



Terms of Reference (ToR)

Mesoamerican Reef Fund (MAR Fund)

Assistant for the MAR Fund Small Grants Program

1. Introduction

The Mesoamerican Reef Fund Inc. (MAR Fund) is a regional environmental fund whose main objective is to protect the Mesoamerican Reef (MAR) ecoregion shared by Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, and Honduras. Its mission is to seek, secure and facilitate regional funding, foster partnerships and drive capacity building for the conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of marine and coastal ecosystems in the MAR region.

MAR Fund was established by four pre-existing environmental funds, one in each country of the region: Fondo Mexicano para la Conservación de la Naturaleza (México), Protected Areas Conservation Trust (Belice), Fundación para la Conservación de los Recursos Naturales y Ambiente (Guatemala), and Fundación Biosfera (Honduras).

MAR Fund is incorporated in the United States as a nonprofit organization with 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. Although it is legally registered outside the region, its purpose is to finance conservation and sustainable development actions in the four countries sharing the MAR ecoregion: Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, and Honduras. Since 2015, it has maintained a branch office established in Guatemala, where the coordinating office is located.

The MAR Fund Board of Directors is composed of the founding members, one representative of the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD), conservation experts from each participating country, and international collaborators/donors.

MAR Fund carries out its activities through six programs: 1) Saving Our Protected Areas, 2) Fishing for the Future, 3) Climate Change, 4) Belize Marine Fund, 5) Clean Water for the Reef, y 6) Blue and Regenerative Economy. Additionally, it supports and coordinates regional networks such as the Connectivity Network, the Reef Restoration Network, and the Fish Spawning Aggregation Sites Network.

The MAR Fund Small Grants Program (SGP) is one of its longest-standing and most flexible funding mechanisms. Thanks to its adaptability to regional challenges and threats, the SGP has supported strategic projects linked to all of the organization's programs. The SGP is currently financed through endowment fund returns provided by German Cooperation through KfW and the French Global Environment Facility (FFEM), as well as programmatic funds from the Paul M. Angell Family Foundation. These resources have made it possible to promote local initiatives that, among other things, contribute to the protection of priority marine and coastal areas and the sustainable use of marine and coastal resources.

The SGP has two financial windows: 1) The Traditional window, which focuses on contributing to the conservation of MAR ecosystem functions and resilience; and 2) The Reef Rescue Initiative (RRI) window, which aims to support the restoration, repopulation, and rehabilitation of coral reefs in the MAR.

Once a year, governmental and non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, civil society organizations, and organized community groups from the four countries of the MAR region have the opportunity to submit proposals addressing one or more of the specific objectives established in each request for proposals (RfP).

Since 2006, MAR Fund has launched 18 RfP, through which 159 projects have been supported and implemented by more than 40 civil society organizations, academic institutions, and government sector entities across the four countries of the region. Additional information about this program is available at: <https://marfund.org/>

2. General Objective

To strengthen and comprehensively support the Small Grants Program (SGP) team, ensuring efficient operations and effective technical, administrative, and compliance management that guarantee the proper implementation, monitoring, and reporting of funded activities and projects (Traditional and RA windows), in accordance with MAR Fund standards and guidelines.

3. Contract Responsibilities

- Support the preparation of the draft Terms of Reference for the annual RfP -to be approved by the Board of Directors- and its launch.
- Support the receipt and review process of proposals submitted during the annual RfP.
- Apply MAR Fund's Project Cycle and Due Diligence Guide during the proposal review process and throughout project follow-up and monitoring.
- Apply MAR Fund's Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) and collaborate with the ESMS technical assistant to ensure that projects funded through the SGP windows comply with established environmental and social commitments.
- Support the preparation of Environmental and Social Action Plans (ESAPs) and grant agreements (GA) for approved proposals.
- Closely follow up on ESAP implementation for approved projects, including sending reminders regarding complaint and incident reports and reviewing deliverables during activity implementation.
- Participate in follow-up calls for funded projects.
- Conduct monitoring visits to funded projects in Mexico, contributing to the comprehensive monitoring and evaluation process, including ESAP commitments, to ensure effective implementation and compliance with grant objectives. When required, be available to support visits to other MAR countries.
- Prepare monitoring visit reports and provide feedback to beneficiaries.
- Support the review process of financial and technical reports (interim and final), as well as all deliverables required under each grant agreement.
- Maintain updated and organized grant files, ensuring efficient technical and administrative management of the SGP.
- Assist in all SGP administrative processes and follow up with beneficiaries for the signing of agreements, amendment letters, disbursement requests, and tracking of proper invoices or receipts, as well as filing all documentation to facilitate evaluations and audits.
- Collaborate effectively with the MAR Fund administrative team in grant follow-up.
- Coordinate with the RRI team in proposal review, project follow-up, and monitoring visits.
- Support ex-post evaluations of funded projects.

- Ensure implementation of the Project Cycle Manual to track all program activities and tasks in compliance with approved deadlines, in coordination with the SGP Officer, and support its updating.
- Support updating information on the online platform and in the development and monitoring of indicators.
- Identify SGP products (studies, plans, other materials) that can be shared and distributed to a public audience.
- Assist in the preparation of SGP communication materials.
- Support the organization of SGP events or meetings.
- Support proposal writing for SGP fundraising efforts.
- Support the preparation and timely submission of reports and other deliverables required by MAR Fund donors.
- Support the preparation of Terms of Reference (ToR), participate in the consultant selection process, follow up on consultancies, and conduct the initial review of deliverables established in SGP consultancy contracts.
- Support the preparation and analysis of SGP evaluations (internal and external).
- Participate in internal meetings and meetings with SGP partners, beneficiaries, and consultants, providing support in note-taking and follow-up on agreements.
- Provide support and training to beneficiaries and consultants, when necessary, in administrative, technical, and safeguards processes, in accordance with MAR Fund policies and donor requirements.
- Participate in MAR Fund internal coordination processes, including follow-up meetings, performance evaluations, training sessions, and strategic retreats.
- Prepare and keep the personal Annual Operating Plan (AOP) updated.
- Perform other tasks required for the effective functioning of the SGP.

4. Supervision

The Small Grants Program Assistant will report directly to the Small Grants Program Officer.

5. Contract Duration

Full-time position. The contract will have a duration of 12 months, subject to renewal based on evaluation, with a three-month probation period.

6. Payments

Fees will be determined according to the consultant's experience. Payment, including applicable taxes, will be made monthly upon invoice. Travel expenses for activities related to MAR Fund will be covered.

The contract will include health and life insurance during its term.

7. Work Location

The consultant will work remotely and must reside in one of the main cities of Quintana Roo, Mexico.

8. Qualifications and Attributes

- Proven experience in the design, evaluation, and management of environmental and conservation projects.
- Experience in reviewing financial and technical reports.
- Academic background or experience in conservation or environmental sciences; knowledge of coastal and marine resource management and protected areas is desirable.
- Excellent organizational skills and attention to detail, with the ability to meet established deadlines.
- Experience in communication and collaborative work skills.
- Experience working in the MAR region is desirable.
- Experience in environmental and social safeguards is desirable.
- Experience in different types of fundraising (philanthropic, commercial, among others) is desirable.
- Ability to represent MAR Fund with professionalism, discretion, and diplomacy, and to speak credibly and authoritatively about the SGP and MAR Fund.
- Action-oriented; ability to act and respond as necessary, even with limited information.
- Demonstrated ability to resolve internal and external challenges, propose solutions, and identify and leverage opportunities.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills in English and Spanish, with the ability to produce high-quality technical documents in both languages.
- Ability to work as part of a team, with excellent interpersonal skills, good sense of humor, self-awareness, openness to feedback, and a spirit of service.
- Availability to travel within the MAR region.

9. Required Documentation

- a. *Curriculum Vitae* (full version in English and Spanish), including a recent photograph.
- b. Three professional references (name, organization, and email address).
- c. Letter indicating why you are the best candidate for the position (in English and Spanish).

10. Deadline and Contact

The deadline to receive the required information in Word or PDF format is **April 7, 2026**. Please send it to the MAR Fund Small Grants Program Officer, Elisa Blanda, at eblanda@marfund.org.

11. Considerations

- MAR Fund is an organization committed to equity and diversity in the workplace. Our employment policy ensures that all decisions—from recruitment to professional development—are based on merit and individual qualifications. We have a zero-tolerance policy on any form of discrimination or harassment. As an organization working toward the conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of marine and coastal ecosystems in the Mesoamerican Reef, we seek to integrate diverse perspectives and encourage applications from candidates of all backgrounds and sectors to strengthen our mission.

- Applicants must assume all costs associated with the preparation and submission of proposals to MAR Fund under this call. They acknowledge that MAR Fund has no obligation to cover such costs—whether in whole or in part—nor to provide any advance or compensation if their proposal(s) are not selected.
- Applicants acknowledge and accept that the preparation of proposal(s) does not constitute a financial obligation on the part of MAR Fund; therefore, the economic and financial responsibility for preparing the proposal(s) rests exclusively with the applicant(s), regardless of the outcome of the selection process.
- The selection process will be conducted in accordance with MAR Fund’s internal evaluation guidelines, and the outcome will be final and non-appealable.
- Only applicants advancing to the next stage of the selection process will be contacted, and due to the number of applications, MAR Fund will not provide feedback to applicants.