

TERMS OF REFERENCE (ToR)

Consultancy Services for the Mats'eng Biosphere Reserve Project

1. Background

The Kingdom of Lesotho, in collaboration with the UNESCO Man and Biosphere (MAB) programme designated the Mats'eng Biosphere Reserve in 2021. This is in line with the country's Medium-Term Implementation Strategy for the National Vision 2030, and the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) 2018-2023 which provides clear indications of government's commitment to the protection of the nation's biodiversity assets, natural and cultural heritage, and its desire to fully utilise such resources through conservation, education, research and tourism to advance socio-economic development.

As part of its strategic commitment to sustainable development and conservation, the Government of Lesotho developed the Mats'eng Biosphere Reserve Integrated Management Plan (2021–2030), driven by a vision to :

“a unique and well protected Biosphere Reserve with an intertwined symbiotic relationship between humans and nature. A place where the stewardship of biodiversity and culture is supported and promoted, and where research, education, and learning are encouraged, where people use natural resources wisely, through environmental, heritage, and tourism community-based projects for sustainable livelihoods while maintaining the ecological integrity of the area, for present and future generations.”

The Greening Education Partnership (GEP) was launched at the UN Transforming Education Summit in September 2022 as a global initiative to deliver strong, coordinated, and comprehensive action to support countries to accelerate education responses to prepare every learner to acquire the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes to tackle climate change and to promote sustainable development. As an open and inclusive community of practice which, to date, includes over 1300 organizations and 87 Member States, the GEP aims to 'get every learner climate-ready' through 4 pillars of action: Greening Schools; Greening Curriculum; Greening Teacher Training, and Education System's Capacities and Greening Communities.

UNESCO ROSA, through the strategic initiative 41C/IP2, titled "Advancing Scientific and Environmental Education for Sustainable Development and Resilient Societies", is implementing projects aimed at advancing transformative education to address the urgent challenges posed by climate change. In Lesotho, UNESCO ROSA in collaboration with the National Commission for UNESCO and other partners is implementing concrete learning activities focused on climate change education and education for sustainable development using UNESCO-designated sites, Biosphere Reserves. For instance, from 2023 to mid-2024, Lesotho participated in the Greening education Partnership, through consultations and school piloting of global guides- the Greening Curriculum Guidance and the Green School Quality standard, both developed by UNESCO at the international level.

2.Objectives of the Consultancy

The consultancy has two primary, interconnected objectives, both focused on the initial implementation of the Matšeng Biosphere Reserve Integrated Management Plan. These objectives are: (1) raising awareness among key stakeholders—including communities, government officials, and NGOs—about the Biosphere Reserve and its Integrated Management Plan; and (2) implementing the Greening School Model, based on the UNESCO Green School Quality Standard, in three BR schools. This model will concentrate on enhancing the greening of four key areas: school governance, facilities and operations, teaching and learning, and community engagement

3. Scope of Work

Specifically, UNESCO seeks to engage a consultant to do the following (in liaison with the Lesotho National Commission for UNESCO):

- Develop a comprehensive understanding of the key frameworks guiding the UNESCO MaB programme, the Matšeng Biosphere Reserve Integrated Management Plan as well as the Greening Education Partnership.
- Design a programme, assemble educational materials and resources to support 1) raising awareness among key stakeholders—including communities, government officials, and NGOs—about the Biosphere Reserve and its Integrated Management Plan; and (2) implementing the Greening School Model, based on the UNESCO Green School Quality Standard, in three BR schools.
- Conduct consultation and capacity development workshops for the two primary, interconnected objectives above with key stakeholders.
- Develop monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks to assess project implementation and initial results.

4. Deliverables

The deliverables for this consultancy shall be the following:

1. An inception report that includes a programme, educational materials and resources in preparation for the work on the two interconnected objectives above.
2. A final report with clear evidence on activities and initial results on achieving the two interconnected objectives.

5. Duration and Timeline

The consultancy will be carried out over a period of **5 months** from the date of contract signing. The timeline for key deliverables will be agreed upon with the selected consultants.

6. Required Qualifications and Experience

Interested consultants should possess the following qualifications:

- MSc in Social Science, Environmental Studies, Education, Sustainable Development, or related fields.
- At least **5 years of experience** in working on biosphere reserve management, Education for Sustainable Development, and Green School Initiatives or conservation projects.
- Proven experience in capacity building, stakeholder engagement, and governance training.
- Strong knowledge of the UNESCO MAB Programme, climate resilience strategies, and integrating ESD in the curriculum.
- Excellent communication, facilitation, and report-writing skills.

7. Application Process

Interested consultants must submit the following documents:

- A technical and financial proposal outlining their approach to the consultancy.
- Updated CV(s) of key personnel involved.
- Evidence of past relevant work (reports, references, etc.).
- Proposed work plan and timeline.

8. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- Technical expertise and experience (40%)
- Proposed methodology and approach (30%)
- Financial proposal (20%)
- Previous experience in Lesotho or similar contexts (10%)

9. Reporting and Supervision

The consultants will report directly to the **UNESCO Regional Office of Southern Africa**, under the direct/close supervision of the Lesotho National Commission for UNESCO in collaboration with the MAB National Committee. Regular progress meetings and updates will be required as and when the Lesotho National Commission for UNESCO deems necessary.

10. Submission Deadline

All proposals must be submitted by 28 April 2025 17:00 (UTC+2) to vacancies.harare@unesco.org. Late submissions will not be considered.