THE REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CENTRE FOR THE CAUCASUS

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Consultant for the Gazelle - Livestock Disease Risk Assessment

Publication Reference Number076/RECC/G/UNEP 2026 SC 023

Contract Title:	**Consultancy Service Contract for the Gazelle - Livestock Disease Risk Assessment**		
Contract Type:	Fee-based		
Contracting Organization:	The Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus (RECC)		
Division/Department:	RECC Projects' Implementation Unit		
Programme/Project Number:	``**Transforming Policy and Investment through Improving Ecosystem Management and Restoration of Degraded Drylands of Dedoplistskaro Biosphere Reserve in Georgia to Generate Multiple Environmental and Socio-Economic Benefits**`` (*GEF Project ID: 11141)*		
Duty Station:	Tbilisi and Dedoplistskaro Biosphere Reserve, Georgia		
Expected Start Date of Assignment:	December, 2026	**Duration:**	**5 months** (up to May 2027)
Estimated Number of Working Days:			
Reports to:	Sophiko Akhobadze	RECC Executive Director	

I.Background

The Global Environment Facility (GEF)-funded project "Transforming Policy and Investment through Improving Ecosystem Management and Restoration of Degraded Drylands of Dedoplistskaro Biosphere Reserve in Georgia to Generate Multiple Environmental and Socio-Economic Benefits" aims to support ecosystem restoration, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable land use in the Dedoplistskaro Biosphere Reserve (DBR).

The project is implemented by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and executed by the Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus (REC Caucasus) on behalf of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia (MEPA). The project duration is four years (2025–2028).

Project Component 2 focuses on improving ecosystem management and restoring degraded drylands in the DBR landscape. Output 2.2.5 supports strengthening the population and management of the Goitered Gazelle (Gazella subgutturosa) as a flagship species of the Dedoplistskaro Biosphere Reserve and an indicator of successful ecosystem restoration and landscape management.

The Goitered Gazelle historically inhabited semi-arid ecosystems across the South Caucasus but disappeared from Georgia by the 1960s due to hunting pressure and habitat degradation. Recent transboundary

conservation efforts between Georgia and Azerbaijan, supported by WWF and other partners, have led to the gradual re-establishment of a small population in eastern Georgia.

The project will support the implementation of the Goitered Gazelle Restoration Plan, developed under the leadership of MEPA in accordance with the Ministerial Order No. 2-804 (21 October 2024) "On Approval of the Rules of Practical Measures for the Survival of Species at Risk of Extinction."

To support implementation of the restoration plan, RECC intends to recruit a National Consultant to assess Gazelle Livestock Disease Risk. The assignment will provide complementary evidence and recommendations for project interventions under Output 2.2.5.

II. General objective of the assignment

The overall objective of this assignment is to assess potential disease-transmission and animal-health risks at the gazelle–livestock interface in the DBR landscape and recommend practical veterinary, livestock-health and biosecurity measures to reduce risks to the Goitered gazelle population.

The Consultant will work under the overall guidance and supervision of the RECC Executive Director and in close technical coordination with the RECC Biodiversity and Ecosystem Restoration Lead Consultant, MEPA, the Agency of Protected Areas and relevant protected-area administrations, including the Tusheti Protected Landscape Administration, which manages the Samukhi Multiple-Use Area. The veterinary Consultant will also coordinate with competent veterinary authorities.

III. Scope of work

The consultant's tasks under the present assignment will include:

a. Veterinary and disease transmission risk assessment

- Review available veterinary and livestock-health records, surveillance information, relevant research, existing animal-health measures and information on disease risks affecting gazelles or other wild ungulates in the DBR and comparable landscapes.
- Consult competent veterinary authorities, including the National Food Agency as relevant, veterinary practitioners, protected-area administrations, livestock owners and herders on livestock health, disease occurrence, veterinary service access and existing preventive practices.
- Use available spatial and seasonal overlap information, field observations and stakeholder consultations to identify potential livestock-to-gazelle disease-transmission pathways, including shared pasture and water sources and other relevant direct or indirect contact. Consider transmission in the reverse direction where supported by evidence.
- Assess livestock-health management and relevant practices, including disease reporting, vaccination where applicable, movements of livestock, management of sick animals, carcass disposal and access to veterinary services, insofar as they affect risks to gazelles.
- Prepare a qualitative risk assessment identifying priority hazards, exposure pathways, likelihood and potential consequences, evidence sources, confidence levels and information gaps. Clearly distinguish confirmed disease occurrence from suspected hazards and theoretical transmission risks.
- Recommend feasible veterinary and livestock-health measures, biosecurity improvements, targeted awareness for livestock keepers, surveillance and reporting arrangements, and procedures for referral of suspected disease events to competent authorities.
- Specify further investigations or diagnostic testing needed to resolve important gaps, including rationale, priorities, responsible institutions and indicative costs.
- Provide the conflict study Consultant (the National Consultant for Gazelle–Livestock Interactions Study (Ref. 076/RECC/G/UNEP 2026 SC 022), hereinafter "the conflict study Consultant") with the veterinary findings and agreed implications for coexistence measures. Advise the project GIS

Consultant, as needed, on mapping relevant exposure interfaces without disclosing sensitive species locations or confidential veterinary information.

b. Presentation and validation of results

- Present the assignment findings and recommendations at a stakeholder consultation meeting organized in coordination with RECC. The Consultants may present at the same meeting, while retaining separate presentations, reports and contractual deliverables.
- Incorporate comments received from RECC and stakeholders into the final report and prepare a response to comments matrix. All reports shall include the literature and sources reviewed and the stakeholders consulted.

IV. Reporting obligations and deliverables

The consultant shall submit the following deliverables electronically in Georgian:

Table 1. Reporting Obligations

Report Index	Name of Deliverable/Means of Verification	Time of Submission
R1	Draft Veterinary Risk Assessment Report including consultations and field observations, priority hazards and transmission pathways, qualitative risk assessment with confidence levels and limitations, review of livestock-health practices, draft prevention and biosecurity measures, and priorities for further surveillance or diagnostic investigation.	February, 2027
R2	Final Veterinary Risk Assessment and Mitigation Report incorporating RECC and stakeholder comments, validated findings, prioritized veterinary and livestock-health measures, responsible institutions, indicative costs, implementation schedule and monitoring indicators; consultation presentation; response to comments matrix; and a concise veterinary findings summary for the conflict study Consultant.	April, 2027

V. Payment schedule

The Consultant shall submit to the RECC the reports in the form and within the time periods specified in Table 1 (Reporting Obligations) as per Terms of Reference, acceptable to the RECC. The payment mode for the service will be applied based on delivered reports and acts of acceptance (*Service Delivery Acceptance Acts*) signed by both sides (RECC and the Consultant) and submitted by the Consultant of original invoices to the RECC.

RECC will only make milestone payment based on achievement of specific deliverables as specified in time schedule for submission of deliverables as per Table 1 (Reporting Obligations).

The schedule of payments and estimated time input are specified below:

Table 2. Schedule of Payments and Estimated Time Input

Report Index for Deliverables	Amount of Transfer	% of total contract ceiling for the Services (*total Value of the Service*)
R1	Number of working days x Working day rate	
R2	Number of working days x Working day rate	
Total	working days x Working day rate	

Financial offers shall be submitted in GEL as net amounts (exclusive of taxes); applicable taxes will be withheld by RECC in accordance with the legislation of Georgia.

VI. Qualifications and professional experience

Applicants should meet the following minimum qualifications:

- University degree in veterinary medicine or veterinary science qualifying the applicant to practise as a veterinarian; postgraduate training in veterinary epidemiology, wildlife health or a related field is an asset.
- At least five years of relevant professional experience in veterinary medicine, animal-health surveillance, veterinary epidemiology or disease-risk assessment, including livestock health.
- Knowledge of wildlife health, gazelle conservation or dryland pastoral systems in Georgia, the South Caucasus or comparable landscapes is an asset.
- Ability to work with wildlife ecologists and GIS specialists and interpret spatial and seasonal information relevant to disease exposure.
- Experience working with livestock owners, herders, protected-area administrations and government institutions; donor-funded project experience is an asset.
- Strong analytical, consultation and report-writing skills, including ability to prepare professional deliverables in Georgian and English.

VII Award criteria

Evaluation will be made in accordance with the quality/price-based selection method per REC Caucasus procedures and rules. The best value for money will be established by weighing technical quality against price on an 80/20 basis.

The quality of each technical offer will be evaluated in accordance with the award criteria and the associated weighting as detailed in the evaluation grid specified in Annex 1 of this Terms of Reference.
Only offers achieving a technical score of 75 points or more (out of a maximum of 100 points) shall be declared 'technically accepted' and will be considered for the financial evaluation.

Annex 1. Evaluation Grid

Ref. Number076/RECC/G/UNEP 2026 SC 023 *Consultant for the Gazelle - Livestock Disease Risk Assessment*	
EVALUATION GRID	**Maximum**
Quality of technical proposal / approach to the assignment	
(Max 20 points)	
Understanding of the assignment and rationale	5
Proposed methodology and data-collection approach	10
Work plan and timetable	5
Total score for Organisation and methodology	**20**
Consultant	
(Max 80 points)	
Relevant veterinary qualifications and postgraduate training	15
Veterinary, epidemiology, livestock-health and disease-risk assessment experience	25
Wildlife–livestock disease risks and wild ungulate health knowledge	20
Experience working in multi-stakeholder and/or international donor-funded conservation initiatives	10
Facilitation, analytical and reporting skills, including demonstrated capacity to prepare professional deliverables	10
Total score for Consultant	**80**
Overall total score	**100**