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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1. Partner country

Republic of Serbia

1.2. Contracting authority

Public Enterprise “VOJVODINAŠUME”

Preradovićevo 2, 21131 Petrovaradin, Republic of Serbia

1.3. Country background

The target area of Gornje Podunavlje is situated in the border triangle of Hungary, Croatia and Serbia, a natural model region for transnational cooperation. It occupies an area of 19,605ha on the left bank of the Danube and is one of the last big oases of swampy wood complexes. The richness in habitat types like water ponds, forests, meadows etc. makes it famous for its diversity of fauna and flora. This area has one of the most diverse bird faunas in Serbia, >70% of species in Serbia were recorded in this nature reserve.

Vojvodinašume Public Forest Enterprise, as the forestry agency of the province of Vojvodina, is the managing authority of all protected areas in this province, including the Gornje Podunavlje Special Nature Reserve. Vojvodinašume joined the DANUBEPARKS Network during the implementation of SEE/A/064/2.3/X and, since then, has participated actively in most activities and meetings, thus showing great interest and responsibility for transnational cooperation in nature protection along the Danube. The ambitious participation and the experiences in the DANUBEPARKS network, in combination with the great capacity in forest management and conservation, qualifies Vojvodinasume to implement the the large-scale restoration actions in the frame of LIFE WILDisland.

Vojvodinašume plays an important role in bringing together Protected Area administrations with forestry agencies along the Danube, and serves as promotor for the implementation of the WILDisland initiative outside the EU territory. As managing authority of several protected areas along the Danube in Serbia, additionally, Vojvodinašume has a strategic relevance for the replication of the project outputs and anchoring the WILDisland initiative in Serbia in the Life-after-Lifer period.

1.4. Current situation in the sector

LIFE WILDisland focus is on the conservation of the priority habitat type 91E0* (Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) by way of coordinated, Danube-wide conservation and restoration of the Danube islands. Danube islands are flagship sites for the preservation of intact riverine habitats and make up over one-third of 91E0* surface area in Danube Natura 2000 sites. Developed within the framework of the Interreg DANUBEParksCONNECTED project, the Danube Wild Island online tool produced the first ever inventory of the Danube islands. The Danube Wild Island Habitat Corridor located within the overall LIFE project area contains around 900 islands covering a surface area of over 138,000 ha; 385 islands can be characterized as being in a near-natural state. Of these, 147 islands (14,000 ha) can be described as pristine and characteristic of river wilderness. These form the core of the LIFE WILDislands project. The 91E0* habitat is found in all Danube LIFE WILDisland countries. Approx. 28,000 ha of 91E0* habitat may be found in the 101 Natura 2000 sites on the main course of the Danube, whereby none have been listed in Romania to date (based on new findings during WILDisland preparation, process with competent authority started to introduce this habitat into SDF). 90% of the Danube islands host 91E0* alluvial forests; on 65% of the islands, 91E0* is in fact the dominant habitat type. Initial habitat analyses

have shown that islands populated mainly by softwood alluvial forests make up 34% of the total surface of 91E0* in Natura 2000 along the Danube. When including islands with softwood alluvial forests as a sub-dominant habitat type, coverage is even higher. In some Danube countries, islands constitute up to 60% of all softwood alluvial forests.

The conservation status of the alluvial forest habitat type 91E0* is bad in the Alpine and Continental regions and unfavourable-inadequate in the Pannonian and Black Sea regions. As reported in Article 17, the chief strains on this habitat include changes in the state of bodies of water, forestry operations (e.g. plantations) and invasive species. Other serious threats include recreational and other human activities. To ameliorate this poor conservation state and reverse this negative trend, coordinated transnational action is required to prevent further degradation and isolation of 91E0*. While the conservation status of 91E0* is generally unsatisfactory across all biogeographic regions, 40% of softwood forests on Danube Islands display a near-natural state (Categories A and B); there are even primeval stands of 91E0*. LIFE WILDIsland represents one of the last remaining wilderness in Central Europe, with 106 Danube islands (3,290 ha) hosting near-pristine softwood stands (wildisland.danubeparks.org). This is a unique natural asset of European importance.

1.5. Related programmes and other donor activities

In total, the LIFE WILDIsland project consortium has already implemented the impressive number of 76 LIFE projects.

Many of these projects focused on the conservation and restoration of riparian and alluvial sites, and 32 projects actually dealt with 91E0* habitats (and/or connected riparian species).

Between 2009–2018, the consortium has continuously “delivered” best practice LIFE projects (2009 NPDA, viadonau: Restoration of Danube river banks LIFE02 NAT/A/008518; 2010 DDBRA: Saving *Pelecanus crispus* in the Danube Delta LIFE05 NAT/RO/000169; 2015 viadonau: Living space in the rivers of Mostviertel-Wachau LIFE07 NAT/A/000010; 2018 BROZ: LIFE10 NAT/SK/000079 APUS & NYCTALUS).

2. OBJECTIVES & EXPECTED OUTPUTS

2.1. Overall objective

The overall objective (Impact) to which this action contributes is:

Implementation of conservation and restoration measures for Danube islands as flagship sites for river dynamics and morphology to counteract further degradation and isolation of 91E0* alluvial softwood forests.

2.2. Specific objective(s)

The specific objective (Outcome 1) of this contract is as follows:

- Provide professional and timely implementation of procurement procedures and professional project management, coordination and finance management services for project: LIFE WILDIsland

2.3. Expected outputs to be achieved by the contractor

The expected outputs of this contract correspond to Outcome 1:

- Implement the public procurement plan of project LIFE WILDisland based on PraG (Procurement And Grants for European Union external actions – A Practical Guide).
- Provide overall project and financial management assistance for project LIFE WILDisland, according to LIFE Programme requirements.

3. ASSUMPTIONS & RISKS

3.1. Assumptions underlying the project

Availability of financial resources for the project needs;

- Involved staff responsible, competent and motivated;
- The persons involved in project management (internal and external staff) maintain regular and continuous communication within the partnership and with the Programme authorities.

3.2. Risks

Restrictions due to Covid-19 pandemic:

The Covid-19 pandemic caused serious impact all over Europe, with dramatical changes in social and business life. The future development is hardly to predict from the today's point of view, limitations, restrictions and negative can have serious impact on network communication, dissemination, but also for the consultation of stakeholders, the planning and implementation of construction works.

Mitigation:

Basically, for all actions buffer time is planned. Delays in the early phase of the project due to Covid-19 can be compensated in the later phase. Based on the lessons-learnt in 2020/2021 no delays are expected for river and forest restoration measures. For the communication measures, alternatives are planned (see E.1, E.2). The alternatives (online communication, webinars, hybrid conferences) found the way into standard communication as it helps to reduce travel (costs) and the ecological footprint of the project, and further increases the reach of communication measures.

4. SCOPE OF THE WORK

4.1. General

4.1.1. Description of the assignment

The service should include the professional and timely implementation of procurement procedures based on PraG (Procurement And Grants for European Union external actions – A Practical Guide) and professional project management, coordination and finance management services for project: LIFE WILDisland.

4.1.2. Geographical area to be covered

Petrovaradin, AP Vojvodina, Republic of Serbia.

4.1.3. Target groups

The project's target groups:

- EU-institutions & policy makers,
- National and regional public authorities,
- Infrastructure and (public) service providers,
- International organisations and conventions,
- Universities, scientific institutions,
- Protected Area Networks,
- Interest Groups incl. NGOs,
- Cities and local municipalities,
- General public.

4.2. Specific work

The service will be contracted for about 5 years and 5 months period of project implementation (from contract signature until project closure), as a part time job (15% working time) and the offer is to be made for lump sum for the complete service of technical support.

The service should include the following tasks:

I. Implement the public procurement plan of project LIFE WILDisland based on PraG (Procurement And Grants for European Union external actions – A Practical Guide).

The Consultant should provide expert services in implementing all procurement procedures for project LIFE WILDisland according to the Practical Guide of the EC, as well as LIFE Programme requirements.

The Consultant is obligated to provide expert consultation to the Contracting Authority regarding procurement procedures upon request, by telephone, email or personally within working hours.

The service covers the preparation of the tender dossiers in accordance with the contracting and implementation plan as follows:

1. SINGLE TENDER - SERVICES:

Visibility services and Event organization services:

- *WILDisland event 2025 in Belgrade (including workshop and study visit to restoration sites)*
- *6 Workshops for information on project results with local stakeholders*
- *Local brochure*
- *4 info boards (restoration site Sidearm 1, Sidearm 2, Mišvald oxbow 2x)*

2. SINGLE TENDER - SERVICES:

Services of Development of Project technical documentation for dredging Sidearm 1, Sidearm 2, Mišvald oxbow

3. SIMPLIFIED TENDER - SERVICES:

Services of Reforestation

4. SINGLE TENDER - SERVICES:

Implementation of survey in the region of SNRGP: pre-/postmonitoring

5. SINGLE TENDER - SERVICES:

Services of Hydrological data collection and Morphological and biotic data collection for project site

6. LOCAL OPEN TENDER - SUPPLY:

Purchase of Excavators

7. DIRECT PURCHASE - SUPPLY:

Purchase of office equipment: Laptops and Multifunction laser printers

It should be noted that the above Procurement Plan might be revised during the course of implementation, therefore any changes requested by the Contracting Authority to the initial Procurement plan should be adopted by the Consultant with no changes to the contract value.

All tender dossiers have to be prepared according to the provisions of PRAG rules, in English language and the Consultant is obliged to send all prepared documents by e-mail to the Contracting Authority. In the case of request for any changes in the tender dossiers, the Consultant is obligated to adopt them and to send revised tender dossier back to the Contracting Authority.

The Contracting Authority is obligated to provide all the necessary information to the Consultant needed for the preparation of Terms of References and Technical Specifications. The Contracting Authority is also obligated to prepare the list of potential tenderers and to send it to the Consultant to prepare the List of entities.

Details about timing of public procurement procedures will be communicated by the Contracting Authority during contract implementation.

The Consultant should participate in tender evaluations upon Contracting Authority request at the premises of the Contracting Authority. The Consultant is required to participate in the opening, examination, evaluation and ranking of tenders or applications, upon the request of the Contracting Authority, at their premises, in the role of Consultant and internal monitoring.

Also, the service should include the preparation of contracts and notification to candidates, as well as contract addendums if requested by the Contracting Authority.

Furthermore, the Consultant should provide expert support in the preparation of documentation for VAT exemption if requested by the Contracting Authority.

II. Provide overall project and financial management assistance for project LIFE WILDisland, according to LIFE Programme requirements.

The service should include:

Project administration:

- Administration and adequate preparation of documentation for archiving.
- Preparation of storage documentation for a period of 7 years.

Assistance with project reporting:

- Identification of relevant areas of reporting per project periods;
- Collection of relevant information and documents from the management team;
- Giving an assessment of the adequacy of data;
- Assistance in collecting and preparing all required and relevant supplementary and supporting documents;

- Amendments, modifications and adaptations in accordance with the requirements of reporting forms;
- Assistance in preparation of annual and mid-term reports,
- Assistance with clarification requests for reporting at the request of the competent control body.

Project management and monitoring services:

In order to harmonize the implementation of project activities with the approved activities and the associated project budget, the Consultant should provide professional assistance with:

- Continuous analysis of project progress in order to support management and adequate decision-making;
- Periodic assessment of the effectiveness, impact, sustainability and relevance of the project in the context of the identified objectives;
- Providing guidelines on the visibility of the project to the public,
- Ensuring efficient implementation, as well as regular monitoring, ie. providing support to the project team.
- Tracking costs and spending according to budget lines and schedule,
- Verification, revision and adjustment of the public procurement project plan based on project needs,
- Professional support in preparation of project modification requests according to LIFE Programme requirements if requested by the Contracting Authority.

The consultant must also comply with the Communication and Visibility Requirements for European Union External Actions laid down and published by the European Commission. (See https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/comm-visibility-requirements_en).

4.3. Project management

4.3.1. Responsible body

The Consultant is responsible for all activities regarding this contract.

4.3.2. Management structure

Contracting Authority: Public Enterprise "Vojvodinašume" PETROVARADIN, Preradovićeve 2, 21131 Petrovaradin. The responsible person for implementation of the tasks related to this contract on behalf of the Contracting Authority is Ms. Ivana Vasić as project manager.

4.3.3. Facilities to be provided by the contracting authority and/or other parties

Not applicable.

5. LOGISTICS AND TIMING

5.1. Location

Petrovaradin, Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, Republic of Serbia.

5.2. Start date & period of implementation of tasks

The intended start date is the date of signature of the contract by both parties and the period of implementation of the contract will be about 5 years and 5 months from this date (from the contract signature to the end of the project). Please see Articles 19.1 and 19.2 of the special conditions for the actual start date and period of implementation.

6. REQUIREMENTS

6.1. Staff

Note that civil servants and other staff of the public administration of the partner country, or of international/regional organisations based in the country, shall only be approved to work as experts if well justified. The justification should be submitted with the tender and shall include information on the added value the expert will bring as well as proof that the expert is seconded or on personal leave.

6.1.1. Key experts

Key experts are defined and they must submit CVs and signed statements of exclusivity and availability.

All experts who have a crucial role in implementing the contract are referred to as key experts. The profiles of the key experts for this contract are as follows:

Key expert 1: Procurement and Management Expert

Qualifications and skills

- High School diploma minimum (University degree will be an advantage);
- IT-skills: MS Office, MS Excel or similar;
- Serbian and English language fluency.

General professional experience

- At least 5 years of general professional experience.
- Experience in project management.
- Reporting skills.

Specific professional experience

- Experience in procurement procedures in accordance with PRAG (engagement in min. one EU funded project, engagement in more projects will be an asset).

All experts must be independent and free from conflicts of interest in the responsibilities they take on.

6.1.2. Other experts, support staff & backstopping

CVs for experts other than the key experts should not be submitted in the tender but the tenderer will have to demonstrate in their offer that they have access to experts with the required profiles. The contractor shall select and hire other experts as required according to the needs. The selection procedures used by the contractor to select these other experts shall be transparent, and shall be based on pre-defined criteria, including professional qualifications, language skills and work experience.

The costs for backstopping and support staff, as needed, are considered to be included in the tenderer's financial offer.

6.2. Office accommodation

Office accommodation for each expert working on the contract is to be provided by Consultant.

6.3. Facilities to be provided by the contractor

The contractor shall ensure that experts are adequately supported and equipped. In particular it must ensure that there is sufficient administrative, secretarial and interpreting provision to enable experts to concentrate on their primary responsibilities. It must also transfer funds as necessary to support their work under the contract and to ensure that its employees are paid regularly and in a timely fashion.

6.4. Equipment

No equipment is to be purchased on behalf of the contracting authority / partner country as part of this service contract or transferred to the contracting authority / partner country at the end of this contract. Any equipment related to this contract which is to be acquired by the partner country must be purchased by means of a separate supply tender procedure.

7. REPORTS

7.1. Reporting requirements

The Consultant will submit the following reports in English and Serbian in one original and one copy:

- The Consultant will prepare interim report on the implementation of the tasks, at the end of the interim period:
 - 1st Interim period: from contract signature – March – April 2023.
 - 2nd Interim period: from – March – April 2023 to March – April 2024.
 - 3rd Interim period: from March – April 2024 to March – April 2025.
 - 4th Interim period: from March – April 2025 to March – April 2026.

The approval of the interim reports by the Contracting Authority will be the basis for issuing interim payments as indicated in the Special Conditions. Interim reports must be provided along with the corresponding invoices.

The contractor should also submit a Final report at the end of the contract, upon all contract results have been achieved, the latest by August 2027. The approval of the final report by the Contracting Authority will be the basis for issuing final payment as indicated in the Special Conditions. The final report must be provided along with the corresponding invoice.

7.2. Submission and approval of reports

The report referred to above must be submitted to the project manager identified in the contract. The project manager is responsible for approving the reports.

8. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

8.1. Definition of indicators

“Services provided in timely, quality and quantity manor, as required in these Terms of Reference”.

8.2. Special requirements

Not applicable.