**Terms of Reference (ToR)**

**Position Title:** Water Resources Management Specialist /Expert Group coordinator
**Project:** Climate-Resilient Integrated Water Resources Management (CR-IWRM) in the Zarafshan River Basin
**Assignment Title:** Comprehensive Analysis and the initial Basin Development Plan for the Zarafshan River Basin
**Duty Station:** Home-based, with required travel to Samarkand, Navoi, Bukhara, Kashkadarya, and Djizzakh Provinces (Zarafshan River Basin)
**Duration:** August 2025 – February 2026 (up to 60 working days)
**Reports to:** Zarafshan River Basin Council Board as well as to designated Technical Advisors from the Consortium of Caritas Switzerland and CAREC
**Type of Contract:** Individual Consultant

1. **Background**

The consortium of Caritas Switzerland and the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC) is implementing the project *“Climate-Resilient Integrated Water Resources Management (CR-IWRM) in the Zarafshan River Basin”*. The project aims to promote sustainable and climate-resilient water resources management across the Zarafshan River Basin (ZRB), with a strong emphasis on participatory governance, multi-sectoral coordination, and ecosystem-based approaches.

One of the project’s core components is the development of a comprehensive Basin Development Plan (BDP), which will serve as a strategic framework for integrated water resources management in the basin. The BDP will be informed by a series of multi-sectoral situational analyses covering water resources, agriculture, ecosystems, climate risks, socio-economic conditions, and institutional frameworks.

This consultancy focuses on the water resources dimension of the situational analysis and includes an expert group coordinating role. The selected expert will lead the assessment of water resources availability, use, infrastructure, and key challenges, while also synthesizing the broader inputs from other sectoral experts. In addition to the situational analysis, the consultancy will result in the preparation of a draft Basin Development Plan (BDP), serving as a unified and actionable planning document.

**2. Objectives of the Assignment**

The objective of the assignment is threefold:

1. To conduct a detailed assessment of the water resources situation in the Zarafshan River Basin (ZRB); and
2. To provide leadership in consolidating the findings of other sectoral experts — including those covering hydrogeology, ecology, agriculture, and social/gender dimensions — into an integrated situational analysis report. This report will serve as the technical foundation for the Basin Development Plan (BDP), ensuring that water-related issues are addressed in a comprehensive, climate-resilient, and multi-sectoral manner.
3. Prepare the initial version of the River Development Plan based on the situational analysis report.

Specifically, the consultant will:

* Analyze the current status, trends, and challenges related to surface and groundwater availability, infrastructure, water use, allocation, and efficiency;
* Identify key drivers of water stress, risks, and opportunities for improved management, including climate change impacts;
* Coordinate and synthesize inputs from thematic experts to ensure coherence and integration across sectors;
* Produce a consolidated, actionable planning document based on the findings of the situational analysis, which will serve as the initial draft of the ZRB Basin Development Plan (BDP).

**3. Scope of Work and Key Tasks**

The Water Resources Management Specialist will serve as the technical lead for the water resources component and assume overall coordination responsibility for the multi-sectoral situational analysis to inform the Basin Development Plan (BDP) for the Zarafshan River Basin (ZRB). The consultant will carry out the following tasks:

1. **Describe the natural and climatic conditions of the Zarafshan River Basin:**
	* Geographic and climatic characteristics;
	* Engineering-geological, hydrological, and hydrogeological features;
	* Land resources and soil-reclamation conditions.
2. **Review the legal and institutional framework for water resources management in Uzbekistan:**
	* National legislation and policy relevant to basin-level planning and IWRM;
	* Institutional arrangements, mandates, and inter-agency coordination mechanisms;
	* Water use management systems and regulatory instruments.
3. **Assess relevant strategies and programs:**
	* Review national strategies, reforms, and investment programs relevant to water governance and climate adaptation;
	* Map out donor-supported and regional initiatives with implications for basin development.
4. **Collect and analyze water resources data:**
	* Surface and groundwater availability and quality;
	* Reservoir storage capacity, management, and inter-basin water transfers;
	* Quantification of total renewable water resources and water balance assessment.
5. **Assess current and projected water demand by sector:**
	* Analyze water demand in agriculture, industry, and domestic sectors;
	* Compare demand against available supply and identify existing and future imbalances;
	* Consider seasonal variability and potential climate change impacts.
6. **Review irrigation and land reclamation conditions over the past 5 years:**
	* Infrastructure performance, functionality, and coverage;
	* Institutional and staffing capacities for O&M and service delivery;
	* Sectoral water allocation practices and efficiency.
7. **Identify priority issues and critical zones:**
	* Develop a structured list of water-related challenges and constraints in the basin;
	* Assess associated risks and socio-economic and environmental impacts;
	* Highlight areas requiring urgent attention or investment.
8. **Coordinate and integrate sectoral inputs:**
	* Work closely with experts in hydrogeology, ecology, agriculture, and social/gender issues to harmonize methodologies and findings;
	* Provide technical leadership in synthesizing all thematic inputs into a unified, coherent situational analysis report;
	* Ensure that the final product reflects an integrated, climate-resilient, and gender-sensitive approach.
9. **Reporting and strategic input:**
	* Deliver technical inputs and presentations as needed for project meetings or stakeholder consultations;
	* Submit a consolidated situational analysis report with clear, actionable recommendations.
	* Provide a draft version of the BDP based on the content agreed with the Project Team.

**4. Deliverables and Timeline**

The consultant is expected to deliver the following outputs in close coordination with the project team and other thematic experts:

1. **Inception Report**
A detailed plan outlining the proposed methodology, stakeholder engagement strategy, data requirements, and a timeline of activities.
**Due:** Within 3 weeks of contract start.
2. **Draft Analytical Report**
A preliminary situational analysis of the water resources in the Zarafshan River Basin, including an outline of key findings and a proposed structure for the Basin Development Plan.
**Due:** By the end of November.
3. **Final Consolidated Report**
A comprehensive, integrated situational analysis report, which must include:
	* A synthesis of findings from all relevant sectors (e.g., hydrogeology, ecology, agriculture, social/gender);
	* Maps, charts, and tables illustrating key data and trends;
	* Integrated, actionable recommendations to inform the Basin Development Plan.

**Due:** By the end of December.

1. **Stakeholder Presentation**
A formal presentation of key findings and recommendations to relevant stakeholders for validation and feedback, to support the finalization of the situational analysis.

**5.** The initial version of the River Development Plan, based on the situational analysis report and the content agreed upon with the Project Team.

**Due:** By the end of February.

**Language and Format:**
All deliverables must be submitted in English or Russian, in both electronic and hard copy formats. The consultant may be required to provide short summaries or presentations in Uzbek upon request.

**5. Required Qualifications and Experience**

The ideal candidate will possess the following qualifications and competencies:

* **Education:**
Advanced university degree (Master’s level or higher) in Water Resources Management, Hydrology, Environmental Engineering, or a closely related field.
* **Professional Experience:**
	+ A minimum of 5 years of relevant professional experience in integrated water resources management (IWRM), basin-level planning, or water sector policy and analysis;
	+ Proven experience in leading or coordinating multidisciplinary teams for complex analytical or planning assignments;
	+ Practical experience working in Central Asia or comparable semi-arid river basins is desirable.
* **Technical Skills:**
	+ Strong knowledge and hands-on experience in hydrological data analysis, water balance assessments, and water infrastructure evaluations;
	+ Familiarity with GIS tools and spatial analysis techniques to support mapping and visual presentation of findings;
	+ Ability to analyze legal and institutional frameworks and assess sectoral policies related to water governance.
* **Reporting and Communication:**
	+ Demonstrated ability to produce high-quality, strategic planning reports and synthesize complex data into actionable recommendations;
	+ Strong coordination and stakeholder engagement skills;
	+ Excellent writing and presentation skills in English; working knowledge of Russian and/or Uzbek is an asset.
* **Additional Assets:**
	+ Familiarity with the Zarafshan River Basin’s hydrological, institutional, and socio-economic context is a strong advantage;
	+ Previous experience working with donor-funded projects, especially in cross-sectoral and climate-resilience planning.

**6. Duration, Reporting, and Logistics**

* **Duration and Level of Effort:**
The assignment will be completed within **seven (7) months** from the date of contract signing. The expected start date is **August 2025**, with anticipated completion by **February 2026**. The estimated level of effort is **up to 60 working days**, covering desk-based research, consultations, fieldwork, and report preparation.

This includes:

* + Time allocated for the preparation of key deliverables;
	+ Coordination with other experts and stakeholders;
	+ Participation in project events;
	+ **Up to 4 planned field missions** to the Zarafshan River Basin, each lasting approximately **3–4 days**;
	+ Potential attendance at **1–2 additional coordination or validation meetings**, to be agreed in advance.

These estimates are intended to support candidates in preparing realistic budgets and work plans.

* **Duty Station and Travel:**
The consultant will work from their **home office**, with required travel to **Samarkand, Navoi, Bukhara, Kashkadarya and Djizzakh Provinces** in the Zarafshan River Basin.
Travel expectations include:
	+ **Up to 4 field missions** for stakeholder consultations, data collection, and ground verification;
	+ Optional travel (up to 2 additional trips) for coordination or validation events.

All travel arrangements, logistics, and scheduling will be the **responsibility of the consultant**, in coordination with the project team.

* **Supervision and Reporting:**
The consultant will report to the **the Zarafshan River Basin Council Board and designated Technical Advisors** from **Caritas Switzerland** and **CAREC**, and will collaborate closely with the experts from **Hydrosolutions LLC**. All deliverables will be reviewed and validated by the implementing consortium and relevant national partners.
* **Support and Coordination:**
While the project will help establish initial contacts with key stakeholders, the **consultant is responsible for managing all data collection, field arrangements, and communications** necessary for fulfilling the assignment.