

Terms of Reference

Expert for harmonisation of Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC) in North Macedonia

Programme title:	Groundwater Management, Use and Protection Programme (GWP)
Position title:	Expert for harmonization of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC) in North Macedonia
Type of contract	Individual Consultant Contract
Duty Station:	Home based /Skopje, North Macedonia
Duration of contract:	Up to 15 working days in period of October – December 2025
Start date:	1 October 2025
Application deadline	19 September 2025

A. BACKGROUND

The Swiss-funded **Groundwater Management, Use and Protection Programme (GWP)** aims at supporting North Macedonia in establishing a sustainable long-term, multi-level, and systematic groundwater management that enables collaborative, effective, and more transparent use of the groundwater resources.

The GWP stakeholders/partners include institutions at central governmental level, research and academia as well as local institutions (e.g. municipalities, public utilities), civil society organisations and the private sector. The **consortium of Skat Consulting and PointPro Consulting** has been mandated by the **Swiss Embassy** in the Republic of North Macedonia to implement Phase 1 of the GWP from Jan 2024 – Dec 2027. Two additional subsequent phases may follow subject to successful implementation of the Programme's first phase and fulfilment of the overall commitment of its main national partners.

[Skat Consulting Ltd.](#) Is a owner-operated leading Swiss company specialising in international cooperation and is dedicated to making available basic services and ensuring dignified living conditions and a healthy environment for all. Skat Consulting supports governments, the private sector and civil society around the globe in improving people's lives by facilitating lasting solutions in water, building, energy and governance.

[PointPro Consulting d.o.o.](#) is a leading management consulting company based in Skopje since 2006 incorporating two business areas: (a) Infrastructure and Sustainable Development and (b) Management Consulting and Corporate Finance.

To facilitate the implementation of the Programme, on a day-to-day basis, a so-called **Programme Facilitation Unit (PFU)** will be hosted together by the Skat Consulting Branch in Skopje and PointPro Consulting. The PFU is responsible for direct implementation of activities.

Groundwater Management, Use and Protection Programme (GWP) aims to increase the effectiveness of the legal framework by supporting the drafting of amendments to existing laws and regulations. This is all about **creating an enabling environment** with appropriate policies, strategies and laws for the management, use and protection of groundwater. Increasing legal effectiveness will be achieved by **supporting the harmonisation of the national legislation** with the objectives of the relevant EU directives and by consolidating the existing legal framework. GWP aims to remove some of the main barriers inhibiting better water resources management at different levels in the country, stemming mostly from incomplete and/or inconsistent legal and regulatory frameworks, including different interpretations of laws by key institutions; bottlenecks caused by the current institutional model, including limited capacity of key institutions in terms of access to funding and the required number of staff with certain skills; and limited cooperation between key institutions at technical, policy and education levels.

To create a more efficient legal framework, the Programme will support the development of recommendations and supporting documents to harmonise national legislation in line with the

Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC)-[Marine Directive](#) in North Macedonia as well as preparation of Table of Concordances (TOCs) to support the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC) in North Macedonia progress monitoring process; and preparation of the Regulatory Impact Analysis (RIA) report to support enactment process.

Based on the gap analysis and recommendations, the Programme will, in close cooperation with relevant institutions/partners on central and local level support the preparation of legislative drafts/amendments to fulfil the Marine Strategy Framework Directive principles.

The **Marine Strategy Framework Directive 2008/56/EC (MSFD)** is a key piece of European Union legislation aimed at protecting the marine environment across EU Member States' marine waters. It establishes a framework to achieve or maintain **Good Environmental Status (GES)** of marine waters by 2020 through an ecosystem-based approach. The concept of 'good environmental status' (GES) is defined by the through eleven descriptors. These describe the state of the marine environment. They also describe anthropogenic pressures on the marine environment such as commercial fisheries, or pollutants such as marine litter, contaminants, or the input of energy. A [Commission decision](#) (2017) sets out the criteria and methodological standards that Member States need to use when determining good environmental status for each of these descriptors. It also proposes specifications and methods for monitoring and assessing the state of the marine environment. Determining good environmental status requires the setting of quality levels, referred to as threshold values. Unless they are already defined in other EU laws, these must be set through EU or regional or sub-regional cooperation and based on the latest science available.

The MSFD requires Member States to develop and implement marine strategies, including monitoring, assessment, and programs of measures addressing pressures such as pollution, eutrophication, marine litter, invasive species, and biodiversity loss.

Although North Macedonia is a **landlocked country without a coastline or marine waters under its jurisdiction**, the MSFD's objectives are relevant due to the transboundary nature of water pollution and ecosystem health. River basins in North Macedonia are transboundary and ultimately discharge into the seas, and therefore pollution or mismanagement upstream can directly affect marine ecosystems downstream.

Based on Article 12 of the Interim Agreement of 13.09.1995 and Article 18 of the Prespa Agreement (Final Agreement for the settlement of the differences as described in the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 817 (1993) and 845 (1993), the termination of the Interim Accord of 1995, and the establishment of a Strategic Partnership between the Parties, the bilateral agreement apply to the relations between the North Macedonia and Greece, including the agreement concerning hydro- economic questions concluded between the SFRY and the Kingdom of Greece on 18 June 1959, ratified and published Supplement to the "Official Gazette of the FNRJ" No. 6/60

North Macedonia is a party to regional cooperation agreements such as the **Drin Memorandum of Understanding (Drin MoU)** signed in 2011 by riparian countries—Albania, Greece, Kosovo, Montenegro, and North Macedonia—aiming for integrated management of the shared Drin River basin. This cooperation supports the alignment of inland water management policies with marine environmental objectives, including those of the MSFD.

Currently, North Macedonia's transposition and implementation of the MSFD requirements remain partial. The country has yet to designate competent authorities responsible for MSFD-related tasks, and draft River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) under the Water Framework Directive (WFD) do not fully integrate key MSFD elements such as Good Environmental Status criteria, marine litter reduction, and cross-sectoral coordination. Moreover, measures addressing land-based sources of marine pollution, such as nutrient loading and plastic waste, require strengthening.

North Macedonia stated that it is partially aligned with the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). North Macedonia is a land-locked country and its contribution of inland water to pollution of Mediterranean and Black Sea is minimal. Full alignment with the Directive and determining the relevant institutional setting is expected by the end of 2025. Main challenges have been

identified: lack of legal basis and lack of adapted legislative framework, needs for an assessment of the environmental impact of human activities. By the end of 2025, a suitable financial instrument will be established. As EU Commission concluded in its Screening Report¹ North Macedonia needs to further align with the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

Harmonizing MSFD objectives with North Macedonia's inland water management policies is essential for ensuring coherent environmental protection throughout the catchment and downstream marine environments. This includes reinforcing synergies between the MSFD, and other EU directives implemented in North Macedonia, especially the WFD, the Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC), and the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (91/271/EEC).

The following articles of the MSFD require specific attention for transposition and implementation within North Macedonia's national framework:

Article 6.1 (Regional Cooperation) requires Member States to use existing regional cooperation structures, including Regional Sea Conventions, to coordinate marine strategy implementation. The implementation requires strengthening and formalizing participation in regional institutions; as well as establishing mechanisms for joint monitoring and data sharing.

Article 6.2 (Coordination with Third Countries) calls for coordination within marine regions/subregions, including landlocked countries in catchment areas, through international forums and Regional Sea Conventions. The implementation requires expanding the cooperation beyond immediate riparians to all countries in the marine catchment; promote integration of MSFD objectives into transboundary water management.

Article 7.1 (Designation of Competent Authorities) Requires designation of authorities responsible for MSFD implementation and coordination. The implementation requires to officially designate competent authorities for MSFD tasks and to clarify institutional roles and mandates

Article 7.2 (Notification of Changes) requires informing of any changes in competent authorities and the *implementation requires development of internal procedures for timely notification.*

Article 26.3 (Measures for Landlocked States). Landlocked states must implement measures necessary to comply with Articles 6 and 7 and notify the Commission of such measures. The implementation requires review of existing legislation and adoption of additional measures as needed; focus on cooperation and designation measures.

To support above mentioned goals, the GWP Programme is looking for **Senior expert for harmonization of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC) in North Macedonia** and its incorporation into the national legal systems.

B. SCOPE OF WORK

The aim of this assignment is to support the harmonization of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC) in North Macedonia and its integration into national legal systems. The main objective of this assignment is to:

- Assess the current status of transposition and implementation of Directive 2008/56/EC in North Macedonia.
- Identify gaps, challenges, and inconsistencies in legal, institutional, and operational frameworks.
- Evaluate synergies and alignment between MSFD and related legislation, especially WFD, Nitrates Directive, and Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive.
- Provide clear, actionable recommendations for completing and improving transposition and implementation.
- Support the development of coordinated measures, policies, and cooperation mechanisms to meet MSFD objectives indirectly.

¹ Screening Report North Macedonia - Cluster 4: Green Agenda & Sustainable Connectivity, 7 July 2025 available at [Screening report North Macedonia - Cluster 4: Green Agenda & Sustainable Connectivity - European Commission](#)

C. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Under the guidance of the Outcome Manager and the Team Leader, the Expert shall carry out the following tasks:

Task 1: Review the national legal and institutional framework relevant to MSFD. The expert is expected to:

1.1. Review of Legal and Institutional Framework and Policy Instruments

- Analyse national legislation and policies relevant to MSFD, including Water Law and proposed amendments, and other relevant environmental and waste management legislation.
- Assess the designation of competent authorities responsible for MSFD-related tasks.
- Examine existing institutional arrangements and coordination mechanisms for marine environmental policy and transboundary water cooperation.
- Evaluate the national legislation pertaining to the River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) and level of integration of MSFD objectives.
- Evaluate the national legislation regulating the incorporation of measures from WFD, Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC), and Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (91/271/EEC) aimed at reducing land-based pollution affecting marine environments.
- Analyse whether environmental quality objectives comparable to Good Environmental Status (GES) have been legally defined and operationalized.
- Assess the extent and adequacy of legislation pertaining monitoring programs related to MSFD descriptors (eutrophication, contaminants, biodiversity, marine litter, invasive species).
- Review reporting mechanisms and data sharing in line with EU requirements.

1.2 Review the transboundary and regional cooperation

- evaluate existing cooperation agreements;
- analyse the effectiveness of transboundary cooperation in supporting MSFD goals.
- identify opportunities to enhance collaboration with regional sea conventions and river basin commissions.
- examine alignment with broader initiatives such as the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans.

1.3 Gap Analysis and Recommendations

- Identify key gaps and obstacles in legal, institutional, and operational areas.
- Provide recommendations for legal amendments, institutional strengthening, enhanced monitoring, and improved policy coherence.
- Suggest specific measures and timelines for improving MSFD implementation.
- Recommend capacity building needs and stakeholder engagement strategies.

Task 2: Present the findings to relevant government institutions and other relevant stakeholders

The expert is expected to provide a presentation summarising the key findings and recommendations from the gap assessment report and recommendations. The aim is to gather feedback and promote dialogue on implementation and reach consensus on the next steps to harmonize legislation with the MSFD.

D. MAIN DELIVERABLES AND PAYMENTS SCHEDULE

Deliverable 1: Assessment and Recommendation report for MSFD harmonization with analyses and findings of the Task 1 by 15th November 2025. It is expected that the Report at least include: Legal and institutional gap analysis; Recommendations for legal and policy alignment; Proposals for institutional roles and coordination mechanisms; and framework for enhanced transboundary cooperation.

Deliverable 2: **Present the findings** and main policy recommendations to the relevant stakeholders of the Task 2 by 15th December 2025.

The payment for the services will be carried out in instalments upon submission and acceptance of the deliverables.

E. REQUIREMENTS AND SKILLS

- Minimum bachelor's degree in relevant field (law, international relations, environmental law, public administration, marine policy, water management, or related fields). M.Sc. degree in relevant field will be considered an asset.
- Proven experience with EU environmental harmonization/transboundary arrangements implementation. Knowledge of MSFD and of the Western Balkans water management governance and transboundary water cooperation will be considered as an asset.
- Proven experience in experience in legal analysis, policy assessment, and drafting recommendations
- Excellent working knowledge of English.

F. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- *Contract modality and duration*

The expert will be hired under IC (Individual Contract) modality until December 2025. A maximum of 15 expert-days is anticipated for the entire period of the assignment.

- *Reporting*

The expert will report to the Outcome Manager and the produced documentation needs to be submitted in English. The specific legislative amendments to Law on waters and other legislation as well as the list of subsidiary acts and their scope preferably to be submitted in Macedonian language

- *Travel and other associated costs*

The expert is expected to be present North Macedonia to participate in presentations of the work/reports/deliverables which will be agreed in prior with the Programme staff. Costs for the international travel and accommodation for such events² will be organized and covered by the Programme. Meetings can also be organised remotely/ home country.

- *Payments schedule*

The payment for the services will be on a regular basis, based on the number of used expert-days in line with previously assigned timetable/mission plan and approved time sheets (to be certified by the Outcome Manager prior to the payments of the instalments).

- *Ownership and submission of data, reports and other material produced*

All primary data, reports, visual elements and other products during this assignment shall be made available to Program in electronic format. The Program keeps the right to use all products without any restrictions (e.g., in various publications, websites, presentations).

G. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Interested offerors are invited to submit the following documents (in pdf format):

- Draft methodology and workplan
- Offeror's letter pertaining the expert confirmation of availability.
- Financial proposal³ in the form of a lumpsum of all-inclusive cost in EUR/MKD.
- Most updated CV with focus on required qualification as well as the details of relevant professional experience.
- At least two favourable references

² Up to 1 such event is expected for the duration of the contract

³ National expert submits proposal in MKD, international expert submits proposal in EUR

to the following address:

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Contact for more information

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ANNEX 1: OFFEROR'S LETTER CONFIRMING INTEREST AND AVAILABILITY FOR THE ASSIGNMENT

Dear Sir/Madam:

I hereby declare that:

- A) I have read, understood and hereby accept the Terms of Reference describing the duties and responsibilities of *[indicate the purpose of the assignment as per TOR]* under the "Groundwater Management, Use and Protection Programme in North Macedonia - Phase 1";
- B) I have also read, understood and hereby accept SKAT Consulting's General Conditions of Contract for Consultancy Services;
- C) I hereby propose my services and I confirm my interest in performing the assignment through the submission of my CV which I have duly signed and attached hereto as Annex 1;
- D) In compliance with the requirements of the Terms of Reference, I hereby confirm that I am available for the entire duration of the assignment, and I shall perform the services in the manner described in my proposed approach/methodology which I have attached hereto as Annex 3 *[delete this item if the TOR does not require submission of this document]*;
- E) I hereby propose to complete the services based on the following payment rate: *[please check the box corresponding to the preferred option]*:
- ☐ An all-inclusive daily fee of *[state amount in words and in numbers indicating currency]*
- ☐ A total lump sum of *[state amount in words and in numbers indicating currency]*, payable in the manner described in the Terms of Reference.
- F) For your evaluation, the breakdown of the abovementioned all-inclusive amount is attached hereto as Annex 2;
- G) I recognize that the payment of the abovementioned amounts due to me shall be based on my delivery of outputs within the timeframe specified in the TOR, which shall be subject to SKAT Consulting's review, acceptance and payment certification procedures;
- H) This offer shall remain valid for a total period of _____ days *[minimum of 90 days]* after the submission deadline;
- I) If I am selected for this assignment, I shall sign a Contract for Consultancy Services with Skat Consulting Ltd. - Branch Office Skopje;
- J) I hereby confirm that *[check all that applies]*:

- ☐ At the time of this submission, I have no active Contract for Consultancy Services or any form of engagement with Skat Consulting Ltd. - Branch Office Skopje;
- ☐ I am currently engaged with Skat Consulting Ltd. - Branch Office Skopje or Skat Consulting Ltd. St. Gallen Switzerland and/or other entities for the following work:

Assignment	Contract Type	Name of Institution/Company	Contract Duration	Contract Amount

- ☐ I am also anticipating conclusion of the following work from Skat Consulting Ltd. - Branch Office Skopje or Skat Consulting Ltd. St. Gallen Switzerland and/or other entities for which I have submitted a proposal:



Assignment	Contract Type	Name of Institution/ Company	Contract Duration	Contract Amount

K) I fully understand and recognize that Skat Consulting Ltd. - Branch Office Skopje is not bound to accept this proposal, and I also understand and accept that I shall bear all costs associated with its preparation and submission and that Skat Consulting Ltd. - Branch Office Skopje will in no case be responsible or liable for those costs, regardless of the conduct or outcome of the selection process.

L) **If you are a former employee of the Skat Consulting Ltd. St. Gallen Switzerland recently separated, please add this section to your letter:** I hereby confirm that I have complied with the minimum break in service required before I can be eligible for an Individual Contract.

M) I also fully understand that, if I am engaged as a Consultant, I have no expectations nor entitlements whatsoever to be re-instated or re-employed as an employee.

O) Do you have any objections to our making enquiries of your present employer?

YES ☐ NO ☐

P) Are you now, or have you ever been a permanent civil servant in your government's employ?

YES ☐ NO ☐ If answer is "yes", WHEN? _____

Q) REFERENCES: List three persons, not related to you, who are familiar with your character and qualifications.

Full Name	Full Address, including E-Mail Address and Telephone Number	Name of Organization Business or Occupation

R) Have you been arrested, indicted, or summoned into court as a defendant in a criminal proceeding, or convicted, fined or imprisoned for the violation of any law (excluding minor traffic violations)?

YES ☐ NO ☐ If "yes", give full particulars of each case in an attached statement.

I certify that the statements made by me in answer to the foregoing questions are true, complete and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. I understand that any misrepresentation or material omission made in the CV or other document requested by the Company may result in the termination of the contract without notice.

DATE: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

NB. You will be requested to supply documentary evidence which support the statements you have made above. Do not, however, send any documentary evidence until you have been asked to do so and, in any event, do not submit the original texts of references or testimonials unless they have been obtained for the sole use of Skat Consulting Ltd. - Branch Office Skopje.



Annexes *[please check all that applies]:*

- ☐ CV shall include Education/Qualification, Professional Certification, Employment Records /Experience
- ☐ Financial offer daily fee
- ☐ Draft methodology and workplan



ANNEX 2: BREAKDOWN OF COSTS⁴ SUPPORTING THE ALL-INCLUSIVE FINANCIAL PROPOSAL

A) Breakdown of Cost by Components:

Cost Components	Unit Cost	Quantity	Total Rate for the Contract Duration
I. Personnel Costs			
Professional Fees			
Life Insurance			
Medical Insurance			
Communications			
Land Transportation			
Others (pls. specify)			
II. Travel*			
Round Trip Airfares			
Living Allowance			
Travel Insurance			
Terminal Expenses			

B) Breakdown of Cost by Deliverables**

Deliverables <i>[list them as referred to in the TOR]</i>	Percentage of Total Price (Weight for payment)	Amount
Deliverable 1		
Deliverable 2		
Total		

**If needed, costs for international travel and accommodation for such events will be organized and covered by the Programme. Those costs should not be included in the daily fee. Meetings can also be organised remotely/ home country*

***Basis for payment tranches*

⁴ The costs should only cover the requirements identified in the Terms of Reference (TOR)