



Mekong River Commission For Sustainable Development

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. CONSULTANCY SUMMARY

Title:	Regional Consultant for support the work on application for MRC to become the accredited entity to Green Climate Fund and Adaptation Fund
Consultancy Type:	Special Service Agreement (SSA)
Division:	MRCS Planning Division
Duration:	25 days from 17 August – 31 December 2026
Duty Station:	Homebased and travels and meetings within the Mekong River Commission Secretariat and MRC Member Countries
Reporting to:	Director of Planning Division through the Climate Change Adaptation Specialist
Expected Deliverables:	Please refer to deliverables in Section 5 of this TOR

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

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

The MRC Secretariat (MRCS) is the operational arm of the MRC. It provides technical and administrative services to the Joint Committee (JC) and the Council to achieve the MRC's mission.

The MRCS Planning Division (PD) is responsible for strategic basin development planning, and strategic analysis and planning of issues related to socio-economic, climate change adaptation, hydropower, and agriculture and irrigation to support basin planning management and development for sustainable development of the Mekong River. Under the approved Multi-year Workplan 2025-2026, PD has been tasked to continue working on becoming an accredited entity for Green Climate Fund and Adaptation Fund.

The Mekong Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan (MASAP) outlines strategic priorities and basin-level actions through which the MRC contributes to addressing climate change risks and strengthening resilience across the Lower Mekong Basin (LMB). MASAP highlights key areas of development that require transboundary cooperation for effective climate adaptation, while also supporting Member Countries in implementing their national climate strategies.

Since its endorsement, MASAP has been implemented based on its seven strategic priorities as follows:

- 1) Mainstream climate change into regional and national policies, programmes and plans;
- 2) Enhance regional and international cooperation and partnership on adaptation;
- 3) Prepare transboundary and gender-sensitive adaptation options;

- 4) Support access to adaptation finance;
- 5) Enhance monitoring, data collection and sharing;
- 6) Strengthen capacity on development of climate change adaptation strategies and plans; and
- 7) Improve outreach of MRC products on climate change and adaptation.

Strategic Priority 4 of the MRC's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan (MASAP) focuses on enhancing access to adaptation finance to support the implementation of adaptation measures. This priority is reflected in the Basin Development Strategy (BDS) 2021–2030 and the MRC Strategic Plan 2026–2030 under Activity 4.2.2.6: Finalise accreditation requirements for MRC access to international climate finance to project proposals that ensure cost-effective administration.

Recognizing the complexity of the climate finance architecture, the MRCS recommends prioritizing two key funds under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) that provide a direct access modality: (i) the Adaptation Fund (AF); and (ii) the Green Climate Fund (GCF). This modality enables national and regional entities, whether public or private, to submit funding proposals directly to the funds, without the need for an intermediary. To qualify for direct access, entities must meet and maintain compliance with the accreditation standards established by each fund.

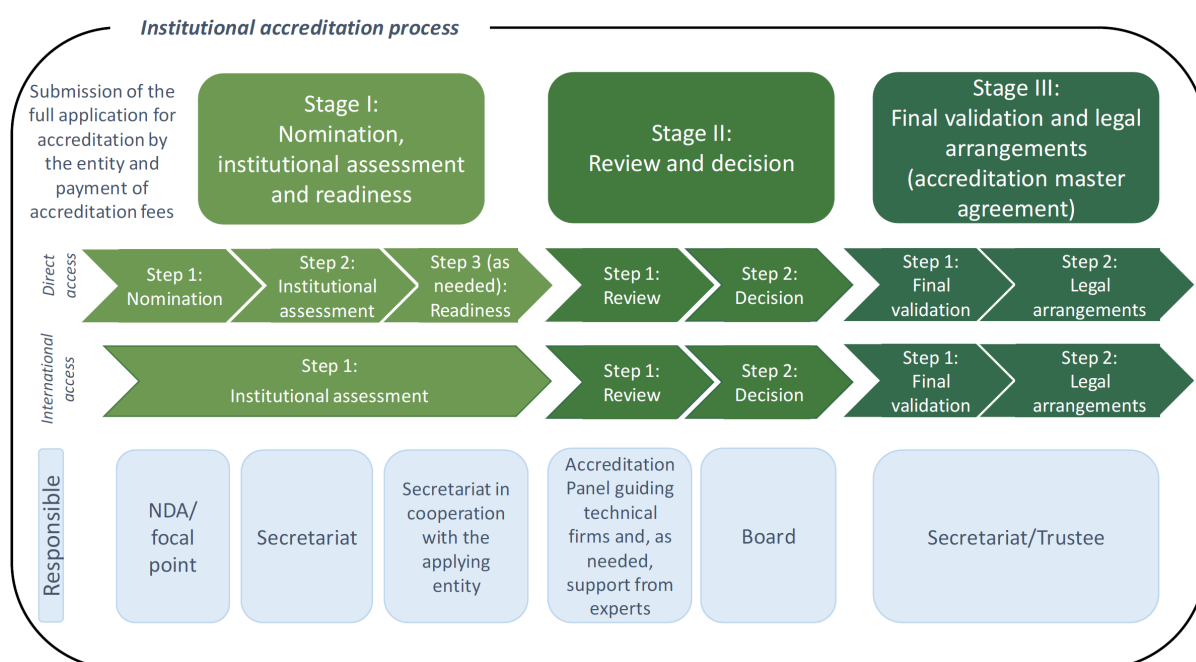


Figure 1: GCF institutional accreditation process

MRC has currently completed Stage 1 (Nomination, Institutional Assessment and Readiness) of the accreditation process for the GCF (Figure 1). Also, MRC has presently received a “Regular Accreditation” account from the AF and started filling-in the account by providing supporting documents to the AF.

Building on the context provided above, the PD is seeking a qualified international or regional consultant to support task on climate fund accreditation for the MRC to become an accredited entity to GCF and AF. This task 4.2.2.6.1 is listed under the approved MRC Multi-year Work Plan 2026.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE CONSULTANCY

The objective of this assignment is to strengthen the MRC's institutional capacity to secure and sustain accreditation with the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and Adaptation Fund (AF) by updating the Gaps Assessment Report, contributing to the preparation and submission of accreditation documentation, assessing financial management systems, and facilitating stakeholder engagement to refine readiness proposals and address accreditation requirements.

4. EXPECTED RESULTS/OUTPUTS

- A fully revised and updated **Gaps Assessment Report** that incorporates the most recent institutional documents (e.g., financial manual, HR manual, procurement guidelines, how MRC's funds are used to benefit the communities and other involved stakeholders, with clear identification of compliance status and areas for improvement related to GCF and AF standards;
- Inputs and technical contributions to MRC's preparatory documents for GCF and AF accreditation applications' preparatory documents for GCF and AF accreditation applications
- A completed and submitted **AF Accreditation Application Package**, including all required supporting documents, and a response log documenting queries from accreditation panels and the corresponding clarifications provided;
- One *facilitated stakeholder workshop* with meeting agendas, participant lists, presentations, and **Workshop Reports** summarizing key outcomes, and stakeholder feedback.

5. DELIVERABLES AND CONCRETE TIMELINES

A tentative schedule of key deliverables is provided below. The exact schedule will depend on the timing of the contracting with the successful consultant, but it is anticipated that the assignment will commence from **17 August to 31 December 2026**.

Deliverables and Expected Quality	Number of Working Days	Deadline
1. Inception plan/work plan and methodology with clearly defined timelines and outputs to the Planning Division Team at the inception meeting	1	Aug 2026
2. Submission of an updated Gaps Assessment Report incorporating latest institutional documents and compliance analysis	8	Aug – Dec 2026
3. Submission of a completed AF accreditation application package, including technical inputs, supporting documents, response logs	9	Sep – Dec 2026
4. Continue providing technical inputs as required by the GCF and AF	5	Aug – Dec 2026
5. Facilitation of two stakeholder workshops, including preparation of supporting materials and summary reports	2	Aug – Dec 2026
Total	25	

6. REQUIRED TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The consultant will undertake the following tasks:

- Review the most recent institutional documents such as the financial manual, HR manual, and procurement guidelines, and assess their alignment with GCF and AF accreditation criteria. Identify areas of full, partial, or non-compliance, and develop

specific, actionable recommendations to address the gaps. Finalize and submit an updated Gaps Assessment Report that clearly outlines compliance status and proposed improvements.

- Provide technical inputs to MRC's preparatory accreditation documents by reviewing, refining, and aligning content with GCF and AF requirements. Ensure clarity, coherence, and completeness in each submission, and coordinate with the MRC team to integrate feedback and finalize the documents for submission.
- Compile all required documentation for the Adaptation Fund accreditation package and organize it in accordance with submission guidelines. Submit the complete application and track any correspondence or queries from the accreditation panel. Prepare responses and maintain a detailed response log documenting all follow-up communications.
- Conduct a review of MRCS's financial systems, procedures, and audit records to evaluate current capacity and internal controls. Engage with finance staff through interviews or consultations and identify key strengths and areas requiring improvement. Produce an assessment report with findings and practical recommendations for enhancing financial management in line with GCF and AF standards.
- Plan and facilitate two stakeholder workshops to support the refinement of the readiness support proposal and closure of accreditation gaps. Prepare workshop materials, lead discussions, and gather feedback from participants. Document outcomes and recommendations in comprehensive summary reports for each workshop.

7. PAYMENT MODALITY

- 1st payment (30% of total contract value) will be paid after all **deliverables completed up to 18 September 2026** (including **deliverable # 1 & 2** as stated in Section 5), equivalent to 7 working days completed;
- 2nd payment will be made after receiving the **submission of the deliverables up to 18 November 2026** (including **deliverable # 3 & 4**, as stated in Section 5), (40 % of total contract value, equivalent to 10 working days completed); and
- The final payment (30% of total contract value, equivalent to 8 working days completed) will be made after receiving the **submission of all deliverables (as stated in Section 5) up to 10 December 2026**. All deliverables must be satisfactorily accepted and confirmed by the MRCS Planning Division.

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. The consultant, in case a 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.

8. 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.

9. DECLARATION OF NON-FRAUDULENCE AND PROTECTION OF PERSONAL DATA

The Subscriber 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.

10. WORKING ARRANGEMENT

Reporting Line: Director of the MRCS Planning Division

Communication Line: The Consultant will work under the strategic guidance of the Director of the MRCS Planning Division and work closely with the Climate Change Adaptation Specialist (MRCS Planning Division). Furthermore, the consultant will work in close collaboration and coordination with the National Mekong Committee Secretariats of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, and Viet Nam

Working Station: Home office work and MRC Secretariat and possible travel for the meetings with the Mekong River Commission Secretariat and its Member Countries

11. QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

- ☐ Advanced degree(s) (Master's or Doctoral degree) in Climate Change Adaptation, Integrated Water Resources Management, Natural Resources Management, Environmental Science, or a closely related field;
- ☐ At least 7 years of working experience in relation to the GCF and/or AF accreditation process, including Basic and Specialized Fiduciary Standards, Environmental and Social Safeguards Standards, and Gender Policy, Strategy and Action Plan of the GCF;
- ☐ Working experience on revising and/or developing policy documents for organization(s) to closing gap(s) for the accreditation to the GCF and/or AF;
- ☐ Demonstrate a strong understanding of the MASAP, MRC Basin Development Plan 2021-2030, MRC Strategic Plan 2021-2025, and other relevant strategies;
- ☐ Extensive experience in working with international/inter-governmental organizations and multiple stakeholders
- ☐ Extensive knowledge of the Mekong River Basin and deep understanding of the Mekong Cooperation;
- ☐ Fluent in English with advanced written and verbal communication skills, and a strong ability to conduct detailed analytical work and problem-solving; and
- ☐ Ability to collaboratively work with diverse teams and stakeholders.

12. SIGNATURE BLOCK

MRCS:

Full Name: **Nguyen Huy Phuong**

Incumbent's Full Name: _____

Title: **Director of Planning Division**

Signature: _____

Incumbent's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____