Terms of Reference

Communication Production and Media Outreach Support to the GEF Drin II Project

In the framework of:

Memorandum of Understanding
for the Management of the Extended Transboundary Drin Basin

GEF II Project "Implementing the Strategic Action Programme of the Drin Basin to Strengthen Transboundary cooperation and enable Integrated Natural Resources Management "

September 2026

Implementing the Strategic Action Programme of the DRIN BASIN to Strengthen Transboundary Cooperation and Enable Integrated Natural Resources Management

The Coordinated Action for the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding for the management of the Drin basin (Drin CORDA) is supported by the GEF Drin Project. The latter is implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and executed by the Global Water Partnership (GWP) through GWP-Mediterranean (GWP-Med), in cooperation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). GWP-Med serves as the Secretariat of the Drin Core Group, the multilateral body responsible for the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding.

Disclaimer: The document adheres to the UN rules and policies regarding the names and international status of Riparian's and/or other geographical areas etc. The use of characterizations, names, maps or other geographical statements in this document in no way implies any political view or positions of the Parties which are executing and implementing the Project.

For more information, please contact

GLOBAL WATER PARTNERSHIP MEDITERRANEAN

Web: www.gwpmed.org
Headquarters:
12, Kyrristou str., 10556
Athens, Greece
T: +30210-3247490, -3247267, F: +30210-3317127

E-mail: secretariat@gwpmed.org

1. Introduction – Background

The Drin Basin is a shared natural resource connecting Albania, Greece, Kosovo*, Montenegro and North Macedonia. Its sustainable management requires continued cooperation among the Riparian countries and their institutions, as well as the meaningful engagement of stakeholders at national, regional and local levels.

The GEF Drin II Project supports the implementation of the Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the Drin Basin and aims to advance integrated natural resources management and sustainable development in the Basin and its coastal and marine areas. The project builds on the achievements and institutional experience of the Drin Coordinated Action (Drin CORDA) process and the previous GEF Drin project.

Communication is an integral part of project implementation. The Drin Communication Strategy identifies communication as an enabler of implementation, stakeholder engagement, knowledge sharing and institutional ownership. It calls for communication to translate technical information into accessible and useful formats, support stakeholder participation, document knowledge and lessons learned, and strengthen recognition of the Drin Basin as a model of transboundary cooperation.

The project involves extensive engagement with national institutions, technical agencies, local authorities, communities, development partners and other stakeholders. Much of this engagement takes place through high-level meetings, institutional consultations, technical meetings, stakeholder workshops and activities on the ground. Communication materials are therefore required not only to disseminate project results, but also to help project officers explain the project, its relevance and benefits to different audiences and support meaningful participation.

At the same time, a substantial body of knowledge and communication material has been generated through previous Drin initiatives. This provides an important foundation for communicating the history and evolution of the Drin cooperation process and ensuring continuity between previous initiatives and Drin II.

2. Description of the Assignment

Objective of the assignment

The objective of this assignment is to provide production, design, content development, adaptation and media/outreach support to the project's Communications and Knowledge Management Officer (referred to in this ToR as the GWP-Med Senior Communications Officer or SCO) to strengthen the implementation and visibility of the GEF Drin II Project. The Consultant works under the technical guidance of the GWP-Med Senior Communications Officer and does not replace or duplicate the SCO's functions.

The assignment will build upon existing communication and knowledge materials produced through GEF Drin II project (particularly existing Communications Strategy, and Stakeholder Engagement Plan) including previous Drin initiatives and will ensure that new products complement, rather than duplicate, existing resources.

The Consultant, under the technical guidance of SCO, will develop the following:

1: Inception Note, Audience and Communication Pathways, and Key Messages

The Consultant shall support the SCO in reviewing the existing Communications Strategy, Stakeholder Engagement Plan, Project Inception Report and relevant project materials and multimedia assets. Drawing primarily on the Communications Officer's direct knowledge and guidance, and on the existing stakeholder mapping and analysis in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan, the Consultant shall support the updating and operationalization of preferences for priority audiences in each national context, including their interests, information needs, constraints, decision-making contexts and communication preferences.

Drawing on this analysis, where relevant, experience from comparable successful projects and processes, the Consultant will support refinement and prioritization for the identification of the key pathways through which communication can realistically contribute to stakeholder engagement, decision-making, and uptake. In light of the project's limited communications resources, identify the strategic points where communication can have the greatest leverage and recommend where effort should be concentrated.

Based on these findings, and under the guidance of the SCO, the Consultant shall support the development of a clear and coherent account of what Drin cooperation has achieved, what Drin II is intended to do, and why it matters, together with key messages adapted to the different priority audiences and national contexts for validation by the SCO.

Deliverable 1: A working note prepared under the guidance of the SCO, compiling the Consultant's analytical and drafting inputs. The note consolidates: (a) an updated workplan; (b) a refinement of priority audiences per national context, building on the existing Stakeholder Engagement Plan; (c) a summary of communication pathways and leverage points; and (d) draft key messages for validation by the Communications Officer (English).

The SCO owns and approves the note. The Consultant provides drafting and analytical support only

2: Basin & **Country-Specific Communication Packages and Production Support**

Part A — Basin Operational Communications Plan support

Under the guidance of the SCO, the Consultant shall support the operationalization of the existing strategic framework into a practical basin-level plan, with drafting inputs on priorities, audiences, messages, channels, activities and products, for validation and approval by the SCO. The plan should identify where communications effort should be concentrated, based on the audience and communication pathways analysis under Deliverable 1, and should provide a focused basis for implementation rather than a broad list of communication activities and products. SCO owns and approves the plan.

Plan B: Country-Specific Communication Packages and Production Support

Based on the approved plan, and on inputs provided by the SCO, the Consultant shall produce for each Riparian, a communication package adapted to the relevant national context, including, but not limited to:

- draft country-specific key messages and talking points for priority audiences;

- a two-page project brief, adapted to the national context and translated into the relevant national languages;
- a tailored presentation deck/template for use in institutional meetings, stakeholder consultations and other relevant occasions;
- a one-page country communication action sheet, identifying priority audiences, recommended communication uses and channels, and key communication opportunities

The Consultant may propose alternative or additional products where these would better serve the priorities identified in the plan. Any proposed alternatives shall be submitted in writing to the SCO for review and agreement before development. The Consultant is responsible for production, design, layout and translation coordination. Content, messages and talking points remain the responsibility of SCO.

Deliverable 2: Basin Operational Communications Plan and country-specific communication packages for each Riparian, as specified above. The plan is owned and approved by the SCO; the packages are produced by the Consultant and validated by the SCO.

3: Multimedia Drin Story: From Cooperation to Action

Development of a standalone, visually engaging multimedia digital story presenting the evolution of the Drin cooperation process, its key milestones and achievements, the transition towards GEF Drin II, and why the cooperation matters.

The digital story is intended to complement the institutional Drin CORDA website by providing a more immersive, visually engaging and multimedia-led experience for audiences seeking to understand the history, experience and significance of Drin cooperation.

The product shall go beyond a conventional web page or static publication and shall combine strong visual storytelling with multimedia and interactive elements. As a minimum, it shall include:

- a clear narrative structure organised into thematic and/or chronological sections;
- integration of existing Drin videos and other multimedia assets;
- photography and other relevant visual material;
- an interactive or animated timeline, or equivalent interactive storytelling element;
- maps and/or visual representations of the Drin Basin and cooperation process;
- infographics or other visual explanations of key information;
- intuitive navigation allowing users to explore the story rather than simply read a static page;
- responsive design optimised for desktop and mobile devices.

Human stories component

The digital story may include 3–5 human-interest stories illustrating TDA-identified problems through the lived experiences of people in the Drin Basin, each linked to the SAP and GEF Drin II response.

The Contractor shall be responsible for the editorial concept, content development, visual design, production and technical implementation of the digital story, drawing primarily on existing project materials and the audience and communication analysis undertaken under Deliverable 1.

The digital story shall be delivered as a single, cohesive digital storytelling experience, structured through multiple thematic and/or interactive sections within the experience rather than as a conventional multi-page website.

The digital story shall be developed in English. Where relevant and agreed with GWP-Med, selected elements may be adapted or translated into Drin Riparian languages.

The digital story shall be hosted separately from the main Drin CORDA website and accessible through a link from the main website. The Contractor shall provide hosting for a minimum period of three years, including SSL, routine security and software updates, backups and basic technical maintenance. All hosting and related costs shall be included in the financial offer.

The digital story shall include a simple, user-friendly content management system or editing interface enabling GWP-Med to update and modify content, images, links, embedded media and other relevant elements without requiring development support.

The Contractor shall provide full administrative access, source files and relevant credentials, allowing GWP-Med to maintain or transfer the digital story to another hosting provider if required. Basic web analytics shall also be configured.

Deliverable 3: Development of a visually engaging multimedia digital story presenting the evolution, milestones and achievements of Drin cooperation and the transition to GEF Drin II. The story shall integrate existing videos, photography, an interactive timeline, maps, infographics and intuitive navigation. It shall be responsive for desktop and mobile and developed using existing Drin materials and the audience analysis under D1. The contractor will provide three-year hosting, CMS functionality, analytics, maintenance, administrative access and source files.

4: Media Package: Country Media Mapping and Targeted Story Content

Develop country-specific media mappings covering relevant media outlets, journalists, specialised publications and digital platforms across the Riparian countries, including relevant contact details and the thematic or audience relevance of each outlet.

Based on the media mapping, the audience and communication analysis under Deliverable 1, and available GEF Drin II materials, identify priority media and story opportunities and develop 2–3 placeable stories suitable for pitching to relevant specialist, regional and national media. The Contractor shall draw on the video, photography, and narrative content produced under D3, and may supplement it with additional quotes, context, or data as needed for media placement

Prepare a press pack and pitch plan to support targeted outreach.

Undertake targeted media outreach around these stories, including pitching and follow-up with selected media contacts, with a target of 5 media placements across relevant specialist, regional and national outlets. The target is not a guarantee of publication.

The Contractor shall maintain a record of media outreach undertaken, including the outlets and contacts approached, the topics or stories proposed, responses received and relevant follow-up information. The

media mapping and outreach record shall be provided to GWP-Med as a working resource for continued media engagement beyond the assignment.

Deliverable 4: Country-specific media mappings covering relevant media outlets, journalists, specialised publications and digital platforms, including contact details and thematic/audience relevances. Identify priority media and story opportunities, develop 2–3 placeable stories, and prepare a press pack and pitch plan for targeted outreach. Undertake targeted pitching and follow-up, with a target of 5 media placements, and provide GWP-Med with a record of outreach and responses as a resource for continued media engagement.

Item	What (title of Deliverable)	Assignment / Deliverable
D1	Working Note, Workplan, Refinement of Audience and Communication Pathways, and Key Messages	A working note prepared under the guidance of the SCO, compiling the Consultant's analytical and drafting inputs. The note consolidates: (a) an updated workplan; (b) a refinement of priority audiences per national context, building on the existing Stakeholder Engagement Plan; (c) a summary of communication pathways and leverage points; and (d) draft key messages for validation by the Communications Officer (English).
D2	Plan A- Basin Operational Communications Plan support Plan B - Country-Specific Communication Packages and Production Support	Basin Operational Communications Plan and country-specific communication packages for each Riparian, as specified above. The plan is owned and approved by the SCO; the packages are produced by the Consultant and validated by the SCO.
D3	Multimedia Drin Story: From Cooperation to Action	Development of a visually engaging multimedia digital story presenting the evolution, milestones and achievements of Drin cooperation and the transition to GEF Drin II. The story shall integrate existing videos, photography, an interactive timeline, maps, infographics and intuitive navigation. It shall be responsive for desktop and mobile and developed using existing Drin materials and the audience analysis under D1.
D4	Media Package: Country Media Mapping and Targeted Story Content	Country-specific media mappings covering relevant media outlets, journalists, specialised publications and digital platforms, including contact details and thematic/audience relevances. Identify priority media and story opportunities, develop 2–3 placeable stories, and prepare a press pack and pitch plan for targeted outreach. Undertake targeted pitching and follow-up, with a target of 5 media placements, and provide GWP-Med with a record of outreach and responses as a resource for continued media engagement.

3. Reporting, Deliverables and Milestones

The Successful Consultant(s) are expected to provide the following deliverables, which are directly related to the tasks outlined in detail under Section 2 based on the below timeline.

Timeline of design of deliverables

D1	Working Note, Workplan, Refinement of Audience and Communication Pathways, and Key Messages	End week 2
D2	Country-Specific Communication Packages and Production Support — Basin Operational Communications Plan support	End week 4
D3	Multimedia Drin Story: From Cooperation to Action	End week 5
D4	Media Package: Country Media Mapping and Targeted Story Content	End week 6
D5	Full asset handover	End week 6

Each payment will be issued after the quality assessment and approval of each deliverable by the Contracting Authority. Then, the awarded consultant will issue the respective invoices.

4. Visual identity and Source Materials

The communication products should be developed in accordance with the project's visual identity and GWP-Med communication requirements.

GWP-Med will provide the visual identity package, including logos, branding guidelines, colour palettes and any available graphic assets relevant to the assignment.

GWP-Med will also provide available Reports developed under Drin I.

Reporting Line

The Senior Communications Officer (SCO) holds overall responsibility for all communication activities under the project and approves all communication products on technical and content grounds. Final approval of payment rests with the Project Manager, who shall confirm that the deliverables meet the contractual, scheduling and scope requirements set out in this ToR, following technical approval by the SCO.

Confidentiality

All information supplied by GWP-Med in connection with this tender to date, and any further information supplied during the tender process shall be regarded as confidential and must not be shared with any other organization without written permission of GWP-Med.

5. Audience

The target audiences for this assignment are those identified in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan and the Communication Strategy.

The Consultant shall not redefine audiences but shall priorities them for communication purposes, based on the audience analysis under D1 and under the guidance of the SCO.

6. Copyrights

All editable source files, layouts, graphics and other materials developed under this contract shall become the property of GWP-Med and shall be delivered upon completion of the assignment.

Subject to agreement, GWP-Med shall have full, unrestricted and exclusive rights to use the products and services listed in this invitation, including the right to broadcast, show and disseminate them in any media and its websites and to exploit the products for any purpose, and the right to make any future adjustments to the contents of the products.

The Contractor is not allowed to use the products for any purpose other than those set out in the Contract, without the prior consent and authorisation of GWP-Med in writing. The Contractor shall warrant that any output produced or on its behalf will not infringe any patent, trademark, copyright, registered design or other intellectual property rights of any third party and agree to indemnify GWP-Med for any such claim, liability, proceedings and costs arising therefrom.

8 Contract Price, Deliverables and Schedule of Payments

The maximum budget available for this assignment is: **USD $** 32,000

This amount includes all costs, taxes, fees and other expenses required for the completion of the assignment, including VAT where applicable.

Deliverables	**Payments**	**Dates**
D1	25% of Contract Value	End of Week 2
D2	25% of Contract Value	End of Week 4

Deliverables	Payments	Dates
D3-D5	50% of Contract Value	End of Week 6

Payments will be made following satisfactory completion and acceptance of the agreed outputs for each period by GWP-Med.

9.Selection Criteria, Awarding Criterion and Evaluation Process

Successful participants must have:

- Minimum 7 years' experience in strategic communications for international development, environment or water programmes; experience with GEF, UNDP or UN-system projects is a strong asset
- Demonstrated delivery of multilingual digital products (microsites/hubs) including design, build and content, with at least two live examples
- Proven media relations track record with specialist environment/development publications; existing networks in the Western Balkans an asset
- Ability to work in English plus capacity (in-house or subcontracted) to deliver in the Drin basin languages
- Capacity to deliver the full package within six weeks, evidenced by a named team and availability statement
- Be enrolled in one of the official professional or trade registries at the country of registration.

Failure to comply with the above pass / fail requirements and provide relevant proof with the application is considered ground for exclusion.

Awarding Criterion and Evaluation process

AWARD CRITERION: The most economically advantageous offer based on the best price/quality ratio.

Offers shall be evaluated as follows:

Offers qualified in terms of exclusion grounds and selection criteria will be further evaluated as follows:

(1) Criterion	Scoring / Sub-criteria	Max Points Ci
Participants must submit	A technical proposal describing the proposed methodology and work plan; A portfolio of relevant assignments and publication samples; A list of similar assignments completed during the last seven years; Curriculum Vitae (CVs) of the proposed experts; The portfolio will be evaluated as follows:	
Methodology and Work Plan	**Methodology and Work Plan (40 points)**: demonstrate a clear understanding of the objectives, scope and expected outputs of the assignment and provide a detailed methodology and work plan for the implementation of all required tasks, including audience analysis, communication narrative development, country-specific adaptation, content development, communication product design and media/outreach support. Scoring: **0–8:** Understanding of the objectives, scope and expected deliverables of the assignment **0–12:** Methodology for audience analysis, communication narrative development and country-specific adaptation **0–12:** Methodology for communication product development and design, including visual and multimedia approaches **0–8:** Quality assurance procedures, review process, coordination and work plan Maximum points: 40	**40 points**
Relevant Experience and Qualifications	The tenderer shall demonstrate experience in assignments of similar nature, scope and complexity. Scoring: 0–10: Experience in developing communication strategies, narratives and communication products	**30 points**

(1) Criterion	Scoring / Sub-criteria	Max Points Ci
	0–6: Experience with international organisations, development agencies or donor-funded projects 0–8: Experience in environmental, climate, water, energy, food security, sustainable development or related thematic areas 0–6: Qualifications and relevant experience of proposed experts Maximum points: 30	
Portfolio and Quality of Previous Communication Products	The tenderer shall demonstrate proven capacity to develop high-quality, accessible and visually engaging communication products through submission of relevant portfolio samples 0–10: Approach to translating complex technical/project information into clear, concise and accessible content for non-specialist audiences 0–8: Approach to tailoring communication products and messages to different target audiences and country-specific communication needs 0–6: Ability to develop coherent communication narratives and key messages across different products and formats 0–6: Proposed approach to ensuring consistency, accuracy and accessibility across the communication portfolio Maximum points: 30	**30 points**
Total		**100 points**

The maximum total technical score is 100 points.

Each evaluation criterion shall be assessed independently in accordance with the published scoring scale. The final scoring of each evaluation criterion is the outcome of its scoring. The overall score of the technical offer is the sum of the final scoring of all the Sections/evaluation criteria.

The overall score of the technical offer shall be calculated as follows:

Bi = c1 + c2 + c3

Where:

c1 = Methodology and Work Plan score
c2 = Relevant Experience and Qualifications score
c3 = Portfolio and Quality of Previous Communication Products

For the overall score which will determine the ranking of offers, technical evaluation will be weighted with 80%, and the financial offer with 20%.

Financial Score**: Fi** = (Kmin / Ki) × 100

Where:

- Fi the score of the financial offer

- Kmin: The cost of the financial offer with the minimum price offered.

- Ki: The cost of the financial offer

The final listing of the most advantageous offers will be made on the basis of the following formula:

Λi = 0.8*Bi+ 0.2 *Fi

Where:

- Fi the score of the financial offer

- Kmin: The cost of the financial offer with the minimum price offered.

- Ki: The cost of the financial offer

The most economically advantageous offers is the one with the greater value of Λ.

In case of equality of overall scores, the winning proposal is the one whose corresponding technical proposal received the highest rating.

10. Duration of the Contract

The overall duration of the contract will be from contract signature and no later than the 15th of December 2026.

11. Monitoring and Progress Controls

The assignment will be supervised by the GWP-Med Senior Communications Officer, in coordination with relevant GWP-Med Senior Programme Officers and project staff.

The contractor will work in close coordination with the GWP-Med team and will be expected to participate in online coordination meetings as required.

All communication products will be subject to review and approval by GWP-Med before finalisation and dissemination.