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Assessment of the range of ecosystem services provided by two MPAs in South Africa

**Special Technical Specifications
Cahier des Clauses Techniques
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I. PURPOSE OF THE CONTRACT

The present contract concerns a consultancy assignment for the assessment of the range of ecosystem services emanating from two Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in South Africa, namely:

- Addo Elephant National Park MPA, and
- Table Mountain National Park MPA.

The consultancy is conducted within the framework of the South Africa – France Partnership for Biodiversity and Marine Conservation, financed by the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and jointly implemented by the Office Français de la Biodiversité (OFB) and South African National Parks (SANParks). A similar consultancy covering two French MPAs (Mayotte Marine Natural Park and Arcachon Bay Marine Natural Park) will be implemented along similar guidelines and dates. Both consultants are therefore required to interact, collaborate, and share findings.

The objective of this consultancy is to apply a robust, policy-relevant ecosystem services framework to evaluate, analyze, and communicate the ecological, social, and economic benefits generated by both MPAs.

II. INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

II.1 South Africa – France Partnership for Biodiversity and Marine Conservation

The partnership was established under a quadripartite cooperation agreement signed in 2022 between:

- Agence Française de Développement (AFD);
- Office français de la Biodiversité (OFB);
- South African National Parks (SANParks);
- South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI).

With this partnership, SANParks and OFB aim to strengthen collaboration, knowledge exchange, and mutual learning on marine biodiversity conservation, ecosystem-based management, and governance of Marine Protected Areas. This collaboration is made operational through workshops in both countries, webinars, participation in international events, and various consultancies.

II.2 South African National Parks (SANParks)

South African National Parks (SANParks) is a public management authority responsible for conserving and managing South Africa's system of national parks, including 10 Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). It protects biodiversity, cultural heritage, and natural landscapes while supporting research and tourism through the allocation of human, financial, and technical resources across terrestrial, coastal, and marine environments.

SANParks manages:

- 21 terrestrial national parks across South Africa;
- 10 Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), contributing to South Africa's national MPA estate, which covers 5.4% of South Africa's Economic Exclusive Zone. SANParks are not the national management authority responsible for the entire South African MPA network,

but manage 10 inshore MPAs, and those associated with SANParks managed terrestrial parks;

- Ramsar wetland sites and World Heritage-listed protected areas (in collaboration with other authorities);
- sites of high biodiversity supporting conservation, research, tourism, and community engagement.

Marine conservation within SANParks is implemented through MPAs that are proclaimed within South Africa's MPA network of 42 coastal and offshore MPAs. Five of the 10 MPAs managed by SANParks are adjacent to terrestrial national parks, ensuring integrated land-sea management. This approach allows for coherent governance of coastal catchments, intertidal zones, and offshore ecosystems.

South Africa's MPA network was significantly expanded under the National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act (NEM:PAA) in 2019, where the South African government gazetted 20 new MPAs, increasing protection from 0.4% to 5.4%. SANParks therefore plays a key role in implementing the gazetted objectives through park-level management, compliance, scientific monitoring, and stakeholder engagement.

Although each of the recently proclaimed MPAs has specific gazetted objectives, and the older MPAs have aquatic programs, these objectives align with national biodiversity and ocean governance strategies and include:

- conserving representative and ecologically important marine ecosystems;
- protecting threatened and endemic marine species;
- supporting ecological processes and ecosystem resilience;
- contributing to scientific knowledge, monitoring, and long-term research;
- enabling sustainable use, where appropriate, through regulated tourism and recreation;
- supporting socio-economic benefits linked to conservation and nature-based tourism.

Of the 10 MPAs managed by SANParks, five are adjacent to terrestrial national parks :

- **Table Mountain National Park Marine Protected Area**, proclaimed in 2004.
- **Addo Elephant National Park Marine Protected Area**, proclaimed in 2019 and including the original Bird Island MPA.
- The cluster of 5 West Coast National Park Marine Protected Areas (Langebaan, Jutten, Malgas, Markus and 16 Mile Beach MPAs, declared in 1973 and 1985),
- Namaqua National Park Marine Protected Area, proclaimed in 2019.
- Tsistikamma Marine Protected Area (Garden Route National Park), with its initial sections proclaimed in 1964.

SANParks implements MPA management through:

- integrated park management plans covering land-sea interactions;
- on-the-ground compliance and enforcement in collaboration with national authorities;
- long-term ecological monitoring and applied research;

- partnerships with scientific institutions, government agencies, and international partners;
- stakeholder engagement, including local communities and MPA users.

II.3 Office Français de la Biodiversité (OFB)

The OFB is a French public institution dedicated to biodiversity protection and restoration across mainland France and overseas territories. Its mandates include scientific expertise, law enforcement, public policy support, stakeholder engagement, and the management of protected areas. OFB directly manages eight Marine Nature Parks (PNM) and co-manages numerous other MPAs.

It is under the authority of the Ministry of Ecological Transition, Biodiversity, Forests, Sea, and Fisheries and is responsible for several key nationwide missions, including :

- Knowledge, research, and expertise on species, their habitats, and uses;
- Environmental and wildlife health policing;
- Support for the implementation of public policies;
- Management and support for natural area managers;
- Support for stakeholders and mobilization of society.

The French Office for Biodiversity (OFB) acts as the direct manager or co-manager of protected areas, to which it allocates human, financial, and technical resources:

- 8 marine natural parks (6 in mainland France and 2 in the overseas territories);
- the Agoa marine mammal sanctuary in the French West Indies;
- 110 Natura 2000 sites with a marine component and 4 terrestrial Natura 2000 sites;
- 8 national nature reserves (RNN);
- 10 national hunting and wildlife reserves (RNCFS) (10 of the 11 existing RNCFS are managed by the OFB);
- 6 hunting and wildlife reserves (RCFS);
- 3 Corsican hunting and wildlife reserves (RCFS of Corsica);
- 1 biosphere reserve;
- sites managed by the Coastal Protection Agency (Conservatoire du littoral).

The marine natural park is a relatively recent marine management tool in the history of protected areas: it was established by law on 14 April 2006. Prior to the creation of this new protection status, various tools supported marine conservation strategies, but few initiatives addressed both coastal and offshore areas and provided an appropriate governance framework. It was based on this observation that the idea emerged to create a new tool suited to large marine areas, which can be applied from the coast offshore, up to the limit of 200 nautical miles (the exclusive economic zone).

The objectives of PNM are defined in the Environmental Code:

- to contribute to knowledge of marine natural heritage;

- to contribute to the protection of the marine environment;
- to contribute to the sustainable development of the marine environment.

The French Office for Biodiversity manages marine natural parks (PNM) in both mainland France and the overseas territories. Gradually established by decree since 2007, there are eight such parks, and the network is considered complete:

- Iroise Marine Natural Park, established in 2007;
- **Mayotte Marine Natural Park**, established in 2010;
- Gulf of Lion Marine Natural Park, established in 2011;
- Picardy Estuaries and Opal Coast Marine Natural Park, established in 2012;
- **Arcachon Bay Marine Natural Park**, established in 2014;
- Gironde Estuary and Pertuis Sea Marine Natural Park, established in 2015;
- Cap Corse and Agriate Marine Natural Park, established in 2016;
- Martinique Marine Natural Park, established in 2017.

III. JUSTIFICATION

MPAs contribute significantly to biodiversity conservation, climate regulation, and human well-being. However, their benefits are often insufficiently quantified, communicated, or integrated into decision-making.

In South Africa, one of the core criteria of the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) is whether MPA management maintains critical ecological processes delivering ecosystem services to surrounding communities. This consultancy responds to the need for a rigorous and structured assessment of ecosystem services flowing from MPAs, in order to :

- strengthen evidence-based MPA management ;
- improve stakeholder understanding of MPA benefits ;
- inform policy, planning, and management effectiveness evaluations.

The consultancy aligns with :

- The Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (CBD, 2022) ;
- The Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDGs 14 and 15 ;
- The mandates of SANParks and OFB for equitable and science-based conservation.

IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE CONSULTANCY

IV.1 Overall Objective

The objective of this consultancy is to apply a **robust, policy-relevant and context-appropriate ecosystem services framework** to evaluate, analyze, and communicate the ecological, social, and economic benefits generated by the listed MPAs.

IV.2 Specific Objectives

The consultancy shall:

- Identify, classify, and map the key ecosystem services provided by the selected MPAs, considering spatial and temporal dynamics.
- Evaluate the status, flow, and beneficiaries of these services, as well as pressures or drivers influencing their sustainable delivery.
- Analyse trade-offs and synergies among ecological, social, and economic benefits.
- Develop short- and medium-term projections of ecosystem service trajectories (10 and 25 years) to improve stakeholder understanding of both the range of services and their benefits and tradeoffs.
- Produce comparative findings at both different scales to identify common patterns and unique local contexts.
- Based on the identified status, drivers and pressures on the range of ecosystem services, to propose recommendations (can be at both management and policy levels) to maintain or enhance ecosystem service delivery.
- Together with the consultancy appointed to assess ecosystem services in two French Marine Natural Parks (PNM), produce a comparative synthesis between French and South African MPAs, highlighting lessons for cross-regional learning. Furthermore, the organisation of an online session to share the outputs of the consultancies on both sides.

V. SCOPE OF WORK (SOUTH AFRICA)

V.1 Geographic Scope

The consultancy covers the following MPAs

Addo Elephant National Park Protected Area

The Addo Elephant National Park Marine Protected Area (Addo MPA) extends 80 km eastward from Coega harbour, with an area of 1,200 km² and includes the estuary of the Sundays River. The MPA, includes the seabed and the water above it up to the high water mark, protects a diverse range of ecosystems, and supports important breeding grounds for various marine species including threatened seabirds (African penguins and Cape gannets). The various zones of the MPA include St Croix Offshore Restricted Zone and the Bird Island Offshore Restricted Zone, which regulate activities such as fishing, anchoring, and vessel speeds.

Addo MPA supports diverse ecotourism activities, including boat-based whale and dolphin watching, SCUBA diving, recreational angling, waterskiing and recreational boating. Although this MPA supports local communities through tourism, fisheries and resources management, concerns remain around access and how that might potentially impact traditional livelihoods.

Table Mountain National Park Marine Protected Area

The Table Mountain National Park Marine Protected Area (TMNP MPA) lies adjacent to the national park and the City of Cape Town and boasts exceptional marine and coastal biodiversity. It stretches from Muizenberg in False Bay, around Cape Point, to Mouille Point on the Atlantic seaboard. Beachgoers, surfers, kayakers, SCUBA divers, free divers, anglers, fishers, rock pool hoppers, and other ocean enthusiasts enjoy the 127 km stretch of coastline year-round. The TMNP MPA is a designated coastal and ocean space that is legally protected. It is managed to conserve valuable and sensitive ecosystems and species for the benefit of people and nature.

The Robben Island Marine Protected Area (RI-MPA) lies adjacent to the TMNP MPA.

The park management plan of TMNP and RI MPA are currently under review.

VI. METHODOLOGY

The consultant is expected to propose and apply a robust and participatory methodology. The approach can draw from internationally recognized frameworks such as:

- IPBES (Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services)
- Millennium Ecosystem Assessment
- Common International Classification of Ecosystem Services

The methodology should combine, depending on the proposed approach by the consultant, the following elements:

- Desktop analysis of existing datasets and literature;
- Stakeholder engagement (interviews, workshops where relevant);
- Engagement with key scientists and managers associated with each MPA.
- Spatial analysis and mapping;
- Qualitative and quantitative valuation approaches;
- As well as any data collection deemed necessary.

VII. EXPECTED RESULTS

This consultancy aims for a holistic approach that covers multiple ecosystems within and across identified MPAs focusing on tangible and intangible ecosystem services provided by these MPAs.

This will include coastal, estuarine, offshore, dune systems, and other ecosystems found within each of the MPAs and cover multiple services/themes as detailed below. These will include, but are not limited to:

1. habitat provision;

2. nutrient cycling;
3. biodiversity;
4. disaster mitigation;
5. contribution of ecosystem services to local communities and the economy (from subsistence to commercial extractive resource use);
6. current and emerging threats at multiple scales; and,
7. scenario based assessments of ecosystem change or loss : i.e. quantification of the cost (ecological and/or financial) of losing ecosystem services and the socioeconomic, ecological, and cultural impacts associated with each scenario. This also includes the necessary management actions needed to increase benefits received from ecosystems.

For reference, the WWF report on the northern Mozambique channel (*WWF and UNEP-Nairobi Convention. 2025. Assessing the Value of the Northern Mozambique Channel: Developing the economic case for integrated ocean governance and ecosystem investment in Africa's most biodiverse oceanic region. Antananarivo, Madagascar: WWF-SWIO.*) provides a non-exhaustive example for such work and possible approaches.

VII.1 Comprehensive identification and classification of Ecosystem Services.

- A detailed inventory of tangible and intangible ecosystem services provided by Table Mountain National Park MPA and Addo Elephant National Park MPA covering provisioning, regulating, cultural, and supporting (e.g., habitat provision, nutrient cycling, biodiversity, etc) services.

VII.2 Quantitative and qualitative valuation of Ecosystem Services.

- Assessment of the financial value, where possible, of ecosystem services including tourism revenue, fisheries benefits, and avoided costs (e.g., disaster mitigation).
- Evaluation of the biodiversity value using ecological indicators, species conservation status, and/or ecosystem integrity metrics (or similar).
- Analysis of the current contribution of ecosystem services to local communities and the regional and/or national economy.
- Assessment of relational values associated with ecosystem services, complementing Cultural Ecosystem Services by capturing meaningful human-nature relationships, as recognised in the IPBES Nature's Contributions to People framework.

VII.3 Threat and risk analysis.

- Assessment of current and emerging threats to ecosystem services (e.g., climate change, invasive species, unsustainable resource extraction, tourism, illegal fishing, etc.).

- Risk evaluation describing the likelihood and magnitude of ecosystem service loss.
- Evaluation , or proposed early-warning indicators and/or monitoring metrics

VII.4 Scenario-based assessment of Ecosystem Service loss.

- Development of realistic future scenarios showing:
 - What could occur if ecosystem services are degraded, reduced, or lost under pressures such as climate change, pollution, illegal harvesting, various scales of commercial resource extraction, coastal development, and marine traffic, etc..
 - Socioeconomic, ecological, and cultural impacts associated with each scenario.
- Clear depiction of what may be lost, including financial, ecological, social, and cultural costs if these services decline.
- The necessary management actions needed to increase benefits received from ecosystems.

VII.5 Mapping and spatial representation of Ecosystem Services.

- Mapping of key ecosystem service hotspots for the two MPAs
- Identification of areas where ecosystem services are most valuable and most at risk.

VII.6 Practical recommendations for MPA management.

- Management recommendations
- Policy or governance recommendations

VIII. DELIVERABLES AND TIMELINE

No.	Deliverable	Description	Timeline
1	Inception Report	- Finalised methodology. - Evaluation of existing data sets - Data request from SANParks (for identified available datasets).	Month 1 (1 month)
2	Draft Initial Findings Report	Initial draft of desktop evaluation of ecosystem services, ecological and socio-economic datasets compiled.	Month 5 (4 months)
3	Valuation and Scenario Development	- Draft valuation of qualitative and quantitative ecosystem services. - Draft scenario-based assessment of ecosystem service loss	Month 8 (3 months)

		- Recommendations	
4	Draft Report	- Comprehensive synthesis report submitted to SANParks for review - Collaborative report on cross-consultancy learnings	Month 9 (1 month)
5	Final Report	Submission of final report	Month 10

IX. GOVERNANCE AND COORDINATION

The service provider will work under the supervision of the **SANParks team and the OFB FEXTE cooperation team**. In addition, the service provider shall:

- Closely coordinate its activities with the MPA teams;
- Provide monthly progress reports;
- Participate in coordination meetings with the other team of consultants working on South African MPAs, as required;
- Participate in cross-cutting discussions with the consultant selected for the other lot, including:
 - at least two dedicated exchange meetings during the assignment, at key stages (particularly during the methodological scoping phase and the results presentation phase), in order to compare approaches, discuss findings, and identify comparative lessons between the French and South African contexts;
 - the preparation of a joint contribution or comparative synthesis note, according to modalities to be jointly defined as the work progresses;
 - availability for additional ad hoc exchanges upon request from the OFB project team.

SANParks will provide access, as soon as possible, to the relevant available datasets and will provide comments on the deliverables.