

National Environment & Planning Agency

Conserving biodiversity and reducing land degradation using an integrated approach

Terms of Reference: Project Assistant

**Prepared by:
National Environment & Planning Agency
August 2020**

Updated October 2021

Terms of Reference for Project Assistant

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Government of Jamaica (GOJ) with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is executing the “Conserving biodiversity and reducing land degradation using an integrated approach” project. The project will be financed with resources from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Government of Jamaica. The executing entity is the National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA).
- 1.2 The project agreement was signed on September 25th 2020, (the Non-reimbursable Financing Agreement 9862) herein referred to as “the Agreement”. This Agreement was signed between Jamaica and the United Nations Development Programme, in the capacity as the Administrator of the Global Environment Facility Fund (GEF) grants for this project.

Project Site and Importance

- 1.3 The project is being implemented within the Cockpit Country. Much of the islands biodiversity and endemism is centred round the Cockpit Country located in the northwest central part of the island.
- 1.4 The wet limestone forest of Cockpit Country is Jamaica’s largest remaining primary forest and a refuge for rare Jamaican species such as the Black-billed Parrot (*Amazona agilis*) and the Giant Swallowtail butterfly (*Pterourus homerus*). At least 66 plants are known to be endemic to the Cockpit Country. Its landscape of steep-sided hills and deep closed valleys eroded from the limestone bedrock is an outstanding example of karst topography.
- 1.5 A majority of the endemic plants in the Cockpit Country are known from single localities or have been collected only a few times and considered threatened or rare. Many of Jamaica’s threatened birds are found here, including the critically endangered Jamaican Blackbird (*Nesoposar nigerrimus*) and both species of Jamaica’s endemic parrots. Almost the entire population of the Black-billed Parrot (95 percent) is found in Cockpit Country.
- 1.6 New species of butterflies endemic to the Cockpit County are still being found. Four of Jamaica’s 14 endemic frogs occur only in the forests and caves of the Cockpit

Country, by far the most important area of habitat for Jamaica's amphibians and reptiles.

- 1.7 Cockpit Country endemic flora and fauna are threatened by a range of human activities, including illegal hunting of birds for food and for the pet trade, unregulated collecting of rare species of plants, extensive logging for yam sticks and timber, and the conversion of forest to agriculture. Clearing of the forest, are mostly along its edges and made accessible by roads, trails and paths and is among one of the greatest threats to the area's ecosystems.
- 1.8 Recognizing the challenge in managing the diverse threats to conservation of forests and their biodiversity in the biologically diverse Cockpit Country, the Government of Jamaica in November 2017 declared a ban on mining in the area to be protected within the Cockpit Country.
- 1.9 Other threats to the natural resources of the Cockpit Country are, forest fragmentation, deforestation and degradation attributed to factors such as poor agricultural practices such as slash and burn, hillside farming, and improper and overuse of fertilizers and pesticides; climate change; invasive alien species such as *Neprolepis multiflora*, grasses such as *Brachiaria decumbens*, Bamboo (*Bambusa vulgaris*), and shrubby trees such as Logwood (*Haematoxylum campechianum*) and *Calliandra calothyrsus* and the Indian Mongoose (*Herpestes javanicus*).
- 1.10 The threats mentioned can be traced to many causes including poor land use and socio-economic planning, weak enforcement, limited political awareness, limited inter-agency collaboration and budget allocation for conservation-related work. Constraints such as limited scientific information, limited expertise in taxonomy and related fields, and limited public awareness on biodiversity could contribute to the threats.
- 1.11 Within the project site, activities will be implemented in target clusters that have been chosen mainly because of their critical importance as centers of endemism and biodiversity hotspot and economic significance. Other criteria include poverty incidence, vulnerability, extent of land use conversion and infrastructure development and land degradation. Project site with clusters attached in Appendix.

Project Objectives and Components

- 1.12 The project's objective is to enhance conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services through mainstreaming of biodiversity into policies and practices into Jamaica's productive landscapes and key sectors. The project will be implemented over a 6-year period between 2020 – 2026.
- 1.13 The project will achieve its objective through incremental activities under three components; Component 1: Systemic and institutional capacity for integrated

landscape management at national level; Component 2: Application of Integrated landscape planning and management in key biodiversity areas; and Component 3: Knowledge management, gender mainstreaming and monitoring and evaluation

- 1.14 The project thus comes at a time when increasing degradation of natural habitats from deforestation and conversion to agriculture and expanding infrastructure and housing development, mining, tourism, and the increase in invasive alien species are becoming increasing threats to critical habitats and ecosystems and their attendant biodiversity.
- 1.15 The project aims to address the negative impacts of unsustainable development practices by trying to establish and operationalize a comprehensive landscape approach in the Cockpit Country that harmonizes socio-economic development, sustainable management of natural resources and conservation of biodiversity in this mixed-use landscape of Jamaica.
- 1.16 The project's interventions are aimed at addressing the linkages between the factors leading to land degradation and biodiversity loss in order to successfully reduce these threats and thereby support viable populations of globally threatened species and allow for the movement of wildlife, facilitate pollination and reproduction, and other processes that support improved natural resiliency to external development and climatic shocks. The experiences and learning from the Cockpit Country are expected to help facilitate replication of sustainable management approaches in other key biodiversity areas in the country.

Partnership for Project Implementation

- 1.17 The NEPA will be responsible for the overall coordination and management of the Project. The project is being implemented collaboratively with the Forestry Department, Rural Agricultural Development Authority, Ministry of Local Government and Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation along with the local authorities in the project site and community stakeholders with special focus on the Maroons.
- 1.18 The success of this project hinges on NEPA's ability to implement the planned environmental interventions coupled with the ability to bring about positive social changes in stakeholders' behaviour towards the environment and the long term adoption of best practices for environmental stewardship. Carefully crafted communication strategy and public awareness campaigns will be utilized to increase public awareness and support the implementation of the overall programme.

2.0 DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1 As a key member of the Technical Coordination Team, the Project Assistant to the National Technical Coordinator and the Project Director with a view to:
- I. Support the management of the project
 - II. Provide logistic and administrative support to the Project Team
 - III. Facilitate knowledge building and stakeholder engagement

Specific Duties

- 2.2 The Project Assistant will be responsible for the following tasks:
- I. Support the drafting of relevant project documents; work plans; budgets and proposals.
 - II. Organize field visits to monitor and ensure implementation of programme activities.
 - III. Coordinate Mid-term and Final evaluations for the programme.
 - IV. Maintain the internal expenditures control system which ensures that vouchers processed are matched and completed and transactions are correctly recorded and posted.
 - V. Plan and coordinate events, including conferences, seminars, workshops, consultations, meetings, press briefings and other project activities.
 - VI. Ensure timely support of logistical services for the project, including organizing missions, travel arrangements, payments, hotel booking, etc.
 - VII. Professional, clear and timely communication with partners and stakeholders, as required to ensure seamless implementation of logistical and events planning tasks and activities.
 - VIII. Support the establishment of strategic partnerships and knowledge exchange with internal and external stakeholders.
 - IX. Support the preparation and dissemination of quarterly and annual reports on project implementation and interventions.

3.0 PROJECT ASSISTANT EXPECTED OUTPUTS

4.0 CHARACTERISTICS OF ENGAGEMENT

Language of delivery:	English
Type of Contract:	Project Staff
Duration of Engagement:	Six years. Contract will be issued for an initial period of three years and is renewable upon satisfactory performance.

Engagement Modality:	Full Time
NEPA's Support:	NEPA will provide office space, computer and office equipment.
Appraisal:	The Project staff will be appraised semi-annually.
Salary Range:	JA \$ 1,246,913.00 - \$1,544,189.00 per annum plus any allowance attached to the post

5.0 QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

a. Education

- I. Bachelor's degree in Business Administration or Management Studies or Public Administration or its equivalent .

b. Work Experience and Related Knowledge

- I. 5 years of progressively responsible administrative and programme implementation experience at the national or international level is required.
- II. At least 3 years of relevant project/programme coordination/management experience is required.
- III. At least 3 years' experience working with government ministries, national or local institutions or an international development partners would be an asset.
- IV. At least 2-3 years of experience in environmental, climate change and other development issues is an advantage.
- V. Knowledge of gender mainstreaming, community development and social inclusion would be an asset
- VI. Experience in the use of computers and office software packages, experience in handling of web- based management systems.

c. Key Competencies

- I. High ethical standards
- II. Strong leadership and team-building skills and positively influence others to achieve objectives.
- III. Self-motivated and ability to work under the pressure;
- IV. Familiarity with logical frameworks and strategic planning;
- V. Strong computer skills;
- VI. Flexible and willing to travel as required;
- VII. Excellent communication and writing skills in English;

- VIII. Ability to deliver results on time, on budget and at the very highest standard.
- IX. Effective communication skills using appropriate communication tools and techniques.
- X. Creativity and innovation to develop new and unique ways to improve operations of the organization and to create new opportunities.'

6.0 MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY AND STANDARDS

The Project Assistant will report directly to the National Technical Coordinator who will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the project.

7.0 INSTITUTIONAL AND OPERATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

