Terms of Reference

Consultancy to Conduct a comprehensive diagnostic of the Mesoamerican Reef Restoration Network (MAR-RRN)

1. Introduction and Background

In 2012, Oceanus A.C. promoted and initiated the creation of the Mesoamerican Reef Restoration Network (MAR-RRN), an important regional platform for coral reef conservation and restoration.

The Network's main objective is to enable the exchange of knowledge, experiences, best practices, and methodologies regarding coral reef restoration and associated ecosystems (seagrass, mangroves, and beach vegetation, among others). The Network promotes the coordination between experts, technicians, scientists, and governmental and non-governmental organizations in the four MAR countries and the Greater Caribbean. More than fifty organizations from the four countries make up the Network.

The Network is managed and led by an Executive Committee and runs under the established bylaws. In 2020, with the support of the MAR2R (CCAD/WWF/GEF) project, the Network developed its governance instruments, including a Strategic Plan and Action Plan for five years (2021-2026). Every two years the Network holds a regional meeting (Biennial meeting), where the Executive Committee presents the progress of the operational plan and shares the next steps for the following two years. The Biennial meetings also represent an opportunity for the Network to exchange experiences and elect a new Executive Committee.

Since 2017, the MAR Fund, through the Mesoamerican Reef Rescue Initiative (RRI)[1], has supported the scientific and technical capacities of the Network. Therefore, to continue to strengthen the Network and ensure the long-term resilience and sustainability of the MAR's critical reef ecosystems, the MAR Fund and the MAR-RRN Executive Committee, are looking for a consultant, to conduct a comprehensive diagnostic of the MAR-RRN. The selected consultant will be responsible for assessing key operational areas, identifying challenges, and providing actionable recommendations to enhance the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the MAR-RRN.

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[1] The main objective of the Initiative is to increase the resilience and recovery of the Mesoamerican Reef and the environmental and cultural services it provides, through capacity building, regulations, economic incentives, and financial sustainability, required for an effective and timely restoration.

2. Objective of the consultancy

Conduct a comprehensive diagnostic of the Mesoamerican Reef Restoration Network (MAR-RRN) and evaluate its key operational areas, including, but not limited to, governance structure, membership, and bylaws. Identifying challenges, and providing actionable recommendations to strengthen its operations, encourage members' participation, and enhance the leadership of the Executive Committee.

This diagnostic will be developed through a participatory process and delivered within 4 months, aiming to optimize the Network's efficiency and effectiveness in supporting reef restoration efforts in the MAR Region.

3. Main activities of the consultancy

a. Develop a detailed work plan and timeline, outlining the scope of the diagnostic assessment, objectives, and expected outcomes.
b. Recommend the appropriate methodology to conduct the diagnostic process and provide recommendations.
c. Gather information from various sources, including, but not limited to, the members of the Network, the Network´s Executive Committee, MAR Fund, document reviews, online interviews, and surveys.
d. Hold an initial meeting with the Network´s Executive Committee and MAR Fund to discuss the work plan and project approach.
e. Schedule and conduct meetings with key members of the Network, the Network´s Executive Committee, the RRI´s technical supervisory committee, MAR Fund staff, and other relevant actors and organizations, to gather insights and perspectives.
f. Revise and analyze the Network´s Strategic Plan, Actions Plan, Bylaws, and other Network documents and governance instruments.
g. Evaluate key operational areas, including the current Network structure, management practices, resource allocation, workflow efficiency, website, and communication strategies.
h. Identify and analyze existing challenges and gaps in current processes and operations; members' participation, coordination, decision-making, and leadership.
i. Compare findings with best practices and benchmarks from similar Networks to assess performance and identify areas for improvement.
j. Formulate actionable recommendations to address identified challenges and enhance the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the Network.
k. Hold regular communication with the Network´s Executive Committee and MAR Fund to inform them about the advances of the consultancy.
l. Collaborate with MAR Fund and the Network´s Executive Committee to facilitate, at least, two virtual sessions with the Network to present and validate the results of the diagnostic and analysis; and, to analyze the conclusions and next steps.
m. Elaborate a document with preliminary findings of the diagnostic and validation process.
n. Prepare and submit the final product incorporating the diagnostic analysis, including key recommendations, and an action plan for their implementation.
o. Prepare and deliver a presentation summarizing the final main findings and recommendations.
p. All documents will be received by MAR Fund, and reviewed by a Petit Committee (MAR Fund and the Network´s Executive Committee will invite a Petit Committee, with volunteers from the Network, who will review the products and provide feedback).
q. Collaborate with the translator in the review of the final version of the products, ensuring that the

translation is faithful to the original version.

r. Collaborate in the review of the layout for publication in both versions, Spanish and English. The consultant must prepare the products in one language TBD in discussion with the MAR-RRN Committee and MAR Fund.

Note: The translation of the final document, as well as the layout in both languages for publication, will be contracted directly by MAR Fund, separately. The costs of these services will not be included in the fees of this consultancy.

4. Deliverables of this consultancy

a. Work plan and methodology: A detailed plan describing the scope, objectives, timeline, and methodology for conducting the diagnosis.
b. Diagnostic analysis and document will include the minimum of:
   ▪ Objective and Scope: Clarify diagnostic aims
   ▪ Context and Background: Provide a brief overview of the MAR-RRN role in the MAR region and why its effectiveness is vital, including a snapshot of current challenges and opportunities.
   ▪ Evaluation of Key Operational Areas: Summarize each key area to be analyzed (e.g., management practices, resource allocation, workflow efficiency, and communication strategies) and assess current performance, highlighting major strengths and limitations.
   ▪ Identify Challenges and Gaps: Analyze specific challenges and gaps within the current processes and operations.
   ▪ Benchmarking and Comparison with Best Practices: Compare findings with best practices and benchmarks from similar projects or organizations, identifying gaps and improvement areas based on established standards and successful approaches in the field.
   ▪ Recommendations: Provide specific, prioritized actions to improve each operational area, with a clear explanation of how these actions can enhance the overall effectiveness and success of the Network.
   ▪ Action Plan for Implementation: Outline a practical action plan for implementing top-priority recommendations, including timelines, roles, resources, and key performance indicators for tracking progress.
   ▪ Conclusion: Summarize the diagnostic's main insights and the anticipated benefits of implementing the recommendations to strengthen the MAR-RRN.
   ▪ Glossary
c. Presentation: PowerPoint slides summarizing the diagnostic main findings, recommendations, and action plan.
d. Brief consultancy report indicating the work process.
e. List of people interviewed, with name, contact, and organization.
f. Photographic evidence of the consultation process.

5. Deliverables format

- All products must be submitted in an editable format. **Sent by email only, as attachments. Pictures can be sent via Wetransfer.**
- All products must be submitted in one language (English or Spanish), TBD.
- Documents should be submitted in Word, Excel, or PowerPoint format.
- Photographs should be submitted **in JPEG or PNG format at 300 dpi**.

6. Supervision and communication

MAR Fund will supervise and oversee the implementation of the consultancy. The support of the RRI´s Technical Committee and the Network´s Executive is key to providing feedback and input to the consultancy products.

7. Duration of the consultancy

The consultancy has a duration of 4 months after the signing of the contract.

8. Payments

- Fees will be agreed upon with the consultant depending on experience, availability, and budget.
- Payments for this consultancy will include the consultant's professional fees. These fees will cover taxes and any banking fees incurred by the consultant.
- Payments will be made according to an agreed delivery schedule and upon **satisfactory receipt** of the deliverables, and against presentation of the corresponding invoice.
- No travel is required for this consultancy.

9. Requirements for this grant

a. Degree in a relevant field such as management, business administration, environmental science, or related discipline.
b. Based in the MAR Region (if based in Mexico it must be in Quintana Roo).
c. Minimum 5 years of proven experience in conducting comprehensive diagnosis, evaluations, or assessments, particularly in operational or strategic contexts.
d. Experience with similar projects or organizations, preferably in the environmental non-profit sector.
e. Strong analytical and problem-solving skills.
f. Excellent written and verbal communication skills in both English and Spanish.
g. Proficiency in data analysis and reporting tools.
h. Ability to work independently and manage multiple tasks effectively.
i. Familiarity with best practices in operational efficiency and effectiveness.
j. Knowledge of the specific sector or context relevant to the consultancy (e.g., coastal marine ecosystem restoration, environmental networks).
k. Strong organizational and project management skills.

10. Required Documentation

a. Cover Letter: detailing the consultant's interest in the project, relevant experience, and understanding of the scope of work.
b. Curriculum Vitae (CV) or Resume (3 pages maximum).
c. Summary of the proposed methodology to conduct the work.
d. Quote or financial proposal.
e. Send the required information meeting these ToR requirements to aherrera@marfund.org and copy to cocana@marfund.org no later than **January 20th, 2025 no later than 5 pm CST.**

11. Considerations

- Proponents are responsible for all costs associated with the preparation and presentation of proposals submitted to MAR Fund for evaluation on the framework of this request for proposals, and therefore there is no obligation on behalf of MAR Fund to cover such costs – either in whole or in part – or to provide any advance or compensation if their proposal is not selected.
- Proponents acknowledge and accept that the preparation of the proposal(s) does not constitute a financial obligation on behalf of MAR Fund, and therefore the economic and financial responsibility for the preparation of the proposal(s) is exclusive of the proponent(s), regardless of the selection process outcome.
- The selection process will be carried out by MAR fund's internal evaluation guidelines and the result will be final.
- Only proponents who advance to the next stage of the selection process will be contacted.