

## W4R Initiative – Mid Term Review (MTR)

### Contents

W4R Initiative – Mid Term Review (MTR).....	1
1. Introduction to MTR of W4R Initiative.....	2
2. W4R Initiative – an overview .....	2
3. Purpose of the Mid-Term Review .....	3
4. Objectives of the Mid-Term Review .....	3
5. Scope of the Mid-Term Review .....	4
5.1 Geographical Coverage .....	4
5.2 Thematic Focus.....	4
5.3 Timeframe Covered .....	4
5.4 Stakeholders Involved .....	4
5.5 Exclusions .....	5
6. Methodological considerations .....	5
7. MTR Criteria and Key Questions .....	5
8. Deliverables and Timeline.....	6
9. Required Qualifications and Experience.....	6
10. Reporting, Communication and Management.....	7
11. Budget and Logistics.....	7
12. Application Process.....	8
13. Annexes to ToR MTR .....	9
Annex 1: Results Framework - Visual .....	10
Annex 2: Wetlands for Resilience – a ten year global wetlands ambition Project proposal (separate document) .....	

## 1. Introduction to MTR of W4R Initiative

The Wetlands 4 Resilience (W4R) Initiative is implemented by Wetlands International and partners, with programme support from the Unit for Climate and Environment at the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida. The full title of the initiative is Wetlands for Resilience – a ten year global wetlands ambition, articulating that W4R was started with the intention of a long-term institutional partnership between Wetlands International and Sida intended to run until the end of 2030. The current phase 1 of W4R is planned and funded for four years, from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2026. This Mid-Term Review (MTR) is being commissioned at mid-point of phase 1 of the W4R Initiative, and aims to assess progress, effectiveness, and areas for improvement to ensure successful program outcomes. The Mid-Term Review will be carried out by a firm or an independent consultant. The consultant / Mid-Term Review team will be supported by representatives from Wetlands International to conduct the MTR.

## 2. W4R Initiative – an overview

The Goal of W4R is: upscale healthy, biodiverse, and well-managed wetland landscapes globally by 2030, contributing to climate resilience and environmental, social and economic sustainability.

The objectives of W4R Initiative are:

1. to bring together and share globally the learning and methodologies for holistic, ecosystem-led resilience building, from our global wetland landscape portfolio and partner programmes;
2. To design and apply a Wetlands 4 Resilience model approach, toolkit and guidance to accelerate upscaling in our major wetland landscape regeneration programmes;
3. To catalyse wetland landscape regeneration by others, through uptake and implementation of the W4R model approach across different sectors, globally.

The expected results (impact, outcomes and intermediate outcomes as formulated in the proposal that forms part of the agreement for phase 1 of W4R) are visualized in the **Results Framework** included in Annex 1.

The visual of ‘W4R Results Framework’ in short tells the W4R story: to work on realising positive impact on **climate resilient sustainable development**, through (stimulating large-scale) **wetlands restoration**.

At the global level W4R will develop a **W4R Model Approach & Toolbox** (5.1), **share and build capacity** on how to use these in practice (5.2), and through **regional and global awareness** – using so-called lighthouse and W4R landscape cases – stimulate adoption by other stakeholders (5.3). The expected outcome is that additional landscapes will apply W4R approaches and contribute to the positive impact beyond W4R target landscapes (serving as demonstrating and learning landscapes).

In **Bangladesh Sundarbans** W4R will support a **W4R Landscape Partnership** that will **assess** the Sundarbans wetlands and climate resilience context (1.1), define an **Engagement Strategy** and start dialogues (1.2), and work on a **shared understanding** of the Sundarbans (2.1). The outcome will be that there is a **joint owned plan (&vision)** to work on an improved conservation and restoration status of the Sundarbans landscape.

In **Ziway-Shalla sub-basin/Ethiopia and Jeta-Pecixe-Cacheu (JPC)/Guinea-Bissau** W4R will support **Landscape Partnerships** on **adapted (planning & policy) processes** (3.1) by building capacity and supporting development of guidelines and management plans in their landscapes. Furthermore through policy influencing and capacity building W4R will work on **national policies and action plans** (3.2) supportive of wetlands to enhance climate resilient sustainable development. Wetlands International will work with the landscape partnerships to **implement best practice interventions** to show the opportunities in the landscapes (4.1), and develop a **Landscape Proposition / Investment Framework** for the landscapes. The outcome will be that innovative and integrated **collaborative planning** is taking place (3) contributing to increased and aligned **investments and finances** for climate resilient sustainable development in the landscapes (4).

The W4R initiative is expected to enhance implementation of Wetlands International's Strategic Intent 2020-2030, especially by supporting the mobilising and upscaling aspects of its Theory of Change. It complements Wetlands international's existing programmes by its intent to facilitate strategic investments for mobilising and upscaling in landscapes, countries and global networks, including by influencing the work of other stakeholders. The main focus is to influence and facilitate policies and investments towards river basins and wetland landscapes all over the world. The intent is that W4R supports and strengthens as much Wetlands International's own internal way of working in and across landscapes and within our network, as well as inspiring and mobilising others in the targeted countries and landscapes, thereby contributing to enhanced climate resilience. A webpage for the programme has been built.<sup>1</sup>

### 3. Purpose of the Mid-Term Review

The purpose of the MTR is to provide an independent and objective assessment of the W4R Initiative's implementation, progress, effectiveness and relevance as well as learnings for the remaining implementation period at its midpoint. The review will identify achievements, challenges, and opportunities for improvement to optimize the envisioned outcomes of W4R at end of phase 1 W4R in the remaining period. The findings will inform strategic decision-making, learnings, and adjustments to ensure the initiative remains on track to achieve its intended outcomes.

### 4. Objectives of the Mid-Term Review

The key objectives of the MTR are to:

1. Assess the extent to which the W4R Initiative is progressing to achieve its intended outcomes of phase 1 at both the global and country levels.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.wetlands.org/publication/wetlands-for-resilience-a-ten-year-global-wetland-ambition/#:~:text=The%20W4R%20%28Wetlands%20for%20Resilience%29%20programme%20addresses%20the,to%20achieve%20climate%2C%20biodiversity%20and%20sustainable%20development%20goals.>

2. Evaluate the effectiveness and relevance of the W4R Initiative's implementation across the different levels, as well as in relation to Strategy for Sweden's global development cooperation in the areas of environment, climate, and biodiversity 2022–2026<sup>2</sup>.
3. Assess the extent to which the W4R Initiative is adding value to the Institutional Development of the Wetlands International global network.
4. Identify challenges, lessons learned, and opportunities for improvement for the W4R Initiative.
5. Provide recommendations for the remaining implementation period.

## 5. Scope of the Mid-Term Review

### 5.1 Geographical Coverage

The mid-term review will cover both the global level work (including lighthouse landscapes in India and Indonesia) of W4R as well as the upscaling landscapes targeted by the program: Ziway-Shalla sub-basin in Central Rift Valley (Ethiopia), and Jeta-Pecixe-Cacheu landscape (Guinea-Bissau), and also the Sundarbans, Bangladesh, a start-up landscape.

### 5.2 Thematic Focus

The review will assess the program's progress, and provide learnings and recommendations for the remaining work, in:

- advancing (globally) the learning & sharing, including through the Wetlands International Community of Practice
- advancing the Wetlands 4 Resilience (4 returns) model approach in addressing biodiversity loss, climate resilience, and sustainable development.
- Policy influence at global and national levels to catalyse upscaling of practices
- Stakeholder engagement and multi-stakeholder partnerships.
- Implementation of ecosystem-based resilience approaches.

### 5.3 Timeframe Covered

The review will assess the progress made from the program's inception in 2023 to the present mid-term point at the end of Q1 2025.

### 5.4 Stakeholders Involved

Key stakeholders to be engaged include:

- Wetlands International network offices.
- Local, national and global stakeholders involved or targeted in the W4R initiative.
- Involved staff of Sida
- Beneficiary Community-Based Organisations / NGOs / communities in the targeted landscapes where applicable.

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<sup>2</sup> Available in Swedish here

[https://www.regeringen.se/contentassets/dfbd424f89684d749801396d71f636eb/strategi-for-sveriges-globala-utvecklingssamarbete-inom-miljo-klimat-och-biologisk-mangfald-2022-2026\\_uppdaterad.pdf](https://www.regeringen.se/contentassets/dfbd424f89684d749801396d71f636eb/strategi-for-sveriges-globala-utvecklingssamarbete-inom-miljo-klimat-och-biologisk-mangfald-2022-2026_uppdaterad.pdf).

The MTR should be utilisation focused. In other words, the MTR process shall be designed, conducted and reported to meet the needs of the intended users. These include Sida staff, WI staff of the different country offices in Guinea-Bissau, Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Indonesia and India, as well as global office and the wider WI network. Furthermore these include stakeholders WI collaborates with in Guinea-Bissau, Ethiopia, Bangladesh and at global level.

## 5.5 Exclusions

The review will not cover:

- Financial audits, which are conducted separately.
- Internal steering and control, which were reviewed in 2024.
- Detailed impact assessments, as this is a Mid-Term Review.

## 6. Methodological considerations

The review will employ a mixed-method and participatory approach, including:

- Desk review of program documents, reports, website, and landscape-level data.
- Key informant interviews and stakeholder interviews / consultations.
- Field visit to a selected landscape in Ethiopia and / or Guinea-Bissau: observations, data collection through stakeholder interviews / consultations

It is expected that the Mid-Term reviewer describes and justifies an appropriate methodology and methods for data collection in the tender proposal. The MTR design, methodology, and the methods for data collection (including a representative sample of relevant informants and stakeholders) and analysis are expected to be fully developed and presented in the inception report. These should include flexible approaches and methodologies for remote data collection as well as (one selected country for) in-country interviews and observations. An outline for deliverables is to be included in the tender proposal and agreed in the inception report.

Wetlands International and Sida will ensure that all relevant documentation and contact details for relevant persons or organisations are available to the evaluator(s) at the start of the assignment.

## 7. MTR Criteria and Key Questions

The MTR shall assess programme implementation and progress in relation to the Wetlands 4 Resilience Initiative's theory of change developed for the 2023-2026 programme phase. The review will follow relevant OECD-DAC criteria, for this MTR focus is on relevance and effectiveness. Specific questions which are to be assessed include, but are not limited to, below key questions:

### **Relevance:**

- Are the goal, objectives, outcomes and design aligned with stakeholder needs and priorities at both the global and country levels?
- To what extent are they relevant in relation to the Strategy for Sweden's global development cooperation in the areas of environment, climate, and biodiversity 2022–2026?

- To what extent is the W4R initiative adding value to the institutional development of the Wetlands International Global Network?

**Effectiveness:**

- To what extent is the Initiative on track to achieve its intended outcomes of phase 1 (at both the global and country levels)?
- Are the theory of change and the results framework of the initiative being implemented as planned? What strategies are working well, and which need adjustments?
- What challenges, lessons learned, and opportunities for improvement can be identified to achieve the Initiative's outcomes?
- What recommendations for the remaining implementation period can be provided?

Note: The MTR-team shall use the Sida OECD/DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation, see OECD (2021), Applying Evaluation Criteria Thoughtfully<sup>3</sup>.

## 8. Deliverables and Timeline

The Mid-Term review will be carried out in the period from 14<sup>th</sup> April to 20<sup>th</sup> June 2025. The consultancy should not exceed the envisioned budget of 17,500-20,000 EUR s.

The review team's timetable will include the following activities:

- Initial start-up meeting with Program Manager of W4R Initiative;
- Prepare an inception report outlining the MTR design, methodology and work plan.
- Desk review of program documents, reports, and landscape-level data.
- Development and refining of the Mid-Term Review methodology
- Conducting online and onsite stakeholders interviews / consultations
- Data analysis;
- Presentation of draft findings and draft recommendations in MTR report;
- Incorporation of feedback and comments and finalization of the MTR report.

The Mid-Term Review team will be responsible to deliver the below main deliverables / milestones

- **Start-up meeting** with WI (digital; by 15<sup>th</sup> April).
- **Draft Inception Report** (by 23<sup>rd</sup> April), including presentation on this
  - **Deadline for comments** from intended users to MTR-review team (by 28<sup>th</sup> April).
- **Refined MTR methodology** as part of **Final inception report** (by 2<sup>nd</sup> May).
- **Submission of Draft Report** (6<sup>th</sup> June).
- Discussion with W4R program staff (by 10<sup>th</sup> June).
  - **Deadline to submit comments** to MTR-review team (by 17<sup>th</sup> June).
- **Final Mid-Term Review Report** (by 20<sup>th</sup> June).

## 9. Required Qualifications and Experience

The Mid-Term Review will be carried out by a firm or an independent consultant. The consultant / Mid-Term Review team will be supported by representatives from Wetlands International to conduct the MTR.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://doi.org/10.1787/543e84ed-en>.

The MTR-review team should have:

- Expertise in wetland conservation, climate resilience, and sustainable development.
- Expertise in policy and advocacy in the field of environment, biodiversity, and/or climate
- Experience conducting reviews and/or evaluations for large-scale environmental programs.
- Knowledge of MEL methodologies, particularly OECD-DAC criteria.
- Strong analytical, reporting, and communication skills.
- Experience working at both international and country levels, with experience of reviewing and/or evaluating programs in countries in Africa.
  - o Experience of working and/or reviews or evaluations in Ethiopia and/or Guinea-Bissau is a strong asset;
  - o local representation in at least one of the two countries Ethiopia and / or Guinea-Bissau is a strong asset, to allow efficient face-to-face interaction with in-country stakeholders.

## 10. Reporting, Communication and Management

The MTR team will report on deliverables to the Program Manager of W4R Initiative. The final formal recipients of the MTR-report within the W4R Initiative are Sida and the W4R Steering Group. For day-to-day management the MTR team interacts with the Program Manager of W4R Initiative, who coordinates with the Program Management Working Group of W4R Initiative, and where relevant in with the Steering Group, and with Sida. Regular check-ins between the MTR team and the Program Manager of W4R Initiative will be conducted to ensure alignment with Mid-Term Review objectives. Coordination with country teams in Ethiopia and Guinea-Bissau will also be required.

The final report shall contain an executive summary of conclusions and recommendations. It shall describe the methodology used and all limitations shall be made explicit in the report and the consequences of these limitations be discussed.

All communications are to be conducted in the English language.

## 11. Budget and Logistics

A detailed budget proposal should be submitted as part of the bid/offer by the consultant/MTR-team, covering all costs associated with this review: professional fees, and all reimbursable expenses (e.g., travel costs, field work, materials, etc.). The MTR-team is expected to visit Ethiopia and/or Guinea-Bissau for stakeholders' interviews / consultations. Wetlands International will facilitate access to relevant stakeholders and project sites in Ethiopia and Guinea-Bissau.

The payment of the review team will be performed as follows:

- 30% of the fees upon signing the contract;
- 30% of the fees after submission of the preliminary (draft) report;
- 40% of the fees after submission of the final report to and approval by Wetlands International.

Payment is subject to prior submission of original invoice stating the following information:

- Reference of the bid;

- Bank details;
- The period of execution of the service.

Wetlands International will not make advance payments on the fees. However, any expenses for the mission, in compliance with Wetlands International procedures, are payable in advance once the contract is signed.

## 12. Application Process

Interested candidates should submit:

1. A letter of bid duly signed
2. A technical proposal (maximum 6 pages) outlining:
  - applicant's understanding of the ToR,
  - suggested methodology,
  - draft work plan,
  - reference to examples / experience with similar previous assignments indicating field of specialization and references
3. A financial proposal: showing the total cost (in Euro), professional fees and reimbursable expenses (e.g., travel costs, field work, materials, etc.). The financial proposal must cover all costs associated with this review; costs incurred outside the terms agreed in the financial proposal and final contract will not be reimbursed. The offer will also state the details of the amount not including taxes and including all taxes. Any special exemption should be clearly stated.
4. Annexes:
  - at least two sample reports of similar assignment which will be treated confidentially;
  - CV of all members of the review team and possible track record

**Submission Deadline:** 7 April 2025, 12:00CET (midday)

The offer must be submitted to: [Jeroen.Jurriens@wetlands.org](mailto:Jeroen.Jurriens@wetlands.org) no later than midday on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2025, and bearing the subject in the email: W4R MTR proposal.

Proposals will be scored according to the following criteria and have to score at least 50 points on the technical proposal to be considered further:

	Max. score
<b>Technical proposal (70%)</b>	
Proposed methodology and approach	40
Experience	20
Writing and presentation	10
<b>Financial proposal (30%)</b>	
Value for money	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

These are further details for the offer:

- Perusal and evaluation of offers: The offers will be sorted by Wetlands International by 8<sup>th</sup> April 2025. An evaluation committee will be tasked to assess the eligible offers. The choice will be based on technical capacity. The final choice will be made considering the budget available for this action.

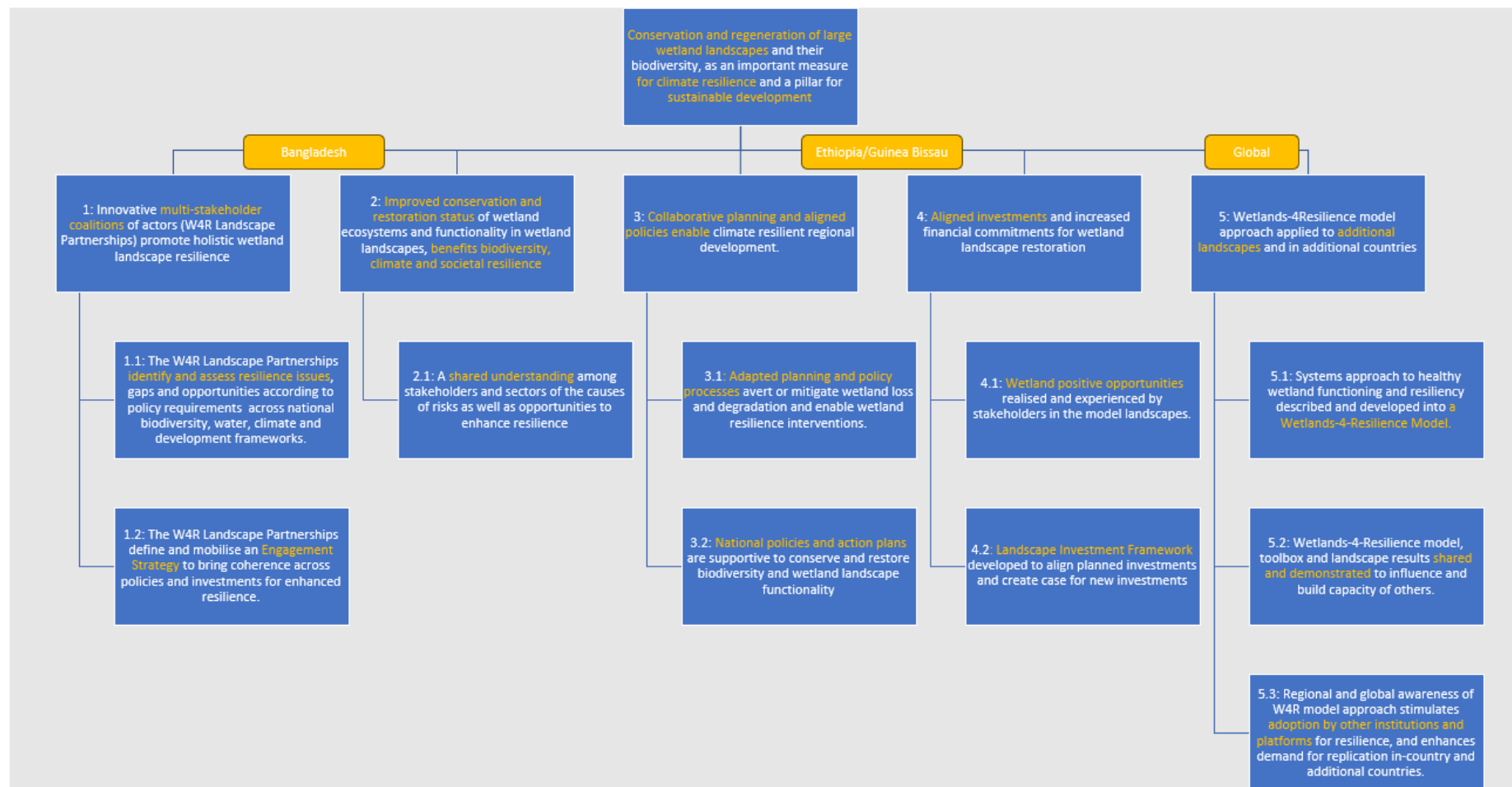


- Reserve on cancelling the bid: The present invitation to bid can be cancelled due to the conditions below:
  - There has not been enough competition;
  - No offer meeting the requirements of the invitation to bid has been received;
  - The offers accepted at the time of the perusal by far exceeded the available budget.
- Conditions for carrying out the mandate:
  - The service will be subject to a contract and will be added as an appendix to the present ToR and the offer shall be validated.
  - The review team leader will take up all the tax obligations related to its status of consultancy.
  - The review team will comply with Wetlands International management procedures while performing the services, subject to this offer of consultancy.

### 13. Annexes to ToR MTR

- Annex 1: Results Framework
- Annex 2: Wetlands for Resilience – a ten year global wetlands ambition Project proposal (separate document)

## Annex 1: Results Framework - Visual



Annex 2: Wetlands for Resilience – a ten year global wetlands ambition Project proposal (separate document)