



Request for Qualifications to identify and assess ongoing or potential initiatives to simultaneously improve economic opportunities for women and the health and resilience of marine and coastal ecosystems in the Mesoamerican Reef region

The Mesoamerican Reef Fund (MAR Fund) is seeking a consultant to assist in identifying and evaluating projects or initiatives, underway or planned, that will develop or enhance economic opportunities for women via activities that also improve the health and resilience of marine and coastal ecosystems in the Mesoamerican Reef region. Through partnering with a qualified consultant, MAR Fund seeks to augment its own knowledge and contacts to search for and assess opportunities to respond to the growing global movement to develop and implement initiatives that link social and environmental goals, in this case reducing the economic marginalization of women in ways that also reduce threats to the region's coral reefs, mangroves, seagrasses, and associated habitats and species.

RfQ timeline

RfQ Issued: August 3, 2021
Responses due: September 3, 2021
Final selection: October 5, 2021

This document comprises the following sections:

- Section I: Information on the issuing organization
- Section II: Project description, methodology, timeline and budget
- Section III: Evaluation criteria and submission instructions for consultant

Section I: Information on the issuing organization

Information on the organization	
Name	RfQ title
Mesoamerican Reef Fund Inc.	<i>Identifying and assessing ongoing or potential initiatives to simultaneously improve economic opportunities for women and the health and resilience of marine and coastal ecosystems in the Mesoamerican Reef region</i>
RfQ date issued: August 3, 2021	Response deadline: September 3, 2021
Description of the organization	<i>The Mesoamerican Reef Fund (MAR Fund) is a private regional environmental fund with the objective of supporting the protection of the Mesoamerican Reef (MAR) ecoregion, shared by Mexico, Belize, Guatemala and Honduras. Its mission is to drive regional funding and partnerships for the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of the MAR. This pilot project is a collaboration between MAR Fund and The Summit Foundation, and specifically Summit's Equality for Women and Girls and Mesoamerican Reef programs. More information</i>

about MAR Fund and Summit can be found at <https://marfund.org> and <https://www.summitfdn.org/>.

For this pilot project, Summit has provided a grant of \$50,000 to MAR Fund. We envision using this funding to secure the services of a qualified consultant, and to award small grants to help launch or strengthen a small number of selected, income-generating projects.

Contact information	
Project lead	Email
María José González	info@marfund.org

Section II: Project description, methodology, timeline, and budget

Project information	
Project description	<p><i>MAR Fund, in collaboration with The Summit Foundation, wishes to explore the viability of supporting, through grants, projects or initiatives in the MAR region that simultaneously improve coastal and marine conservation and sustainable use of marine natural resources and advance gender equality for women by increasing their participation in the economy. This project aligns with the growing global trend to recognize and support women as a force for sustainability. The collaboration seeks to support local women to disrupt social norms and systemic barriers that limit them from generating income and starting businesses, all in the context of seeking to address threats to the MAR ecosystem.</i></p>
	<p><i>Linking improving economic opportunities for women with reducing threats to the MAR is clearly essential and timely. Yet it is also challenging to find projects that are currently making, or seem likely to make, significant progress on both goals, particularly as the MAR region experiences the economic and social impacts of the global pandemic. MAR Fund has developed a preliminary list and assessment of potentially promising projects in all four MAR countries. But in order to have a better idea of the potential universe of options in the region, MAR Fund is launching this search for a consultant to uncover and assess additional ideas, contacts, and candidate projects.</i></p>
	<p><i>Our initial priorities are to identify projects or initiatives that meet the following criteria. (This list may be modified based on input we received during this RfQ process and in discussion with the selected consultant). Priority projects are expected to be those that are:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><i>1. Already generating jobs and other economic benefits to women or have a concrete plan and reasonable expectation for doing so;</i><i>2. Led, co-led, and/or primarily implemented by women, for women;</i><i>3. Focused on activities that will reduce threats to the coral reefs, mangroves, seagrasses, and/or associated habitats and species of the MAR region.</i>
	<p><i>While we are happy to share our contacts, and our thinking about the types and stages of projects that will best fit our goals, we are issuing this RfQ with the aim of benefiting from the perspective, experience, and contacts of the selected consultant. Depending on how the project unfolds, the consultant (if available and interested after this initial project) may assist also with selecting projects for grant funding, and then supporting MAR Fund in working with the funded projects.</i></p> <p><i>MAR Fund and Summit are hopeful that, through this pilot project, we will identify a variety of promising ideas and projects across the MAR region – more than can be funded through this initial exploration. In that case, we hope to be able to continue and ideally expand this effort, including through seeking additional funding for grants and other forms of support</i></p>

	<i>from other sources. This too may be an area in which the selected consultant may be able to provide expertise and assistance.</i>
Project methodology	<p><i>Given the reality of COVID-19 restrictions, it is assumed this consultancy will be implemented remotely, from the consultant's home or office, using phone calls or internet-based meeting platforms. If the consultant's location and restrictions permit, some limited travel may be contemplated to assess potential projects, in consultation with MAR Fund staff.</i></p> <p><i>We invite the suggestions of respondents on how best to carry out the project. We expect to work with the selected consultant to define the details of the project methodology, including how best to uncover organizations, projects, and ideas that are not yet known to MAR Fund, and then how best to assess all the candidate projects and select a small number to receive small grants. We expect the consultant to identify, research, characterize, and assess potential and ongoing projects (or initiatives) in each of the MAR countries. Information we expect would be gathered would include the name of the group or organization, its specific location, its aims, its general stage of development (e.g. idea, initial development, growth, mature), and its impacts (existing or projected), including the number and demographics of women benefiting and the benefits to the MAR ecosystem. We expect the consultant would also analyze the projects using agreed methods and criteria, such as each project's pros and cons, risks, conditions for considering support, potential financial support required, specific activities to be financed, expected period until results are delivered or increased, and the strengthening and capacity building needs of the group.</i></p>
Project timeline	<i>We invite the perspective of respondents on an appropriate timeline to conduct the work involved, but our expectation is four to six months, including identifying and analyzing projects and formulating recommendations for funding.</i>
Project budget	<i>The amount of the contract will depend on the selected consultant and the agreed project scope and methodology, up to \$10,000.</i>

Section III: Evaluation criteria and instructions

Evaluation criteria	
Evaluation criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Level and focus of consultant's formal education and relevance to project aims</i> • <i>Extent and type of work experience and relevance to project aims</i> • <i>Demonstrated experience in working productively with people from different sectors</i> • <i>Clarity and quality of submission (oral and written fluency in Spanish and English, required)</i> • <i>Demonstrated capacity to deliver the project requirements on time and on budget.</i>
Delivery and submission instructions	<p><i>The consultant must submit the required information by September 3, 2021 to the following email address: info@marfund.org. The proposal may be submitted under the title "Women initiatives in the MAR", in English.</i></p> <p><i>In order for your proposal to be considered, it must include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Cover letter indicating your understanding of the project and why you are the best choice to carry it out;</i> • <i>Proposed methodology for identifying potentially qualifying projects or initiatives across the MAR region;</i> • <i>Proposed methodology for assessing the potential of identified projects or initiatives and ranking them for support with small grants;</i> • <i>Proposed timeline for development of required activities;</i> • <i>Name(s) of any person(s) other than the applicant who will assist with the project, along with the role(s) and qualifications of the individual(s)</i> • <i>Fee proposal; and</i> • <i>Curriculum Vitae with names and contact details of three references.</i>