

Terms of Reference	
Position: JUNIOR NON-KEY EXPERT - Newts Expert	
1. Results' chain and description of the assignment:	
1.1 Project title	STRENGTHENING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK IN NATURE PROTECTION SECTOR AND FURTHER IMPLEMENTATION OF NATURA 2000 IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA
1.2 Beneficiary	Main beneficiary of the activity is the Ministry of Environment (MEP) in Serbia
1.3 Result's chain	The overall objective of this action contributes is to support the protection of the environment, improve its quality and contribute to actions and policies aimed at biodiversity conservation in Serbia.
	Outcome 1: To provide continuous support in identification and designation of the Natura 2000 sites establishing the base for successful implementation and management of future Natura 2000 network
	Output 1: A finalised list of all potential Sites of Community Importance (pSCI) and Special Protection Areas (SPA) across Serbia Output 2: Comprehensive SDFs with harmonized data on species, and site boundaries for all proposed Natura 2000 sites Output 4 - 23: Detailed management plans for at least 20 potential Natura 2000 Sites, outlining conservation priorities, actions, monitoring methods, and stakeholder roles
1.4 Activity title	AI.1 Conduct research on the territory of the Republic of Serbia for the identification and designation the remaining SPAs and pSCIs of NATURA 2000 network to achieve 100% AI.2 If needed, revise some of the Standard Data Forms (SDF) and complete SDF (Standard Data Form) for the remaining selected sites based on research conducted AI.3 Biogeographical seminars AI.5 Development of a minimum 20 Management Plans for potential Natura 2000 Sites
1.5 Background and purpose	<p>The primary purpose of this assignment is to support the further identification, validation, designation and management planning of Natura 2000 sites in Serbia, with a specific focus on newt species¹. The expert will contribute to the completion of the Natura 2000 network through gap analysis, identification of missing species data, targeted field verification where required, harmonisation of datasets, preparation and revision of Standard Data Forms (SDFs), participation in biogeographical seminars if required, and technical support to the development of Natura 2000 management planning documentation.</p> <p>The expert will contribute to the preparation of management plans for selected Natura 2000 sites by applying the agreed methodologies, including field verification of data gaps, assessment of the conservation status of newt species and their habitats, identification of pressures and threats, formulation of conservation objectives and proposal of appropriate management measures based on available data and field knowledge.</p> <p>The expert shall provide scientifically sound technical inputs, practical field support, quality control of newt species data, mapping support, and contributions to consultations, reporting, management planning and decision making processes related to Natura 2000 implementation in Serbia.</p>
1.6 Requested services	<p>AI.1: Contribute to the validation of previously identified Natura 2000 sites and support gap analysis and additional field surveys related to newt species. Assist in the integration and harmonisation of species datasets, preparation of maps and technical documentation, and contribute to the preparation of the draft national list of Natura 2000 sites. Participate, where relevant and required, in stakeholder consultations and dissemination activities related to Natura 2000 site identification and designation.</p> <p>AI.2: Support the review, revision, and completion of Standard Data Forms (SDFs) for proposed Natura 2000 sites, with a focus on newt species. Contribute to quality control, harmonisation of species data, mapping consistency, and verification of conservation relevant information in line with EU Natura 2000 requirements.</p> <p>AI.3: If required, contribute technical expertise and scientific inputs to the preparation and implementation of biogeographical seminars, including presentation and clarification of newt species data, site selection rationale, conservation priorities, and ecological coherence of the proposed Natura 2000 network.</p> <p>AI.5: Contribute to the preparation of Management Plans for potential Natura 2000 sites through assessment of newt species based on available ecological data, mapping results and field information. Apply the agreed methodologies and criteria for conservation status assessment, identification of pressures and threats, definition of conservation objectives, and selection of management measures. Contribute to species mapping, ecological evaluation, zonation and preparation of management planning documentation.</p>
1.7 Implementation modalities	The expert will directly report to the Deputy Team Leader (DTL) and will cooperate closely with the Team Leader (TL) and relevant non-key experts.

¹ For the purpose of this ToR, references to newts, mammals, bats, fish, amphibians, newts, reptiles, invertebrates, Lepidoptera species (Odonata sp.), beetles (Coleoptera sp.), grasshoppers (Orthoptera sp.), Lepidoptera, butterflies, moths, molluscs, crayfish and other taxonomic groups shall be understood as referring exclusively to species listed in Annexes II and/or IV of the Habitats Directive, unless stated otherwise

	Performance of the assignment will be assessed by the TL and DTL based on timely delivery, technical quality and effective cooperation with the project team and beneficiaries.
2. Expert inputs	
2.1 Deliverables	<p>For Output 1 the expert will deliver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contribution to Validation of Potential Natura 2000 Sites: Technical inputs for the validation, ecological assessment, and delineation of potential Natura 2000 sites related to newt species. ▪ Gap Analysis and Additional Survey Inputs: Identification of missing data and priority areas for additional surveys related to newt species, including species distribution, conservation status, pressures, and threats. ▪ Draft Species Data Contributions: Technical species datasets, maps, and expert assessments contributing to the preparation of the draft national list of Natura 2000 sites. <p>For Output 2 the expert will deliver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contribution to Review and Completion of SDFs: Technical inputs for the review, revision, harmonisation, and completion of Standard Data Forms (SDFs) related to newt species. ▪ Species Quality Control Inputs: Expert verification and quality control of newt species data, species interpretation, ecological consistency, and mapping outputs in line with Natura 2000 standards. ▪ Contribution to Biogeographical Seminars, if required: Participation in biogeographical seminars and related expert discussions, including presentation and clarification of newt species data, ecological justification of proposed Natura 2000 sites, and technical support during the evaluation of site completeness and coherence of the proposed Natura 2000 network. <p>For Output 4–23 the expert will deliver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contribution to Management Planning Documentation: Technical inputs for the preparation of Management Plans for potential Natura 2000 sites, including newt species assessments, ecological evaluations, and conservation planning recommendations. ▪ Missing Data Collection and Assessment Inputs: Gathering and assessment of missing ecological data related to newt species, including species condition and habitats, conservation status, pressures, and threats. ▪ Conservation Measures Proposals: Proposals for conservation objectives, management measures, species management recommendations, and zonation related to newt species.
2.2 No of missions	<p>Up to 5 missions for field verification and mapping of newt species of European interest (in particular species listed in Annexes II and IV of the Habitats Directive) in selected Natura 2000 candidate sites and, where required, in other sites with missing data, depending on project needs and subject to prior approval by the project team.</p> <p>The missions are expected to take place during the periods March–June 2027, and, if necessary, also during March–June 2028.</p>
2.3. Indicative starting day	07/2026
2.4 Completion	10/2028
2.5. Location	Serbia, including Belgrade and selected Natura 2000 candidate sites
3. Requested qualifications	
3.1 Qualification and Skills:	Completed university studies of at least three years in a relevant field, or in the absence of formal education six years of professional experience in addition to the minimum requested general professional experience.
	Proficient in English language.
	Excellent communication and analytical skills
	Proficient in report drafting
3.2 General Professional Experience	Excellent team working abilities
	At least 3 years of general professional experience in amphibian ecology, nature conservation or a closely related field
3.3 Specific Professional Experience	Proven experience in species identification, newt species inventory, aquatic and terrestrial field surveys, and field survey work, preferably including at least one relevant project.
	At least 3 years of experience relevant to the nature conservation sector in the Western Balkans, or equivalent experience in comparable European contexts.
	Proven experience in data collection, systematisation, validation and inventory of newt species, demonstrated through projects, studies, publications or technical reports.
	Experience with Natura 2000, the EU Habitats Directive, Standard Data Forms, pSCI/SCI site selection, biogeographical seminars or management planning will be considered a strong advantage.
3.4 Added value	Previous experience in the environment and nature protection sector, and/or previous cooperation with state administration or public institutions, will be considered an advantage.
	Knowledge of the local (Serbian) language will be considered as an asset
4. Reporting	

4.1 Language	English
4.2 Report type/content	Short monthly reports in English describing ongoing and completed activities and outputs, following the format provided under the Article 1.6 Requested services.
4.3 Submission date	End of each calendar month

Note that civil servants and other staff of the public administration of the partner country, or of international/regional organisations based in the country, shall only be able to provide input as experts if well justified. The justification should be submitted with the tender and shall include information on the added value the expert will bring as well on any potential interference or conflict of interest of the proposed expert in his/her function as expert and his/her present or previous functions working as civil servant. Moreover proof should be submitted that the expert is seconded or on personal leave.
