

Consultancy Terms of Reference (ToR)

To review the full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report of proposed Srepok 3A Hydropower Dam and develop a brief finding for raising public awareness among community members potentially impacted by the project

December 2025

1. INTRODUCTION

The Rivers Coalition of Cambodia (RCC) was formed from the efforts of national and some international NGOs working on environmental and human rights issues. The focus is on hydropower development projects, initially on the Sesan River, then the Srepok River, and the Sekong River (the three "S" rivers). Recently, the alliance has expanded its work to include issues related to dam development in Cambodia and the Mekong region.

From 2003 to 2005, the alliance was known as the Sesan River Team, created by the Sesan River Protection Network Organization Sre Pok Sekong (3SPN), the NGO Forum on Cambodia (NGOF), and the Environmental Care Association and Culture (CEPA) to support communities affected by the Sesan Dam. In 2005-2006, with the addition of new NGO members and the expansion of the coalition's work area, it became a three-river "S" working group. The alliance is now renamed the Cambodian Rivers Coalition (RCC) to address ongoing dam-related issues across Cambodia and the Mekong region.

The Cambodian Rivers Coalition (RCC) aims to work with communities to influence Cambodian government policies and intergovernmental affairs on river and dam development. The objective is to encourage the development of ecosystem-friendly projects that consider gender and climate change.

The alliance envisions future hydropower projects that respect the rights of affected people and ensure environmental sustainability and community livelihoods. Public participation, including that of men and women, in the planning and decision-making process is essential to address the interests and needs of affected communities.

In 2025, under the project “**Mekong Inclusion Project Phase 3: Water Governance and Climate Resilience (IP3)**”, RCC through Oxfam received financial support to further strengthen civil society engagement in water governance, social and environmental safeguarding, and climate resilience in Cambodia’s Mekong and its tributaries. Within this framework, the RCC seek to engage a qualified consultant to review and analyze the **full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report of the proposed Srepok 3A Hydropower Dam**, and to develop user-friendly, evidence-based briefings and communication materials to raise public awareness among communities potentially impacted by the project and to inform advocacy with relevant government institutions and other stakeholders.

2. RATIONALE

The Cambodian government's recent announcement of a ten-year moratorium on hydropower dams along the Mekong mainstream has so far maintained the free flow of the Mekong River in its territory. This is widely viewed as a positive and plausible decision for water resources governance in the basin. However, concerns over large-scale hydropower development in Cambodia have not been resolved, as dam projects are operating, under construction, or being planned on important tributaries of the Mekong River and the Tonle Sap Great Lake.

Some of these dams are (or will be) located in rich socio-cultural and ecologically sensitive areas. Major hydropower projects in operation include: Lower Sesan II, Kamchay, Stung Atay, Upper Russei Chrum, Lower Russei Chrum, Stung Tatai, and Kirirom III. In addition, large dams are under construction such as: Stung Pursat 1, Stung Tatai Leu, Stung Meteuk 1, Middle Russei Chrum, and Stung Veal Thmor Kambot 2.

Dam in focus: Most recently, the **Lower Srepok 3 (LSP3) / Srepok 3A** dam has emerged and is going through a questionable process from initial to full Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA). Based on very limited publicly available information, the dam's installed capacity is projected at about **376 megawatts**, and it is planned to be built on the **Srepok River**, one of the most important Mekong tributaries besides the Sesan and Sekong Rivers.

If constructed, the project is expected to inundate **over 60,000 hectares**, which would make it the **largest reservoir in Cambodia**, even larger than the Lower Sesan II dam's reservoir of approximately 30,000 hectares. Lower Sesan II already received widespread criticism for its extensive inundation area and far-reaching social and environmental impacts.

The proposed Srepok 3A / LSP3 dam has therefore triggered tremendous concern over its potential **irreversible effects** on:

- Local livelihoods and food security (including fisheries, farming, and forest-based livelihoods)
- Critical wildlife sanctuaries and protected areas
- Archaeological and cultural heritage sites
- Existing agribusiness operations and other economic activities in the project area

RCC & other CSOs has received a presentation on draft ESIA report and invited by Ministry of Environment to join in a meeting.

In this context, RCC members and partners seek to ensure that the full EIA is rigorously reviewed; that key technical, methodological and legal gaps are clearly identified; and that affected communities and the wider public have access to understandable, evidence-based information about potential impacts and options for safeguarding their rights and the environment.

3. Purpose of the Consultancy

To enhance the Rivers Coalition in Cambodia (RCC)'s ongoing efforts to address the controversial issues of large-scale hydropower dams and to raise public awareness among community members potentially impacted by the proposed Srepok 3A / LSP3 dam, it will hire a **qualified consultant (or team)** to:

- **Review the full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report** of the proposed Srepok 3A Hydropower Dam; and
- **Develop concise, accessible brief findings** on potential environmental and social impacts for wider stakeholder engagement, including evidence-based consultation and advocacy with relevant line ministries and other decision-makers.

4. SCOPE OF WORK

The consultant will work closely with RCC members and secretariat, and Oxfam to undertake, but not necessarily be limited to, the following tasks:

1. Portfolio update of Srepok 3A / LSP3 dam project

- o Keep the portfolio information of the LSP3A dam project in Cambodia up-to-date (developer, location, technical design, capacity, reservoir size, affected areas, project status, timeline, relevant approvals, and ESIA process).

2. Comprehensive review of the full EIA report

- o Review the full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report of the proposed Srepok 3A dam, including annexes and related technical studies.
- o Clearly identify and define **gaps in technical, methodological, and legal aspects** of the EIA report and/or EIA processes (e.g., baseline data, cumulative impacts, transboundary implications, public participation, alternatives assessment, mitigation and compensation measures, compliance with Cambodian legal and policy frameworks, and relevant regional/international standards).
- o Develop a **concise brief of key findings** tailored for wider stakeholder engagement, including evidence-based policy dialogue and advocacy with line ministries and other stakeholders.

3. Policy recommendations and advocacy support

- o Provide **policy recommendations** and guidance for addressing social and environmental safeguards of the Srepok 3A / LSP3 dam in Cambodia's Mekong mainstream and tributary rivers context.
- o The recommendations should be suitable for integration into:

- Press releases
 - Petitions
 - Formal letters
 - Social media posts
- o These materials will be used to express RCC's positions and concerns regarding the LSP3A hydropower project.
4. **Support to joint advocacy strategy and risk analysis**
- o Lead the development of, or contribute substantively to, a **joint advocacy and influencing approach** with RCC's members and secretariat, focusing on the Srepok 3A / LSP3 dam and linked water governance issues.
 - o Prepare a **written risk analysis document** on joint advocacy (e.g., political, legal, security, reputational, and social risks) with corresponding prevention and mitigation strategies.
5. **Facilitation and participation in discussions/meetings**
- o Co-convene dam-related discussions/meetings, especially those focusing on LSP3A, with RCC's members, and help to identify and solicit needed follow-up actions.
 - o Participate as a **resource person or panelist** (when invited) in policy dialogues on social and environmental safeguards of LSP3A, providing technical and legal analysis as well as community perspectives.
6. **Documentation and knowledge sharing**
- o Document the process of the LSP3A dam development (with a focus on EIA/ESIA, decision-making process, public participation, and engagement with affected communities) and share this documentation among RCC's members, Oxfam, and like-minded CSOs.
 - o Ensure that the **voices of local and indigenous communities** related to the dam development project are heard, accurately reflected, and documented (through interviews, consultations, focus groups or other appropriate methods).
7. **Support on communication materials and engagement planning**
- o Provide inputs to RCC's members to **co-develop communication materials** for public awareness raising and policy influencing (e.g., press release, petition, formal letters, social media posts) regarding LSP3A.

- o Support RCC to **develop its 2026 influencing and engagement advocacy plan for LSP3A**, and contribute to RCC’s broader **engagement plan for 2026–2030**, ensuring they are grounded in the EIA findings and community concerns.

5. KEY DELIVERABLES

The consultant is expected to deliver the following:

1. Concise EIA Review Report (English)

- o A clear and well-structured report in English summarizing the findings from the full EIA review of the Srepok 3A / LSP3A dam.
- o The report should include:
 - **Updated portfolio information** of the Srepok 3A / LSP3A dam based on the EIA report and other verified sources.
 - A clear definition and analysis of **gaps in technical, methodological, and legal aspects** of the EIA report and/or EIA processes.

2. Brief findings on environmental and social impacts

- o A concise **written brief of key findings on possible environmental and social impacts** of the LSP3A dam on surrounding communities and ecosystems.
- o This brief must be prepared in **both English and Khmer**, and written in accessible, non-technical language suitable for community members and the general public.

3. Risk analysis of joint advocacy

- o A **written risk analysis document** outlining potential risks associated with joint advocacy on LSP3A and broader hydropower issues (including political, legal, security, social, and reputational risks), together with prevention and mitigation measures.

4. Advocacy and engagement planning support

- o Technical assistance and written inputs to support RCC in developing:
 - **RCC’s 2026 influencing and engagement advocacy plan for LSP3A**; and
 - **RCC’s engagement plan for 2026–2030** (relevant sections where LSP3A and related tributary hydropower issues are addressed).

5. Evidence of community voices and technical/legal discussion

- o Documentation demonstrating that **local and indigenous communities’ voices** related to the LSP3A project have been heard and integrated into findings and recommendations.

- o Documentation of **technical and legal aspects** of the LSP3A project discussed in meetings/policy dialogues (e.g., meeting notes, summary briefs).

6. Integrated advocacy outputs

- o Key outcomes from discussions and analyses are **integrated into a petition letter and other advocacy products** (e.g., press release, formal letters, and social media content) and conveyed to relevant stakeholders prior to public dissemination and media outreach for public awareness.

6. KEY ACTIVITIES, METHODOLOGY, MILESTONES AND TIMEFRAME

The consultancy is expected to take place during **December 2025**. A detailed work plan will be submitted to NGO Forum by the consultant, but at minimum should cover the following milestones:

No.	Deliverable / Output	Timeline
1	Drafting and Finalization of ToR	Week 1 – December 2025
2	Signing of contract between NGO Forum and Consultant (including agreed work-plan and methodology)	Week 2 – December 2025
3	Desk review and consultations: Review of the full EIA report of the proposed Srepok 3A hydropower dam; desk literature review; stakeholder consultations with key actors; and a validation workshop to present and refine key preliminary findings to ensure they are contextually relevant and actionable.	Week 3 – December 2025
4	Draft outputs: Submission of the draft EIA review report (English) , and draft brief key findings in both Khmer and English , including initial recommendations and a draft RCC engagement and influencing approach related to LSP3A.	Week 4 – December 2025
5	Final outputs: Submission of the final EIA review report in English , final brief key findings in both Khmer and English , and final influencing and engagement plan for LSP3A and RCC's engagement plan for 2026–2030 (relevant sections).	Week 1– January 2026

7. REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

The interested consultant (or team) shall have:

- **Academic background**
 - o University degree in a relevant field (e.g. environmental science, ecology, hydrology, social sciences, natural resource management, water governance or related areas).
 - o **Master's or PhD** in water governance, natural resource management, environmental policy, or related field is strongly preferred.
- **Professional experience**
 - o At least **10 years of experience in social and biodiversity / environmental research** and assessment.
 - o Minimum **5 years of experience working in the water governance and/or natural resource management sector** in Cambodia and/or the Mekong region.
 - o Demonstrated experience in **assessment of water governance and natural resource management (NRM)**, including EIA/ESIA review, environmental and social safeguard analysis, and community-based research.
 - o Proven experience working with **Government, NGOs, private sector, and communities**, particularly in sensitive or contested development projects.
- **Policy and regulatory competence**
 - o Familiarity with **Cambodian government policies, laws and regulations** related to natural resources management, environmental protection, EIA/ESIA, indigenous peoples' rights, and public participation.
- **Team composition and gender considerations**
 - o The research team **should comprise at least one woman**, and a **gender-inclusive research team/consortium is strongly encouraged to apply**. Experience integrating gender and social inclusion perspectives into environmental and social analysis is a strong asset.
- **Language**
 - o **Fluency in both English and Khmer** (written and spoken), with demonstrated ability to produce high-quality technical and non-technical documents in both languages.

8. MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR CONSULTANT'S PROPOSAL

Interested consultants are requested to submit a brief proposal (maximum length can be agreed with NGO) including at least the following:

1. **Understanding of the assignment** (max. 1 page)

- o A concise statement demonstrating the consultant’s understanding of the context, objectives, and key tasks of the assignment.
2. **Methodology / Approaches** (max. 1 page)
- o Proposed methodology and approaches for:
 - Reviewing the full EIA report;
 - Conducting additional desk review and stakeholder consultations;
 - Validating findings;
 - Ensuring community voices are incorporated and risks are adequately assessed.
3. **Professional references**
- o Contact details of at least **three professional references** who can speak to the consultant’s relevant experience and performance.
4. **CV and relevant experience**
- o Detailed **CV(s)** of the consultant or team members, and a **list of previous similar assignments** (EIA/ESIA reviews, hydropower assessments, water governance and NRM research, advocacy support, etc.).
5. **Detailed financial proposal**
- o A clear **financial proposal** in USD, including daily rates, estimated number of days, and any other costs (e.g., travel, communication, meetings).
6. **Proposed work plan**
- o A **proposed work plan** aligned with the indicative timeline in this ToR, showing key activities, deliverables and milestones for December 2025.