WWF Azerbaijan Branch

Regional program “Improving Forest Law Enforcement and Governance in the European Neighborhood Policy East Countries and Russia”

TERMS OF REFERENCE

WWF Azerbaijan is seeking a consultant to conduct work on

Preparing recommendations on effective restoration and protection of natural forest ecosystems severely affected by unsustainable use in a selected pilot area in the buffer zone of Shahdagh National Park of Azerbaijan

1. Background information on the project

The regional program “Improving Forest Law Enforcement and Governance in the European Neighborhood Policy East Countries and Russia” (the “Program”), supported by the European Commission and other donors, is aimed at putting in place improved forest governance arrangements through the effective implementation of the main priorities set out in the St. Petersburg Ministerial Declaration and Indicative Plan of Actions on the Europe and North Asia Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (ENA-FLEG). It will cover seven countries of the ENA Region, including six members of the European Neighborhood Policy Initiative – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine – and the Russian Federation. Implementation of the Program is led by the World Bank, working in partnership with the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

The Program will be carried out over a three-year period, from February 2008 through June 2011. The Program will support selected pilot activities to be implemented with the active involvement of governments, civil society and the private sector. Most activities will be at a country level, complemented by strategically targeted regional actions. The program activities cover: development of national action plans, capacity building and training, awareness raising, assistance in enhancing regional and sub regional collaboration, and support for the implementation of the priority actions on FLEG. Alongside this, the program will carry out analytical work on illegal forest activities and government responses to such crime, as well as monitoring or related developments. The outputs of the program will be:

Result 1: Increased awareness and commitment of key stakeholders on FLEG
Result 2: Effective national and regional FLEG action processes in place
Result 3: National ownership and capacity increased
Result 4: Improve regional and sub-regional collaboration and knowledge sharing
Result 5: Effective engagement of key trading partners
Result 6: Continuation of the formal official ENA FLEG process
Result 7: Sustainable forest management practices implemented

2. Objectives of the assignment

The objective of this assignment is to prepare concrete recommendations on a) ecologically, socially and economically viable restoration and protection methods for natural forest ecosystems most severely affected by over-grazing and other forms of unsustainable use and b) sustainable alternative livelihoods in the selected
areas in the buffer zone of Shahdagh NP in Azerbaijan. Implementation of these recommendations should contribute to the protection and sustainable management of the national park and surrounding areas.

3. Scope of Work
Under the direct supervision of the Project Manager (WWF Azerbaijan), the consultant will:

- Identify representative pilot site(s) in the buffer zone of Shahdagh NP, which include natural forest ecosystems severely affected by grazing (by domestic animals) and excessive utilization of wood (the site(s) covering about 100 ha of area in total with significant forest cover);
- Assess the extent of damage caused by grazing and unsustainable forest use in the pilot site(s) including:
  - Damages to natural regeneration of forest – by estimating average number of remaining undamaged wildlings (naturally regenerated seedlings) per hectare and comparing with maximum potential number of wildlings for that particular forest type (if it would have been undisturbed)
  - Damages to young and mature trees – estimating the percentages of trees damaged or destroyed
  - Soil disturbance - percentage of area with clear signs of erosion and landslides
  - Estimating other relevant forest conditions.
- Based on this assessment, prepare specific recommendations on how to restore and protect forest cover in each pilot site by:
  - Fencing (which particular locations and how big areas to fence)
  - Forest restoration techniques - planting, seeding and contributing to natural regeneration
  - Involvement of local population in forest restoration
  - Proposing realistic alternative and more sustainable livelihoods in the areas closely located to the pilot site(s) - aiming to reduce existing pressures on natural forest ecosystems.
- Recommendations on wider use of these recommended measures in appropriate locations near the Shahdagh NP and in Azerbaijan in general.

4. Expected outcomes
- Concrete information on the extent of damage caused to natural forest ecosystems by over-grazing and unsustainable forest use in the selected pilot site(s)
- Specific recommendations on forest restoration and protection, as well as on alternative livelihoods, including more ecologically sustainable livestock keeping
- Good information basis for implementation of relevant measures leading towards more sustainable use of natural resources in the buffer zone of Shahdagh NP and in this way better protection of the park itself
- Good information basis for wider implementation of these measures at the national level.

5. Duration and estimated time input
The consultant's work will involve the following stages:

1. Identification of pilot site(s) around the NP by means of maps (both paper based and electronic) and travel to the site(s) – about three calendar weeks.
2. Assessment of the extent of damage caused to natural forests by grazing and excessive logging – about five calendar weeks.

3. Elaboration of recommendations on forest restoration and protection and identification of alternative livelihood opportunities (with specific recommendations and maps) – about one calendar month.

4. One-day meeting with representatives of key stakeholders in Baku to discuss initial findings and recommendations (the costs of meeting will be fully covered by WWF Azerbaijan).

5. Final report writing, taking into consideration stakeholder views – about one calendar month.

In total, the consultant’s work should not exceed four calendar months. The consultant will travel to the pilot sites on a regular basis during the period of assignment to meet local population and collect relevant information. The consultant will be assisted by a GIS expert hired by WWF Azerbaijan.

6. Qualification requirements and evaluation criteria

- University degree in forestry or closely related field
- Minimum five years of working experience in the field of forest conservation, restoration and/or protection
- Good knowledge of current situation in the forestry sector of Azerbaijan
- Working experience in forest inventory would be an asset
- Knowledge of sustainable livestock management and other related livelihood systems would be an asset
- Strong communication skills and demonstrated ability to cooperate with various stakeholders, in particular with local population.

7. Reporting requirements

The consultant will:

- Directly report to the Project Manager within the scope of work outlined above
- Provide accurate information to the Project Manager (including administrative and logistical issues) in a timely manner.

The deliverables will include:

- A final document (report) and relevant maps which will include the assessment results and specific recommendations
- Reports on meetings with stakeholders, including local population.