

**GEF/UNDP/ASEAN PROJECT ON REDUCING POLLUTION AND PRESERVING ENVIRONMENTAL FLOWS
IN THE EAST ASIAN SEAS THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INTEGRATED RIVER BASIN
MANAGEMENT (IRBM) IN ASEAN COUNTRIES**

VA/IRBM GUIDE-IRBM/2025-002

Title	CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF IRBM GUIDE FOR IMPROVED GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF RIVER BASINS AND COASTAL AREAS IN THE ASEAN REGION
Type	Regional Level
Duration	8 months (01 December 2025 – 31 July 2026)
Closing Date	14 November 2025

BACKGROUND

The GEF/UNDP/ASEAN Project on Reducing Pollution and Preserving Environmental Flows in the East Asian Seas through the Implementation of Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM) in the ASEAN Countries is a 5-year project (2023-2027) with the goal of establishing functional IRBM mechanisms in seven priority river basins/sub-basins/watershed in the six ASEAN Member States (AMS), i.e., Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Philippines and Viet Nam, to reduce pollution, sustain freshwater environmental flows and adapt to climate change vulnerabilities.

The Project is designed to improve governance and management arrangements in IRBM and accelerate the required changes in the six AMS in support of national priorities, objectives and commitments to global sustainable development targets using the Source to Sea (S2S) framework.

Common barriers to effective IRBM governance were identified in the seven river basins, namely:

- limited ability and willingness to prioritize water resources management across the basin;
- low level of integration and harmonization of sectoral development/management plans;
- inadequate governance (policy, representative institutional mechanisms, laws, public participation/mobilization, capacity, human and financial resources) in place for sustainable land and water use management in watershed areas and coastal basins;
- limited enforcement of policy and regulatory frameworks to protect water resources and related ecosystems;
- insufficient investment to meet the specific need and conditions across the river and coastal basins; and
- lack of monitoring data and information on water quality, water quantity and water use across sectors and sources/loadings of land-based pollution.

This Terms of Reference require Consultants/Consultancy Company or consortia with expertise and background on the application of integrated approaches in managing river basins and coastal and marine areas to conduct a review and assessment of good practices and experiences in governance and

management of IRBM, integrated water resources management (IWRM) and integrated coastal management (ICM) projects and programs in the ASEAN region and other regions and prepare a Guide for use by national and local governments in planning, implementing, reviewing and continually improving governance and management of river basins and coastal areas in the region.

SCOPE OF WORK, DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND DELIVERABLES

Scope of Work

Under the guidance of the RPMU represented by the Regional Project Manager, in close coordination with key RPMU staff and National Coordinators, and in collaboration with the National Implementing Partners, in the six participating AMS, the Consultants/Consulting Firm will be responsible in undertaking the necessary tasks, as elaborated below and deliver the corresponding outputs within the agreed timeline.

Duties and responsibilities

Scope of Work A: Assessment and recommendations for improved interagency and multisectoral governance structures in priority river basins/sub-basins and coastal areas in the ASEAN Region

1. Conduct a review of good practices in governance and management of IWRM, IRBM and ICM projects and programs within the ASEAN region and other regions of the world, including innovations in institutional arrangements, policies and strategies, legislation/regulations and their enforcement, economic and financial instruments, public awareness and participation, socio-economic and environmental resiliency to climate-related and other natural and man-made hazards, gender gaps, responsiveness and equity, knowledge management and capacity building, blue economy investments, and sustainable financing of IRBM programs.
2. Consolidate the information from Step 1 into a Technical Report on Good Practices in Governance and Management of IWRM, IRBM and ICM Projects and Programs in the ASEAN region.
3. In consultation with RPMU, prepare a Program of Activities for a Regional Forum focusing on innovations in IRBM governance and management as highlighted in the Technical Report.
4. In coordination with RPMU, organize and facilitate the conduct of an ASEAN-wide Regional Forum on innovations in IRBM governance and management and blue economy development of river basins and coastal areas for national and local government policy-makers, planners and managers.
5. Based on the results and recommendations from the Regional Forum, prepare an IRBM Guide for Improved Governance and Management of River Basins and Coastal Areas in the ASEAN Region for use by national and local governments in planning, implementing, reviewing and continually improving governance and management of river basins and coastal areas.
6. Using the IRBM Guide as reference, develop Terms of Reference for Project Teams and Local Specialists in the seven priority river basins and coastal areas to:

- a. Conduct a similar review, evaluation at the national and basin levels and updating of the role, responsibilities and benefits of the respective river basin organization in line with existing institutional mechanisms and laws in the six participating AMS.
- b. Prepare draft technical report including options and proposed actions for improving the governance arrangements and mechanisms in the priority river basins and coastal areas.
- c. Organize and conduct public consultation on the draft report to gather feedback and refinements.
- d. Finalize and disseminate the report to the relevant government authorities, concerned stakeholders and the general public.

Scope of Work B: Assessment and recommendations for improved IRBM policies, laws, financial and economic instruments, and support programs in priority river basins/sub-basins and coastal areas.

1. Using the Technical Report on IRBM Guide on Good Practices in Governance and Management of IWRM, IRBM and ICM Projects and Programs prepared under Scope of Work A as references, develop templates for reviewing, analyzing, and developing recommendations for improving policies and strategies, laws and regulations, economic and financial instruments and partnership arrangements within their respective river basins taking into consideration the existing capacities in the various river basins, as well as national priorities and objectives and targets and objectives subscribed to by participating countries in international agreements, including ASEAN policies and strategies, Large Marine Ecosystem Strategic Action Plans, the UN SDGs, UNFCCC, and others.
2. In coordination with RPMU, conduct consultations with the participating countries to review and refine the templates.
3. Prepare Terms of Reference to guide river basin organizations and Project Teams in the seven river basins to use the templates in:
 - a. Conducting a review and analysis of national and local IRBM policies and strategies as well as related laws and regulations, economic and financial instruments and partnership arrangements.
 - b. Preparing assessment reports on the results of the review and analysis process, including a provisional agenda for developing and/or updating existing national and local policy, strategies, laws, instruments and partnerships.
 - c. Organizing and conducting IRBM forums with the river basin organizations, relevant national agencies, local governments, women and other concerned stakeholders to review and validate the technical reports and build consensus on the provisional agenda for developing and/or updating existing river basin policy, strategies, laws, instruments and partnerships.
 - d. Refining and publishing the final assessment reports/provisional agenda and disseminate them to relevant government authorities at the national and local levels, stakeholders in the river basins and the general public.

Expected Outputs and Deliverables

- Detailed work plan for the implementation of the activities under Scope of Work A and B
- Technical Report on Good Practices in Governance and Management of IWRM, IRBM and ICM Projects and Programs in the ASEAN region
- Summary Report of the Regional Forum
- IRBM Guide for Improved Governance and Management of River Basins and Coastal Areas in the ASEAN Region
- TOR for the review, evaluation and updating of the role, responsibilities and benefits of river basin organization in line with existing institutional mechanisms and laws in the six participating AMS.
- Templates for reviewing and analyzing, and developing recommendations for improving policies and strategies, laws and regulations, economic and financial instruments and partnership arrangements in the seven river basins
- TOR to guide river basin organizations and Project Teams in the seven river basins in conducting a review and analysis, and developing recommendations for improving policies and strategies, laws and regulations, economic and financial instruments and partnership arrangements in the river basins.

WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

Institutional Arrangement

The consultants/consulting firm will be coordinating regularly with the Regional Project Manager with support from the IRBM Project Technical, Training and Capacity Development Manager, National Coordinators, National Focal Agencies and local governments from the 6 AMS to report on progress, address emerging challenges and in seeking approval and acceptance of the above-mentioned outputs.

Duration of the Work

Expected duration of work is from November 2025 – July 2026.

Duty Station

The Consultants/Consulting Firms will be home-based with regular coordination with the RPMU.

Travel Plan

In the event that the Consultants/Consulting Firm are required to travel to render services, as required under the TOR, associated travel costs will be covered by the RPMU.

Qualifications of the Consultants/Consulting Firm

- Post Graduate Degree in relevant disciplines (e.g., environmental sciences, water resources management, water and sanitation, waste management, legal, economics, finance and investments and related disciplines).
- Good working knowledge of international, regional, national and local best practices on integrated river basin management (IRBM), integrated water resources management (IWRM), integrated coastal management (ICM) and other area-based management approaches that

complement the Source-to Sea approach, including sound understanding of sustainable development.

- At least 10 years working experience in the ASEAN region on ecological protection, watershed/river basin governance and management.
- Relevant experience on river basin governance and management encompassing coordination of water, land and the coastal and marine areas and resource use, including data integrated and decision support systems, stakeholder engagement, policy coherence, use of technical tools and understanding of complex social and political factors, such as decentralization, dispute resolution and management of ecosystem services to maximize economic, social and environmental benefits in support of sustainable development goals and targets.
- Relevant experience in leading multidisciplinary teams and dialoguing with a diverse range of stakeholders for the preparation and/or implementation of IRBM/IWRM/ICM projects and programs.
- Fluency in written and spoken English is an advantage.

Financial Proposal

Bidders/applicants should detail the budget plan based on expected outputs, clearly showing logical framework or activity plan to achieve the outputs.

Submission of Tender/Application

Applicants are requested to submit:

1. Duly accomplished **Letter of Confirmation of Interest and Availability**;
2. **Detailed Curriculum Vitae**, indicating all past experience from similar projects, as well as the contact details (email and telephone number) of the team leader and members.
3. **Brief description** of why the organization/consultant is considered as the most suitable for the assignment.
4. A description of the **methodology**, on how they will approach and complete the assignment.
5. **Financial Proposal** that indicates the all-inclusive fixed total contract price, supported by a breakdown of costs.

Applicants are requested to submit the tender and requirements via email to recruitment@pemsea.org. Kindly indicate the vacancy reference number and title of requirement when applying (in the subject line) by email.

Additional Considerations

Bid applications received after the closing date will not be considered. Only those candidates that are shortlisted will be notified.

For more information on IRBM, please visit www.pemsea.org
