



Call for Expressions of Interest Technical Project Evaluators

Eastern and Western Africa & Eastern Tropical Pacific Regions

Blue Action Fund is interested in setting up a network of evaluators of its grant programme. To that effect, it is seeking Expressions of Interest from qualified candidates in Eastern and Western Africa and the Eastern Tropical Pacific Regions. With a growing grant portfolio, the objective is to identify a small number of experts in different regions who would be available to carry out independent technical evaluations of Blue Action grants. Blue Action's intention is to establish a decentralized network of evaluators with whom it can nurture long-term relationships, who might become increasingly familiar with Blue Action and its grants, and who might be available for continued follow-up of projects on the ground, both by way of midterm and final grant evaluations but also on an *ad hoc* basis if necessary.

Following a earlier Blue Action call for Expressions of Interest with focus on the Asia Pacific Region, we are now soliciting Expressions of Interest with a specific focus on Eastern and Western Africa (South Atlantic Ocean and Western Indian Ocean) as well as for the Eastern Tropical Pacific region. Blue Action currently has a several grants under way in these regions, and new ones in the pipeline.

State of Blue Action Programme October 2020





The next technical evaluations for these grants are due in the first half of 2021. While it is strongly preferred that candidates already be based in the region, this is not a strict requirement. Considering the current global pandemic, Blue Action acknowledges that these are times of great uncertainty and is open to exploring innovative solutions to meet its needs. More information about Blue Action and the scope of the technical evaluations can be found in the Annex.

We are looking for experts who fulfill the following minimum qualifications:

- Master's degree in environmental studies or other relevant subject.
- Demonstrated understanding of marine conservation and the environmental NGO sector.
- Experience with sustainable livelihood interventions in nature conservation projects is an advantage.
- Proven expertise conducting technical project evaluations (minimum 3 technical evaluations of similar scope).
- Quantitative and qualitative data analysis skills.
- Ability to produce well-written, analytical reports in English is essential.
- Demonstrable knowledge and understanding of one of the regions.
- Ability to speak and understand local language(s) is an advantage.

Please submit your Expression of Interest by providing:

- A cover letter indicating your qualifications as well as geographic area(s) of expertise and your daily rates
- An up-to-date CV
- A list of project evaluations conducted including donor, project volume, location, evaluation date and scope of evaluation
- A work sample from a similar assignment
- Indication of potential Conflict of Interest (e.g. large NGOs you had employment or contractual relationships with over the past 3 years)

Expressions of Interest should be submitted latest by November 1 by email to info@blueactionfund.org. Please indicated in the subject line 'First Name Last Name Expression of Interest'.



Annex

Background and Introduction

Blue Action Fund (Blue Action) is an independent non-profit foundation established under German law. It was created by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation (BMZ) and Development) and KfW Development Bank in 2016. Sweden joined through the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs in 2017 and France through the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) in 2018.

Dedicated to supporting marine protected areas and the most sensitive coastal waters of Africa, Latin America and Asia, Blue Action works through a program of grants to NGOs working on marine/coastal conservation and the improvement of coastal livelihoods (grants are typically in the range from € 1-3 million, typically to NGOs working in partnership with local actors).

Blue Action's overall goal is to contribute to reducing the dramatic loss of marine biodiversity and stabilizing incomes in coastal fishing communities. Blue Action Fund concentrates on projects that result in measurable outcomes, including:

- Conservation of biodiversity through newly established or better managed Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) or networks of MPAs
- Enhanced livelihood conditions and food security.

Blue Action has been launching at least one call for proposals per year since 2016. More calls are expected in the near future. The first ten grant agreements are in force, while several others are currently being negotiated. Further information about individual grants can be found [here](#).

Blue Action regards monitoring and evaluation of the grant activities as essential to effective grant-making. It therefore requires Mid-term and Final Technical Reviews be conducted by independent 3rd parties for all of its grants. These Technical Reviews are commissioned and financed by Blue Action outside of the grant budgets.

Objectives

The objective of the Technical Review is to:

- 1) Undertake a comprehensive analysis of the project's implemented measures and activities and assess its progress and achievements
- 2) Analyse underlying causes for project delays or challenges to achieve objectives
- 3) And:
 - For Mid-Term Reviews: Propose suitable measures to improve project performance and enhance future implementation. This might include adjustments to the project design.
 - For Final Technical Reviews: Identify lessons learned for Blue Action, provide suggestions for future grants and programme.

Methodology

Evaluations are usually conducted through visits to the grantees and the place(s) where the project is implemented (or a sample of selected sites). As preparation for the site visits, desk analysis of existing documentation is expected (in particular project proposal, workplans and annual reports). Knowledge gaps identified can be filled prior to the visit via communication with Blue Action and/or the grantee. If Blue Action identifies the project as presenting a high social or environmental risk, the field mission might be accompanied by a social impact / Environment and Social Management expert from the region.

On site, exchanges with key staff, external partners and stakeholders, including NGOs working in the area that are not part of the consortium, government officials, community leaders at all relevant administrative levels, community members and project beneficiaries are expected. At the end of the



visit key findings should be presented to the grantees to allow for first reactions, which should be incorporated into the report.

The final review will be shared with grantees. Grantees they will be given an opportunity to provide a separate reaction to Blue Action.

The Technical Review will include, among other topics:

- Assessments of Work Plan accomplishment
- Progress made on obtaining baseline and other project data necessary for quantification of indicator achievement
- Impacts of the project and contribution to the fulfilment of the Blue Action Fund Results Matrix
- Environmental and social impacts of the project
- Mitigation efforts of potential negative effects
- Evaluation of project challenges and opportunities for improvement
- Project management efficiency

While the overall approach to the reviews should remain the same across projects, the specific scope of each review exercise will need to be adjusted to project design (e.g. number of countries, selection of sites, duration, etc.) and the experience made during implementation of the project.

The Review is based on the [DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance](#) and looks at the following core criteria:

- Relevance
- Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- Impact
- Sustainability (post-project)

Deliverables and Timeline

The following key deliverables are expected:

- Comprehensive report based on the result of the mission, using a report template provided by Blue Action. The report is intended for both the grantees and Blue Action, including its Board Members. Depending on the context, Blue Action might share the report with selected donors interested in the work or other interested stakeholders, such as consultants engaged in the financial audit of the project.
- “Evaluation at a Glance” overview: Quantitative summary of the evaluation summarising the findings, using a template provided by Blue Action
- Remote presentation and discussion of the report with the Blue Action team