communication functions, with strong interpersonal skills and the capacity to effectively engage with a wide range of stakeholders, including government agencies, project partners, and local communities.
- Familiarity with the socio-political and environmental context of the MRC Member Countries is highly desirable;
- Excellent command of English, both written and spoken, with strong drafting, editing, and presentation skills;
- Fluency in English is required as it is the working language of the MRC Secretariat; Knowledge of Khmer, Lao, Thai, or Vietnamese is considered an advantage.

10. SIGNATURE BLOCK

MRCs:

Name and Title: Theerawat Samphawamana Incumbent's Signature: _____

**Director of the Environmental Management
Division**

Date: _____

Date: _____