

Terms of References for Ecosystem Service Expert

1. Background and Context

EcoAlbania is a non-governmental organization committed to protecting natural ecosystems and promoting sustainable development in Albania. Established in 2014 as a joint initiative between academics from the University of Tirana and environmental activists involved in the “Save the Blue Heart of Europe” campaign, the organisation has since played an important role in advancing biodiversity conservation, strengthening environmental governance, supporting policy advocacy, and contributing to ecological research at the national level.

Currently, EcoAlbania, in partnership with ResPublica and the Free Thought Forum (FML), is implementing the EU-funded project “PAMANCA – Protected Areas Matters – Advocating for Nature Conservation in Albania”. The project aims to strengthen environmental governance, improve the management of protected areas, and promote more sustainable development practices, while supporting Albania’s alignment with the EU environmental acquis.

Within this context, improving the understanding of the state of conservation of protected areas is essential. While identifying pressures and threats helps explain the challenges ecosystems are facing, it is equally important to understand the benefits that these ecosystems provide to people commonly referred to as ecosystem services. These include provisioning, regulating, cultural, and supporting services, all of which are closely linked to human well-being.

Protected areas in Albania provide a wide range of ecosystem services, such as water regulation, carbon sequestration, soil protection, biodiversity conservation, tourism and recreation opportunities, as well as cultural and social values for local communities. Despite their importance, these services are often underestimated or not fully considered in planning and decision-making processes, which can lead to unsustainable use and management.

In the framework of Activity A3.5, “Produce and share periodical reports on the monitoring of the state of conservation in targeted protected areas (2025–2028)”, the project will develop two State of Conservation Reports (2026 and 2027). To support this process, a structured and evidence-based assessment of ecosystem services in selected protected areas is required.

This assessment will help ensure that ecosystem services are properly reflected as a key component of conservation status, and that they are better integrated into policy

discussions, awareness-raising efforts, and advocacy for improved management of protected areas in Albania.

2. Objective of the Assignment / Procurement

The overall objective of this assignment is to support the preparation of the State of Conservation Reports (2026 and 2027) by providing a structured and evidence-based assessment of ecosystem services in the targeted protected areas:

- Butrint National Park
- Shebenik-Jabllanicë National Park
- Lura–Mali i Dejës National Park
- Buna River–Velipoja Protected Landscape
- Pishë Poro–Nartë Protected Landscape

Specific Objectives:

- To identify, classify, and assess key ecosystem services provided by the targeted protected areas;
 - To analyse their ecological, social, and economic importance, including their contribution to local livelihoods and well-being;
 - To assess trends, pressures, and drivers affecting ecosystem service provision;
 - To explore, where feasible, the economic value of selected ecosystem services to support policy dialogue and sustainable management;
- To contribute to the integration of ecosystem services into the State of Conservation Reports and related advocacy outputs.

3. Scope of Work / Technical Specifications

Under the supervision of and in direct consultations with the EcoAlbania's Project Manager, the expert will be required to implement the following tasks:

Task 1: Review and Methodological Framework

- Review relevant documentation, including protected area management plans, national policies, previous assessments, and project data;
- Develop a practical and context-appropriate methodology for assessing ecosystem services;



- Define key indicators, classification approaches, and data sources.

Task 2: Ecosystem Services Assessment and Mapping

- Identify and classify ecosystem services (provisioning, regulating, and cultural);
- Map their spatial distribution, where feasible and based on available data;
- Analyse their importance, use, and relevance for local communities and ecosystems.

Task 3: Trends, Drivers, and Trade-offs

- Analyse trends in ecosystem services over time;
- Identify key drivers of change (e.g. land-use change, tourism, climate impacts);
- Assess trade-offs between different uses and ecosystem services.

Task 4: Valuation, Reporting, and Use of Findings

- Provide indicative (qualitative or simplified) valuation of selected ecosystem services;
- Prepare analytical inputs for the State of Conservation Reports and ensure alignment with other assessments (e.g. pressures and threats);
- Draft key sections, summaries, and clear messages to support communication, awareness-raising, and advocacy efforts

4. Deliverables and Timeline

The expert will contribute to the development of two State of Conservation Reports within Activity A3.5, through two reporting cycles (2026 and 2027).

Reporting Cycle 1 – 2026

Deliverable	Deadline
D1.1 Inception Report (methodology, analytical framework, data sources, work plan, and outline for ecosystem services assessment)	End of September 2026
D1.2 Draft Ecosystem Services Assessment (including identification, analysis, and initial mapping of key ecosystem services)	Mid October 2026



Deliverable	Deadline
D1.3 Final contribution to the State of Conservation Report (validated analysis, inputs integrated into final report)	End of October 2026

Reporting Cycle 2 – 2027

Deliverable	Deadline
D2.1 Updated methodological note and work plan (if required based on lessons learned)	Mid May 2027
D2.2 Updated Ecosystem Services Assessment (including trend analysis and comparison with 2026 findings)	Beginning of June 2027
D 2.3 Final contribution to the State of Conservation Report (updated analysis and recommendations)	End of June 2027

Additional Notes

- The expert will ensure consistency and comparability of ecosystem services assessment across both reporting cycles;
- All deliverables will be submitted in English and reviewed by EcoAlbania prior to approval;
- Draft deliverables will be subject to feedback and revision before finalization;
- Outputs will directly feed into communication, advocacy, and policy-oriented products of the project.

5. Duration and Location

- **Duration:** 14.09.2026 to 14.07.2027
- **Location:** Tirana and possible business trips to the 5 key Protected Areas regions

6. Required Qualifications / Eligibility Criteria

The expert should meet the following minimum qualifications and experience:

- Master's degree in environmental sciences, ecology, natural resource management, environmental economics, environmental policy, or a related field;
- At least 7 years of proven professional experience in ecosystem services assessment, biodiversity conservation, natural resource management, or related environmental analysis;

- Demonstrated experience in conducting similar assignments, particularly related to ecosystem services assessment, natural capital approaches, ecosystem valuation, or protected area management;
- Experience in spatial analysis and mapping (GIS) of ecosystem services is considered a strong asset;
- Proven experience in working with EU-funded projects or other international donor-funded programmes is considered an advantage;
- Solid experience in reviewing and analysing technical documentation, conducting desk research, and producing high-quality analytical reports;
- Experience in working with public institutions, local authorities, and environmental stakeholders at national and/or local level;
- Strong understanding of ecosystem services frameworks, environmental governance, and policy processes related to protected areas;
- Ability to analyse both qualitative and quantitative data, including where relevant basic valuation approaches, and translate findings into clear, evidence-based conclusions and recommendations;
- Excellent report writing, communication, and presentation skills in English;
- Ability to work independently, manage time effectively, and deliver high-quality outputs within tight deadlines.

7. Budget and Payment Terms

- The financial offer must be submitted in ALL (Albanian Lek) or EUR (Euro) and should include the expert's daily fee, covering all costs related to the assignment.
- The total level of effort for this assignment is estimated at 40 working days, covering both reporting cycles (2026 and 2027).
- The contract amount will be paid in two instalments, linked to the successful delivery and approval of outputs, as follows:
 - 50% of the total contract value upon submission and approval of all deliverables under Reporting Cycle 1 (D1.1, D1.2, D1.3);
 - 50% of the total contract value upon submission and approval of all deliverables under Reporting Cycle 2 (D2.1, D2.2, D2.3).
- All deliverables will be reviewed and approved by the EcoAlbania Project Manager prior to payment.
- VAT must be excluded from the financial offer, as it is not eligible under the project funding rules.
- The offered price shall be lump sum and all-inclusive, covering professional fees, travel, accommodation, field visits, and any other related costs. No additional costs will be reimbursed.



8. Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Weight (%)
Technical Proposal	50%
Financial Offer	30%
Responsiveness	20%

9. Submission Guidelines

- Deadline: 10.09.2026, 17:00 CET
- Email or physical address for submission
- Required documents: Proposal including the methodology and financial offer, CV/Portfolio, References.

10. Ethical Considerations and Conflict of Interest

EcoAlbania's code of ethics must be respected, and any potential conflict of interest must be declared by the service provider.

Proposal Form

Applicants' company name:	
Address:	
E-mail:	
Legal representative (name and position):	
Date of the offer:	
Validity (minimum 30 days):	
Signature and stamp:	

Price offer*:	
Number of days:	
Day rate:	
Total price (net):	
VAT amount (%):	
Total price including VAT:	

** Price includes work of applicant's travel and all related costs for implementation of the above-mentioned services. No additional costs can be charged by the contracted party.*

Bidder's declaration

The bidder declares with the submission of this offer

- that he is aware of the tender's regulations,
- that he has the authorization to execute the order
- that he will engage, according to the requirements, the necessary workers, employees, consultants, and other members of staff and can thus meet the tendered deadlines.
- that he will provide the offered service on the terms and prices quoted
- that his offer is binding until the acceptance of the tender's deadline

Place, Date

Signature of legal representative

