



Terms of Reference

Communications Consultant for MAR+Invest Mesoamerican Reef Fund

1. Background

The Mesoamerican Reef (MAR) coastline stretches for 1,000 kilometers from the tip of the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico to the Bay Islands and coastal Honduras, through the Caribbean coast of Guatemala, all of Belize and Quintana Roo, Mexico. The MAR includes the largest barrier reef in the Atlantic and is an integral component of an interconnected and transboundary system of coastal habitats. The MAR region is world renowned for its diverse natural wonders as well as its rich cultural and ethnic diversity.

The annual value of the MAR is close to US\$ 4.5 Billion, integrated by reef-related tourism (US\$ 3.9 B), reef-related fisheries (US\$ 183 M), and shoreline protection (between US\$ 320 and US\$ 438 M). However, much of this value is at risk. If the MAR continues to decline, by 2030 the per annum value of the system could fall by US\$ 3.1 billion a year (in tourism, fisheries and coastal development). Conversely, a shift towards healthy reefs by 2030 could unlock an additional US\$ 2.5 billion annually across the three sectors.

The absence of a relationship between entrepreneurship ecosystems, conservation and commercial capital in the MAR is a barrier to the development of commercially viable ventures with a positive impact on the coastal and marine ecosystems. Without these relations, the gap in capital required for conservation and restoration of coral and related ecosystems will not be closed.

The Mesoamerican Reef Fund (MAR Fund) is a regional, private environmental fund created with the objective of supporting the protection of 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 drive capacity building for the conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of marine and coastal ecosystems in the Mesoamerican Reef region.

The Global Fund for Coral Reefs (GFCR) is a blended finance instrument to mobilize action and resources to protect and restore coral reef ecosystems. GFCR supports efforts to incubate and accelerate revenue-generating interventions that can sustainably finance the mitigation and elimination of unsustainable direct and indirect local drivers of coral reef degradation.

In 2022, GFCR approved the creation of MAR+Invest, the business and finance facility for the MAR. MAR+Invest, led by MAR Fund, convenes a partnership of organizations from the MAR countries, including New Ventures Group & Viwala, Mexican Fund for the Conservation of Nature & Sureste Sostenible, and the Healthy Reefs for Healthy People Initiative. The program partners bring together diverse expertise on conservation, monitoring, leadership, capacity building, conservation finance, innovation and impact investment sectors.

MAR+Invest supports the development of enterprises that generate coral positive outcomes and market returns. It calls for proposals to identify potential market initiatives in different stages of development, with a reef positive end result for the MAR.

It identifies, incubates, and enables finance solutions that offer a scale of impact capable of reducing local threats to the reef, generate alternative livelihoods, increase financial sustainability for coastal and marine protected areas in the MAR, grow an Emergency Fund managed by MAR Fund, and ultimately attract capital to develop a coral positive investment portfolio. During the first phase, which started in July 2022, MAR+Invest established the technical assistance facility (MARTAF), managed by MAR Fund, and the Financing Facility, managed by New Ventures. These two structures are the foundation of MAR+Invest to attract catalytic and commercial capital to the ecoregion to build the resilience of MAR coral reefs via blended finance. Now, in the second phase from June 2024 to May 2026, MAR+Invest will consolidate its plans to grow the Blue Economy sector for the MAR region, by supporting reef-positive ventures and attracting capital.

2. Objectives

The overall communication objective for MAR+Invest is to showcase the reef-positive investable solutions of the initiative's portfolio, supported by the transformational blended finance approach of MAR+Invest and the GFCR, and assist the efforts to attract capital to the MAR region.

The specific communications objectives for MAR+Invest are:

- Generate a new level of awareness about the threats to the MAR and potential solutions, using appropriate channels.
- Communicate the need to conserve and protect the MAR and its interconnected ecosystems.
- Communicate MAR+Invest's unique positioning and objectives, and the role of its partners.
- Communicate coral positive innovations and solutions happening in the MAR with support from the initiative and a focus on MAR+Invest results.
- Reach innovators, communities and entrepreneurs developing solutions to the current threats to the MAR that are in need of a network for development and knowledge.
- Generate awareness of the opportunities in the MAR among local donors, accelerators and investment funds.
- Give visibility to communities doing responsible resource management and contributing to conserve the MAR through sustainable practices.
- Develop the MAR+Invest promotional material as needed for various channels of communications.
- Develop and nurture communication partnerships, including with governments, for important national and international events such as conferences of the parties for different conventions.
- Maintain a constant and solid communication with GFCR by responding in a timely manner to their requests and by providing periodic updates on advances of MAR+Invest.

More information about this initiative can be found at : <https://mar-invest.org/>

3. Contract responsibilities

- Elaborate and implement the MAR+Invest communication plan to inform about the development and achievements of the initiative (in English and Spanish) in collaboration with the MAR+Invest coordinator and in communication with the initiative partners.
- Elaborate and distribute communication materials on the initiative for different audiences, to be shared with all partners.
- Develop and maintain updated programmatic materials, such as institutional powerpoint presentations and project documents that can be shared with different audiences (in both English and Spanish).
- Notify about the MAR+Invest activities (in English and Spanish) and coordinate content distribution in GFCR channels, MAR+Invest channels and in partner's channels.
- Maintain updated information on MAR+Invest internal platforms and in GFCR program tracking boards, in collaboration with the MAR+Invest coordinator.
- Carry out interviews with beneficiaries of MAR+Invest for posting in different media, such as blog posts.
- Develop content and update the MAR+Invest website.
- Collaborate and coordinate with MAR Fund's Communications Officer to notify MAR+Invest's monthly news, achievements, RfP or events, in MAR Fund's social media and website.
- Generate an annual summary of MAR+Invest achievements and coordinate its distribution among partners and different audiences, such as through a newsletter.
- Generate content for the MAR Fund updates in coordination with the MAR Fund Communications Officer.
- Actively participate in the creation and coordination of webinars for MAR Fund's webinar series.
- Develop and send press releases for special events, as required.
- Organize and coordinate press conferences if needed, and act as a liaison with the press.
- Coordinate and develop materials to update governmental contacts on MAR+Invest advances.
- Ensure communications materials comply with MAR Fund's Environmental and Social Management System.
- Participate in MAR Fund's internal coordination processes, such as weekly meetings, performance evaluations, trainings and strategic retreats.
- Other tasks as may be required by the donors and for the most effective communication of MAR+Invest advances and results.

4. Oversight

The consultant reports directly to the MAR+Invest Coordinator.

5. Duration of contract

This is a position of 60%. The contract will be for a renewable 12-month period. In the last month of the contractual period, the MAR+Invest Coordinator will conduct a contract review and will advise on a decision as to the offer of a subsequent contract. Any new contract will list the future projects and responsibilities to be carried out in a subsequent period.

6. Payment

Fees will be assigned based on the experience of the consultant. They will be paid in monthly disbursements and the consultant shall submit an invoice per payment, with taxes included.

Medical and life insurance will be covered during the contract.

7. Place of work

The consultant may be based in any of the Mesoamerican Reef countries.

8. Qualifications and attributes

- Education in communications with experience in conservation or in environmental science with at least three years' experience in communications.
- Experience working with the private sector and with different types of fundraising is highly desirable (philanthropic, commercial).
- Excellent communication and networking skills, experience as a spokesperson.
- Experience with designing marketing content (brochures, briefs), websites, social media, blog posts, for various audiences.
- Experience with communication tools and channels (such as MailChimp)
- Experience with website development (WordPress).
- Experience with conducting interviews and short video editing.
- Experience working in the Mesoamerican Reef region is desirable.
- Ability to represent MAR Fund with professionalism, discretion and diplomacy and to speak with credibility and authority on MAR+Invest.
- Excellent organizational skills, attention to detail and able to meet deadlines.
- Action-oriented; able to act and react as necessary, even if limited information is available.
- Excellent creative and proactive skills.
- Demonstrated capacity to resolve internal and external challenges and identify and respond to opportunities.
- Impeccable verbal and written communication skills in English and Spanish. Capable of producing high-quality communications materials.
- Team player with excellent interpersonal skills, including a good sense of humor, self awareness, and openness to feedback.
- Availability to travel within the MAR region and beyond (when conditions allow it).

9. Application procedure

Qualified individuals should submit:

1. Curriculum Vitae
2. Two-page essay (maximum) indicating the reason she/he is interested in this consultancy and why they are the best person for the job, in English and Spanish.
3. Three references, at least two of them from existing or former supervisors.

10. Deadline and contact

Please provide the required information by **August 30th 2024** to the following email:
ajones@marfund.org.