



## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **Resource Mobilization Study**

#### **1. BACKGROUND ON THE CONVENTION ON WETLANDS**

Wetlands are vital ecosystems that provide water security, biodiversity, climate regulation, and livelihoods for millions of people. Despite their importance, they remain among the most threatened ecosystems globally.

The Convention on Wetlands is an intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands, wetland biodiversity and services. It was the first of the modern global multilateral environmental agreements and remains the only one dedicated to the conservation of a specific critical ecosystem.

The Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands (the Secretariat) has its headquarters in Gland, Switzerland, where the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) provides legal status and related administrative services for the Secretariat to support Contracting Parties in the implementation of the Convention.

#### **2. CONTEXT**

Funding for wetlands conservation is fragmented and insufficient, creating a direct barrier to achieving national and international commitments to implement the Convention on Wetlands and its fifth [Strategic Plan 2025-2034](#).

411 million hectares of wetlands have been lost since 1970, with nearly a quarter of those remaining in a degraded state. These losses significantly impact water availability, biodiversity, climate stability and human well-being.

The Global Wetland Outlook 2025 (GWO 2025) a flagship publication of the Convention on Wetlands, highlighted that while wetlands contribute up to \$39 trillion in benefits each year, they receive less than 10% of global climate finance. This report offers a comprehensive assessment of the state, value, and trajectory of wetlands worldwide, estimating USD 275 to 550 billion in investment is required to achieve wetland conservation and restoration.

Notably, the Convention on Wetlands does not have a dedicated funding mechanism. It relies on assessed and voluntary contributions to support the activities of its Secretariat, as well as a limited

range of activities to assist country-level implementation. These funds are insufficient to adequately support developing Contracting Parties, particularly Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), which require additional resources to implement the Convention and its Strategic Plan effectively. Furthermore, as highlighted in the Global Implementation Report to COP15, Contracting Parties report difficulties in accessing external funding.

At the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP15) to the Convention on Wetlands, held in Zimbabwe in July 2025, Parties adopted [Resolution XV.9](#) on implementing the institutional strengthening of the Convention on Wetlands which requests;

- the Secretariat to publish within one year of COP15 in all official languages a study on resource mobilization from all sources for the conservation and wise use of wetlands.
- The Secretariat to collect inputs on the study from Contracting Parties and make a compilation thereof available to the Subgroup on Finance.
- The Subgroup on Finance to draw up terms of reference for the resource mobilization study which maps existing funding sources and identifies financing gaps and potential resource mobilization options and to organize at least one dedicated in-person meeting to develop recommendations to Standing Committee 68, on options to improve resource mobilization from all sources, to support the implementation of the Convention and the achievement of its strategic plans by Contracting Parties, especially developing country parties in Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States, taking into consideration inter alia the study and compilation of inputs from Contracting Parties.

### **3. TARGET AUDIENCE**

The primary users of the study outcomes would include:

- The Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands, following their formal request under [Resolution XV.9 on Implementing the Institutional Strengthening of the Convention on Wetlands](#). The resource mobilization study will support National Focal Points and all individuals responsible for implementation of the Convention at the national level in carrying out their key roles in implementing the Convention at the country level.
- The Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands to mobilize voluntary financial resources from all sources and to develop new approaches and tools for countries, particularly developing countries, to implement the Convention and fund Secretariat activities requested by Contracting Parties not funded under the core budget.
- Governments, financial institutions and International Organization Partners working at all levels, advocating for wetland conservation including the intersection of water, biodiversity, and climate, including livelihoods dependent on healthy wetlands such as fishing or tourism.
- Funding agencies, including the private sector, foundations and philanthropic organizations actively funding initiatives, programs or projects to conserve, restore and sustainably manage wetlands.

#### 4. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The Study on Resource Mobilization for the Conservation and Wise Use of Wetlands aims to strengthen effective implementation of the Convention on Wetlands and its fifth Strategic Plan.

Specifically, the study will;

- Provide a comprehensive assessment of current financial flows by identifying and quantifying the overall volume of financing currently allocated to wetlands from international sources. The study will seek, as far as possible, to disaggregate this amount by source, distinguishing between public and private funding, and between national and international contributions.
- Seek to address the methodological challenge of classifying what constitutes “wetland financing” versus other types of funding, such as biodiversity or ecosystem management, to ensure consistency and comparability of results across countries and institutions.
- Estimate the level of resource mobilization, from all sources, needed for the full implementation of the Convention and its new Strategic Plan. By assessing these needs and the gaps, the study will
  - Take into account the particular needs faced by developing countries, so that any general funding "gap" is viewed in light of differentiated circumstances and capacities.
  - Map the specific challenges developing countries face in accessing financial resources.
  - Identify which international funding channels are currently used, if any, by developing countries in implementing the Convention and which channels are available to them, particularly Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS).
- Examine the current relationship between the Convention and international environmental financing mechanisms, such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF) and especially the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and identify opportunities to establish formal collaboration and access to these mechanisms
- Explore innovative and complementary financing approaches, such as the Tropical Forest Forever Facility (TFFF), which also covers mangroves adjacent to tropical and subtropical forests).
- Map current and potential funding sources Contracting Parties may access, both on national and international level.
- Assess and describe the current funding model and value of the funding used by the Secretariat to support country implementation needs.
- identify priority funding needs for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and the key barriers limiting access to national or international funding from public and private sources, both on national and international level, including philanthropic foundations.
- Propose viable and sustainable funding models and mechanisms to be used by the Secretariat in developing a comprehensive resource mobilization approach by reviewing funding approaches of organizations with similar mandates, and through consultations with Contracting Parties. The study report will highlight best practices and recommend

practical, relevant and replicable models/mechanisms for the Secretariat to adopt, including an assessment of the administrative and cost implications of the identified models/mechanisms.

- Support the Secretariat in developing a comprehensive resource mobilization approach for the Convention by assessing the existing funding methods, identifying areas for improvement and recommending actions to secure diversified and predictable funding from all sources.

## **5. DESCRIPTION OF KEY OUTPUTS AND DELIVERABLES**

Under the supervision of, and in close collaboration with the Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands, the Consultant will undertake the study as defined above and prepare a comprehensive Resource Mobilization Report that will include the following key deliverables of the study to be included as part of the report:

- Provide an inception report that will frame the scope of the study, outline the process the consultant will follow in conducting the study and preparing the report and provide any recommendations on how the scope of the study may be enhanced to increase the value and benefit to Contracting Parties.
- Provide an assessment of the available funding mechanisms, sources, modalities and relative size of funding amounts that are accessible to the Secretariat, Contracting Parties, with particular attention to LDCs, SIDS and middle-income countries particularly and or non-governmental organizations operating within member states, for implementing wetland related activities. This includes an assessment and description of the current funding model used by the Convention on Wetlands' Secretariat to fund activities to support Contracting Parties, as well as assessment of financing that is exclusively or largely directed to wetlands.
- Provide an estimate of the financial resources required for full implementation of the Convention and its fifth Strategic Plan.
- An inventory and analysis of the channels available for developing countries and in particular LDCs and SIDS and of the priority funding needs of developing countries and in particular LDCs and SIDS to identify where financial support is mostly required to effectively implement the Convention and its fifth Strategic Plan.
- An assessment of barriers and challenges to effective resource mobilization for wetlands, as experienced by developing countries and in particular LDCs and SIDS and recommendations of priority actions to overcome these barriers.
- A review and comparative assessment of funding mechanisms and approaches used by organizations and conventions with similar mandates to support implementation of their resolutions including strategies and capacities adopted to increase funding from all sources. The review should include an assessment of the administrative and cost implications for implementing the recommendations.
- Explore potential measures and pathways to enhance collaboration and synergies with international environmental financing mechanisms.
- Recommendations to the Convention and its Secretariat on strategies for implementation of proposed strategies to increase, diversify and sustain resource mobilization from all sources. The recommendations will be included as part of a draft resolution on finance.

Undertake following engagements:

- Virtual engagement with the Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands and the Subgroup on Finance to present the inception report, draft report and thereafter update it to reflect inputs from members.
- Consults may perform interviews with a sample of Contracting Parties if deemed useful in fulfilling the study deliverables.
- The report should have maximum 35 pages organized into chapters based on the report elements identified above.

## 6. TASKS, WORK SCHEDULE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Item Nr.	Description	Key Delivery Date	Responsible
1	The Secretariat will recruit a consultant in accordance with the standard procurement processes and based on the TORs as approved by the Subgroup on Finance	December 2025	Secretariat
2	The Secretariat will contract a consultant to undertake the study in accordance with the approved TORs	December 2025 to September 2026	Secretariat
3.	Consultant to present the inception report to the Subgroup on Finance for consideration and approval to proceed in undertaking the study	March 2026	Consultant
4.	The Consultant to present a draft report of the findings of the study to the Subgroup on Finance for review	July 2026	Consultant
5.	The Secretariat, following review by the Subgroup on Finance, will circulate the draft resource mobilization report for comments and inputs by Contracting Parties and supervise the incorporation of inputs by the Consultant	September – October 2026	Secretariat
6.	The Secretariat will oversee the publication of the resource mobilization report on the Convention's website in the official languages. The Secretariat will notify Contracting Parties once the study has been published	May 2027	Secretariat

## **7. EXPERTISE AND THE PROFILE OF THE CONSULTANT**

Suitable consultants should demonstrate:

- Expertise in designing and implementing resource mobilization and fundraising strategies, including knowledge of donor engagement, innovative financing mechanisms, and partnership development for environmental or conservation initiatives.
- Understanding of multilateral treaty bodies and knowledge of the governance structure and modus operandi of large international organizations and/or multilateral treaty bodies.
- Familiarity with the scope, implementation and priorities of the Convention on Wetlands and other Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs);
- Demonstrated experience conducting similar studies, assessments, or strategy development projects, particularly in the environmental, conservation, or natural resource management sectors.
- Capacity to for the consultant to work as a team (consultancy teams of two or more consultants is preferred)
- Excellent analytical and report-writing skills.
- Fluency in the English language, including the ability to write professional and fit for purpose reports in English.