

Terms of Reference for Safeguards Consultant/s to develop an Environmental and Social Management Framework, Gender Assessment, and other safeguards documents for the Blue Action Fund Project “Strengthening Ecological and Livelihood Resilience in the Southern Belize Reef Complex (SBRC)”

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| Location | Belize |
| Anticipated Start Date | January 2024 |
| Consultancy Type | Short-term contract |
| Contract Duration | 12 weeks |
| Language required | English |

1. Project Background

World Wildlife Fund Germany along with its partners WWF Mesoamerica, Southern Environmental Association (SEA) and Humana People to People Belize through funding provided by the Blue Action Fund will be executing the five-year project entitled “Strengthening ecological and livelihood resilience in the Southern Belize Reef Complex (SBRC)”. The Southern Belize Reef Complex (SBRC) is a marine biodiversity hotspot, its reefs, mangroves and seagrass beds act as a nursery and refuge for important fish species, marine turtles, sharks, manatees, and crocodiles, while also offering coastal protection to local communities. Yet, increasing pressure from human activities, including unregulated & unsustainable construction, unsustainable fishing, and marine transport, threaten to impair its biodiversity and the ecosystem services it provides.

The overall objective of the project is to strengthen the resilience of the species and ecosystems of the SBRC while providing local communities access to nature-based livelihoods, as well as (restorative) climate adaptation measures. For the SBRC to continue providing ecosystem services in the context of a changing climate, it is important that by the end of the project the protection and sustainable management of its ecosystems and species and its ecological connectivity are improved. Hence, the project aims to (1) address a critical conservation gap via the declaration of Placencia Lagoon (PL) as a Marine Protected Area (MPA); (2) strengthen the management of four MPAs: Laughing Bird Caye National Park (LBCNP), Gladden Spit and Silk Caye Marine Reserve (GSSCMR), South Water Caye Marine Reserve (SWCMR) and Glover’s Reef Marine Reserve (GRMR); ; (3) offer sustainable livelihood opportunities to local communities, and (4) restore at least 500 hectares of mangroves, especially around PL.

The project focuses on seven communities within the project scope: Dangriga, Hopkins, Riversdale, Maya Beach, Seine Bight, Placencia, Independence-Mango Creek, (See Map in Annex 1). These communities are the key resources users of the target areas, which support mainly tourism and/or artisan fishing. Supplementary information has been annexed to the terms of reference for greater context. See Annex 2 for the main findings of the ESMS screening and Annex 3 for the project’s theory of change.

BAF ESMS:

The Blue Action Fund requires all of its projects to be compliant with the World Bank Environmental and Social Framework (WB ESF 2017), including the Environmental and Social Standards (ESS) 1-10, the World Bank Group Environmental Health and Safety Guidelines (EHSGs), and the other [Standards and Guidelines](#) listed in Annex A of the [Blue Action Fund ESMS Manual](#). These Standards are aimed at providing guidance on how to identify risks and impacts, and are designed to help avoid, mitigate and

manage risks and impacts as a way of doing projects in a sustainable way. To make these Standards relevant and practical for conservation projects, Blue Action Fund has developed safeguarding [Principles and Requirements](#) based on the WB ESF, which include:

- **Principle 1:** Environmental and social assessment and risk management
- **Principle 2:** Stakeholder engagement
- **Principle 3:** Health, safety and security of communities and project personnel
- **Principle 4:** Protection, conservation and sustainable management of the environment, biodiversity and natural resources
- **Principle 5:** Livelihoods and access restrictions
- **Principle 6:** Gender equity and vulnerable groups
- **Principle 7:** Cultural heritage
- **Principle 8:** Indigenous Peoples
- **Principle 9:** Grievance management
- **Principle 10:** Human rights

BAF documents/tools:

The principal Safeguard Instrument for the application of the Blue Action Fund ESMS and Standards and Guidelines therein, is the project's [Environmental and Social Management Plan \(ESMP\)](#). This is the umbrella Safeguard Instrument for the project and will contain reference to other relevant Safeguard Instruments and protocols, which can be annexed to the ESMP. Examples of other Safeguard Instruments include:

- [Stakeholder Engagement Plan \(SEP\)](#) – required by all projects
- [Grievance Mechanism](#) – required by all projects
- [Process Framework](#) – required by projects causing access restrictions with potential for economic displacement
- [Free, Prior and Informed Consent Protocol](#) – required in projects working in landscapes with Indigenous Peoples, but often used as good practice community engagement
- [Chance Find Procedure](#) – required in projects with earthworks with potential to uncover/disturb physical cultural heritage
- [Environmental and Social Code of Practice](#) – required in projects conducting small scale construction, refurbishment, livelihood development activities with construction.
- [Gender Guide](#) – in order to ensure gender equality within project implementation and equal benefits of project results.

Templates for all of these documents can be found on the [Blue Action Fund website](#), and should be utilized for the completion of deliverables under this consultancy.

2. Objectives

The overall objective of the consultancy is to prepare the necessary assessments (Environmental & Social Assessment (ESA) and Gender Assessment (GA) to comply with Blue Action Fund's Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS), verify the results of the safeguards screening and law enforcement tool and prepare provisional safeguards tools including mitigation measures as foreseen by the Blue Action Fund's ESMS.

The main objective of a gender assessment (GA) is to collect gender-specific data that will lead to gaining knowledge on roles of women and men in the project area, the decision-making processes among women and men at the community level, control over the management of natural resources and the types of resources, access to land by women and men in the project area, etc. This is in view of identifying

gaps and solutions to improve women's participation in conservation and promote more equitable management of and benefits from the use of natural resources among women and men.

For both assessments, socioeconomic baseline data shall be collected and indicators for the socio-economic impact of the project activities shall be defined. The analysis shall make use of existing literature and available statistics and analysis and will involve comprehensive exchange with all relevant stakeholders. Both assessments will be prepared after visits to the project sites and through consultations with local communities, indigenous people groups, and other key stakeholders that may potentially be affected by project activities.

The ESA and GA will be done in parallel with the development of the full project proposal and the findings shall be reflected in the project activities. Therefore, a very close cooperation with the project development team is key to ensure a swift uptake.

3. Scope of Work

The ESA and GA shall be based on the following aspects:

- Assessment of the socio economical, demographical, and cultural situation in the project area including livelihood pattern and options of local communities;
- Assessment of the political, legal and administrative framework with particular consideration of marine protected area – management and management of marine natural resources;
- Stakeholder analysis and –mapping to identify relevant and potentially impacted stakeholder groups with specific focus on vulnerable groups;
- Site visits to the 7 target communities to collect data via relevant methods such as household interviews or focus group discussions with women, men, and youth affected by the project.
- Assessment and quantification of the dependency of different user groups on the use of marine natural resources.
- Assessment of the gender division of labor and time use, access and control over natural resources, power and decision making, knowledge and capacities, as well as opportunities for and constraints on women's participation.
- Provision of socio-economic, sex-disaggregated baseline data which can be used to monitor potential gender-differentiated impacts of the project;
- Assessment and quantification of the potential impact of the planned project activities on resource users with particular consideration of access restriction and law enforcement.
- Identification and recommendation of mitigation activities that are appropriate in the implementation of the project.
- Indicators to measure project social, cultural and economic impact and effects of mitigation measures.

The results of ESA and GA shall be utilized to develop provisional safeguards instruments, using the BAF templates and guidelines (see section 5 “Deliverables”, links to the documents can be found in section 1 “Project Background”) and presented in an overall ESA report, GA report and Gender Action Plan.

Tasks:

The main tasks and requirements of the ESA and GA were identified by the project consortium during the scoping process, which was based on the initial risk screening (both documented in the BAF Environmental and Social Risk Management Tool). These requirements build the core of the ESA and GA. They are summarized in the table 1 below.

Table 1: Specific tasks and requirements per principle as identified during the risk scoping process

| BAF E&S Principles | Risk significance | E&S Assessment requirements | Stakeholders (to be updated according to the stakeholder analysis) | Methods |
|---|-------------------|---|--|---|
| Principle 1: Environmental and social assessment and risk management | Low | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project specific ESA and local ground truthing of screening findings, - identification of potentially negatively affected groups or individuals (law enforcement, access restriction to the southern Belize protected areas, FPIC...) | <p>A comprehensive stakeholder mapping shall be conducted as part of the ESMS assessment. The main stakeholder groups are listed under principle 2. Specific additional stakeholders are listed under the respective principles.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - desk review to compile and systematize relevant information and analyses from existing assessments. - interviews with relevant stakeholder representatives, community groups, leaders, government officials to complement data and analysis from desk review |
| Principle 2: Stakeholder Engagement | moderate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Document all prior stakeholder consultation relevant for the project area; - Prepare relevant project information (project partners, timeframe, activities, area, risks/ impacts) and disclosure in an appropriate format during consultations; - Validate, improve, and update the stakeholder list and analysis by seeking stakeholder input and field visits; identify the type of engagement required if not already clear; - Undertake pre-cursory consultations to define the ICP and/or FPIC process [eg. to understand the preferred decision-making process for affected communities, potential representative institutions and/or people; timeframes, information requirements]; - Identify and plan suitable engagement mechanisms (forums, community meetings, MPA stakeholder forums etc.) and methods | <p>Stakeholders shall be engaged in each of the 7 communities targeted under this project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The focus will be on users of natural resources in and around the MPAs targeted by the project (e.g. fishers, seaweed framers, tour guides etc) and their professional associations). - Vulnerable groups such as women, low income families, youth with low education level etc. and indigenous groups will also be specifically considered. <p>Further key stakeholders include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - local government (town council/village councils); - private sector representatives from tourism (tourism industry association members: tour operators, tour guides, hoteliers, Belize Tourism Board etc.) and fisheries sectors (shrimp farm owners, seafood companies); - local maritime transportation providers, boat operators, - as well as government agencies with responsibility for licensing, monitoring, law enforcement in the | <p>Methods will depend on local validation but may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - dissemination campaign, - fora/community meetings to raise concerns and reach consensus, - focus groups with vulnerable and impacted stakeholder groups. |

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| | | <p>and strategies to allow participation of vulnerable groups;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify vulnerable groups | <p>targeted MPAs (Forest Department, Fisheries Department, National Biodiversity Office, Office of the Prime Minister, Port Authority, Coast Guard).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Furthermore, conservation and social development NGOs working in the respective communities and associations representing special interests groups like the National Garifuna Council will be consulted. | |
| Principle 3: Health, safety and security of communities and project personnel | moderate | <p>Project workers H&S:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no further assessment needed <p>Child labour:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - assess whether child labour is a risk in the project activities <p>Law Enforcement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - check if the project teams assessment of the law enforcement risks in the law enforcement tool is comprehensive. - consult with stakeholders on their perceived risks with regard to law enforcement. - assess the proposed mitigation measures and suggest further measures if required. <p>Small-scale construction, hazardous materials/substances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no further assessment needed | <p>Specific stakeholders for the issue of child labour include Belize social and education ministry, children's rights organizations and others.</p> <p>For Law enforcement, local communities and state and NGO law enforcement units are key, as well as civil rights organizations.</p> | <p>Child Labor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - desk review of existing documents - socioeconomic assessments (via interviews, field visits, and income analysis) carried out for Principle 5 will include an assessment on the risk of child labor. <p>Law enforcement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - desk review of existing documents - consultations on perceived risks to be carried out via focus groups |
| Principle 4: Protection, conservation and sustainable management of the environment, biodiversity and natural resources | low | <p>Pesticides, alien species, nutrients:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - depending on livelihood options to be identified during consultations at the beginning of the project (seaweed farming, small scale aquaculture, agriculture), define appropriate | <p>If relevant agriculture and mariculture producers (especially seaweed) and respective authorities.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If needed, desk review based on available environmental impact assessments of the selected livelihood options - If needed, seaweed farming expert will be consulted on the risk of |

| | | processes / best practices / mitigation measures. | | invasive species associated to the practice. |
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| Principle 5: Livelihoods and access restrictions; | substantial | <p>The assessment should inform the process of MPA designation, reviewing the existing management plans and developing livelihood options by specifying the risk, defining specific criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify affected resource user groups - assess the dependencies of local fishers on fishing in restricted areas, - assess current practice to deal with existing and potential access restrictions, - assess potential loss of income through intensified enforcement of access restrictions, - assess potential alternatives (e.g. alternative fishing grounds, including additional cost, effort, alternative livelihood options ...) - identify environmentally sustainable economic activities as part of the project's livelihoods component specifically focusing on women empowerment including cost calculations. | <p>The main stakeholders regarding access restriction are fishers operating in the targeted MPAs, local community members which are resource user, tourism operators, maritime transportation operators, land developers etc.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - desk review of existing documents - participatory socioeconomic assessments (interviews, field visits, and income analysis) focusing on affected resource user groups to assess potential loss of income - participatory socioeconomic analyses of potential alternatives (community consultations, economic analysis) - quantitative statistical analysis of gathered socio economic field data |
| Principle 6: Gender equity and vulnerable groups | moderate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Validate project working definition of disadvantages and vulnerable groups through local consultations; - Direct consultation with disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, women, youth [as appropriate] to generate feedback/ views of the planned project activities, risks & impacts, priorities and needs; - check all project activities with regard to potential gender issues and | <p>Local communities, specially focusing on vulnerable groups such as: Garifuna communities, women and women groups, youth, low income families, others as identified</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - desk review of existing documents. - one-on-one interviews and focus groups with disadvantaged and vulnerable stakeholders for direct consultations and validation of barriers to participation and gender equality. - socioeconomic assessments for principle 5 will have a specific emphasis on barriers to participation, |

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| | | <p>identify opportunities to foster gender equality (specifically with regards to representation of women in NR management). Understand any barriers to participation, most appropriate engagement mechanisms/ measures, how to include in stakeholder engagement plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - develop guidelines on how to deal with cases of gender-based violence in the context of the project. - check if the grievance mechanism is gender sensitive. | | gender issues, and opportunities for gender equality. |
| Principle 7: Cultural heritage | low | No assessment needed | N/A | N/A |
| Principle 8: Indigenous Peoples | moderate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Validate Garifuna settlement characteristics with census information and field visits - Identify suitable approach and methodology for the participatory mapping of land/ marine resource use and characterization of Indigenous communities; - Assessment of potential economic, social and cultural impacts of project activities; - Identification of potential mitigation measures for any potential risks & impacts; - Prepare the FPIC Protocol Outline according to Belize requirements, including: (i) Clear identification of the FPIC rightsholders; (ii) Conduct pre-cursory consultations on FPIC [eg. to understand preferred decision-making process for affected communities, potential representative institutions and/or people; timeframes, information | Garifuna communities, responsible authorities, National Garifuna Council | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - desk review of existing documents - participatory assessment with the Garifuna communities of potential economic, social, and cultural impacts of project activities; - participatory identification of potential mitigation measures for any potential risks & impacts; - FPIC |

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| | | <p>requirements, required conditions]; (iii) capacity assessment (grantee's capacity; community capacity) to conduct FPIC;</p> <p>(Within the project region there are Garifuna communities, with which we plan an FPIC process. Some Mayans live in those communities because of working (mainly in tourism), however in this case they tend to return to their homes on weekends, or when they have time off. As FPIC applies to the IPs of the area, i.e. those who have a collective attachment to lands, waters and resources, and whose governance is through customary / traditional institutions of their peoples, in this scenario, this applies only to the Garifuna. The Mayans will be part of the consultations foreseen with all project stakeholders, but not through an FPIC process.)</p> | | |
| <p>Principle 9: Grievance management</p> | <p>low</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluate the existing grievance mechanisms of MPA Authorities, WWF and partners. - Consultation with MPA authorities to understand the existing grievance procedures in place, any issues, how to improve. - Understand the types of potential grievances and any existing grievances in relation to the MPA and/or activities to be supported by the project - Review 1) eligibility criteria; 2) grievance procedures; - capacity assessment of (co -) management entities | <p>local communities, MPA management entities (Fisheries department & SEA)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - desk review of existing documents - consultation with local communities - consultation with MPA authorities to understand the existing grievance procedures in place, any issues, how to improve. |

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| Principle 10: Human rights | substantial | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - potential human rights violations in the context of access restriction will be assessed in principle 5. - procedural rights are to be assessed especially in principles 2, 8, and 9 - any human rights issues related to law enforcement will be assessed under principle 3 - ensure that project risk mitigation plan accounts for potential human rights violations | Office of the Ombudsman | Consultations with stakeholders (see details in principles 2,3,5,8,9) |
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4. Procedure

The consultant should follow the below named procedures/work steps:

1. Coordinate with the Project Team (PT) for the general planning and development of the assessment and the associated documentation.
2. Develop a work plan, including interviews or other consultation mechanisms.
3. Hold regular meetings with PT staff.
4. Build upon the safeguards screening results and scoping, done by the project consortium and validate the findings with field assessments.
5. Assess alignment of project activities with BAF Safeguards requirements
6. Conduct a thorough review of relevant literature and documents, including, but not limited to: background documents related to environmental and social safeguards; the project Concept Note; other projects and their action plans and policies on environmental and social issues; Government of Belize policy, legislation and regulation related to safeguards and gender; and any other documentation relevant to the project area and for the development of the project.
7. Collect primary data in the project area
8. With all the primary and secondary information obtained, carry out an analysis of the environmental and social risks, identify the risks, their likelihood and intensity, and propose adequate mitigation measures.
9. Complete the ESA and GA for the project, incorporating all observations and suggestions of the PT team.

5. Deliverables

The consultant/s shall complete the following documents tailored to the identified project-specific risks and impacts in line with the requirements defined in BAF's ESMS:

- Provisional safeguards instruments, using the BAF ESMS templates and guidelines:
 - o Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP)
 - o Gender-responsive Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) including documentation of stakeholder engagement meetings, interviews etc. conducted during the assessment
 - o Process Framework
 - o (Environmental and Social Code of Practice (for small scale construction))
 - o FPIC protocol
 - o Grievance Mechanism
- Summarized documentation of the ESA results in BAF Environmental and Social Risk Management Tool (Sections D: E&S Assessment Results and E: Safeguard tool development)
- Overall ESA report including:
 - o Approach and findings
 - o Documentation of methodology
 - o All collected primary data,
 - o List of references / literature
- Gender analysis report including:
 - o baseline data on the gender dynamics and the status of women
 - o recommendations for project design to ensure improvement of women's conditions and equitable access to and benefit from resources
 - o Guidelines on how to deal with cases of gender-based violence
 - o All collected primary data
 - o List of references/literature

- Gender action plan, including outputs, activities and targets, and gender-related indicators to be included in the project logframe, to address the key recommendations identified through the analysis.

All deliverables will be in English. Below are further details about the expected timeline of the deliverables.

6. Timeline and Payment Schedule

| No. | Deliverables | Due Date | Fees in % |
|-------|--|----------|-----------|
| 1 | Work Plan detailing methodology | Week 1 | 20% |
| 2 & 3 | Preliminary ESA and GA Assessment Findings | Week 7 | 40% |
| 4 & 5 | Draft Deliverables | Week 9 | |
| 6 | Final Deliverables | Week 12 | 40% |

7. Contract Management

The Consultant shall report directly to the WWF Mesoamerica Project Lead. However, the execution of works shall be done in close coordination with the Project Team. Consultants will be given access to relevant information necessary for the execution of tasks under this assignment. The WWF Mesoamerica office will provide support for the coordination of stakeholder consultations.

The consultant/s will be responsible for providing their own workstation (laptop, internet, phone, and other facilities which may be required during the consultancy). The consultant/s will also be responsible for organizing and covering all logistical costs associated with field activities and data collection. These cost-considerations should be reflected in the financial proposal/proposed budget for the project/s selected.

8. Qualifications

Education:

At least a master's degree in the area of forestry, water resource management, environmental management, environmental sciences, natural resource management, anthropology, social science, or another closely related field.

Professional experiences:

The team leader (international or national expert) should demonstrate:

- At least ten (10) years of relevant experience in environmental assessments, evaluating risks for indigenous peoples. socio-economic analysis, environment and social safeguards and environmental and social impact assessments (ESIA) and management frameworks (ESMFs);
- Working experience creating ESMSs and designing mitigation measures for projects in the field of marine and coastal conservation and natural resource use;
- Experience in designing, managing or monitoring conservation and/or natural resource management projects;
- Experience working in Belize or Central America would be an advantage;
- Fluent in English is required

Other team member/s (national expert) should demonstrate:

- At least five (5) years of experience in environmental assessments, working with indigenous peoples; socio-economic analysis; environment and social management plans;
- Education background complementary to the field of the team leader;
- If the team leader does not have gender experience, at least 3 years of relevant experience in analysing and integrating gender dimensions into policy and program formulation and implementation, particularly in the context of land/natural resource use and management, fisheries and tourism sectors, food, water, health.
- Proven track record in facilitating participatory processes and engaging local communities;
- Proven experience in evaluation and/or conducting socio-economic surveys with expertise in gender-related work.
- Working experience in contributing to the preparation of an ESMF report concerning national resources management;
- Fluency in written and spoken English is required.

The team should include National consultants to lead field work activities.

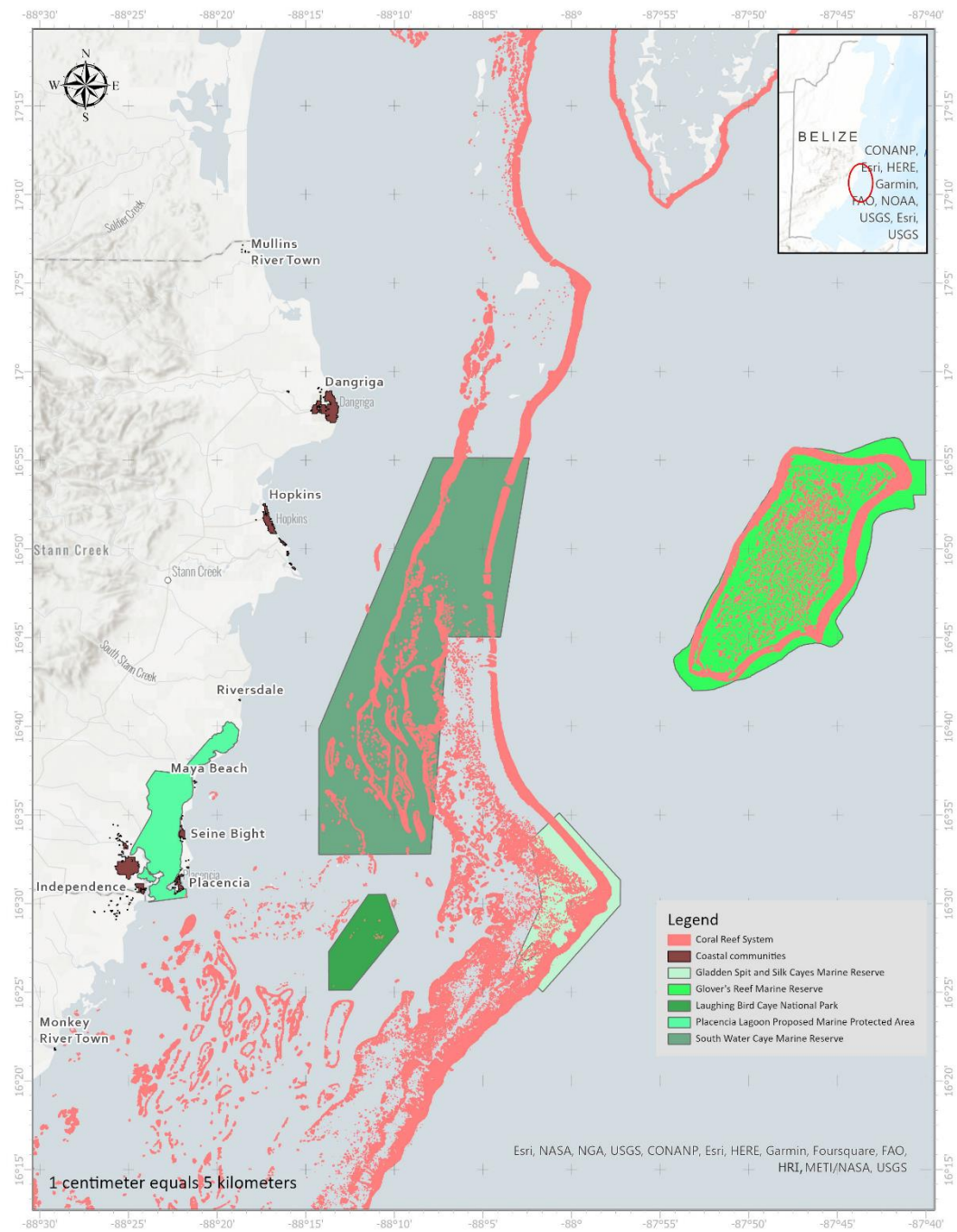
9. Submission Requirements

All candidates interested in conducting this assessment on a consultant basis should submit, no later than November 19 a detailed application proposal including:

- A curriculum vitae detailing his/her experience in relation to the topic of the consultancy;
- A Technical proposal including an analysis, comprehension, and eventual comments on the Terms of Reference, and a proposed chronogram of activities;
- A Financial proposal with a detailed budget specifying consultant daily rates, travel, and other logistic expenses required to complete the proposed activities; and
- A sample of a safeguards and/or gender-related assignment completed by the consulting firm previously.

All proposals should be sent to lmarquez@wwfca.org and copy to jneal@wwfca.org

Annex 1: Map of the project area



Annex 2 - Main findings of the ESMS screening

| Principle | Risk and impact description | significance |
|--|--|-----------------|
| <p>Principle 1: Environmental and Social Assessment and Management of Risks and Impacts</p> | <p>The concept note was designed with the WWF E&S standards in mind which are based on the IFC PF carrying out an initial short screening knowing that a systematic risk assessment and mitigation planning will be conducted during the full proposal phase including field-assessment to be supported by an external safeguards consultant. We therefore estimate the risk of unidentified and unassessed risks and impacts, not planning suitable management measures, not integrating appropriate expertise into the project, or monitoring risks and impacts, ultimately affecting project sustainability and / or causing social or environmental harm to be low.</p> | <p>low</p> |
| <p>Principle 2: Stakeholder engagement</p> | <p>WWF has engaged with relevant stakeholders in the ecoregion since 2007. In the process of the full proposal development the project partners will carry out a detailed stakeholder analysis following Blue Action Fund guidelines for the project area. The risks of inappropriate engagement, resulting in not identifying key stakeholders or project affected peoples is currently assessed as moderate.</p> <p>The most relevant stakeholders for this project will include:</p> <p>Fishers and natural resource users from local communities (communities targeted, population size, main marine resource use) Dangriga, 9,593, fishing Independence/Mango Creek, 4,014, fishing Placencia, 1,200, fishing and tourism Riversdale, 567, fishing Maya Beach, 435, tourism Seine Bight, 1,829, fishing and tourism Hopkins, 1,610, fishing and tourism</p> <p>Fishing Associations: Wabafu Fishing Association, Hopkins Fishing Association, Placencia Producers Limited (including the seaweed farmers), Shrimp Farmers Association in Southern Belize</p> <p>Town Councils: Dangriga Town Council, National Garifuna Council, Hopkins Village Council, Placencia Village Council,</p> <p>Tourism Sector Local tour operators, water taxi and boat operators, Dangriga / Placencia / Independence Tour Guide Association, local Belize Tourism Industry Association Chapters (Dangriga, Hopkins and Placencia)</p> <p>Governmental Agencies: Forest Department, Fisheries Department, National Biodiversity Office, Office of the Prime Minister, Belize Tourism Board</p> <p>NGOs working in the target communities: Wildlife Conservation Society, Fragments of Hope, Crocodile Research Coalition, Clearwater Aquarium, Blue Ventures, Environmental Defence Fund</p> <p>Past stakeholder engagement: From 2007 – 2009, WWF undertook consultations focusing on identification of opportunities for communities related to tourism, fisheries (via Shrimp Farms), benefits of coastal protection. These activities were funded by the Climate Development Knowledge Network (CDKN).</p> | <p>moderate</p> |

| Principle | Risk and impact description | significance |
|---|---|-----------------|
| | <p>From 2012 – 2015, WWF in partnership with SEA and Friends of Placencia Lagoon conducted six consultations with the communities along the Placencia Lagoon (Placencia, Seine Bight, Maya Beach and Independence). The objectives of these consultations were to conduct a rapid assessment and draft a management plan for the Placencia Lagoon.</p> <p>From 2018 – 2023, WWF in partnership with SEA and University of Belize's Environmental Research Institute led the Smart Coasts Project funded by BMUV IKI which did climate change related consultations to look at ecosystem-based adaptations to reduce community vulnerability. During this period, there were at least 5 different consultations with the communities of Dangriga, Riversdale, Placencia, Seine Bight, and Independence. These consultations led to the identification and validation of different adaptation options by the communities, as well as the building of capacity including mangrove restoration training for the community to participate in mangrove restoration activities.</p> | |
| <p>Principle 3: Health, safety and security of communities and project personnel</p> | <p>Project workers H&S: Potential for vehicle / motorcycle accidents, boat accidents, exposure to diseases such as dengue.</p> <p>Child labour: Children supporting the family's livelihood strategies are part of the local context and accepted as long as children's duties in the family do not prevent the child from education and recreation. The project will assess these dynamics to determine and if it's necessary to plan mitigation actions.</p> <p>Law enforcement background: The project design and outcomes are dependent upon law enforcement in the newly designated and existing MPAs. The project directly supports governmental and NGO rangers that will form part of the law enforcement system. The project will support on recruitment, training, and equipment for NGO rangers employed by SEA (9), training, and equipment for fisheries officers employed by the Fisheries Department (FD) (10) as well as the initial operationalization of the surveillance system (fuel, boats, motorbikes, among others). Within MPA boundaries both SEA rangers and FD officers have the power to make arrests, however, outside of MPA boundaries only FD officers can make arrests. Some SEA rangers are certified as Fisheries officers and thus can make arrests in Belize's territorial waters. Fisheries officers employed by the FD carry firearms, SEA rangers do not. SEA rangers carry out joint patrols with coast guards or police officers.</p> <p>Law enforcement - risks to communities: There is a risk of potential tensions between community members and rangers / fisheries officers. However, they are unlikely to be violent based on the context and past experiences. There have been occasions of violent encounters with foreign fishers from neighboring countries working in organized illegal commercialized fishing (sometimes associated with drug smuggling).</p> <p>Law enforcement - risks to project workers: Risks of harm for the rangers and officers due to conflict with community members or organized illegal commercialized fishers. The risk for the second is higher, there have been encounters in the last year. Especially during night patrols. SEA rangers do not carry out night patrols.</p> <p>Small scale construction, hazardous materials / substances: The project plans to construct one ranger post for PL this will be contracted to a qualified local service provider.</p> | <p>moderate</p> |

| Principle | Risk and impact description | significance |
|---|--|--------------------|
| <p>Principle 4: Resource efficiency and biodiversity</p> | <p>No significant risk identified due to hazardous materials (fuel etc.) and GHG emission from project-associated activities. Fuel will be stored according to best practice procedures. GHG emissions from flights will be minimized.</p> <p>Pesticides, alien species, nutrients: Depending on the livelihood options identified pesticide use might be necessary to secure the yield. The project team will promote organic pesticides. If seaweed farming is identified as a promising livelihood opportunity it will be ensured that no alien species will be released to the environment. Should small scale aquaculture or agriculture be promoted, nutrients could be released. The ESA will verify possible negative effects.</p> | <p>low</p> |
| <p>Principle 5: Livelihoods and access restrictions</p> | <p>Access restriction: The following project interventions will introduce or reinforce access restrictions that have the potential to affect peoples' livelihoods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Designation of the new protected area in Placencia Lagoon, including development and implementation of a management plan (area 58 km²). - Improved management and enforcement in 4 existing MPAS (Gladden Spit and Silk Cayes 105.13 km², area, Glover's Reef, 350.67 km², Laughing Bird Caye, 41 km², and South Water Caye, 477 km²) - Mangrove protection / restoration interventions (500 hectares) - Measures to improve the protection of protected species (mainly manatees, sea turtles, protected fish species, etc.) via marine traffic regulations (no wake zones), enhanced enforcement, no take zones - Permanent and seasonal closures for fishing in certain areas and/or for certain species (e.g. lobster and conch both have 4-month closures and sea cucumber has a 6-month closure and requires a special license and quota). When these closures happen, fishers turn to other species of fish such as finfish or offer their services as tour guides. - Gear- and catch-size restrictions for commercially fished species: Within Belize MPAs, spear guns are banned to prevent more aggressive fishing, protecting the populations. This is an existing restriction that will be better enforced by the improved capacities of rangers and officers. Fishers can still fish but with other gear. Catch-size restrictions for lobster, conch, and Nassau grouper. <p>Affected groups: Fishing and other use of marine natural resources are the main traditional livelihood activities in coastal communities. The dependency is specifically high for older and poorer community members with low education levels, who cannot get jobs in the growing tourism industry. Affected groups will be those who frequently practice the 'unsustainable' activities, and the illegal practices, including those who live outside of the project area. These vulnerable groups will be a priority for impact assessments and livelihoods mitigation measures.</p> <p>Nevertheless, sustainable fishing and use of natural resources will have positive long-term impact on the livelihoods of the coastal communities. Moreover, the conservation of the outstanding biodiversity and beauty of nature are the basis for sustainable growth of the tourism sector.</p> <p>Alternative livelihood activities: The livelihood activities of the project will be defined based on livelihood assessments and consultations with the concerned communities. They will contain access to microfinance, seed funding, capacity building etc. However, the link between affected people and the livelihood components of the project needs to be further assessed and ensured.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of potentially affected persons in each community is unknown. | <p>substantial</p> |

| Principle | Risk and impact description | significance |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Future conservation measures in the new protected area are still not defined. - Project resources for livelihood interventions are limited and should be used effectively. | |
| <p>Principle 6: Gender equity and vulnerable groups</p> | <p>Indigenous groups: Seine Bight, Hopkins and Dangriga are Garifuna communities who rely on fishing and tourism. Thus, it is expected that they will be more impacted by potential fisheries restrictions.</p> <p>Low-income families: Low-income families in the other villages, including Placencia Village, rely on PL for their food security and income through fisheries and firewood collection from dead mangrove. This group is considered to be most vulnerable to changes to PL.</p> <p>Youth and women: Limited education and employment opportunities are a problem for youth and women. The project's focus on livelihoods will make sure that youth and women are properly represented and can build capacities for entrepreneurship and employability in sectors like tourism. Additionally, women are also experiencing gender-based and domestic abuse/violence (verbal, psychological, financial, and physical) which the project will need to adequately take into consideration. Low-income conditions and reduced employment opportunities can exacerbate the abuse/violence some women receive.</p> <p>To summarize, the main project risks in relation to gender and vulnerable groups are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Low representation and participation due to social imbalance in economic activities (women and youth are less represented in key economic and social roles); 2) Vulnerable groups most likely to be involved in illegal fishing activities, or least able to cope with national closures (i.e., most affected and less able to adapt); 3) 3) Vulnerable groups have more barriers to adopting different livelihoods (such as farming, horticulture, etc.) due to limited financial and human capacity. | moderate |
| <p>Principle 7: Cultural heritage</p> | <p>The Garifuna language, dance and music has been proclaimed by UNESCO as one of the "Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity". However, the project activities will not have an influence on this.</p> <p>This project will not restrict access to any cultural heritage sites</p> | low |
| <p>Principle 8: Indigenous Peoples</p> | <p>Seine Bight, Hopkins and Dangriga are Garifuna communities rely on fishing and tourism. Thus, it is expected that they will be impacted by potential fisheries restrictions.</p> <p>Although the government of Belize recognizes both Maya and Garifuna indigenous groups, the FPIC protocol is formally only required for Mayan groups. The government of Belize is now working on making the FPIC protocol a requirement for initiatives relevant to the Garifuna. If the formal FPIC protocol is not required for Garifuna communities, the project would still carry out consultations (as close as possible to the FPIC protocol) with both Garifuna and other communities relevant to PL, prior to any actions to formalize the new protected area.</p> | moderate |
| <p>Principle 9: Grievance management</p> | <p>WWF Mesoamerica has a complaints resolution process in place, through which stakeholders can issue a complaint. Complaints can be made via post, phone, or email. For this specific project, WWF Mesoamerica plans to also have mailboxes in Placencia and other major towns in Southern Belize so that people can also submit any complaint this way.</p> <p>https://www.wwfca.org/en/our_work/complaints_resolution_process/ WWF</p> | low |

| Principle | Risk and impact description | significance |
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| | <p>Mesoamerica also has a series of communication products that are available to disseminate the existence of this process and how to submit a complaint. We thus assess the risk of unidentified and unresolved grievances to be low.</p> | |
| <p>Principle 10: Human rights</p> | <p>Potential human rights risks may exist in the project due to the restrictions of fishing and natural resource use. Rights affected could be the right to health (nutrition), the right to work, and the right to an adequate standard of living. Access restrictions strengthened by the project could imply a more significant impact on lower income resource-dependent households. The safeguards assessment will evaluate possibilities to avoid negative impacts. Unavoidable impacts will be mitigated by targeted livelihood activities, qualified to minimize the potential negative impact on resource users. The effect of the mitigation measures will be measured by specific indicators.</p> <p>Procedural rights will be considered through elaborated inclusive stakeholder consultation processes (including FPIC for IPs) and a grievance mechanism.</p> <p>For law enforcement related to the project measures, the right to non-discrimination and freedom from cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment or punishment could be relevant. The US Department of State 2022 Belize Country report flagged some incidences causing human rights concerns with regards to abuse and inhumane treatment by security and prison officer, arbitrary arrest, and detentions, while none of them were related to protected areas law enforcement. Within the project area, there are no documented cases of armed confrontation between rangers and local fishers/community members. However, there have been incidences of violent conflict between law enforcement patrols and illegal fishers from neighboring countries or organized criminal groups. The project will assess these risks more deeply during the ESA and will define feasible mitigation measures and suitable indicators (for details see the Law Enforcement Tool).</p> | <p>substantial</p> |

Annex 3 - Theory of change

In order to achieve the project objective, the project will employ the following strategies which together will ensure a collaborative and holistic approach:

- Increase the **monitoring and enforcement effectiveness** of existing and new MPAs including the updating of management plans, the increase of management capacities including on the job training (also on social safeguards and human rights) and the provision of necessary equipment and infrastructure. A needs assessment will determine the required support for each of the five MPAs.
- Increase the protection status of **Placencia Lagoon** as critical habitat for key species by advancing its **legal designation as an MPA**. The project will update the necessary ecological, socio-economic, and economic sustainability analysis, facilitate the active participation of all relevant stakeholders in a participatory and inclusive consultation process (FPIC) and support the preparation of statutory instruments and management plans for government approval.
- Use scientific analysis to inform the **updating of MPA management plans** including climate change adaptation planning. Based on scientific analyses carried out within the IKI MAR and MPA Resilience Analysis projects, WWF identified a suite of adaptation options to reduce the vulnerability of the SBRC. Two of the most promising being mangrove and coral restoration which will be implemented in this project.
- Advocate for a stringent **implementation of existing legislation and standards** and providing the necessary training to relevant stakeholders such as government agents as authorizing and the tourism, construction and transport sectors as complying actors. Targeted existing legislation and standards will include the national integrated coastal zone management plan and mangrove regulations under the national forest act as well as guidelines for tour operators.
- Enhance **financial sustainability** of the supported MPAs to ensure long-term implementation. Current MPA revenue streams (e.g., financial and business planning, analysis, restructured visitation and user fees, benefit sharing and progressive fundraising approaches) will be analyzed and enhanced and ensure that the MPAs are included in the Project Finance for Permanence (PFP) which will establish a national conservation fund to manage sufficient and durable funding flows.
- Disseminating **best practice examples** and generating innovative approaches to inform and incentivize relevant stakeholders (e.g., landowners, real estate, and recreational and transport operators). The project will carry out trainings on best practices for marine recreation activities with tour operators who commit to follow these. Through design challenges new approaches to mangrove conservation architecture will be generated and showcased. Together with the National Biodiversity Office the project will explore opportunities for private protected area frameworks for landowners.
- **Raise the awareness** of communities and other relevant stakeholders on the link between use restrictions and their benefits for ecosystem services and resource-dependent livelihoods in the longer term. The awareness raising campaign will be designed target-group oriented providing different formats to engage with local communities (including vulnerable groups), schools, the tourism and construction sector as well as relevant government agencies.

- Strengthen **community participation and co-management** capacities in MPA management and mangrove restoration activities. Participatory and transparent processes will ensure communities involvement in decision making and MPA managers will be trained on community engagement techniques. The project will furthermore train community members to be involved in resource monitoring and mangrove restoration activities. SEA will especially engage with youth from the communities to further their participation.
- Provide **alternative livelihood options** for affected communities to align conservation efforts with communities' needs. Livelihood assessments and related activities will be guided by a safeguards analysis to ensure the interventions are targeted to those individuals affected by access restrictions, with special attention to vulnerable groups. The livelihood opportunities to be implemented will be prioritized based on participatory analyses with the local communities.
- Employ a **gender strategy** which improves women's livelihoods by developing livelihood opportunities especially responsive to the needs and aspirations of women while also strengthening female leadership through targeted capacity building and inclusion in project activities.

