



ANNEX II: TERMS OF REFERENCE

Digital Transformation of Water Sector: Strategic Planning & Capacity Development - 17 - PRO512WEB-2024

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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1. Beneficiary Country

N/A

1.2. Contracting Authority

Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfMS or Contracting Authority)

Palau de Pedralbes

Pere Duran Farell, 11

08034 Barcelona, Spain

1.3. The Union for the Mediterranean

Created by the 43 Euro-Mediterranean Heads of State and Government meeting in Paris on 13 July 2008, the UfM Secretariat is a multilateral partnership composed of 43 countries (www.ufmsecretariat.org) (all EU Member States and 16 countries of the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean) with the mandate of enhancing regional cooperation and integration between both shores of the Mediterranean Sea. Its Secretariat (the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean) is the first permanent structure dedicated to the intergovernmental Mediterranean partnership. The Secretariat is the platform to operationalize and follow-up decisions taken at political level with a view to monitoring progress in the implementation of Ministerial Declarations' commitments and promoting the initiatives, programmes and projects intended to foster cooperation in the region.

Its multi-partner approach is crucial for seizing opportunities through the exchange of best practices, sharing of experiences, identifying new and innovative methodologies and developing regional and sub-regional networks, following the principles of co-ownership and variable geometry and in collaboration with other key stakeholders in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

1.4 Digitalisation within the UfM Water Agenda

The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) recognizes the urgent need for digital transformation in the water sector to address contemporary challenges and optimize resource management. In response, the UfM Secretariat is issuing a tender to procure technical assistance and training services for UfM countries. This initiative aligns with the UfM Water Agenda, focusing on enhancing capacities for the implementation of digital solutions in the water sector.

The UfM has conducted in 2023 a comprehensive study on the digital transformation of the water sector in the Mediterranean, to gain a deeper understanding of its current state, value potential, and key challenges. This was a necessary step to gain knowledge that will enable us to formulate effective strategies to achieve the UFM Water Agenda and address the pressing water-related issues in the region.

The Digital Transformation of the Water Sector in the Mediterranean Region is not merely a technological upgrade but a strategic and comprehensive effort to secure the future of water resources. By embracing digital innovation, the Mediterranean region aims to forge a path towards water security, ecological sustainability, and resilience in the face of evolving environmental dynamics. This initiative stands as a testament to the commitment of the UfM to catalyse positive



change and foster a harmonious coexistence between human societies and the natural environment in this culturally rich and historically significant part of the world.

Recognising the need for innovative and sustainable solutions, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) has embarked on a transformative journey to address water-related issues through digital means. The Digital Transformation of the Water Sector in the Mediterranean Region initiative is a response to the complex interplay of environmental, social, and economic factors affecting the region's water resources.

The digital transformation of the water sector in the Mediterranean region can have a multifaceted impact on employment and trade, ranging from direct job creation in technology-related fields to the facilitation of cross-border collaboration and sustainable practices.

2. OBJECTIVE, SCOPE OF WORK, TASKS, AND EXPECTED RESULTS

2.1. Objectives

The primary objectives of the contract are:

- To establish a strategic governance framework, ensuring effective coordination and collaboration among stakeholders.
- To identify key stakeholders and form governance bodies to facilitate a collaborative approach.
- To prepare a detailed plan outlining the main steps, timelines, and resource requirements for the formulation of the Digital Transformation Strategy.
- To enhance the technical capabilities of UfM countries in implementing digital solutions for the water sector.
- To strengthen communication strategies and reporting mechanisms for effective project management.
- To promote employment opportunities and stimulate trade through the adoption of digital technologies in water management.

2.2. Expected results

The Contractor shall produce:

- UfM Community of Practice Engagement Report: Documenting insights and feedback gathered from consultations with the Community of Practice.
- Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) Framework: A clear framework outlining measurable KPIs aligned with project objectives.
- Roles and Skill Gaps Analysis Report: Providing a comprehensive overview of current roles, responsibilities, and identified skill gaps.
- Training Delivery Mechanisms Recommendation Report: Detailing the recommended training delivery mechanisms based on their alignment with identified needs and preferences.
- Training and Capacity-Building Plan: Conduct capacity-building workshops or training sessions as per the developed plan, addressing specific skills and knowledge areas crucial for digital transformation.



- Documentation of Lessons Learned from best practices in the UfM region: Compile a comprehensive document highlighting lessons learned throughout the capacity development process, including successful strategies and areas for improvement.
- Final Evaluation Report: Provide a final evaluation report summarizing the overall impact of the capacity development initiatives on enhancing digital transformation in the Mediterranean water sector.

3. ASSUMPTIONS & RISKS

3.1. Assumptions Underlying the Project

The main assumption is that the UfM Regional Platform, under the guidance of the UfM senior officials, maintains the necessary momentum and political will to foster digitalisation in the water sector and deliver the UfM WEFE Nexus Programme of Work.

3.2. Risks

The main risk is that the UfM member states and water utilities do not sufficiently engage in the activities described in this assignment, for example due to the workloads of the officials with an interest and expertise in water issues or the availability of personnel within water utilities.

4. SCOPE OF THE WORK

4.1. Scope of work

To assist the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean in carrying out an assessment of the extent of development regarding the insertion of digitalisation in national water systems (digital readiness), the capacity development needs when it comes to digitalisation and implement capacity-building programmes and initiatives to enhance the digital skills and knowledge of individuals involved in water management across the Mediterranean region. It shall take place between September 2024 and December 2026 and will encompass the UfM core activities that foster cross-sectoral, coherent and integrated perspectives of water resources management.

4.2. Tasks

The selected contractor will be responsible for:

- Conducting an initial assessment of the digital readiness of participating UfM countries
- To provide an opportunity for UfM member states and partners to share knowledge by presenting their work and experiences on the digitalisation of the water sector
- Designing and delivering training programs for key stakeholders, including government officials, technical staff, and project managers
- Developing a strategic framework that aligns with the UfM Water Agenda and addresses the specific needs of each participating country
- Providing ongoing technical assistance, knowledge transfer, and capacity building
- Establishing robust communication strategies to ensure effective collaboration among project stakeholders
- Conducting regular verification and reporting activities to monitor progress and address challenges, if needed

The Training Needs Assessment Phase is a critical component of the digital transformation initiative for UfM Countries, ensuring that stakeholders are well-prepared and equipped to manage the new digital system effectively. The following key tasks and deliverables outline the strategic approach for this phase:

Training Needs Assessment Phase:

- **Engage with UfM member states:**
 - **Objective:** Collaborate closely with the UfM member states through the Community of Practice to gain a comprehensive understanding of their current capabilities, existing skill sets, and industry best practices relevant to the digital transformation project
 - **Tasks:**
 - Conduct consultations and interviews with key members of the Community of Practice
 - Identify their current strengths, areas for improvement, and expectations from the digital transformation
- **Define Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):**
 - **Objective:** Establish measurable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and metrics to gauge the success of the training plan within the digital transformation roadmap
 - **Tasks:**
 - Collaborate with stakeholders to define KPIs aligned with the identified needs and objectives
 - Ensure that the KPIs are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART)
- **Identify Training Delivery Mechanisms:**
 - **Objective:** Determine the most effective training delivery mechanisms tailored to UfM Countries, aligning with identified needs and employee preferences
 - **Tasks:**
 - Explore various training delivery options such as workshops, e-learning, on-the-job training, and others
 - Consider factors like accessibility, scalability, and effectiveness in choosing appropriate training mechanisms
 - Align chosen mechanisms with the diverse learning preferences of UfM Countries' stakeholders

Key activities include:

- **Formulate a Community of Practice for Digitalisation.** Define and establish a Community of Practice for Digitalisation consisting of experts, stakeholders, and representatives from member countries with a keen interest and expertise in digitalization within the water sector. This Community of Practice will **report to the UfM Regional Platform on Water and the dialogue established around it.**
- **Capacity Development:** Develop and implement capacity-building programs and initiatives to enhance the digital skills and knowledge of individuals involved in water management across the Mediterranean region. This includes government officials, professionals, and other relevant stakeholders.
- **Piloting one peer review study with a water utility.** This will include: (1) developing a methodology for the UfM water Community of Practice for Digitalisation peer reviews, (2) developing a tailored concept note for a peer review, (3) managing a team of up to 3 officials from other member states to take part in the peer review, (4) organizing a national workshop, and



(5) drafting the peer review report. (The travel costs of officials from other member states that will take part in the peer review will be covered by the UfM Water directly).

- **Engagement in UfM Events:** Actively engage with and contribute to upcoming UfM events, conferences, and forums to bring the digitalization agenda to the forefront of discussions. This involvement aims to foster collaboration, share insights, and promote the integration of digital solutions in water management practices.
- **Promotion of Best Practices:** Identify, document, and promote best practices in digitalization within the water sector, drawing on successful examples from UfM countries and beyond. This knowledge-sharing initiative aims to accelerate the adoption of effective digital solutions.
- **Awareness and Advocacy:** Raise awareness about the importance of digitalization in optimizing water management processes. Advocate for the integration of digital technologies to enhance efficiency, sustainability, and resilience in the Mediterranean water sector.
- **Collaboration and Networking:** Facilitate collaboration and networking among UfM member countries, fostering a community of practice dedicated to the digital transformation of the water sector. This collaborative approach aims to leverage collective expertise and experiences.

Strategic Planning: Contribute to the development of strategic plans and guidelines for the digitalization of the water sector, aligning with regional goals and objectives. This includes the identification of key areas for digital intervention and the establishment of a roadmap for implementation.

4.3. Project management

4.3.1. Responsible body

The project will be managed by UfM Water, Environment and Blue Economy Division.

All issues related to the technical elements in relation to this contract, mainly the specific activities as outlined in section 4.2. of these Terms of Reference, shall be taken by the project manager nominated by the contracting authority pursuant to special conditions of contract Article 2.1. The project manager will ensure these tasks in accordance with UfM internal rules and procedures.

5. LOGISTICS AND TIMING

5.1. Location

The members of the Consultant team will work from their home bases. These Terms of Reference foresee up to 10 missions of the Team Leader across the UfM region. The Team Leader will hold online meetings with the Project Manager at least once every three weeks to ensure that the work progresses according to plan and address any difficulties encountered.

5.2. Commencement date and period of implementation of tasks

The expected start date is in October 2024 and the period of implementation of the contract will be **maximum 28 months** from this date. Please see Articles 19.1 and 19.2 of the special conditions for the actual start date and period of implementation.



6. REQUIREMENTS

Tenders deviating from the requirements or not covering all minimum requirements described below may be rejected on the basis of non-compliance with the tender specifications and will not be further evaluated.

6.1. Staff

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 approved to work 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 as proof that the expert is seconded or on personal leave.

The contract includes a multidisciplinary team, which must comprise the following key roles:

- **Team Leader:** Responsible for overall project coordination, ensuring effective communication, and overseeing the successful implementation of the digital transformation initiative.
- **Water Expert:** A specialist in water management, tasked with providing domain-specific knowledge and insights to guide the digital transformation process within the water sector.
- **Communication Expert:** Responsible for developing and implementing communication strategies to facilitate effective collaboration among project stakeholders, ensuring clear and transparent communication.

A fee-based/technical assistance contract is, by definition, one in which the actual days worked each month for each category of experts may differ from the number of working days estimated for each month in the organisation and methodology and the budget breakdown. The actual input required for the tasks specified in the Terms of Reference can only be determined in the course of the contract.

Number	The team	Estimated number of Working days
1	Team Leader/Key Expert specialized in Water Economy and Financing, with experience in the Mediterranean region as well as water issues at a global level	168
2	Non-key expert 1: Water Expert	30
3	Non-key expert 2: Communication Expert	15



6.1.1. Key expert

Key expert has a crucial role in implementing the contract. These terms of reference contain the required key expert's profile. The tenderer shall submit CV and statements of exclusivity and availability for the following key expert:

Key expert: Team Leader

The Contractor shall ensure that all services will be provided and where necessary supplementary support/expertise will be provided through back-stopping and will be included in the offer.

The Team Leader must have necessary sociocultural skills, experience in the regional context and appropriate experience in the areas of water policy and digitalisation. Client and partner orientation, efficient work practices, interdisciplinary thinking is mandatory.

The Team Leader shall be in charge of the overall project including steering and supervision as well as communication with stakeholders. He/ she shall be responsible for the assignment and supervision of staff and for overall quality assurance.

Qualifications and skills

- Master's degree or relevant certification in water management, knowledge products and sustainability, or communications related field, or an equivalent professional experience in the same field of at least 5 years
- Strong writing skills
- Fluent in English
- Working knowledge of Arabic or French will be an advantage

General professional experience

- Experience in the field of the specificity of the assignment for at least 5 years
- Working in a regional initiative, or a related field, or an equivalent professional experience in the same field of at least 2 years
- Previous work within institutional and international organisations would be an asset

Specific professional experience

- Have a proven track record with at least two projects related to water-related issues in the Mediterranean
- At least 5 years of professional experience in water management and some experience related to digital transformation
- From 1 year to 2 years of professional experience in content creation or research
- Experience in developing analytical work on water resources management
- Working experience in the region

The experts must be independent and free from conflicts of interest in the responsibilities accorded to him/her.

6.1.2. Non-key experts

CVs for non-key experts are not examined prior to the signature of the contract. CVs for non-key experts should not be submitted in the tender but the tenderer will have to demonstrate in their



offer that they have access to experts with the required profiles. All experts must be independent and free from conflicts of interest in the responsibilities accorded to them.

The contractor must select and hire other experts as required according to the profiles identified in the organisation & methodology and these terms of reference. It must clearly indicate the experts' profile so that the applicable daily fee rate in the budget breakdown is clear. All experts must be independent and free from conflicts of interest in the responsibilities they take on.

The selection procedures used by the contractor to select these other experts must be transparent, and must be based on pre-defined criteria, including professional qualifications, absence of conflict of interests, language skills and work experience. The findings of the selection panel must be recorded. The selected experts must be subject to approval by the contracting authority before the start of their implementation of tasks.

For this present assignment, the non-key experts to be considered are as follows:

Non-Key Expert 1: Water Expert

General qualification

- Master's degree or relevant certification in water management
- Good ability to work in teams
- A minimum of 5 years working experience

Specific qualification

- At least 3 years of professional experience in the field of the assignment and some experience related to sustainable development.
- Experience working on Mediterranean water issues will be an advantage

Regional experience / Knowledge of the country

- Working experience in the region

Language skills

- Excellent oral and written communication skills in English
- Working knowledge of French or Arabic will be an advantage

Non-Key Expert 2: Communication Expert

General qualification

- University degree in Communications or related subjects
- Good ability to work in teams
- A minimum of 5 years working experience

Specific qualification

- Experience in supporting the communication efforts of international development programmes and/or international development events
- Experience working on Mediterranean water issues will be an advantage

Regional experience / Knowledge of the country

- Working experience in the region

Language skills

- Excellent oral and written communication skills in English



- Working knowledge of Arabic or French will be an advantage

6.1.3. Support staff & backstopping

Cost for backstopping and support staff, as needed, are considered to be included in the financial offer of the tenderer.

6.2. Office accommodation

Office accommodation of a reasonable standard and of approximately 10 square metres for each expert working on the contract is to be provided by the Consultant.

6.3. Facilities to be provided by the contractor

The contractor shall ensure that experts are adequately supported and equipped. In particular, it must ensure that there is sufficient administrative, secretarial and interpreting provision to enable experts to concentrate on their primary responsibilities. It must also transfer funds as necessary to support their work under the contract and to ensure that its employees are paid regularly and in a timely fashion.

6.4. Equipment

No equipment is to be purchased on behalf of the Contracting Authority / Partner Country as part of this service contract or transferred to the Contracting Authority / Partner Country at the end of this contract. Any equipment related to this contract which is to be acquired by the Partner Country must be purchased by means of a separate supply tender procedure.

6.5. Incidental expenditure

The provision for incidental expenditure covers ancillary and exceptional eligible expenditure incurred under this contract. It cannot be used for costs that should be covered by the Contractor as part of its fee rates, as defined above. Its use is governed by the provisions in the General Conditions and the notes in Annex V to the Contract. It covers travel costs and subsistence allowances for missions, outside the normal place of posting, as well as some registration fees for UfM related events undertaken as part of this contract. If applicable, indicate whether the provision includes costs for environmental measures, for example CO₂ offsetting.

The provision for incidental expenditure for this contract is **EUR 17,000.00**. This amount must be included unchanged in the budget breakdown.

Per diem and daily subsistence allowances that may be reimbursed for missions foreseen in these terms of reference or approved by the Contracting Authority, and carried out by the contractor's authorised experts, outside the expert's normal place of posting.

The per diem is a maximum fixed flat-rate covering daily subsistence costs. These include accommodation, meals, tips and local travel, including travel to and from the airport. Taxi fares are therefore covered by the per diem. Per diem are payable on the basis of the number of hours spent on the mission. Per diem may only be paid in full or in half (no other fractions are possible). A full per diem shall be paid for each 24-hour period spent on mission. Half of a per diem shall be paid in case



of a period of at least 12 hours but less than 24 hours spent on mission. No per diem should be paid for missions of less than 12 hours. Travelling time is to be regarded as part of the mission. Any subsistence allowances to be paid for missions undertaken as part of this contract must not exceed the per diem rates published on the website - http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/funding/about-calls-tender/procedures-and-practical-guide-prag/diems_en - in force at the start of each such mission.

The Contracting Authority reserves the right to reject payment of per diem for time spent travelling if the most direct route and the most economical fare criteria have not been applied.

Prior authorisation by the Contracting Authority for the use of the incidental expenditure is needed.

6.6. Expenditure verification

The provision for expenditure verification covers the fees of the auditor charged with verifying the expenditure of this contract in order to proceed with the payment of any pre-financing instalments and/or interim payments.

The provision for expenditure verification for this contract is **EUR 3,000.00**. This amount must be included unchanged in the budget breakdown.

This provision cannot be decreased but can be increased during execution of the contract.

7. REPORTS

7.1. Reporting

The Contractor will submit the following **reports in English** in addition to the **requested documents mentioned in point 2.4.**

7.2. Submission & Approval of Reports

The **reports must be submitted to the Project Manager** identified above. The Project Manager is **responsible for approving the reports**. The Secretariat will provide its comments on the submitted Inception Report, Interim Report and Final Report, **within 15 working days upon receipt**, according to the above indicated timing. Following the comments received, the consultant will send a **revised version by email, before formally submitting the final version**. The approved version of the final report shall be submitted in two copies (one hard copy plus **one electronic version** (MS Word format) to the Project Manager.

Each report shall consist of a narrative section and a financial section. The financial section must contain details of the time inputs of the experts, of the incidental expenditure and of the provision for expenditure verification and shall indicate, at a minimum, the expenditure of the reporting period, the cumulative expenditure, and the balance available. Interim and final reports must be provided along with the invoice, the corresponding approved timesheets, the financial report and an expenditure verification report.

To summarise, the consultant shall provide reports as per the table below; payments will be done accordingly:



- **Inception Report**, based on the kick-off meeting between the expert and the contracting authority, prepare an inception report describing a concise strategy and work plan on concrete steps and activities to be carried out over the contracting period to serve the above-mentioned objectives.
- **Interim Report**, report on the status of advancement with an updated work plan for the upcoming 6 months.
- **Brief Annual Reports for 2025 and 2026** to be prepared in advance of the end-of-the-year UfM Senior Officials' Meetings.
- **Final Report** describing the support provided, plus annexes of the specific work carried out, including outcomes and achievements; problems encountered and recommendations for possible follow-ups.

The reports referred above must be submitted to the Project Manager identified in the contract. The Project Manager is responsible for approving the reports.

8. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

8.1. Definition of indicators

The indicators to be used for monitoring the results and impact of the project shall refer, inter alia, to timely submission of deliverables required under these Terms of Reference, containing complete information, as required.

N.B. The ownership of all the results or rights thereon, including copyright and other intellectual property rights, obtained in performance and implementation of the contract, shall be irrevocably and fully vested to the UfM Secretariat (in accordance with the section 14 of the General Conditions). The Consultant must not retain copies of such documents, data or any other confidential information related to the and must not use them for purposes unrelated to the contract without the prior consent of the UfM Secretariat.