



Terms of Reference

Consultancy for the Development of MAR Fund's 20th Anniversary Book Mesoamerican Reef Fund

1. Background

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, foster partnerships and drive capacity building for the conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of marine and coastal ecosystems in the Mesoamerican Reef region.

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

MAR Fund is registered in the United States as a tax-exempt charitable organization. Although it is legally established outside the MAR, its purpose is to provide sustainable funding for conservation in the ecoregion. A MAR Fund chapter is registered in Guatemala City since August of 2014, where the coordinating office is established, but its staff is distributed in the four countries.

MAR Fund prioritizes projects and distributes funding. In its 20 years, it has raised US\$45.8 million in project funding US\$14.3 million in sinking funds and manages an endowment of US\$34.5 million as of September 2024. MAR Fund has provided funding to partners in the region through different channels, such as small grants and large, multiannual projects. MAR Fund grantees include community organizations, NGOs, governmental organizations, academia and individuals.

The Fund carries out its mission through five programs, as follows:

1. Saving our protected areas: a legacy of caring. Establishment and protection of an interconnected network of priority coastal and marine protected areas in the region.
2. Fishing for the future: sustainable fisheries for a thriving reef. Community participation in co-management of their fisheries, establishment of fish replenishment zones and monitoring and protection of fish spawning aggregations.
3. Climate change: the need is now. Supporting adaptation to climate change and its impacts on the reef.
4. Belize marine fund: enhancing marine conservation in Belize with the participation of local stakeholders, for wider regional benefit.
5. Clean water for the Reef: improving sewage and solid waste management for a healthier ecoregion and its people.

In July 2022, MAR Fund and its partners began the rollout of the MAR+Invest Initiative, supported by the Global Fund for Coral Reefs (GFCR). It is a blended finance mechanism with a strong emphasis on impact monitoring and evaluation, business acceleration, access to finance solutions and capacity building. The goal is to invest in market-based solutions that contribute positively to the health and resilience of coral reefs in the four countries of the MAR. This initiative is being implemented in alliance with the following organizations: Healthy Reefs for Healthy People (HRI), New Ventures/VIWALA and the Mexican Fund for the Conservation of Nature (FMCN)/Sureste Sostenible. More information at <https://mar-invest.org/>

MAR Fund has supported the establishment and operation of regional networks, such as the Connectivity Network, the Reef Restoration Network, the Sustainable Fisheries Network and the Fish Spawning Aggregations Network. It is also part of the Healthy Reefs Initiative, an international effort that measures and tracks the health of coral reefs in the region, and the MAR Leadership Program, a capacity-building initiative that strengthens leadership skills of young conservationists in the four MAR countries and scales impact through support of their strategic projects.

MAR Fund is celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2025. To commemorate this milestone, MAR Fund aims to develop a comprehensive book that reflects its history, achievements, and contributions to the conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of the MAR and the results of the critically important conservation work carried out by MAR Fund partners. This book will add to the previous collection published in collaboration with authors, such as [Written with Blue Ink 1](#) and [2](#) and [Women of the MAR](#). These works have provided valuable insights into the region's conservation efforts and the people behind them, and we hope to continue this tradition of documenting and sharing the important stories of the Mesoamerican Reef.

More information about the MAR Fund can be found at <https://marfund.org>

2. Objective of the consultancy

To produce a high-quality book that captures the history, achievements, and impact of MAR Fund and its partners over the past 20 years. The book will present the organization's journey, milestones, and key stakeholders' contributions through compelling narratives, testimonials, and visuals.

3. Scope of work

The consultant will be responsible for the following tasks:

a) Historical research

- Compile information on MAR Fund's history, including its founding, mission, evolution, and major milestones.
- Review and analyze existing documents such as annual reports, strategic plans, and other communication materials.

b) Interviews and testimonials

- Conduct interviews with at least 10 key stakeholders, including founders, board members, staff, partners, and beneficiaries.

- Collect testimonials and insights to highlight MAR Fund’s impact and the personal experiences of those involved.

c) Content development

- Develop a coherent and engaging narrative for the book, covering MAR Fund’s history, achievements, challenges, and vision for the future, to include the results and impact of the partner organizations in the MAR.
- Include a dedicated chapter on the history of conservation in the MAR region, highlighting key milestones, efforts, and stakeholders involved in conservation work over time.
- Organize the content into chapters or sections to ensure a logical flow and readability.

d) Design and presentation

- Collaborate with graphic designers to ensure the book’s visual appeal and alignment with MAR Fund’s branding.
- Provide input on layout, images, infographics, and other visual elements.

e) Review and editing

- Ensure the content is thoroughly reviewed and edited for accuracy, clarity, and consistency.
- Incorporate feedback from MAR Fund’s Communications Committee, work team and stakeholders.

f) Final product

- Deliver a high-quality, professionally designed book in both printed and digital formats.
- Ensure the digital version is accessible and optimized for online distribution

4. Methodology

The consultant is expected to use the following methodology:

a) Analysis of historical documents

- Review existing historical records, reports, and communication materials provided by MAR Fund.

b) Stakeholder interviews

- Conduct in-depth interviews with at least 10 strategic actors identified by MAR Fund.
- Use these interviews to gather diverse perspectives and anecdotes.

c) Coordination with MAR Fund work team

- Collaborate with a designated team within MAR Fund to ensure the content aligns with the organization’s history and values.

d) Stakeholder involvement

- Involve various stakeholders throughout the book development process to ensure inclusivity and representation of different partners and their work.

5. Deliverables

1. Detailed work plan outlining the approach, timeline, and milestones.
2. A draft outline of the book's content structure.
3. Transcripts or summaries of stakeholder interviews.
4. Draft versions of the book for review and feedback.
5. Final book in both printed and digital formats, including:
 - Print-ready files for a high-quality physical book.
 - A digital version optimized for online distribution.

6. Supervision and coordination

The consultancy will include desk-based work, virtual meetings with key MAR Fund staff and Board members, calls with key partners/stakeholders. The consultant will report directly to the MAR Fund executive director and the President of the Communications Committee and final approval of the book will be provided by the Communications Committee.

MAR Fund will provide access to key documents and will review drafts, track work to date, answer questions and provide ongoing feedback. MAR Fund will also provide travel expenses for the consultant when necessary and will provide introduction to stakeholders involved in the process.

7. Products and payments

Payments will be made upon approval of deliverables: 30% after completion of inception call and delivery of work plan, 40% on the completion of the draft versions of the book, and 30% on the completion and MAR Fund approval of final version of all documents.

8. Duration of the consultancy

The consultancy is expected to be completed within six months, with specific deadlines for key deliverables to be agreed upon at the start of the project.

9. Place of work

Place of residence of the consultant.

10. Confidentiality and copyright

10.1. Confidentiality

The consultant commits to carrying out the assigned tasks with the highest standards and ethical considerations. MAR Fund reserves the right to instruct the consultant on the information that must be treated with confidentiality.

10.2. Copyright

MAR Fund holds the copyright to the products generated through this consultancy.

11. Qualifications of the consultant

Individual consultants and teams of consultants possessing the qualifications outlined below are invited to apply:

- Proven experience in writing and developing publications, particularly commemorative or historical books.
- Strong research, writing, and storytelling skills.
- Familiarity with conservation and environmental topics, preferably in the Mesoamerican Reef region.
- Experience collaborating with designers and managing publication projects.
- Excellent communication skills in [language(s), e.g., English and Spanish].

12. Proposal submission

Interested consultants are invited to submit a proposal including:

- Expression of interest indicating a brief description of their approach to this project.
- Relevant experience and examples of similar work.
- A proposed timeline and budget (with a maximum budget of \$17,500 USD).
- Contact information for at least two references/previous clients.

13. Deadline and contact

Proposals and inquiries should be sent to Lluvia Soto at lsoto@marfund.org with the subject reading “MAR Fund 20th anniversary book”, no later than March 21, 2025.