CALL FOR CONSULTANCY No 44/2026_SPA/RAC_FishEBM Med

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE PROVISION OF CONSULTANCY SERVICES

NATIONAL EXPERT – ALBANIA

UPDATE OF THE NATIONAL NIS/IAS BASELINE AND INTRODUCTION PATHWAYS, SELECTION OF THE SPECIES TO BE MONITORED IN ALBANIA

October 2026

This call for consultancy document is available in English. Offers may be submitted in English [or French].

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

I.1. The Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre

The Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC) was established by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention in order to assist the Mediterranean countries in implementing the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol) of the Barcelona Convention. Tunisia has been hosting the Centre since its establishment in 1985. The Centre works under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP) – Barcelona Convention Secretariat, based in Athens, Greece.

SPA/RAC's main objective is to contribute to the protection, preservation and sustainable management of marine and coastal biological diversity in the Mediterranean and the creation and effective management of marine and coastal areas of particular natural and cultural value and the conservation of threatened and endangered species of flora and fauna in the Mediterranean. For more information: www.spa-rac.org.

I.2. The FishEBM Med project

The FishEBM Med project, funded by the GEF and led by FAO and UNEP with execution facilitated by the GFCM and UNEP/MAP through SPA/RAC, aims to reverse the over-exploitation of selected commercial living marine resources by enhancing the capacity of Mediterranean countries to manage fisheries, including through the application of ecosystem-based management tools, in their blue economy development pathway. It is implemented in Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lebanon, Libya, Montenegro, Morocco, Tunisia and Türkiye, through five components. Component 3 – "Integrated ecosystem-based management tools and ecosystem approach to biodiversity protection and sustainable fisheries" – includes Output 3.3, which aims to identify measures to cope with the negative effects of non-indigenous species (NIS) on biodiversity, as well as those of other potential stressors.

The present assignment falls under Activity 3.3.1 "Update/elaborate monitoring programmes, identify national lists of NIS/IAS and their pathways of introduction in project countries, and identify which species should be used for monitoring" and contributes to Activity 3.3.3 "Training on sharing data on NIS/IAS through the georeferenced online platform MAMIAS".

II. BACKGROUND

In line with:

- Decision IG.27/6 – Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) Policy and Roadmap 2026–2035 and the updated Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme for the Mediterranean Sea and Coast (IMAP) adopted by COP 24 (2025);
- Decision IG.27/14 – Programme of Work and Budget for 2026–2027;
- Decision IG.26/3 – The 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report and a renewed Ecosystem Approach Policy in the Mediterranean;
- Decision IG.25/11 – Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO), Actions 5 and 6;

the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention are invited to update their national monitoring programmes considering the updated IMAP, and to report on IMAP Common Indicator 6 (CI6) "Trends in abundance, temporal occurrence and spatial distribution of non-indigenous species, particularly invasive species, notably in risk areas".

Validated subregional and regional NIS inventories for the Mediterranean Sea, with records up to December 2020, were produced with national experts designated by the Contracting Parties (Galanidi et al., 2023) and served as the baseline for IMAP implementation and the 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report. The dynamic nature of marine invasions and the continuous emergence of new information on species identities, origins and pathways require a refined update of these inventories – to 2026 – for accurate assessments and effective policy implementation.

The national experts will work under the technical leadership of a regional expert recruited by SPA/RAC (Call for consultancy N° 24/2026_SPA/RAC_FishEBM Med), who provides the harmonised methodology, templates,

training, help-desk and technical review of all national deliverables, and in close coordination with the national IMAP/EcAp process supported by the EcAp MED plus project and with the national SPA/BD and IMAP Focal Points.

II.1. OBJECTIVE

The objective of this assignment is to enable Albania to:

- produce a validated and up-to-date national list of marine NIS/IAS up to 2026 and of their introduction pathways, formatted for direct upload to the MAMIAS platform;
- identify the subset of species to be used for the national monitoring of IMAP Common Indicator 6;
- Elaborate national monitoring programme for NIS in line with the updated IMAP (Common Indicator 6), integrating the selected species subset, the risk areas and the MAMIAS reporting based on the common template provided by SPA/RAC ;
- validate these outputs and facilitate their adoption through national workshop(s) gathering the concerned institutions and stakeholders.

II.2. TASKS TO BE UNDERTAKEN

The national expert will, in coordination with the regional expert and following the harmonised methodology, guidance notes and templates provided by SPA/RAC-Regional Experts:

Task 1 – Inception and coordination

- Prepare a brief work plan identifying relevant national data sources, institutions, experts to be consulted, and a schedule of national consultations
- Attend the regional inception/training workshop and the MAMIAS training workshop (2027, in English).

Task 2 – National NIS/IAS baseline and introduction pathways

- Establish the national inventory of marine NIS, including cryptogenic species, to 2026, based on the 2020 national baseline, the published literature, major national, regional and taxonomic reviews, data from national monitoring campaigns, and citizen-science observations, using the template provided by the regional expert.
- Revise the nomenclature following the World Register of Marine Species (WoRMS) and document, for each species, the establishment status, the year and location of first record, the source of the record and the introduction pathway coded according to the CBD pathway classification.
- Address the comments of the regional expert (first-round technical review) and resolve discrepancies and controversial species in consultation with the regional expert and, where needed, taxonomic experts.

Task 3 – Selection of the species to be monitored

- Apply the species-selection criteria of the guidance note (invasiveness, impacts, spread, detectability, relevance to fisheries and risk areas such as ports, marinas, aquaculture sites) to propose a justified national shortlist of species to be used for CI6 monitoring, with the associated monitoring sites/risk areas.

Task 4 – National monitoring programme for NIS in line with IMAP

- Elaborate the national monitoring programme for NIS in line with the updated IMAP Common Indicator 6 specifications and factsheet, using a common template: monitoring objectives, sites and risk areas, sampling design and frequency, methods, taxonomic groups, data management and reporting to IMAP/MAMIAS, institutional responsibilities and indicative costs; ensure coherence with the national biodiversity monitoring programme.

Task 5 – MAMIAS-ready dataset

- Prepare the national dataset (species list, georeferenced occurrence records, pathways) in the MAMIAS import format, check it with the regional expert and upload it to MAMIAS, or support SPA/RAC in doing so.

Task 6 – National validation and adoption

- Prepare the technical content (background note, presentations, draft agenda) of at least one national workshop to be covered by SPA/RAC, gathering the national IMAP-SPA/BD Focal Points, research

institutions, fisheries and environment administrations and other relevant stakeholders; facilitate the workshop(s) and prepare their report.

- Incorporate the outcomes of the workshop(s) and of the regional review into the final national documents and support the national authorities in the endorsement of the species subset and of the new national NIS monitoring programme.

Logistics of the national workshops (venue, participants' travel) are covered by SPA/RAC and are not part of the financial offer.

II.3. TIME DURATION OF THE CONTRACT, DELIVERABLES AND TIMELINE

The contract implementation will need about 25 working days (WD) starting from the date of the contract signature, until the completion of all tasks no later than 15 March 2027. The national deadlines derive from the schedule adopted for the regional expert (call for consultancy N° 24/2026_SPA/RAC_FishEBM Med), as follows:

Deliverables and timeline:

No.	Deliverable	Deadline	New (WD)
1	Work plan and list of national data sources and institutions to be consulted ;	1 weeks after contract signature	1
2	Draft national NIS/IAS list and pathway table (to 2026), in the regional template, with nomenclature revised (WoRMS)	15 December 2026	5
3	Draft shortlist of species proposed for CI6 monitoring, with justification and proposed monitoring sites/risk areas	15 December 2026	2
4	Draft updated national monitoring programme for NIS (gap analysis against the updated IMAP CI6 and revised programme, common template)	25 January 2027	8
5	Revised list, pathways and species shortlist addressing the regional first-round review; MAMIAS-formatted dataset checked with the regional expert	25 January 2027	2
6	National validation workshop(s): technical content, facilitation, workshop report	December 2026 – February 2027	4
7	Final national documents (updated list, pathways, selected species subset, and revised national NIS monitoring programme) incorporating national and regional feedback; confirmation of MAMIAS upload, attendance at the regional training and MAMIAS training	5 March 2027	3
	Total		25 WD

All deliverables shall be submitted in English in editable format (Word/Excel) using the templates provided by the regional expert-SPA/RAC. The participation of the expert in the MAMIAS training workshop will be covered by SPA/RAC (travel and DSA in accordance with UNEP rules).

II.4. SUPERVISION AND COLLABORATION

The national expert will work under the supervision of the SPA/RAC Ecosystem Conservation Programme Officer, and under the technical guidance of the regional expert. The expert will liaise with the national SPA/BD and IMAP Focal Points of ALBANIA and with the national institutions in charge of marine monitoring where applicable. All deliverables are subject to the technical review of the regional expert and to the approval of SPA/RAC.

III. SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED OF THE CONSULTANT

- Post-graduate university degree in marine biology, marine ecology, biodiversity conservation or a closely related discipline.
- At least 7 years of relevant professional experience in the marine environment of Albania, including proven experience in the study of marine non-indigenous species (inventories, taxonomy, monitoring, pathways or risk assessment).
- Good knowledge of the national marine monitoring framework, of the IMAP Common Indicators (in particular CI6) and of the national institutions and data holders concerned by NIS.

- Proven experience in the design of marine environmental monitoring programmes.
- Familiarity with WoRMS, the CBD pathway classification and with NIS databases (MAMIAS, EASIN, ELNAIS or similar) is an asset.
- Ability to mobilise the national scientific community and to facilitate multi-stakeholder workshops.
- Fluency in English (reading and writing); knowledge of Albanian language is required for the national consultations.

ADMINISTRATIVE CLAUSES

ARTICLE 1 – CONDITIONS FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE CONSULTANCY

This call for consultancy is open to individual consultants only, nationals of or residing in Albania, with proven competence in marine non-indigenous species studies. Offers are made by a single individual consultant; no association is foreseen for this assignment.

Staff of the national institution acting as SPA/BD or IMAP Focal Point may apply provided that their institution confirms in writing that the assignment is compatible with their duties.

ARTICLE 2 – COMPOSITION, PRESENTATION OF OFFERS AND DEADLINES

The submitted offer must include separately: (i) a technical offer, (ii) administrative documents and (iii) a financial offer. The services consist of an overall fixed and non-revisable cost.

Technical offer

1. Curriculum vitae highlighting higher education degrees, professional experience and references to relevant works, studies and publications on marine NIS in Albania; key references must be highlighted in bold.
2. Methodological note (maximum 5 pages) presenting the consultant's understanding of the assignment, the national data sources and institutions to be mobilised, the approach for the update of the list and the selection of species and for the elaboration of the national NIS monitoring programme, and any comments on the Terms of Reference.
3. Work plan and time schedule (chronogram) consistent with section II.3.

Administrative documents

1. Cover letter outlining the consultant's suitability and motivation.
2. Proof of professional standing: a document certifying the legal ability to practise the profession according to the legislation of Albania, including a tax identification number. For academic professionals (researchers or university staff), a sworn statement confirming compliance with the tax legislation in force in the country of residence is accepted.
3. Declaration of independence and absence of conflict of interest.
4. The present Terms of Reference, signed and dated on the final page.

If original administrative documents are not in English, French or Arabic (For the case of the Arab countries), they must be accompanied by a certified translation. Should any administrative document be missing, the tenderer will be contacted to provide it within five (05) calendar days; if the file remains incomplete after this period, the offer will be disqualified.

Financial offer

The financial offer must be expressed in United States Dollars (USD), tax-free and all taxes included (VAT is eligible only if the consultant is fiscally resident in Tunisia), and must include all costs connected to the provision of the service. It comprises the submission letter (Annex 1) and the details of the total price (Annex 2). Travel to the MAMIAS training workshop and the logistics of the national workshops are covered by SPA/RAC and must not be included.

ARTICLE 3 – SUBMISSION

Offers must be received electronically at procurement@spa-rac.org, with the date of electronic transmission as reference, indicating in the subject line: "Call for consultancy No. 44/2026_SPA/RAC – National NIS/IAS expert – Albania – [Applicant name]".

The deadline for receiving proposals is 1 November 2026, at 23.59 UTC+1 (Tunis time). Any proposal received after this date and time will not be considered.

ARTICLE 4 – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Questions related to these Terms of Reference may be submitted by e-mail to procurement@spa-rac.org no later than five (5) calendar days before the deadline for submission.

ARTICLE 5 – TERMS OF PAYMENT

Payment will be made as follows:

1. 1st instalment of 40 % upon submission of deliverables 1, 2 and 3 and after their review and approval by SPA/RAC (further to the regional expert's technical review).
2. 2nd instalment of 30 % upon submission of deliverables 4, 5 and 6 and after their review and approval by SPA/RAC.
3. Balance of 30 % within one month after the submission of the final version of all deliverables (deliverable 7), confirmation of the MAMIAS upload and delivery by SPA/RAC of the final acceptance certificate.

All payments are made by bank transfer upon receipt of an invoice, to a bank account held by the consultant in his/her country of residence where he/she is registered for tax purposes.

ARTICLE 6 – EVALUATION PROCEDURE

The technical offers are examined first, the financial offers remaining sealed. Any previous involvement of the consultant in activities that could compromise his/her independence must be disclosed.

Criteria			Scoring
National Consultant (Expert Profile)	Experience	Relevant scientific background and experience in marine biodiversity monitoring and assessment studies with a focus on non-indigenous species	55 points Maximum (10 points / study)
		No similar study	0 points **(in this case the offer is eliminated)**
	Diploma	Post-graduate university degree in marine science and /or environmental science or a related environmental science field	5 points maximum
		University degree in the above- mentioned fields	3 points
		No university degree in the above- mentioned fields	0 point **(in this case the offer is eliminated)**
Proposed methodology for carrying out the assignment		Well-developed methodology that responds precisely to the terms of reference	25 points maximum
		Methodology fairly well-developed and in line with the terms of reference	15 points
		Methodology fairly developed and more or less in line with the terms of reference	8 points
		Methodology not clearly presented and does not meet the study terms of reference and objectives, or No methodology presented	0 points **(in this case, the offer is eliminated)**
Detailed planning and timetable (including an intervention chronogram)		A coherent, well-structured schedule and timetable that accurately reflects the terms of reference	15 points maximum
		Planning and timetable moderately coherent and structured but in line with the terms of reference	5 points
		Planning and Timetable not complying with the terms of reference or no planning, or no time schedule or no chronogram of intervention	0 point **(in this case, the offer is eliminated)**

Any offer that has not attained the minimum score of 70 points will be eliminated. In case of a tie, preference is given to the best technical score, then to the best methodology score.

Financial evaluation

Once the technical evaluation has been completed, the financial offers of applicants that have not been eliminated during the technical evaluation will be examined.

The evaluation committee will check that the financial offers do not contain any obvious arithmetical errors. Any possible obvious arithmetical errors will be corrected, and the corrected figures will be taken into consideration.

The evaluation committee will then proceed to a financial comparison. The lowest financial offer that is judged acceptable will receive 100 points. The other offers will be attributed a score based on the following equation:

Financial score = (amount of the lowest accepted offer/amount of the offer in question) x 100

Conclusions of the evaluation committee

The choice of the best offer is achieved by weighting the technical and financial scores using a distribution key of 80/20 basis. To this end:

- The technical score will be multiplied by a coefficient of 0.80.
- The financial score will be multiplied by a coefficient of 0.20.

The weighted technical - financial scores thus calculated will be added to ascertain the offer with the best technical and financial score.

If two offers obtain the same weighted technical-financial scores, preference will be given to the applicant in the following order:

- having obtained the best technical score.
- having obtained the best score for methodology.
- having obtained the best total score for experience and qualifications of experts.

Note: The selection process may include interviews (through a teleconferencing platform), as well as pre-selection phase followed by requests for complementary information / negotiation if required.

ARTICLE 7 – MONITORING, CONTROL AND VALIDATION OF THE WORK

The consultant will submit a draft version of each deliverable as indicated in section II.3. Drafts are technically reviewed by the regional expert; the consultant will submit the final versions taking into account the regional expert's and SPA/RAC's feedback. SPA/RAC is responsible for the overall process coordination.

ARTICLE 8 – DEADLINE FOR THE EXECUTION OF THE MISSION

The contract implementation will need about 25 working days starting from the date of the contract signature, until the completion of all tasks no later than 15 March 2027, according to the schedule in section II.3.

ARTICLE 9 – PENALTY

In the absence of completion of the services within the contractual deadlines (Article 8), a penalty of one three-hundredth (1/300) of the total amount of the contract will be applied, as of right and without notice, for each calendar day of delay. The amount of the penalties is capped at 5 % of the total amount of the contract; when this limit is reached, SPA/RAC reserves the right to terminate the contract at the consultant's fault in accordance with Article 14, without the consultant being able to raise disputes or claim any compensation. Delays attributable to the late delivery of the regional templates or review, or to the scheduling of the national workshops by SPA/RAC, are not subject to penalties and give rise to an equivalent extension of the deadlines.

ARTICLE 10 – INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS, OWNERSHIP OF DOCUMENTS

All legal rights throughout the world in works created by the consultant in connection with this consultancy will remain the property of SPA/RAC, including copyright in written material, data, maps and presentations. All data,

lists, reports and other documents elaborated and submitted by the consultant for the execution of the contract will become and remain the property of SPA/RAC; the national NIS data will be published through MAMIAS with due acknowledgement of the national expert and data providers. The consultant does not have the right to use or copy the products resulting from this consultancy without the explicit written consent of SPA/RAC.

ARTICLE 11 – ARBITRATION, DISPUTE SETTLEMENT

Every dispute arising from or in connection with the execution of this contract shall be solved by way of amicable negotiations between the parties. The contract is deemed to have been made in Tunisia and to be subject to Tunisian law. In case of dispute, the Court of Tunis is competent.

ARTICLE 12 – LIABILITY AND INSURANCE

SPA/RAC does not accept any liability for acts of third parties, accidents, sickness or losses of any kind, however caused, arising during the implementation of the assignment. The bidder confirms that he/she will be covered by appropriate insurance.

ARTICLE 13 – FORCE MAJEURE

Force majeure means any event outside the control of a party making it impossible to carry out its obligations. The party invoking force majeure must inform the other party within seven (7) days of its occurrence; the contractual deadlines will be suspended by joint agreement for the period covered by the event. SPA/RAC has the right to assess whether the circumstances invoked are convincing; if not, the days of discontinued work will be accounted for as days of delay. Failure by either party to fulfil its obligations due to force majeure does not entail contract termination provided that the party has taken all reasonable precautions and informed the other party as soon as possible; any deadline will be prolonged by a period equal to the period of impediment.

ARTICLE 14 – CANCELLATION CONDITIONS

SPA/RAC may cancel this contract by written notification to the consultant in the following cases:

1. non-respect of the execution deadlines (Article 8);
2. when the penalties of Article 9 reach the cap of 5 % of the total amount of the contract;
3. non-conformity of the services with the technical specifications (section II.2);
4. bankruptcy or receivership of the consultant;
5. inability, after a case of force majeure, to execute a substantial part of the services for at least sixty (60) days;
6. involvement in corruption or fraudulent manipulation to obtain or during the execution of the contract, as defined in SPA/RAC's contractual conditions;
7. decision of SPA/RAC, on its own initiative and for any reason whatsoever, to terminate the contract.

ARTICLE 15 – CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The consultant shall not engage, directly or indirectly, in any professional or commercial activity during the contract period that may conflict with the duties entrusted under the present contract and has an ongoing obligation to disclose to SPA/RAC any situation that may constitute an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest. Failure to do so may result in the immediate termination of the contract.

ARTICLE 16 – PROVISIONAL AND FINAL ACCEPTANCE

The provisional acceptance is pronounced after complete completion of the services described in section II.2, in case of complete conformity deemed conclusive by SPA/RAC, through a provisional acceptance report issued no later than 30 days from receipt of the final deliverables. The consultant shall correct any deficiencies identified by SPA/RAC. Final acceptance will be given one (1) month after the date of provisional acceptance without reservation, once the consultant has fulfilled all obligations resulting from sections II.2 and II.3 and after correction of all deficiencies signalled by SPA/RAC.

ANNEX 1 – SUBMISSION LETTER

I, the undersigned ....., after having taken due note of the dossier documents of the call for consultancy N° 44/2026_SPA/RAC_FishEBM Med launched by SPA/RAC, pertaining to the mission "National NIS/IAS expert – ALBANIA", hereby pledge to execute the requested services in conformity with the provisions defined in the documents referred to, for the prices as established by myself. The total price of the bid is ..... (.....) US Dollars, all taxes included.

I take due note of the fact that SPA/RAC is not obliged to proceed with the tendering procedure and that I cannot claim compensation. I pledge that the conditions of my offer will remain valid for a period of one hundred and twenty (120) days starting from the day after the deadline for the receipt of tenders. SPA/RAC pledges to pay the amount, after the signing of a contract, into the bank account of the Bank ....., in the name of ....., IBAN/BIC .....

In ....., on ..... (Name, first name and function – Signature)

ANNEX 2 – DETAILS OF TOTAL PRICE

Designation	Unit price (USD/WD)	Number of WD	Sub-total (USD)
Fees – national expert			
Other costs necessary for the proper execution of the consultancy (specify)			
Total excluding VAT			
VAT (only if fiscally resident in Tunisia)			
Total all taxes included			

Amount of the offer all taxes included fixed at the sum of ..... (Signature and stamp of the bidder)