



TERMS OF REFERENCE

for services on the preparation of scientific, socio-ecological and economic justification and a complete set of documents for the official establishment of the **ecological corridor between the specially protected natural areas “Kulun-Ata” and “Kara-Shoro”**

Project	"Integrated Community-based Management of High Value Mountain Ecosystems in Southern Kyrgyzstan for Multiple Benefits" (UNDP-GEF)
Project Activity	1.1.3. Identification and official establishment of a wildlife corridor (~35,000 ha) between Kara-Shoro State Nature Park and Kulun-Ata State Nature Reserve
Client	The International Snow Leopard Trust (SLT)
Legal basis	Decree of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic "On Approval of the Procedure for the Organization of Ecological Corridors in the Kyrgyz Republic" No. 127 of 1 April 2021
Target area	Uzgen and Kara-Kulja districts, Osh Oblast
Start date	July 2026
Completion date	June 2027

1. Background

This Terms of Reference (ToR) defines the scope, content and requirements for services to be provided by the implementing organization for the preparation of a complete set of documents for the official establishment of an ecological corridor between Kara-Shoro State Nature Park (Uzgen district) and Kulun-Ata State Nature Reserve (Kara-Kulja district), Osh Oblast, Kyrgyz Republic.

The activity is implemented under Activity 1.1.3 of the UNDP/GEF project. The legal basis is the Decree of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic No. 127 of 1 April 2021 "On Approval of the Procedure for the Organization of Ecological Corridors in the Kyrgyz Republic" (hereinafter — the Procedure).

The estimated area of the corridor is approximately 35,000 ha. The Contractor is required to verify this figure through field and analytical work and to submit a justified proposal on refined corridor boundaries.

1.1. Available data and materials

Within the framework of the project, prior to the commencement of work, the Contractor may be provided with supporting materials collected by SLT and partners: camera trap data on snow leopards and ungulates, including additional data to be collected by SLT during the contract implementation period, land cover data and habitat suitability maps for key species, as well as a preliminary scheme of the proposed corridor.

These materials are provided for informational purposes only and do not relieve the Contractor of the obligation to independently conduct field surveys, collect primary data, and develop an independent scientific justification in accordance with the requirements of the Procedure. All scientific findings included in the official documentation package must be based on data collected and verified directly by the Contractor.

It should also be noted that a parallel research programme on population genetics and genomic connectivity of large mammals (snow leopard, argali, ibex) across the Pamir-Alai landscape is being implemented with the involvement of leading international scientific institutions, with results expected in early 2027. The Contractor should take this research into account as relevant scientific context and ensure that the corridor justification it develops does not contradict its preliminary findings, where such findings are available at the time of the work.

1.2. Minimum data collection requirements

The minimum dataset to be collected by the Contractor includes:

- data on the presence and distribution of key species along survey transects;
- data on the landscape and geographical characteristics of the territory, ecosystem condition and biodiversity;
- cartographic and land management data on land use, including pasture plots and land inventory;
- data on infrastructure (roads, settlements, historical and cultural heritage sites);
- information on subsoil use licences within the corridor territory;
- results of the socio-ecological survey among the local population.

2. Objectives

2.1. Main objective

The official establishment of the ecological corridor "Kulun-Ata — Kara-Shoro" in accordance with the requirements of Government Decree No. 127, through the preparation of a complete set of documents, completion of all legally required approval procedures, and submission of materials for an official decision by the authorized body.

2.2. Specific tasks

1. Conduct field ecological surveys of the planned corridor area to assess the state of biodiversity, habitats of key species, ecological barriers and migration routes.
2. Develop scientific, ecological and economic justification for the establishment of the corridor, including an assessment of the conservation value of the territory and possible scenarios of impact on land users.
3. Conduct spatial analysis and determine optimal corridor boundaries, taking into account species distribution data, landscape structure, land use and infrastructure.
4. Organize and conduct sociological surveys and consultations with the local population, local self-government bodies, pasture users and other stakeholders, including an assessment of existing pasture use rights and traditional livestock grazing routes within the planned corridor area.
5. Develop proposals for a corridor management regime that ensures compatibility between wildlife conservation objectives, traditional pasture use and other community land uses.
6. Prepare a complete set of documents for the official establishment of the corridor in accordance with the Procedure, including an ecological passport, boundary description with coordinates, and cartographic materials.

7. Support all approval procedures with authorized bodies through to the adoption of an official decision.

3. Scope of work and deliverables

Work is carried out in four consecutive phases. Transition to the next phase occurs after acceptance of the results of the previous phase by SLT.

Activity	Deliverable	Timeline	Payment
Phase 0. Preparation			
Development of a detailed work plan, methodology and schedule with review and approval by SLT, UNDP and MNRETS.	Approved work plan with detailed methodology for all types of work, including the methodology for the socio-ecological survey (sampling and instruments).	Month 1	20%
Collection and critical analysis of all available data on the territory	Analytical note on data completeness; list of data gaps		
Participation in a coordination meeting with the MNRETS Working Group	Meeting minutes; agreed methodology		
Phase 1. Field surveys and primary data collection			
Assessment of conservation value of the territory: ecosystem condition, biodiversity, habitats of key species (snow leopard, ibex, argali, golden eagle and other key fauna and flora species as listed in the project document)	Field survey report with photo documentation, species composition data and habitat condition assessment	Months 2–4	40%
Inventory of objects within the territory: settlements, pastures, lands of other designations, public roads, historical and cultural heritage sites	Inventory register with GIS layers		
Socio-ecological survey among the local population to assess land use, interests and concerns	Survey report with analysis of interests and concerns		
Mapping of migration routes for key species and ecological barriers	Maps with description of identified routes and barriers		
Phase 2. Analytical work and development of justifications			
Spatial analysis and determination of optimal corridor boundaries	GIS files with proposed boundaries; boundary description with list of	Months 5–7	20%

based on field data and GIS modelling	geographic coordinates of characteristic points		
Development of scientific, social and ecological justification: corridor significance, key species, ecosystem services, fragmentation risks	Scientific, social and ecological justification (separate document, per clause 13.8 of the Procedure)		
Development of economic justification: assessment of impact on land users, possible restrictions on economic activities	Economic justification with proposals on the corridor management regime		
Development of a draft corridor management regime	Draft Regulation on the ecological corridor "Kulun-Ata — Kara-Shoro"		
Phase 3. Official documentation package and approvals			
Preparation of the complete official documentation package for submission to MNRETS and the Office of the Plenipotentiary Representative of the Government of the KR	Complete package under Procedure No. 127: scientific, ecological and economic justification; boundary description with coordinates; schematic map; land inventory; draft Regulation; Ecological Passport	Months 8-11	10%
Support of approvals with MNRETS, subsoil use authorities, local self-government bodies and sectoral agencies	Outgoing letters, meeting minutes, received conclusions		
Conduct at least 2 public consultations with local communities and land users, including pasture users, with mandatory consideration of issues related to the preservation of access to pasture lands	Consultation minutes, attendance sheets, summary of comments and responses		
Final report. Includes a section on the corridor monitoring mechanism and recommendations for further follow-up	Final report and presentation for SLT and MNRETS	Month 12	10%

The expected final result of the contract is an official decision by the authorized body on the establishment of the ecological corridor, or, at an intermediate stage, a complete documentation package submitted to MNRETS and ready for consideration.

4. Requirements for the implementing organization

Legal entities and individuals registered as individual entrepreneurs in the Kyrgyz Republic are invited to participate. Applications from consortia are accepted provided that roles are clearly distributed between participants.

Minimum requirements:

- Legal entity or individual entrepreneur registered in the Kyrgyz Republic; at least 5 years of operational experience.
- At least 2 completed projects in the field of nature conservation, protected area management or ecological planning in the KR.
- Demonstrated experience of interaction with MNRETS or equivalent authorities.
- Experience in conducting field ecological surveys in mountainous areas of the KR.
- Experience in pasture use and land use issues in mountainous areas of the KR.
- Access to expertise in spatial analysis and cartographic materials preparation (in-house specialist or engaged subcontractor).
- Experience in conducting socioecological surveys and consultations with local communities.

5. Coordination with the Working Group

The authorized body for the establishment of the ecological corridor is the Working Group formed by MNRETS in accordance with clause 11 of the Procedure. The Contractor acts as a technical service provider in support of the Working Group's activities and does not replace its functions.

Under the contract, the Contractor is required to:

- Participate in all Working Group meetings convened by MNRETS.
- Provide the Working Group with all materials under development in a timely manner for review.
- Incorporate Working Group comments when revising documents.
- Ensure all materials comply with the requirements of Procedure No. 127.

Coordination of the Contractor's interaction with MNRETS is carried out by Snow Leopard Trust. The Contractor submits monthly progress reports to SLT.

6. Institutional Conditions

- UNDP Kyrgyzstan provides overall supervision of contract implementation, quality assurance, and participates in the acceptance of key deliverables jointly with SLT.
- All final reports, cartographic materials, GIS layers and other datasets produced under this contract shall be transmitted to UNDP Kyrgyzstan, MNRETS and SLT in editable formats (including source GIS files, shapefiles, raster data in GeoTIFF format, and text documents in .docx/.xlsx formats).
- All products developed under this contract must comply with the visibility requirements of the UNDP-GEF project. Any public communications related to the results of the assignment shall be agreed with SLT and UNDP Kyrgyzstan prior to publication.
- Intellectual property rights to all products belong to the UNDP-GEF project and MNRETS.
- The assignment is implemented in full compliance with **UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards¹** at all stages of project implementation.

7. Proposal requirements

¹ <https://www.undp.org/publications/undp-social-and-environmental-standards>

- Understanding of the assignment — a brief statement of understanding of the ToR objectives and the specifics of the legal process for establishing an ecological corridor in the KR.
- Methodology — a detailed description of the approach to field surveys, spatial analysis, development of justifications and preparation of official documents, including a description of the proposed approach to the socio-ecological survey: sampling and survey instruments.
- Work plan — a detailed schedule indicating deadlines for each deliverable.
- Team composition — CVs of key personnel.
- Portfolio — description of at least 2 similar projects with references.
- Itemized budget broken down by phase and cost category (USD).

8. Submission of proposal

Proposals are accepted until **18:00 on 20 July 2026** at the following email address: procurement@snowleopard.org. SLT reserves the right to reject any proposal or cancel this request for proposals at any stage without explanation. All costs associated with the preparation of proposals are borne by the applicant.