Supporting Sustainable Inclusive Blue Economy Transformation in African SIDS

AfriSIDS

African Union | Supported by gef | Led by UNDP | In partnership with Global Water Partnership Southern Africa

Terms of Reference

Consultant: Lead Writer to Support the Development of Blue Accounts Guidance Outputs under the UNDP/GEF African SIDS Project

1. Background

African Small Island Developing States (SIDS) face distinct development challenges linked to their small size, geographic isolation, narrow economic bases, and high dependence on marine and coastal ecosystems. These vulnerabilities are further intensified by climate change, environmental degradation, and capacity constraints in data collection, coordination, and policy implementation. For African SIDS, the Blue Economy represents a critical pathway for sustainable development, livelihoods, food security, and resilience.

To address these challenges, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) is financing the project *"Supporting Sustainable Inclusive Blue Economy Transformation in African Small Island Developing States (SIDS)"* which aims to support six African SIDS, namely Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé and Príncipe, Comoros, Mauritius, and Seychelles, in their aspirations to move towards sustainable, inclusive, and climate-resilient blue socio-economic development. The project is implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in partnership with the African Union Commission (AUC), and executed by the Global Water Partnership-Southern Africa (GWP-SA). The project aims to enhance the implementation of the African Blue Economy Strategy (ABES) in African SIDS by strengthening enabling policies, institutions, data systems, and stakeholder capacities. The project is implemented under three technical components. Component 1 focuses on strengthening sustainable Blue Economy and Land Degradation Neutrality enabling conditions through improved governance frameworks, while Component 2 supports on-the-ground national demonstration projects that address unsustainable ocean and coastal use, unlock new and additional sustainable Blue Economy opportunities, and promote integrated land management and restoration of degraded production landscapes with positive impacts on Blue Economy assets. Component 3 centres on knowledge management and upscaling, ensuring that lessons learned, best practices and innovative solutions from national demonstrations are documented, shared and scaled across the region.

Under Component 1, Activity 1.1.2 focuses on supporting African SIDS to develop practical approaches for Blue Accounts as a tool to organise, interpret and apply ocean-related ecological, economic and social information in national planning, budgeting, investment and policy processes. The Blue Accounts work will be implemented through a coordinated partnership involving UNDP, UNECA, AUDA-NEPAD, UNESCO-IOC/IOCAFRICA, the African Union Commission and GWPSA. Each institution contributes complementary technical, policy, coordination, and implementation expertise to support the development of a consolidated and operational Blue Accounts guidance package for African SIDS.

The work is structured across several interconnected work packages, with this consultancy primarily supporting outputs under the following work packages:

- Stocktaking and Knowledge Consolidation;
- Conceptual Framework for Blue Accounts;
- Development of Operational Tools and Templates; and
- Knowledge Products and Handover.

The consultant will provide lead writing, synthesis, editorial integration, and document integration support across these work packages.

2. Objective of the Assignment

The purpose of this consultancy is to provide strategic writing, technical synthesis, editorial integration, and knowledge integration support to partner institutions involved in the development of Blue Accounts guidance for African SIDS.

The Consultant will support the consolidation of technical inputs, methodologies, institutional perspectives, and policy considerations into coherent, practical, technically credible, and policy-relevant outputs.

The objective of the assignment is therefore to ensure that the various technical contributions developed under the relevant work packages are translated into:

- A coherent and integrated Blue Accounts guidance package;
- User-oriented operational tools and templates;
- Practical implementation guidance suitable for African SIDS contexts;
- Policy-oriented knowledge products; and
- Clear institutionalisation and sustainability pathways.

The Consultant will not replace the technical leadership roles of the partner institutions. Rather, the Consultant will support the overall coherence, structure, quality assurance, consistency, and usability of the outputs developed through the partnership.

3. Scope of Work

The Consultant will provide lead writing, synthesis and editorial integration support for selected Blue Accounts outputs developed through the partnership.

The assignment will primarily draw on technical inputs, methodological resources and institutional guidance provided by UNDP, UNECA, AUDA-NEPAD, UNESCO-IOC/IOCAFRICA, AUC, GWPSA and other relevant partners. The Consultant will not be expected to undertake extensive primary research or independently develop new accounting methodologies.

The consultancy will support the following areas:

WP1: Stocktaking and Knowledge Consolidation

Consolidate existing methodologies, datasets, institutional experiences and policy frameworks relevant to Blue Accounts in African SIDS. This will include a rapid synthesis of valuation tools, ocean accounting approaches, national Blue Economy strategies, regional frameworks, LME TDAs/SAPs, and institutional arrangements relevant to statistics, planning, environment, finance and ocean governance.

WP2: Conceptual Framework for Blue Accounts

Development of a practical conceptual and methodological framework for Blue Accounts, aligned with global ocean accounting and natural capital accounting approaches, while remaining tailored to African SIDS realities. This will include support to define account types, guiding principles, classification structures, tiered implementation pathways and linkages to national planning and continental reporting processes.

WP3: Development of Operational Tools and Templates

Drafting and consolidation of practical tools and templates that countries can use to operationalise Blue Accounts. This may include accounting templates, metadata formats, data collection sheets, indicator frameworks, implementation checklists, simplified estimation methods and guidance on interoperability with relevant platforms and national systems.

WP7: Knowledge Products and Handover

Development of knowledge products and final handover materials. This will include the final Blue Accounts Guidance, policy brief and practical tools, including appropriate recommendations within the guidance on institutional uptake, sustainability and continued use by national, regional and continental institutions.

4. Specific Tasks

The Consultant will be expected to:

1. Review the Blue Accounts work package note and key technical and policy materials provided by GWPSA and partner institutions.
2. Prepare a concise inception note confirming the proposed approach, structure of the guidance, workplan and inputs required from partners.
3. Undertake a targeted synthesis of the most relevant existing Blue Accounts, ocean accounting, natural capital accounting, Blue Economy valuation and related approaches, drawing primarily on partner-provided and readily available materials.
4. Consolidate technical inputs from partner institutions into a practical Blue Accounts framework and implementation approach for African SIDS.
5. Prepare a limited set of practical templates and/or checklists, as agreed during inception, to support implementation of the guidance.
6. Draft the consolidated Blue Accounts Guidance and a concise policy brief for decision-makers.
7. Incorporate consolidated partner comments coordinated by GWPSA and submit clean final versions of the agreed outputs.

5. Consolidated Deliverables

The Consultant is expected to deliver the following Deliverables.

Deliverable	Description	Expected contents	Amount USD
Deliverable 1: Inception Note and Writing Plan	This deliverable will set out how the Consultant will organise and deliver the assignment, including the proposed approach, required partner inputs and timeline.	The deliverable should include: • proposed methodology and writing approach; • outline of the final Blue Accounts guidance product; • key documents and inputs required from partners; • consultation, quality assurance and review arrangements; and • proposed workplan and timeline.	
Deliverable 2: Stocktaking and Synthesis Note	This deliverable will cover WP1 and provide a targeted synthesis of existing knowledge, methodologies, tools, datasets and institutional experiences relevant to Blue Accounts in African SIDS. The aim is to create a strong evidence base for preparation of the guidance document.	The deliverable should include: • concise synthesis of relevant Blue Accounts, SEEA, ocean accounting, natural capital accounting, Blue Economy valuation and related approaches; • overview of key datasets, relevant policy frameworks and institutional coordination arrangements/considerations across statistics, environment, planning, finance and ocean governance institutions; • key gaps and opportunities for alignment or harmonisation; and • recommendations on the elements to be reflected in the Blue Accounts Guidance for African SIDS.	
Deliverable 3. Draft Blue Accounts Guidance and Practical Tools	This deliverable will cover WP2 and WP3 and translate the stocktaking findings into practical guidance that African SIDS can progressively apply. The emphasis should be on usability, phased implementation and alignment with national capacities.	The deliverable should include: 1) Draft Blue Accounts Guidance for African SIDS, including: • principles, scope and overall approach; • alignment with relevant Blue Economy, SEEA, natural capital and ocean accounting approaches; • practical guidance on using Blue Accounts to support planning, budgeting, investment and policy decisions; • proposed Blue Accounts structure, including appropriate account types/modules and linkages to national and continental reporting processes; • a phased implementation approach suited to different national capacities; and • guidance on sustainability, institutional roles and coordination. 2) An agreed set of up to three practical implementation tools, templates and/or checklists, adapted where possible from existing tools and approaches. 3) Draft policy brief for senior decision-makers.	
Deliverable 4. Final Blue Accounts Guidance and Practical Tools	This deliverable will consist of the final, clean versions of the draft outputs after partner review.	a. Final Blue Accounts Guidance; b. Final practical tools/templates in editable format; and c. Final policy brief	

6. Duration and Level of Effort

The assignment is expected to be completed over a period of up to 6 months from contract signature.

Any travel, interpretation, translation, design or workshop-related costs should be excluded from the proposal and will only be covered if explicitly approved in advance and should not be assumed as part of this consultancy unless specified in the final contract.

7. Reporting and Coordination

The Consultant will report to GWPSA through the African SIDS Project Management Unit. The Consultant will work closely with the designated technical focal points from UNDP, UNECA, AUDA-NEPAD, UNESCO-IOC/IOCAFRICA and AUC.

GWPSA will provide coordination support, facilitate partner engagement, share relevant documents and convene review meetings as required.

8. Required Qualifications and Experience

The Consultant should have:

- An advanced degree in environmental economics, ocean governance, natural capital accounting, sustainable development, public policy, development economics, environmental management, marine/coastal management or a related field.
- At least 10 years of relevant professional experience in technical writing, policy analysis, programme design, knowledge product development or applied research.
- Demonstrated experience preparing high-quality guidance documents, technical reports, policy briefs or toolkits for international development, regional institutions or multilateral programmes.
- Strong understanding of Blue Economy policy, ocean governance, natural capital accounting, environmental-economic accounting, ecosystem valuation or related fields.
- Familiarity with African development policy frameworks, SIDS contexts, AU frameworks, UNDP/GEF projects or regional ocean governance processes will be an advantage.
- Proven ability to synthesise complex technical inputs from multiple institutions into clear, practical and coherent written outputs.
- Excellent written English. Working knowledge of French and/or Portuguese would be an advantage, given the African SIDS context.

9. Technical Evaluation Criteria

- Weight of Technical Proposal: 80%
- Weight of Financial Proposal 20%
  Minimum Technical Threshold to Qualify for Financial Evaluation: 70%

Evaluation criteria	Criteria description	Max weight (%)	Points
1. Education background	An advanced university degree, preferably a Master's degree or higher, in one or more of the following fields: environmental economics, ocean governance, natural capital accounting, sustainable development, public policy, development economics, environmental management, marine or coastal management, or another directly related discipline.	**10**	10

Subtotal			**10**
2. Professional experience		**30**	30
Demonstrated professional experience in similar assignment and regional context	At least 10 years of relevant experience in technical writing, policy analysis, programme design, applied research or knowledge-product development. Experience working with African SIDS, African Union institutions, regional ocean-governance initiatives or comparable international development programmes is an advantage.	6	6
	Demonstrated experience preparing guidance documents, technical reports, policy briefs, methodological frameworks, manuals or toolkits. Proven ability to synthesise complex ecological, economic, social, institutional and policy inputs into clear, coherent and practical outputs.	6	6
	Strong understanding of the Blue Economy, ocean governance, natural capital accounting, environmental-economic accounting, ecosystem valuation, ocean accounting and relevant SEEA frameworks. Experience developing indicators, data templates, metadata formats, checklists, reporting tools or phased implementation guidance is an advantage.	12	12
	Demonstrated experience working in multi-institutional processes and integrating technical inputs and consolidated comments from multiple stakeholders, including managing revisions and maintaining document consistency. Excellent written English is required; working knowledge of French and/or Portuguese is an advantage.	6	6
Subtotal			**30**
3. **Proposed Methodology, Approach and Implementation Plan**		**40**	40
3.1. Understanding of the ToR and Methodological Soundness	- Clear understanding of the assignment and proposes a practical approach to integrating technical inputs, tools and knowledge products into a coherent, user-friendly Blue Accounts guidance package. - Relevance and suitability of the proposed analytical approach, methodology and arrangements for integration of partner inputs, quality assurance, institutional uptake and finalisation of the agreed outputs.	**30**	30
3.2. Implementation Plan and Feasibility	Coherent workplan, realistic timeframe, clear outputs aligned with deliverables in ToRs.	**10**	10
Subtotal			40

TOTAL TECHNICAL SCORE		**80**	80

10. How to Apply

Interested candidates are invited to submit their applications by email to gwpsaprocurement@gwp.org, with a copy to Shamiso.Kumbirai@gwpsaf.org and immaculee.uwimana@gwpsaf.org, no later than 29 September 2026. The application should include the following documents:

- Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- Cover Letter
- Proposed Methodology (3 pages maximum) and proposed pricing for each identified deliverable under Section 5.