

**Terms of Reference  
for Expertise in the  
Development of the Romanian Biodiversity  
Clearing House Mechanism (CHM)  
within the framework of UNDP-GEF project**  
*“Support to alignment of NBSAP with CBD obligations and development of CHM”*

**1. A. Project background information<sup>1</sup>**

The project’s objective is to enhance the national capacity to implement the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) provisions, through addressing institutional and human capacity gaps, and adopting a more integrated approach to biodiversity conservation. The main components of the project are:

- **Aligning the National Strategy and Action Plan on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity with legal obligations under the CBD.**

The main deficiency of the existing Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP - Romania) is that the document was formulated by a limited number of local experts without broader consultation and stakeholders’ involvement. The document, therefore, contains not only outdated information, but it is, also, largely based on expert judgments and views on priorities and threats to biodiversity. No major gap analysis has been undertaken during the BSAP preparations. Therefore, as part of the add-on project, Romania will be given an opportunity to do a consultative and participatory in-depth analysis of critical gaps and barriers to effectively bringing the biodiversity conservation agenda forward.

- **Strengthening Romania’s Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM).**

Despite existing databases for biological diversity at national level, and the nomination of a CHM National Focal Point, there is no coordination program setting to provide for integrated data and information management system for biodiversity conservation in Romania. The existing efforts are important, but not consolidated in support of decision-making. Therefore, a comprehensive CHM, in place and effectively running, is an urgent priority to overcome the current deficiency in the respective information, communication and collaboration system.

- **Undertaking detailed capacity needs assessment in the areas of priority to the CBD implementation.**

The National Capacity Self-Assessment (NCSA), conducted in 2005, identified a number of priorities under the biodiversity thematic area. However, more in depth analysis is needed. And, because three years have already passed, a validation/updating process should take place. For example: Initial assessment and monitoring programs, including taxonomy and implementation of measures for in-situ and ex-situ conservation and sustainable use – capacities needs will be carefully analyzed following with the design of a training and capacity building modules. With changing legal framework, for ownership rights and land use, these issues require particular attention.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: NBSAP-Romania Project Document

The approach of aligning the Biodiversity Strategy with the CBD obligations will be highly participative through broad consultation of relevant stakeholders. Mechanisms of voluntary cooperation will be explored in order to improve the biodiversity related information flow between the institutions and a Clearing House Mechanism (CHM) with linkages to national biological data bases will be developed. The capacity needs assessment will be strictly focused on CBD obligations and implementation, and tailor-made training modules will be designed, targeting the key stakeholders responsible with the CBD implementation.

**1. B. The Strategic Goals of CHM are the following<sup>2</sup>:**

**Goal 1 - The clearing-house mechanism is promoting and facilitating technical and scientific cooperation.**

- 1.1. The clearing-house mechanism contributes to the implementation of the Convention and particularly the achievement of the 2010 target.
- 1.2. The clearing-house mechanism facilitates the transfer of technology and technology cooperation.
- 1.3. The clearing-house mechanism facilitates cooperation among the three Rio conventions and other environmental agreements, organizations and initiatives.

**Goal 2 - The clearing-house mechanism is promoting and facilitating the exchange of information among Parties, other Governments and stakeholders.**

- 2.1. The clearing-house mechanism makes information related to the Convention and Convention processes available via electronic and traditional means.
- 2.2. In collaboration with other relevant initiatives, organizations and partners, the clearing-house mechanism facilitates the access to and repatriation of information on biodiversity.
- 2.3. The clearing-house mechanism assists Parties and other Governments and relevant organizations in making data and information available in support of activities related to the implementation of the Convention and the achievement of the 2010 target.
- 2.4. The clearing-house mechanism contributes to the future technical development of the Bio-safety Clearing-House established under paragraph 1 of Article 20 of the Cartagena Protocol on Bio-safety.
- 2.5. Parties have established effective mechanisms for facilitating the exchange of information, including as appropriate clearing-house mechanism websites which adhere to common formats, protocols and standards, including metadata standards, as recommended by the clearing-house mechanism.

**Goal 3 - The clearing-house mechanism is fully operational with participation of all Parties and an expanded network of partners**

- 3.1. All Parties have established and are further developing clearing-house mechanisms.
- 3.2. Relevant partners participate in an expanded clearing-house mechanism network.
- 3.3. Parties have established and use effective mechanisms for facilitating scientific and technical cooperation, including thematic networks where appropriate in support of the implementation the Convention and the achievement of the 2010 target.
- 3.4. The clearing-house mechanism contributes to the development of the global communication, education and public awareness network.

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<sup>2</sup> source: CBD website

## 2. Purpose of this consultancy:

A national Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM) website should contain all national biodiversity-related information that is required to assist policy makers and interested stakeholders to meet obligations under the Convention and to conserve and sustainable use biodiversity. There are many ways to organize this information and to make it easily accessible. Normally, categories to organize information may include the Convention, national CHM Services, National Contribution, Partnerships, Links and News.

The CHM seeks to support the Convention's thematic and cross-cutting programmes of work by promoting cooperation, exchanging information and developing a network of partners, so that to ensure that all governments have access to the information and technologies they need for their work on biodiversity conservation agenda.

Therefore, the *main objectives* of the CHM institutionalization are to:

- Promote and facilitate technical and scientific cooperation, within and between countries
- Allow for exchanging and integrating information and specific data on biodiversity
- Develop the necessary human and technological support and network,

as overseen and guided by the Informal Advisory Committee (IAC), set up by the Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity Conservation.

The established Internet-based system should also facilitate the greater collaboration among countries through education and training, research cooperation, funding opportunities.

Thus, the CHM *key characteristics* are to be:

- Compatible with different levels of national capacity
- Needs-driven
- Providing access to information (for mutual benefit of all Parties and stakeholders)
- Supporting decision-making.

## 3. Specific tasks:

The *principal steps* to be taken during this consultancy, in defining the Biodiversity Romanian Strategy for a CHM setting-up and proper development process, are summarized as it follows:

- Elaborate a national CHM implementation strategy, as an integrated part of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, in consultation with stakeholders and with the CHM national focal point (Ministry of Environment)
- Setting- up the CHM:
  - Organization of a national CHM workshop to discuss potential activities, functions and responsibilities with stakeholders and with the host-beneficiary (Ministry of Environment)
  - In collaboration with the national CHM focal point and the Project Management Unit deliver a Functional CHM based on the EC CHM Portal Toolkit filled with information available from Project office on the 4<sup>th</sup> national report, national strategy and more,
  - Establish links with existing national biodiversity databases on experts, Natura 2000, protected areas and others to ensure the automatic updating of some information on the CHM and with European Biodiversity Clearing House Mechanism

- Providing information on the use of and adherence to formats, protocols and standards, controlled vocabularies (i.e. controlled CBD vocabulary) , to foster the creation of a national biodiversity network and information exchange system;
- Supervise the national consultants and their work
- Providing links to expertise, partners, literature and resources.
- Suggest technical equipment to be purchased for the national focal point and partner institutions, in order to ensure the data flow to the CHM and the CHM's functionality
- Deliver a training program (including on-the-job training), as mentioned below, and guidelines, for the CHM system effective operation
  - 1 basic training of 2 days for the 2 CHM National Focal Points, and a 3 day training on the Management functions of the EC CHM PTK
  - One day follow-up training after one month
  - Ensure a helpdesk function to answer to all questions arising after the training
  - Before the end of the project a basic training of 3 days on how to add data to the CHM for at least 15 representatives of data holding institutions.

### **3. Consultancy implementation arrangements**

The principal responsibility for managing this consultancy lies with the Project Management Unit and UNDP Romania.

UNDP Romania will contract the consultants and ensure timely provision of the necessary feedback on deliverables.

The Project Management Unit, within the Ecological University of Bucharest, will have the responsibility of liaising with the team of consultants and assisting with logistical support, as case may be, in setting up stakeholder interviews and coordinate with the Government of Romania/ NSC – National Steering Committee, which shall validate final documents, out-puts, results and success indicators achievement.

### **4. Deliverables:**

- Main deliverable: National CHM system in place, functional and linked to the main CHM portal
- A CHM tool kit and training module including the training of a minimum number of operators staff from stakeholders institutes, and of a program of public awareness
- Full report on the activities: one intermediary progress report and one final report

### **5. Qualifications and skills**

- An advanced degree in relevant field of expertise
- Proven experience (minimum 5 years) of working with data and meta-data, web design, development and the use of the EC CHM PTK to the project's objective
- Training experience for web applications in general and the EC CHM PTK in particular
- Experience in working in Romania, knowing the situation with regards to biodiversity and speaking Romanian are assets
- Familiarity with the provisions of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity related to Clearing House Mechanism as well as of any other national strategic documents on the implementation of international requirements on biological diversity conservation, and recent CoP guidance and emerging issues in the field of biodiversity, particularly with regard to global CHM

- Extensive experience in working with wide range of stakeholders (governmental, academia, international, non-governmental)
- Solid experience in organizing, coordinating and management of complex activities and familiarity with participatory methodologies
- Experience with GEF funded projects is an asset
- Excellent analytical, organizational and inter-personal skills
- Fluency in English with excellent writing, presentation and communication skills

**6. Work schedule:** This consultancy is to be connected to, and integrated with, the project implementation activities, through the end of project (November, 2009).

*The consultant is invited to propose a work schedule and a brief concept note / Memo describing the approach to the indicated assignments, so that to properly meet the expected deliverables, at specific deadlines.*

The *Project Work-Plan Implementation Schedule* comprises the following tasks phases:

Month/Activity	May 09	June 09	July 09	Aug 09	Sept 09	Oct 09
Inputs to strategic approach for the tasks overall management						
Assessment of national existing biodiversity data-basis relevance and effectiveness , by report to CBD requirements and CoPs decisions, and proposed designing for national CHM, to be concluded within a First National of findings presentation Workshop						
Development of meta-data base building, national CHM and linkages,						

formats and language, for validation at a Second National Workshop						
Training Program and follow up				Nat; data-holders		
Implementation of approved steps, and last docs submission and validation						
Contract resuming, with final reports submission, final statements and payment						

**7. Supervision and payment:**

Consultations regarding the assignment with UNDP country office shall begin immediately upon contract signature. The contractor shall report to the Project Coordinator at UNDP country office in Bucharest and to the Project Manager. The payment schedule will be devised at a later stage; however, usually, this is being done through three installments and/or upon the completion and delivery of certain outputs, pending on their *content validation*, by the designated project management entities, in Romania. A final substantial and financial project report will be submitted with the request for final payment.

**8. Application:**

Applications must entail the following:

- Proposed approach and methodology of the work (short concept paper of 1-3 pages)
- Schedule of work, indicating no. of days/ task
- Consultancy fee (US\$/day)