

Terms of Reference

For

Ecology and Biodiversity Technical Support for Nature-Based Solutions and Water Resource Management

Project title	PRESERVE - Pacific Resilience through Secure livelihoods, Ecosystem and Resource management, Valued culture and Equity
Engagement type	Consultancy - Desk based
Geographic scope	PNG, Timor Leste, Samoa
Estimated duration	12-14 weeks
Estimated level of effort	Approximately 10-12 days
Deadline for expressions of interest	4 Nov 2026
Anticipated start date	16 Nov 2026

1. About Kiwa PRESERVE

The Kiwa PRESERVE key goal is for Asia Pacific Islands communities, ecosystems and economies to develop enhanced resilience to climate change. PRESERVE is an acronym for Pacific Resilience through Secure livelihoods, Ecosystem and Resource management, Valued culture and Equity.

In 2025, the Kiwa Initiative, planted seeds for a new Nature-based Solutions (NbS) initiative to improve life in communities across the Pacific Region. Beginning in 2026, the Kiwa PRESERVE project was created to bring key partners and communities together to improve community water supply, food production and livelihoods through Nature-based Solutions across Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea and Samoa.

The project identifies the need for climate adaptation strategies in Pacific nation communities and builds on local expertise and traditional knowledge gathered over many years by governments, partners and sub-grantee organizations to share and implement with participating communities.

Led by WaterAid Australia, this project is funded by the Kiwa Initiative. It will be implemented in Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Timor-Leste from June 2026 to September 2029.

The theory of change envisions that by equipping communities and local authorities with the skills, tools and mechanisms to sustainably manage natural resources, collaborative action will foster equitable access to water and food systems for community members, while improving biodiversity and ecosystem health at the watershed level.

Kiwa PRESERVE will be implemented at a local level by WaterAid Timor-Leste and WaterAid Papua New Guinea, working alongside sub-grantees Permatil (Timor-Leste), Permatil Global (Australia) and Live & Learn (Papua New Guinea and Samoa), with overall coordination by WaterAid Australia. With their collective knowledge, experience and capabilities in delivering Nature-based Solutions in the Pacific region, these implementing partners will work alongside communities, local leaders and government to achieve the Kiwa PRESERVE project objectives.

2. Background to the consultancy

As part of project design and implementation, WaterAid Australia requires specialist ecological expertise to: (i) identify any critical habitats within or adjacent to the 4 project areas; and (ii) review WaterAid's proposed methodology for monitoring biodiversity impacts (positive and negative) from NbS interventions.

This Terms of Reference (TOR) outlines the scope, deliverables, timeframe and required qualifications for an individual consultant or small consultancy team to undertake this work.

The 4 specific project sites are:

1. Timor-Leste: Caraulun watershed in Manufahi district
2. PNG: Watom Island in East New Britain,
3. PNG: Tekedan and Dalom Catchments in New Ireland
4. Samoa: Luatuanu'u in Upolu Island, Anoama'a West District

3. Objectives

The assignment has two primary objectives:

1. To identify and characterise any critical habitats /zones of high biodiversity value (as defined in *IUCN ESMS Standard on Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use of Natural Resources* within and adjacent to project sites in Manufahi (Timor-Leste), Rabaul (East New Britain and New Ireland, PNG), and Samoa, through a systematic desktop review.
2. To critically review WaterAid Australia's proposed methodology for monitoring biodiversity impacts from NbS and WRM activities, including catchment management interventions, and to provide evidence-based recommendations for strengthening this methodology.

4. Scope of Work

Task 1: Desktop Review — Critical Habitats and Biodiversity Values

The consultant will undertake a structured desktop review to identify and assess critical habitats in each of the three project regions. The review should draw on available spatial datasets, government environmental assessments, global biodiversity databases and any relevant national or sub-national environmental plans or frameworks.

This is for compliance with AFD ESMS standards, and the IUCN definition and guidance should be used. IUCN considers sites as critical habitats / areas with high biodiversity value or significant biodiversity features on the basis of one or more of the following attributes:

- areas important to threatened species according to IUCN Red List of Threatened Species;
- areas important to endemic or restricted-range species or to migratory and congregatory species;
- areas representing key evolutionary processes, providing connectivity with other critical habitats or key ecosystem services;
- highly threatened and/or unique ecosystems (e.g. to be determined in future by the evolving IUCN Red List of Ecosystems);
- areas identified as Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) and subsets such as:
 - important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs)
 - important Plant Areas (IPAs)
 - important Sites for Freshwater Biodiversity and o Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE) sites
- areas identified as High Conservation Value areas (HCV).

The consultant should outline their methodology in the proposal, which must cover:

- Identification of any areas within or proximate to the project footprint that qualify as Critical Habitats as per IUCN definition, and/or legally protected area or internationally recognised area
- Identification of which government agencies to consult with on any key data gaps, and writing brief interview guide, which WaterAid can then use for in-country consultation. WaterAid will coordinate the logistics of any the consultations and relay information to the consultant for incorporation into the final review.
- Develop an interview guide for consultation with community members on locally protected areas or significant flora/fauna species
- Develop maps of identified critical habitat areas, locally protected areas or locally significant flora/fauna species), and significant freshwater ecosystems, riparian corridors, wetlands, and forest cover relevant to the water security and NbS focus of the project.
- Provide summary of any known pressures or threats to biodiversity in project areas.

Task 2: Review of WaterAid's Biodiversity Impact Monitoring Methodology

The consultant will review WaterAid's proposed methodology for monitoring biodiversity impacts resulting from NbS and WRM interventions, including catchment management activities such as riparian revegetation, soil and water conservation works, and community-managed catchment restoration.

The review should assess:

- The scientific rigour and fitness-for-purpose of the proposed monitoring approach, including whether indicators and methods are appropriate for the ecological contexts in Timor-Leste, PNG, and Samoa.
- Alignment with internationally recognised biodiversity monitoring frameworks and standards
- The practicality and feasibility of the proposed methods for implementation by community members or non-specialist field staff, including consideration of the project scope, resourcing and contexts.
- The extent to which proposed methodology distinguishes project-attributable biodiversity change from broader landscape-level trends.
- Recommended refinements, additions, or alternative approaches, with rationale and indicative guidance on implementation.

WaterAid will provide the consultant with the draft ecological monitoring toolkit at the commencement of the assignment. The toolkit outlines approach for measuring the following:

Vegetation	Biodiversity
• Vegetation cover (%) • Leaf litter depth • Seedling survival	• Invertebrates. • Locally important animals, birds and plants • Invasive species.

If applicable, monitoring protocols should be proposed for any specific protected species that were identified in Task 1.

5. Timeframe and Level of Effort

The estimated level of effort is 10-12 days, to be confirmed with the selected consultant at contracting stage. The consultant is expected to manage their time between the two tasks.

Task 1 is expected to be completed within approximately 12 weeks of contract commencement, by end of November 2026. The report and presentation for Task 2 is expected to be completed within approximately 10 weeks of contract commencement, by end of January 2026.

WaterAid Australia will provide a key point of contact for the assignment and will facilitate any required government consultations in a timely manner.

6. Deliverables

#	Deliverable	Description	Indicative timing
Task 1: Desktop Review — Critical Habitats and Biodiversity Values			
1	Inception note	Brief outline of proposed approach, key data sources, and any initial information gaps identified. Includes interview guides for government and community members.	Week 1-2
2	Desktop Review Report	Structured report including a visual map and a brief narrative report for each of the four location.	Week 9 (Mid Dec 2026)
3	Presentation	1 hr virtual meeting with project team to discuss findings.	Week 12 (Jan 2027)
Task 2: Review of WaterAid's Biodiversity Impact Monitoring Methodology			
4	Methodology Review Report	Written assessment of WaterAid's proposed biodiversity monitoring methodology, including strengths, gaps, and specific recommendations with implementation guidance.	Week 10 (Dec 2026)
5	Presentation	A 2 hr virtual meeting with project team to present key findings and discuss recommendations.	Week 14 (Jan 2027)

All written deliverables should be submitted in English, in Microsoft Word format, unless otherwise agreed. Reports should be clear and accessible for a non-specialist audience while maintaining technical accuracy.

1. Required Qualifications and Experience

WaterAid Australia is seeking consultant with the following qualifications and experience:

Essential:

- Postgraduate qualification (Masters or PhD) in ecology, conservation biology, environmental science, or a closely related field.
- Demonstrated experience conducting biodiversity and critical habitat assessments in the Pacific and/or Southeast Asia region
- Strong familiarity with international biodiversity frameworks such as the IUCN Red Lists and Key Biodiversity Areas criteria.
- Demonstrated ability to conduct high-quality desktop reviews using publicly available spatial data and ecological databases.
- Excellent written English communication skills, with ability to produce clear, evidence-based reports for a non-specialist audience.

Desirable:

- Experience working with or for international NGOs, development banks, or multilateral agencies on environmental and social safeguards.
- Field or research experience in at least one of the three project countries (Timor-Leste, PNG, or Samoa).
- Experience reviewing or designing biodiversity monitoring protocols for conservation or development programmes.
- Knowledge of customary environmental governance arrangements in the Pacific (e.g. Tara Bandu in Timor-Leste, fono-based management in Samoa, clan land systems in PNG).
- Proficiency in GIS or spatial data analysis tools (e.g. QGIS, ArcGIS).

2. Institutional Arrangements

The consultant will be contracted by and report directly to WaterAid Australia. The primary day-to-day contact for the assignment will be the Technical Lead Water Security and Climate.

WaterAid Australia will:

- Provide the consultant with relevant project documentation, including draft project designs, site locations, and the biodiversity monitoring methodology (Task 2) at inception.
- Facilitate introductions to WaterAid country teams and arrange any required government consultations upon request.
- Review and provide written feedback on draft deliverables within 10 working days.
- Make payments in accordance with the agreed schedule upon approval of deliverables.

3. Budget and Payment

Interested candidates are requested to submit a budget proposal inclusive of all professional fees and any directly associated costs (e.g. database subscriptions). WaterAid Australia will consider value for money alongside technical quality in the assessment of proposals.

Payments will be made against approved deliverables in accordance with a schedule to be agreed at contracting stage.

4. How to Apply

Consultants are requested to develop and submit a proposal in response to these terms of reference by **4 Nov 2026** to Tara Bartnik, WaterAid Australia Technical Lead Water Security and Climate (tara.bartnik@wateraid.org.au).

The proposals should address the following elements:

- A brief technical proposal outlining the proposed approach to both tasks and demonstrating relevant experience in the region.
- A curriculum vitae (CV) for the lead consultant and any proposed team members.
- A financial proposal (budget), submitted as a separate document
- A signed Statement of Integrity required as part of AFD Procurement Policies

10. Safeguarding

WaterAid is a child safe organisation. We recognise that we must meet community expectations and the trust placed in our personnel to maintain the highest standards of conduct with children. Therefore, all positions within WaterAid are required to comply with our Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct.

WaterAid is committed to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse in everything we do. The values and standards we uphold are highlighted in our Global Code of Conduct. The consultant will be required to sign and comply with our Global Code of Conduct.