TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR CONSULTANCY

Organization: Wetlands International Africa

Project: Mangrove Capital Africa

Title: Hiring of consultant/group of consultants to assess co-management mechanisms, need assessment for management and surveillance and community awareness and behavior in Yawri Bay and Sherbro River Estuary Marine Protected Area

Duration: 2 months

1. Introduction and Background:

Wetlands International Africa, through the Mangrove Capital Africa (MCA) project, is implementing a range of community-based mangrove restoration and conservation interventions in the Yawri Bay coastal landscape, and hoping to extend its activities in Sherbro River estuary in Sierra Leone.

The Yawri Bay and Sherbro River Estuary Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are of critical importance, providing essential habitats for biodiversity and supporting the livelihoods of numerous local communities.

Effective management of these landscapes requires a deep understanding of current management and co-management practices and the needs of all stakeholders. A focused assessment is needed to: (i) evaluate existing co-management mechanisms and stakeholder satisfaction; (ii) identify management & surveillance needs and gaps of both NPAA and communities; and (iii) analyze conservation related awareness, attitudes and behaviors among target stakeholder groups to inform future interventions and financing (including REDD+/blue carbon, enforcement, and livelihood support).

The assessment will identify gaps, measure the effectiveness of current arrangements, and provide actionable recommendations for strengthening institutional and community-based management. The findings will inform the development of a more robust, equitable, and effective co-management framework.

The outcome of this consultancy is a key step toward strengthening collaborative governance and ensuring the sustainability of our conservation efforts.

The findings will serve as the reference point for assessing future changes and impacts resulting from management interventions. It will also inform project planning, partnership and policy engagement.

2. Objectives of the Study:

2.a: Overall Objective:

The main objective of this consultancy is to assess the effectiveness of existing management and co-management mechanisms within the Yawri Bay and Sherbro River Estuary MPAs.

2.b: Specific Objectives

1. Map and describe formal and informal co-management arrangements (roles, responsibilities, financing, decision-making) for both MPAs.
2. Assess stakeholder satisfaction and perceptions of the performance and legitimacy of co-management (NPAA staff, traditional leaders/chiefs, community members, fishers, women's groups, youth, NGOs, private sector).
3. Conduct a needs assessment for management and surveillance capacity (personnel, equipment, patrol systems, data management and communications) jointly with NPAA and communities.
4. Analyze awareness, attitudes and behavior related to MPA rules, conservation values, livelihood alternatives and compliance drivers for different stakeholder groups.
5. Produce actionable recommendations and a prioritized implementation plan (including short-term, medium-term actions, indicative costs and responsible parties) to strengthen co-management, surveillance and community engagement

3. Geographical locations and target population:

The co-management arrangements assessment will be conducted in the Yawri Bay and Sherbro River Estuary Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) landscapes

4. Scope of Work / Tasks

The Consultant (individual or team) will carry out the following tasks:

Task 1 — Inception & Desk Review

- Prepare an inception note (max 5 pages) outlining methodology, workplan and tools within 7 calendar days of contract start.
- Review existing documents: NPAA management plans, community by-laws, co-management agreements/MOUs, patrol logs, previous assessments, socioeconomic studies, maps/GIS layers, project reports (WI and partners), and national policy documents relevant to MPAs.
- Produce a succinct desk-review summary (2–3 pages) of key findings to inform fieldwork.

Task 2 — Stakeholder Mapping & Engagement Plan

- Map stakeholders (government, NPAA offices, local councils, chiefs, women's groups, fishers associations, youth groups, NGOs, tour operators, research institutions) for each MPA.
- Prepare a stakeholder engagement plan and informed consent procedures for interviews, FGDs and surveys.

Task 3 — Field Data Collection (Participatory)

- Hold joint scoping meetings with NPAA, WI and community representatives at both sites.
- Key Informant Interviews (KIIs): NPAA managers, rangers, local chiefs, community leaders, fishers association leaders, women/youth representatives, local government officials, concessionaires, NGOs—estimated 25–35 KIIs across sites.
- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): segregated by gender/age/activity (men fishers, women fish processors/traders, youth, homestead groups) — aim for 6–10 FGDs per MPA.

- Household / User Surveys: structured short surveys targeting resource users and households around the MPAs).
- Patrol and Surveillance Assessment: ride-along or observation of patrol practices where feasible; collect and review patrol data, schedules, routes, and enforcement records.
- Co-management assessment: collect copies of agreements, track actual practice vs. written roles, and evidence of revenue sharing/grievance mechanisms.

Task 4 — Awareness & Behaviour Analysis

- Using survey and FGD data, analyze levels of awareness about MPA objectives, rules and sanctions; drivers of compliance/non-compliance; perceptions of benefits and costs; and readiness to engage in co-management or alternative livelihoods.
- Segment analysis by stakeholder groups (e.g., men vs women; fishers vs farmers; youth vs elders).

Task 5 — Institutional & Capacity Needs Assessment

- Assess NPAA capacity (staffing, skills, logistics, data systems), community institutions, and local enforcement/court referral systems.
- Identify gaps in surveillance technology, patrol coverage, data recording (GIS, camera traps if relevant), and prosecution of offences.
- Identify training needs and institutional reforms to improve co-management delivery.

Task 6 — Synthesis, Recommendations & Implementation Plan

- Draft findings highlighting strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) for co-management.
- Provide prioritized and costed recommendations (short, medium, long term) for: strengthening co-management agreements; capacity building; surveillance & enforcement; community benefit sharing; communication & behaviour change; and monitoring and evaluation.
- Prepare a practical implementation plan with responsible parties, indicative budgets, timeline and KPIs.

Task 7 — Reporting & Dissemination

- Produce deliverables (see Section 6).
- Present draft findings and recommendations at a validation workshop with NPAA, WI and community representatives (one workshop per MPA or combined if feasible).
- Finalize report incorporating stakeholder feedback.

5. Methodology (minimum requirements)

- Apply mixed methods: qualitative (KIIs, FGDs, participatory rural appraisal tools) and quantitative (structured surveys).
- Use participatory and gender-sensitive approaches; ensure inclusion of women, youth, marginalized groups, and customary authorities.

- Use Geographic Information Systems (GIS) where available for mapping patrol coverage, community boundaries and hotspots of illegal activity.
- Triangulate findings from documents, key informants and field observations.
- Ensure data protection, informed consent and ethical research practices.

6. Deliverables and Timeline

1. **Inception Note & Workplan** — within 7 days of contract start.
2. **Desk Review Summary** — within 10 days of contract start.
3. **Fieldwork Report (raw data + survey dataset & transcripts)** — within 6 weeks of start.
4. **Draft Assessment Report** (including recommendations, costed action plan and map appendices) — within 8 weeks of start
5. **Validation workshop(s)** — within week 9 of contract (presentation of draft).
6. **Final Report** (executive summary, full report, implementation plan, annexes: tools, data, stakeholder list, GIS maps) — within 10 of contract start.

7. Reporting Lines and Coordination

The consultant will report directly to the MCA Project Manager through email and virtual meetings. Two weekly updates are required to track progress. Submission of all reports should be in both hard and soft copy (word and PDF formats)

8. Qualifications and Team Composition

Team leader / Senior Consultant (required):

- Advanced degree (MSc/MA/PhD) in natural resource management, conservation governance, social sciences, development studies or related field.
- Minimum 8–10 years' relevant experience in protected area management, co-management assessments, community engagement and M&E in West Africa (experience in Sierra Leone preferred).
- Demonstrated experience leading mixed-methods assessments and producing substantive reports for government and donors.
- Excellent interpersonal and facilitation skills; fluent in English; knowledge of local Local field enumerators / facilitators (recruited locally, language skills essential).

9. Budget

- Consultants should submit a detailed budget (professional fees, travel, per diem, field allowances, survey costs, data processing, workshop costs, and incidental expenses).
- WIACO recommends inclusion of costs for community participation (FGD refreshments, transport), printing, and a small validation workshop per MPA.

10. Ethical Considerations and Permissions

- The Consultant is responsible for obtaining necessary permissions from NPAA, district authorities and community leaders before fieldwork.
- All respondents must give informed consent. Protect confidentiality and anonymize sensitive data.

11. Evaluation Criteria for Proposals

- Relevant technical experience (35%) — demonstrated past work on PA co-management, M&E and community assessments.
- Proposed methodology and workplan (30%) — clarity, participatory approach and quality of tools.
- Team qualifications and composition (20%).
- Financial proposal (15%) — value for money and realism.

12. Submission Requirements

Interested consultants or teams should submit:

- Technical proposal (methodology, workplan, team CVs, past relevant examples).
- Financial proposal (detailed budget with breakdown).
- Two references from previous similar assignments.
- Proposed start date and anticipated duration.

Submission deadline: 05th October, 2025

Submit to: amsiaka@wetlands-africa.org ; wsene@wetlands-africa.org