

Project

Towards a Better Understanding of the Amazon Aquifer Systems for Their Protection and Sustainable Management

GEF ID 11108

Appendix 4

Terms of Reference

Position: Project General Coordinator.

Project No.: GEF ID 11108

Funding Agency: IDB-UNEP

Executing Agency: Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Terms of Reference for the Recruitment of the Project General Coordinator – Amazon Aquifer Systems (AAS) Project

1. Background and Justification

1.1. Background:

The project “Towards a Better Understanding of the Amazon Aquifer Systems for their Protection and Sustainable Management”, funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF ID 11108), aims to generate updated scientific knowledge and to promote sustainable and coordinated management of the Amazon Aquifer Systems (AAS), which extend, to a greater or lesser degree, across the territories of Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela.

Despite the high availability of surface water in the Amazon region, the demand for safe water sources has increased significantly, making both populations and productive sectors largely dependent on groundwater. However, the actual extension, hydrogeological dynamics, and risks affecting these aquifers are still not well understood. Added to this are threats derived from climate change, extreme events, human activities, and population growth, which call for the development of sustainable and coordinated transboundary management strategies.

The project addresses four main barriers: the lack of knowledge on transboundary aquifers, the absence of shared governance agreements, the lack of a common protection strategy, and low levels of public awareness regarding the importance of the AAS. To address these challenges, key activities have been planned, such as the development of a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA), the preparation of a White Paper with technical and policy recommendations, the implementation of pilot demonstrations, institutional strengthening, and, finally, the formulation of a Strategic Action Program (SAP).

Given the regional scope of the project, the participation of multiple countries, institutions, and stakeholders, as well as the simultaneous implementation of technical, administrative, financial, and communication activities, it is essential to establish a core team of professionals to provide continuous operational, technical, and logistical support for project implementation.

A Project Coordination Unit (PCU) will be established to implement the project, composed of the Project Coordinator, the Water Resources Management Specialist, the Knowledge Management and Communications Specialist, the Financial Management Officer, and the Administrative Assistant.

The PCU will be responsible for the day-by-day activities of the project, including coordination and oversight of all technical activities carried out at the regional and national levels, and will ensure the preparation of project reports and deliverables, as outlined in the relevant Terms of Reference for the project components, the Project Management Committee (PMC), and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). Coordination with national counterparts will be undertaken jointly with the National Project Execution Units (NPEUs) to ensure the best possible alignment

between the project and national programs and organizations. The PCU will also organize and provide secretariat services for the Project Steering Committee meetings and other regional meetings within the project framework.

The creation of a multidisciplinary PCU is key to ensuring efficient operational management of the project, sound resource management, effective coordination among partners, and smooth administrative processes, including preparation of periodic reports, monitoring and evaluation, event organization, document archiving, and compliance with project and GEF procedures.

The timely recruitment of the General Coordinator will ensure effective, transparent, and timely implementation of the PCU, guaranteeing achievement of the expected results and strengthening the institutional capacities of the entities involved.

1.2. Justification:

Given the regional scope of the project, the involvement of multiple countries, institutions, and stakeholders, as well as the simultaneous execution of technical, administrative, financial, and communication activities, the recruitment of a General Coordinator is essential to ensure continuous operational, technical, and logistical management of the project.

The effective implementation of the project “Towards a Better Understanding of the Amazon Aquifer System for its Protection and Sustainable Management” requires specialized technical and administrative coordination that ensures integration of multiple regional and national actors, while also meeting the technical, administrative, and financial standards required by the implementing agencies (UNEP and IDB) and the donor (GEF).

Considering the transboundary nature of the Amazon Aquifer System and the institutional diversity of the member countries of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO), it is essential to recruit a Project Coordinator who will act as the central focal point for implementation, lead the PCU, and ensure adequate articulation between regional and national actions.

The Coordinator will also provide technical oversight of project activities, guarantee the quality of deliverables, lead planning and monitoring processes, manage relationships with consultants, counterparts, and international cooperation agencies, and ensure compliance with technical and financial commitments. Proven experience in managing environmental and water resources projects at the regional and international levels will be key to the success of the project, in a complex institutional context with multiple stakeholders.

Recruitment of this professional will ensure technical coherence of interventions, efficient resource management, fulfillment of goals and outcomes, and enhanced visibility and impact of the project in Amazon countries.

2. Objective

The main objective of the Project General Coordinator will be to lead the overall implementation of the PCU for the project “Towards a Better Understanding of the Amazon Aquifer Systems for their Protection and Sustainable Management”, ensuring technical oversight, strategic

coordination among participating countries, and the quality of the technical deliverables produced.

The Coordinator will serve as the central focal point for the technical and operational management of the project, facilitating articulation between ACTO, the National Project Execution Units (NPEUs), regional and international partners, and the funding entities. Additionally, the Coordinator will support the Executing Agency in supervision, reporting, and institutional representation tasks before the Project Steering Committee and other relevant instances.

3. Scope of Services

The Project General Coordinator will provide technical oversight of project activities, ensuring the quality of all technical activities undertaken and deliverables produced. He/She will lead planning and monitoring processes, manage relationships with consultants, counterparts, and international cooperation agencies, and ensure compliance with technical and financial commitments. The Coordinator will be responsible for the overall administration of all aspects of the project, including the preparation of Terms of Reference for hiring consultants and project specialists, fostering synergy and coordination within the multidisciplinary team, and preparing progress reports on the achievement of project objectives, goals, and indicators.

Furthermore, the Coordinator will generate special reports on project progress and compliance with project performance targets.

4. Key Functions and Responsibilities

4.1. Administrative/Managerial Responsibilities

- Directly supervise the daily work of the PCU, which will be composed of professional, technical, and administrative staff.
- Oversee project technical and management activities, ensuring the quality of deliverables and internal reports.
- Assist the Executing Agency in selecting consultants and establishing agreements with public and private institutions, at national, regional, and international levels, for the implementation of proposed activities, as well as guiding consultants in the preparation of technical outputs.
- Lead and provide annual work plans, budgets, and periodic progress reports on technical activities to the Project Steering Committee and other oversight bodies.
- Act as Secretariat for the Project Steering Committee.
- Lead articulation between the PCU and the National Project Execution Units, ensuring technical coherence of activities, monitoring progress, and alignment with regional project objectives.
- Support and provide inputs for the design and implementation of the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) system.
- Coordinate reporting activities to the Implementing Agencies (UNEP and IDB), the Executing Agency (ACTO), and the participating countries, ensuring compliance with administrative, financial, and technical requirements.

- Coordinate the development of information management tools to ensure evaluation, monitoring, and replication activities, as defined in the CEO Endorsement Document.
- Coordinate the organization and implementation of training and communication activities, including workshops, training sessions, conferences, and other meetings required by the work plan.
- Establish and facilitate partnerships with relevant institutions and donors, including governments, international organizations, regional agencies, academia, and civil society, ensuring alignment with local, national, and international policies of ACTO, UNEP, IDB, and GEF.
- Act as the public liaison of the project, coordinating communication and dissemination of information to ensure maximum visibility of the project in the region and within GEF, under the guidance of ACTO, UNEP, and IDB.
- Supervise the implementation of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan, ensuring inclusion of local communities, Indigenous Peoples, and other relevant groups.
- Support and provide inputs for the implementation of the Gender Action Plan and the Project Communication Plan.
- Present project activities and results to stakeholders and in international conferences.
- Identify technical, operational, and/or financial risks that could affect project implementation, and propose timely mitigation measures.
- Facilitate knowledge management processes and lessons learned for results replication.

4.2. Technical Responsibilities:

- Draft the technical Terms of Reference for project activities and personnel.
- Provide technical advice to participating countries for the planning and implementation of national activities, ensuring alignment with regional project outcomes.
- Ensure supervision and quality control of all technical activities carried out or contracted under the Amazon Aquifer System (AAS) project.
- Act as the project's technical and coordination focal point, particularly regarding the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA, Component 1) and transboundary cooperation and coordinated groundwater management (White Paper, Output 2).
- Lead coordination, design, and development of groundwater management in pilot studies (Output 3).
- Assess current and future coordination mechanisms, a protection framework, and institutional strengthening needs for the development of the Strategic Action Program (SAP) (Output 4).
- Ensure capacity-building products, awareness-raising, stakeholder engagement, and knowledge-sharing outputs are available in a timely manner during implementation (Output 5).
- Based on these administrative/managerial and technical responsibilities, the Coordinator's time will be distributed approximately as follows: 30% for project management, monitoring, and evaluation; 70% for technical coordination.

This distribution is indicative and may vary depending on project realities and implementation demands.

5. Expected Results and Deliverables

The Project General Coordinator will ensure efficient, transparent, and compliant implementation of the project, in line with financial and administrative standards, through proper financial management, timely preparation of reports, coordination of payments, contract management, and support in procurement, audits, and co-financing processes. This will contribute to achieving the project's objectives within the established timelines.

- Annual project work plans prepared and approved by the Steering Committee.
- Annual project budgets prepared and validated.
- Results matrix updated on a quarterly basis.
- Periodic technical and financial progress reports submitted to ACTO, UNEP, and IDB.
- Terms of Reference and technical outputs reviewed and validated according to established standards.
- Coordination and communication mechanisms established with the National Project Execution Units (NPEUs).
- Regional events (workshops, training, meetings) organized with the participation of key stakeholders.
- Monitoring and evaluation report on project activities produced.
- Visibility and outreach strategy for project results implemented.
- Participation and representation reports prepared for international and regional events.
- Preparation of a baseline assessment document on the current status of groundwater resources, based on geological, geophysical, hydraulic, hydrodynamic, hydrochemical, isotopic hydrology, and hydrogeological studies (UNEP) (Product 1.1).
- Delivery of a georeferenced base map of the Amazon Aquifer System, supported by a GIS infrastructure, including vulnerability maps based on available and new country-specific information (IDB) (Product 1.2).
- Preparation of a document analyzing water security and hydrological/hydrogeological modeling scenarios of aquifer behavior, with emphasis on transboundary areas, under different climate change and socio-economic development scenarios (UNEP) (Product 1.3).
- Consolidation of research studies on:
 - Hydraulic interconnection with surface waters, with emphasis on border areas, including recharge mechanisms (UNEP).
 - Understanding contamination threats to groundwater (e.g., As, Pb, Hg, and others determined by member countries) (IDB) (Product 1.4).
 - Consolidation of the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) of the Amazon Aquifer System, agreed by the Water Authorities Network (RADA) (UNEP) (Product 1.5).
 - Preparation of a legal and regulatory gap analysis, including institutional capacity assessment for groundwater management in the region and countries, and development of model policies and regulatory toolkits for required reforms (UNEP) (Product 2.1).
- Consolidation of a "Gender-sensitive White Paper" addressing:
 - Improvements in national legal, technical, and institutional frameworks for groundwater management and regional coordination.

- Strengthening ACTO's cooperation role in groundwater resources management (UNEP) (Product 2.2).
- Coordination of consultants' work to design a sustainable regional groundwater monitoring network, interoperable with the Amazon Regional Observatory (ARO), and preparation of related manuals validated by each member country (IDB) (Product 2.3).
- Preparation of a roadmap for sustainable groundwater management and for strengthening the political and legal context in Suriname and Guyana (IDB) (Product 2.4).
- Operational management and leadership of 8 national pilot projects to test good management practices aimed at reducing aquifer stress and improving water security under climate variability, with a gender approach (Product/Outcome 3).
- Assessment of current and future coordination mechanisms for the development and ministerial approval of the Strategic Action Program (SAP), with gender mainstreaming (UNEP) (Product 4.1).
- Consolidation of regional technical guidelines and protocols for the protection and sustainable use of the Amazon Aquifer System (IDB) (Product 4.2).
- Consolidation and implementation of the financial strategy for SAP actions (IDB) (Product 4.3).
- Delivery of records and documentation of capacity-building and awareness events, including participation reports and knowledge exchange, ensuring their availability as lessons learned during implementation (Outcome 5).
- Implementation of capacity-building and training activities with gender mainstreaming, at regional (including ACTO), national, municipal, and local levels, benefiting more than 38,000 people (IDB) (Product 5.1).
- Preparation of a gender and groundwater action plan, adopted by member countries and ACTO (IDB) (Product 5.2).
- Development and implementation of a communication strategy and knowledge management plan to raise awareness and understanding of the AAS among stakeholders (IDB) (Product 5.3).
- Participation in IW: LEARN activities, creation of a project website, and preparation of experience notes (1% of project budget) (IDB) (Product 5.4).
- Guidance to the PCU to ensure project implementation using management tools for Monitoring and Evaluation, documenting processes, tracking progress against indicators and targets, and preparing timely reports throughout the project cycle, ensuring successful implementation before funding agencies (UNEP-IDB) (M&E Product).
- Guidance to the PCU to ensure proper operational, administrative, and financial management of the project, on behalf of the ACTO Permanent Secretariat, before the funding agencies (PMC Product).

All deliverables must be consistent with the CEO Endorsement Document approved by the GEF.

6. Requirements and Professional Profile

6.1 Academic Qualifications

- Professional degree in Administrative or Economic Sciences, Environmental Engineering, Water Resources or Sanitary Engineering, Ecology, Biology, or related fields.

- Master's degree or postgraduate studies in water resources management, environmental management/science/policy, natural resources management, or a related field.

6.2 Professional Experience

- Minimum of **15 years of general professional experience** in management positions (Director, Coordinator, or equivalent).
- At least **10 years of specific experience** in watershed management and/or water resources–related issues.
- Demonstrated minimum of **10 years of experience and solid knowledge** in sustainable development, including financial and institutional sustainability.
- Proven experience in working with key stakeholders to promote sustainability and environmental awareness among diverse audiences.
- Minimum of **5 years of proven experience** in the management and/or coordination of international projects.
- Demonstrated experience with the objectives and procedures of international organizations, particularly GEF, ACTO, UNEP, and IDB, as well as regional organizations involved in project activities.
- Demonstrated experience of at least **5 years in coordinating and managing multidisciplinary and/or cross-sectoral teams**.
- Work experience in one or more of the participating countries and/or in the Amazon region.
- Excellent communication skills.
- Strong computer skills (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.).
- Full professional fluency, both written and spoken, in **Spanish and English**; knowledge of other languages (e.g., Portuguese) will be considered an asset.

6.3 Reporting Skills

The professional must have demonstrated experience in drafting and preparing **management reports** to present project progress and achievements, monitor deadlines, and deliver and follow up on timelines for quarterly, semiannual, and annual progress reports.

He/She must demonstrate strong managerial capacity to **summarize technical progress** through concise reports that include workflows, trend charts, bar graphs, and results reports, ensuring compliance with the project's key indicators.

7. Remuneration and Contract Conditions

As this position is part of the key staff of the Project Execution Unit, reports shall be prepared on a monthly basis and will be submitted and approved by the supervisor.

For Brazilian citizens or residents in Brazil, the employment contract and remuneration will comply with the conditions and determinations of the set of labor laws (CLT – Consolidação das Leis do Trabalho). The contract modality is CLT – consultancy, and remuneration will be paid in BRL (this amount includes the benefits established by law).

For citizens of other nationalities and non-residents in Brazil, the employment contract will follow the provisions established in the financial and administrative instrument of the PS/ACTO, where the modality of consultancy contracts applies, and remuneration will be paid in US Dollars.

The remuneration is all-inclusive, covering insurance and living expenses at the duty station.

8. Supervision and reporting

The Coordinator will work under the direct supervision of the Coordinator for Science, Technology and Education of the ACTO Permanent Secretariat (PS/ACTO), in close coordination with the Administrative Directorate of ACTO and in accordance with the procedures defined by the Administration of the PS/ACTO.

9. Location

The General Coordinator will provide his/her services primarily at the headquarters office of the PS/ACTO located in Brasília, DF, Brazil. The Coordinator must be available for travel. Due to the nature of the project, occasional travel to ACTO member countries will be required.

10. Submission Deadline

CV's must be submitted by October 6, 2025, at 11:59 p.m. Brasília time (GMT-3) to the email address: selecao@otca.org. The subject line of the email must indicate: "**General Coordinator of the AAS Project.**"