



Terms of Reference
Mesoamerican Reef Fund (MAR Fund)

Focal Point for Belize
Conservation of Marine Resources in Central America III
Financing Agreement: BMZ-No. 2017.6892.8 (Phase III)

I. Background

The Mesoamerican Reef Fund, Inc. (MAR Fund) is a regional and private environmental fund with the goal of protecting the Mesoamerican Reef (MAR) ecoregion shared by Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, and Honduras. Its mission is to seek, secure and facilitate regional funding, fosters partnerships and drives capacity building for the conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of marine and coastal ecosystems in the Mesoamerican Reef.

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

MAR Fund is established as a non-profit entity in the United States, with a 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt status. Although it is legally registered outside the MAR region, its purpose is to fund conservation and sustainable development actions in the four countries that share the MAR ecoregion: Mexico, Belize, Guatemala and Honduras. Since 2014, it has had an established branch in Guatemala, where the coordinating office is located.

MAR Fund mobilizes and channels financial resources to partners implementing actions directly on the ground, strengthening the management of marine and coastal protected areas, carrying out ecosystem restoration, and promoting sustainable livelihoods throughout the region, among other efforts. Its beneficiaries include community-based organizations, non-governmental organizations, government institutions, academic institutions, and individuals. MAR Fund distributes financial resources through various funding mechanisms, ranging from small grants to large-scale, multi-year projects.

MAR Fund implements its strategic actions through five programs:

- 1) Saving Our Protected Areas
- 2) Fishing for the Future
- 3) Climate Change
- 4) Clean Water for the Reef
- 5) Blue and Regenerative Economy

Additionally, MAR Fund supports and fosters collaboration among regional networks, including the Connectivity Network, the Coral Reef Restoration Network, and the Fish Spawning Aggregation Sites Network.

Under the program Saving Our Protected Areas, focused on establishing and protecting an interconnected network of priority marine and coastal protected areas, MAR Fund launched the Implementation of the project “Protection of Maritime Resources in Central America III (Phase III)” in December 2021, building on the achievements of Phases I and II. During the first two phases, nine priority coastal and marine protected areas (CMPA) were supported. In Phase III, support is being provided to 31 CMPAs through approved 20 projects.

Phase III is co-financed by the Federal Republic of Germany through KfW. Its objective is to promote the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources in and within selected marine and coastal protected areas across the MAR region. The expected outcomes of the project are:

1. Better conditions in the CMPAs for the conservation of their natural resources.
2. Implemented measures for the sustainable use of the CMPAs’ natural resources, engaging the local population.
3. Strengthened collaboration among key stakeholders for the conservation of biodiversity in the MAR.

The implementation of Phase III is the responsibility of MAR Fund, which oversees the project’s overall coordination, administration, and technical and financial supervision. Internally, MAR Fund established a Project Implementation Unit (PIU) integrated by a Project Coordinator, two Technical Officers, an Administrative Assistant, and focal points in each country of the region to provide technical oversight and follow-up to projects in the field.

II. Objective

Provide technical support to protected areas with approved proposals, through grantee organizations, to ensure the effective implementation of projects, enabling them to achieve the results indicators established in each approved proposal while also contributing to the overall Phase III results indicators.

III. Responsibilities

a. General:

Technical support and follow-up for protected areas in Belize to facilitate the implementation of approved projects under the Protection of maritime resources in Central America III project.

b. Specific:

b.1 Implementation Phase

- a) Support the project coordinator in planning and implementing the activities required to effectively implement the Phase III project in selected protected areas and maintain constant communication with the PIU.
- b) Provide support in establishing the inter-institutional coordination necessary for the effective and successful development of Phase III project activities in and around selected protected areas.
- c) Support selected protected areas in drafting their Triennial Operating Plan (TOP) and budget and the necessary updates, as may be required.
- d) Ensure the compliance of the Project Operational Manual (POM) by communicating and reminding of its components to grantee organizations to ensure that grantees and other potential participants in the project abide by it.
- e) Support selected protected areas in the bidding process of goods and services (e.g., development of terms of reference).
- f) Maintain smooth communication with the staff of grantee organizations and stakeholders involved in activities approved for each selected protected area project.
- g) Conduct field visits for technical oversight to verify the progress of activities and the effective use of granted resources. The periodicity of visits will depend on the number of overseen selected projects/protected areas.
- h) Monitor the scope and compliance with each selected project's indicators and the Phase III project's logical framework.
- i) Prepare monitoring reports of visits to approved projects to provide feedback on the work carried out by the grantee organization.
- j) Notify about any potential obstacles during the implementation of each selected project/protected area in Belize and the overall Phase III project.
- k) Support grantee organizations in preparing technical reports before submitting them to MAR Fund.
- l) Review grantees' financial progress reports (quarterly) and technical progress reports (semi-annually).
- m) Support the preparation of each grantee's/protected area's information to be included in MAR Fund's Annual Report and the Indicator Matrix.

- n) Gather communication material from the selected protected areas, such as relevant news, testimonials, videos, and interviews, among others, to include in MAR Fund's documents and reports, website, social networks, bulletins, and others. Identify and highlight positive news stories to communicate achievements.
- o) Closely monitor the implementation of selected projects focused on Fish Replenishment Zones (FRZs), including providing support for the development of webinars and events related to this topic (e.g., exchange visits and learning exchanges).
- p) Support any other activity that may be required by the project coordinator and/or MAR Fund's Technical Department for good project performance.

b.2 Management of environmental and social aspects

- a) Monitor how grantees are applying the Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS), the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP), and any other measure required by MAR Fund's ESMS.
- b) Verify that grantees provide adequate updates in their quarterly reports about the ESMS, their environmental and social action plans (ESAP) and any other document required in the ESMS.
- c) Monitor reports on any grievances made to each grantee through their specific grievance mechanism monthly.

b.3 Project closeout

- a) Support the follow-up of MAR Fund and KfW's requirements for a correct and complete project closeout by 2028.

IV. Coordination

The Consultant will work in close coordination with the PIU Coordinator and MAR Fund's Technical Director and will provide ongoing follow-up and support to Phase III grantees in Belize.

V. Contract duration

The contract will have a duration of 12 months, subject to renewal based on performance evaluation, and will include a three-month probationary period. Any subsequent contract will specify the activities and responsibilities to be carried out.

Phase III has a remaining duration of two and a half years; therefore, this consultancy may be extended through December 2028, subject to satisfactory performance and project needs.
Tentative start date: August 2026.

VI. Remuneration

Remuneration will be determined based on the candidate's qualifications and experience. Payments will be made monthly upon submission of an invoice, inclusive of any applicable taxes. Travel expenses associated with Project activities will be covered by MAR Fund.

The contract will include health and life insurance coverage for the duration of the consultancy.

VII. Place of work

The Consultant should preferably be based in the country's coastal region and must be available to travel to the grantee's offices and to the selected protected areas within the country.

VIII. Confidentiality and copyright

VIII.I. Confidentiality

The Belize Focal point shall perform the assigned tasks with the highest standards and ethical considerations. MAR Fund reserves the right to brief the focal point on the information that must be treated as confidential.

VIII.II. Copyright

MAR Fund holds the copyright of the products derived from this consultancy.

IX. Qualifications and attributes of the project's focal points

Education

a) Must have a professional degree in natural resource management, natural resource and conservation management, project management, rural development, biology, marine biology, aquaculture, environmental engineering, or related careers, with a proven experience in project design, evaluation, and follow-up, particularly on environment and conservation.

Work experience

- a) At least a 5-year practical experience in conservation and management of coastal and marine resources, preferably in protected areas.
- b) Experience in designing, evaluating, and monitoring conservation and/or environmental management projects, preferably in protected areas.
- c) Experience in rural development and community work.
- d) Experience in developing and implementing environmental and social safeguards.

Skills/Knowledge

- a) Knowledgeable on the Mesoamerican Reef region in their country.
- b) Action- and result-driven. Proficient in organization skills, attention to detail, and timeliness with deadlines.
- c) Excellent interpersonal skills.
- d) Proficient verbal and writing skills in English and Spanish. Capable of producing high-quality technical documents in both languages.
- e) Availability to travel regularly to coastal and marine protected areas of their country for this project.

X. Required documentation

Interested applicants must submit the following information:

- Résumé
- Three professional references (name, title, organization, email address)
- A 2-page essay describing their work experience and why they consider themselves a suitable person for this position in their language of choice
- Signed Declaration of Undertaking form (Annex 1)

The deadline for receiving applications is July 17, 2026. Applications must be submitted in a digital format to this e-mail: arivas@marfund.org