THE REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CENTRE FOR THE CAUCASUS

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Consultant for Gazelle-livestock Interactions Study

Publication Reference Number: **076/RECC/G/UNEP 2026 SC 022**

Contract Title:	**Consultancy Service Contract for Gazelle-livestock Interactions Study**		
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)
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 the effective implementation of the restoration plan and ensure long-term viability of the species, the project intends to conduct an assessment of gazelle–livestock interactions, including potential competition for grazing resources, disease transmission risks, and attitudes of livestock herders. Based on the findings, appropriate response measures will be developed to minimize risks and strengthen gazelle conservation.

To support these activities, REC Caucasus intends to recruit a National Consultant to conduct study on gazelle-livestock interactions.

II. General Objective of the Assignment

The overall objective of this assignment is to assess gazelle–livestock interactions, including potential ecological conflicts and socio-economic factors affecting gazelle conservation.

The Consultant will work under the overall guidance and supervision of the RECC Executive Director (Project Director/Supervisor) and in close technical coordination with the RECC Biodiversity and Ecosystem Restoration Lead Expert, MEPA, the Agency of Protected Areas, and the administrations of the relevant protected areas, including the Tusheti Protected Landscape Administration, which manages the Samukhi Multiple-Use Area.

III. Scope of Work

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

a. Study on the gazelle-livestock interactions (possible competition, livestock herders' attitudes, etc.)

The consultant shall conduct a targeted study assessing the interaction between gazelles and livestock within the Dedoplistskaro Biosphere Reserve landscape.

The study should examine:

- potential **competition between livestock and gazelles for grazing resources**;
- livestock management practices in areas where gazelles occur;
- **attitudes and perceptions of livestock herders** towards gazelles and wildlife conservation;
- potential **human–wildlife conflict risks**.

The study shall be based on desk review, field observations, consultations with livestock owners and herders, stakeholder interviews, and analysis of relevant ecological, veterinary and livestock-management data, where available.

The study shall include, at a minimum:

- Compilation and review of available information on the Gazelle population, its habitat use and movements, livestock distribution, grazing practices, water points and areas where Gazelles and livestock interact;

- Assessment of the spatial and seasonal overlap between Gazelles and livestock, including the use and availability of grazing, forage and water resources and provide guidance to project GIS expert to develop relevant maps;
- Assessment of possible competition or displacement between Gazelles and livestock, considering seasonal conditions, drought periods, grazing intensity and access to key resources;
- Review of livestock-management practices in areas used by Gazelles and identification of practices that may adversely affect the Gazelle population or its habitats;
- Assessment of livestock owners' and herders' knowledge, attitudes and perceptions concerning Gazelles, wildlife conservation and livestock–wildlife coexistence;
- Assessment of potential human–wildlife conflict risks and factors affecting community acceptance of Gazelle conservation measures;
- Preparation of spatial outputs identifying areas of significant Gazelle–livestock overlap, potential competition, pressure points and priority areas for management intervention, subject to appropriate restrictions on the disclosure of sensitive species data.

Based on the findings, the consultant shall propose **practical response measures**, which may include:

- Spatially or seasonally adjusted grazing-management measures;
- Measures to reduce competition for forage and water resources;
- Improved management of livestock access to sensitive Gazelle habitats;
- Community and herder engagement measures;
- Awareness-raising and conflict-prevention activities; and
- Further research or monitoring required to address identified knowledge gaps.

The recommendations should support the **long-term coexistence of livestock production and gazelle conservation** in the DBR landscape.

The study report shall clearly distinguish evidence-based findings from assumptions and uncertainties and shall define recommended actions, responsible institutions, implementation priorities, indicative costs and monitoring indicators.

b. Presentation and Validation of Results

The consultant shall present the results of the analysis and recommendations at a **stakeholder consultation meeting**.

Comments and feedback received during the consultation shall be incorporated into the final versions of the reports.

All reports shall include list of literature and sources reviewed and list of stakeholders consulted.

IV. Reporting Obligations, Deliverables and Reporting Schedule

The consultant shall submit the following deliverables electronically in Georgian:

Table 1. Schedule of Reporting Obligations.

Report Index	Name of Deliverable/Means of Verification	Time of Submission
R1	Desk Review and Data-Collection Package, including: (i) review of available ecological, veterinary, livestock-management and socio-economic information; (ii) proposed methodology and detailed work plan; (iii) preliminary stakeholder list and data-gap assessment; and (iv) draft questionnaires, interview guides and field-survey tools for RECC approval.	December, 2026 - January 2027
R2	Field Survey and Draft Study Report, including completed field observations and stakeholder consultations, analysis of questionnaire and interview findings, assessment of gazelle–livestock interactions and proposed spatial outputs, and draft practical recommendations and priority mitigation measures.	February, 2027
R3	Final Study Report, incorporating comments received from RECC and stakeholders and including validated fidings, final maps or mapping guidance, prioritized recommendations, responsible institutions, indicative costs, implementation schedule and monitoring indicators, together with the stakeholder consultation presentation and a response-to-comments matrix.	April, 2027

V. Payment Schedule

The Expert 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 Expert) and submitted by the Expert 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	
R3	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 General Professional Experience

Applicants should meet the following minimum qualifications:

- Advanced university degree (MSc or higher) in biology, zoology, ecology, wildlife management, conservation biology, veterinary science or a closely related field;
- At least 5 years of relevant professional experience in wildlife conservation, ungulate ecology, wildlife–livestock interactions, species restoration or wildlife population management;
- Demonstrated experience designing and conducting field studies, stakeholder interviews or questionnaires and analysing ecological and socio-economic information;
- Knowledge of gazelle conservation and dryland ecosystems in Georgia, the South Caucasus or comparable landscapes;
- Ability to interpret spatial information and work with GIS specialists to define mapping requirements and review spatial outputs;
- Knowledge of relevant international conservation standards and good practice, including IUCN guidance on species recovery planning and wildlife monitoring;
- Experience working with government authorities, protected-area administrations, livestock owners, herders, NGOs and research institutions; experience with GEF, UNEP or other donor-funded projects is an asset;
- Excellent analytical, facilitation and report-writing skills, with demonstrated 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. Number: 076/RECC/G/UNEP 2026 SC 022 *National Consultant for Gazelle–Livestock Interactions Study*	
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**
Expert	
(Max 80 points)	
Relevant academic qualifications in ecology, zoology, wildlife management, conservation biology, veterinary science or a closely related field	10
Relevant professional experience in gazelle or other ungulate conservation, wildlife–livestock interactions, species restoration or wildlife population management	25
Experience in wildlife conservation in dryland ecosystems and/or Georgia, the South Caucasus or comparable landscapes	15
Experience designing and conducting ecological and socio-economic studies, including field surveys, questionnaires or interviews, data analysis and coordination of spatial outputs	20
Experience working in multi-stakeholder and/or international donor-funded conservation initiatives	5
Facilitation, analytical and reporting skills, including demonstrated capacity to prepare professional deliverables in Georgian and English	5
Total score for Expert	**80**
Overall total score	**100**