TERMS OF REFERENCE

Consultancy to Conduct the Financial Gap Analysis of the Beneficiary CMPAs under the Project Protection of Marine Resources in Central America III Using the MARFin Web 4.0 Platform

I. Background

The Mesoamerican Reef Fund, Inc. (MAR Fund) is a regional environmental fund established with the objective of supporting the protection of the Mesoamerican Reef System (MAR). Its mission is to seek, secure, and facilitate regional financing, foster partnerships, and promote 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 of the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD), conservation experts from each participating country, and international partners/donors.

MAR Fund is established as a non-profit organization in the United States, with 501(c)(3) status and 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 that share the Mesoamerican Reef ecoregion: Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, and Honduras. Since 2015, MAR Fund has maintained a branch office in Guatemala, where its coordinating office is located.

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

MAR Fund's actions are implemented 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 coordinates regional networks, such as the Connectivity Network, the Reef Restoration Network, and the Fish Spawning Aggregation Sites Network.

Project: Protection of Marine Resources in Central America III (Phase III)

Within the framework of the *Saving Our Protected Areas* program, which focuses on establishing and protecting an interconnected network of priority marine and coastal protected areas, MAR Fund began implementing the project *Protection of Marine Resources in Central America III (Phase III)* in December 2021, as a continuation of Phases I and II.

During the first two phases, nine priority coastal and marine protected areas (CMPAs) were supported. Under Phase III, 31 CMPAs are supported through 20 projects.

Phase III is co-financed by the Federal Republic of Germany through KfW. Its objective is the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources in and among the selected marine and coastal protected areas within the Mesoamerican Reef. The expected results are:

1. CMPAs have improved conditions for the conservation of their natural resources.
2. Measures are implemented for the sustainable use of CMPA natural resources with the participation of local communities.
3. Cooperation among key stakeholders for the conservation of MAR biodiversity is strengthened.

More information on Phase III is available through the following link.

MAR+Invest Initiative

In 2022, MAR Fund established a partnership with organizations from the MAR countries, including New Ventures Group & Viwala, the Mexican Fund for the Conservation of Nature (FMCN) & Sureste Sostenible, and the Healthy Reefs for Healthy People Initiative (HRHP), to design and launch the MAR+Invest initiative with the support of the Global Fund for Coral Reefs (GFCR).

MAR+Invest is a blended finance mechanism with a strong impact monitoring and evaluation system, business acceleration, and capacity building. Its purpose is to enable the conditions for a sustainable ocean economy in the MAR by investing in market-based initiatives that contribute to reef health and resilience.

Objectives:

1. Conserve the long-term value of MAR natural capital through the generation, development, and growth of market-based opportunities that reduce threats to the reef.
2. Promote projects that address long-term challenges in the MAR and require different types of capital.
3. Generate sustainable financial solutions for MAR CMPAs.
4. Develop financial mechanisms with donors and investors that reduce risks, close early-stage capital gaps, and finance reef-positive solutions.
5. Mobilize additional capital — philanthropic, development, and commercial — for the initiative.

More information on MAR+Invest is available through the following link.

The MARFin Tool: A Financial Analysis Platform for CMPAs

MAR Fund, with the support of WWF and the French Facility for Global Environment (FFEM), developed a financial tool called MARFin. This tool enables protected areas to plan their long-term expenditures and determine their financial gaps.

In 2024, MAR Fund, through the MAR+Invest initiative and with the support of the Global Fund for Coral Reefs (GFCR), updated the tool into a user-friendly and easily accessible online platform. Through MARFin, protected areas can structure their complete financial framework, starting from the most basic level of revenues and expenditures, allowing them to develop budgets and conduct financial planning.

Currently, MARFin Web 4.0 operates as an online platform connected to a centralized and remotely accessible database that models and projects financial resources based on information related to revenues, expenditures, investments, and operational needs of CMPAs.

As part of the actions promoted under Phase III to strengthen the financial sustainability of beneficiary CMPAs, the use of the MARFin Web 4.0 tool has been promoted. However, there are currently information gaps, methodological differences, and limitations in the systematization of financial data among the different protected areas, which makes it difficult to adequately complete and harmonize the information required in the platform.

In this context, MAR Fund seeks to hire a specialized consultancy to provide support to beneficiary CMPAs in validating and updating their financial information in MARFin Web 4.0, while strengthening the capacities of their technical teams. In addition, the consultant will conduct a financial and gap analysis for each CMPA and formulate strategic recommendations to optimize financial management.

II. Objectives

1. General Objective

- Provide specialized technical assistance to Phase III and MAR+Invest beneficiary CMPAs to strengthen their use of the MARFin Web 4.0 platform through the collection, validation, and analysis of financial information from the protected areas.

2. Specific Objectives

- Provide technical support to the administrators and co-administrators of Phase III and MAR+Invest CMPAs to complete and validate available and projected revenue and expenditure information in the MARFin Web 4.0 tool.
- Strengthen the capacities of personnel from beneficiary CMPAs to use and update financial information on the MARFin Web 4.0 platform.
- Conduct a financial analysis of the information recorded in MARFin Web 4.0, generating financial gap reports for each protected area and an overall results report that contributes to financial planning and decision-making for the sustainability of Phase III and MAR+Invest beneficiary CMPAs.

Proposed Methodology

The consultancy will be conducted remotely through virtual coordination meetings and technical assistance sessions with the person designated by each CMPA to enter the data into the tool.

The working methodology will focus on personalized technical support for the collection, review, cleaning, validation, and uploading of financial information to the MARFin Web 4.0 platform. It will also promote the harmonization of criteria for recording and analyzing financial information among the different CMPAs in order to improve the quality, consistency, and comparability of the data entered into the tool.

The consultancy will combine document review, virtual working sessions to provide individualized technical assistance, and continuous validation and analysis of the financial and operational information of participating CMPAs, culminating in the preparation of the corresponding reports.

Key Information Sources

- MARFin Web 4.0 tool and related technical documentation.
- Financial and operational information provided by the administrators and co-administrators of Phase III and MAR+Invest beneficiary CMPAs.
- Meetings and interviews with CMPA administrators and technical-financial personnel.
- Institutional documents, budgets, operational plans, and financial reports of the CMPAs that are available.

III. Activities

- Review the current status and quality of the information entered into MARFin Web 4.0 by each beneficiary CMPA.
- Harmonize the classification criteria for budget items to ensure data comparability and consistency.
- Identify gaps, inconsistencies, and financial information needs within the MARFin Web 4.0 tool.
- Contact the administrators and co-administrators of beneficiary CMPAs to explain and request the required information.
- Schedule all virtual meetings and support administrators and co-administrators in entering and validating CMPA financial information in the MARFin Web 4.0 tool.
- Collect signed Data Sharing Agreements for the use of information in MARFin Web 4.0.
- Support the creation of accounts and data entry on the platform.
- Analyze the revenue and expenditure structure of each CMPA.
- Prepare financial gap and projection reports using MARFin Web 4.0 for at least 20 protected areas (Annex A), including recommendations to improve the financial management of each one.
- Identify financial gaps and financing needs.
- Formulate recommendations to strengthen the financial sustainability of CMPAs.
- Prepare a general regional financial gap analysis report in English and Spanish.
- Ensure that the consultancy complies with MAR Fund's environmental and social safeguards (https://marfund.org/es/sgas/), as well as institutional policies.

IV. Expected Deliverables

- Directory containing CMPA contacts and signed data-use agreements.
- MARFin Web 4.0 platform updated with validated financial information from at least 20 Phase III beneficiary CMPAs.
- Individual report for each CMPA summarizing the status of financial information updates in MARFin Web 4.0 — in Spanish for CMPAs in Mexico, Guatemala, and Honduras, and in English for those in Belize — including an analysis of revenues, expenditures, financial projections, identified financial gaps, and recommendations.
- PowerPoint presentation of the results.
- Final report in English and Spanish detailing the overall financial analysis and gaps, including an executive summary of no more than three pages.

V. Payment

A contract for professional services will be signed, and payment will be made upon submission and approval of the deliverables.

VI. Supervision and Place of Work

The consultant will report to the Phase III Coordinator and will also coordinate with the other members of the Phase III Project Implementation Unit (PIU).

The consultant will work remotely from their place of residence. If residing in Guatemala City, the consultant will be required to attend the office when requested.

VII. Contract Duration and Payment Conditions

The consultancy will have a duration of six months from the date of contract signature.

Payments will be made according to an agreed schedule of deliverables approved by MAR Fund.

VIII. Qualifications and Competencies

- Knowledge of financial statements and web-based platforms.
- Minimum of three years of experience in financial analysis, financial management, financial planning, or project administration.
- Experience in conservation or marine protected area management is desirable.

IX. Academic Background

- University degree.
- Advanced knowledge of finance.
- Knowledge of financial planning tools.
- Experience in financial analysis and reporting.
- Knowledge of marine protected areas is desirable.

- Excellent organizational, interpersonal, and writing skills.
- Fluency in English and Spanish, both oral and written; 100% bilingual.
- Experience with Google platforms.

X. Required Documentation

- Methodological proposal, work schedule, and financial proposal/fees for at least 20 CMPAs.
- Curriculum Vitae.
- Letter of Intent.
- Three professional references, including name, position, and email address.
- Signed Commitment Declaration Form (Annex B).

The Consultant will be responsible for covering any costs associated with field visits, travel, or transportation required for the collection, validation, or verification of the information necessary to fulfill the deliverables established under this contract.

XI. Deadline and Contact

Please submit all requested documentation no later than **September 20, 2026** to the following email address: **cperez@marfund.org**

XII. 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 individual merit and qualifications. We have a zero-tolerance policy toward any form of discrimination or harassment. As an organization dedicated to the conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of the marine and coastal ecosystems of the Mesoamerican Reef, we seek to integrate diverse perspectives and encourage participation from candidates from all sectors and social backgrounds to strengthen our mission.
- Proponents shall bear all costs associated with the preparation and submission of proposals submitted for evaluation by MAR Fund under this/these call(s). Accordingly, they acknowledge that MAR Fund has no obligation to cover such costs, either in whole or in part, nor to provide any advance payment or compensation should their proposal(s) not be selected.
- Proponents acknowledge and agree that the preparation of the 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 proponent(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 resulting decision shall be final and not subject to appeal.
- Only proponents who advance to the next stage of the selection process will be contacted. Due to the number of applications, MAR Fund will not provide feedback to applicants.

Annex A. List of Marine and Coastal Protected Areas

Country	Marine-Coastal Protected Area	Beneficiary
Mexico	Isla Cozumel: 1. Arrecifes de Cozumel National Park 2. Isla Cozumel Flora and Fauna Protection Area	National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP)
	3. Isla Contoy National Park	National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP)
	4. Arrecifes de Puerto Morelos National Park	National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP)
	5. Mexican Caribbean Biosphere Reserve	Institute of Biodiversity and Natural Protected Areas of the State of Quintana Roo
	6. Banco Chinchorro Biosphere Reserve	National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP)
	7. Arrecifes de Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve	National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP)
Belize	8. Turneffe Atoll Marine Reserve	Turneffe Atoll Sustainability Association
	9. Sapodilla Cayes Marine Reserve	Toledo Institute for Development & Environment
	10. Gladden Spit & Silk Cayes Marine Reserve	Southern Environmental Association
	11. Corozal Bay Wildlife Sanctuary	Sarteneja Alliance for Conservation and Development
	12. Half Moon Caye Natural Monument	Belize Audubon Society
Guatemala	13. Bocas del Polochic Wildlife Refuge	Fundación Defensores de la Naturaleza
	14. Cerro San Gil Springs Protection Reserve	Fundación para el Ecodesarrollo y la Conservación
	15. Río Sarstún Multiple Use Area	Fundación para el Ecodesarrollo y la Conservación
	16. Punta de Manabique Wildlife Refuge	National Council of Protected Areas (CONAP)
Honduras	17. Michael Rock Special Marine Protection Zone	Bay Islands Conservation Association
	18. Cuero y Salado Wildlife Refuge	Fundación Cuero y Salado
	19. Tela Bay Marine Wildlife Refuge	Amigos del Arrecife de Tela
	20. Blanca Janeth Kawas Fernández National Park and/or Punta Izopo National Park	Fundación para la Protección de Lancetilla, Punta Sal y Texiguat

Annex B. Commitment Declaration

Reference Name of the Application/Bid/Contract: __________________________ (the "Contract")

To: __________________________ (the "Project Implementing Entity")

1. We, including any member of our Consortium and any proposed or contracted Subcontractors, hereby confirm that the criteria specified in the *KfW Guidelines for the Procurement of Consulting Services, Works, Goods, Plant, and Non-Consulting Services in Financial Cooperation with Partner Countries*:

    a. Article 1.3.2 (Exclusion Criteria) does not apply; and
    b. There is no conflict of interest in accordance with Article 1.3.3.

2. We, including any member of our Group of Companies or Consortium and any proposed or contracted Subcontractors, further declare that during the procurement process and, should we be awarded a Contract, during its implementation:

    a. We have not engaged, and will not engage, in any sanctionable practice as defined in the *KfW Guidelines for the Procurement of Consulting Services, Works, Goods, Plant, and Non-Consulting Services in Financial Cooperation with Partner Countries* and, in the event of a sanctionable practice, we are fully committed to complying with Article 1.4 (Sanctionable Practices).
    b. We undertake to comply with, and ensure that our Subcontractors and principal suppliers under the Contract comply with, international environmental and labor standards, in accordance with the applicable laws and regulations of the country in which the Contract is implemented and with the fundamental conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and international environmental treaties.

       In addition, we undertake to implement any environmental and social risk mitigation measures identified in environmental and social management plans or other similar documents provided by the Project Implementing Entity and, in all cases, to implement measures to prevent sexual exploitation, abuse, and gender-based violence.

Name: ________________________________
Position: ____________________________

Duly authorized to sign the Application, Bid, or Proposal on behalf of[1]: ________________________________

Signature: _____________________
Place: __________________________
Date: __________________________

[1] In the case of a Consortium, indicate the name of the Consortium. The person signing the Application, Bid, or Proposal on behalf of the Applicant/Bidder must attach the power of attorney granted by the Applicant/Bidder.