Call for Expressions of Interest
Technical Project Evaluators

Asia-Pacific Region

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 Latin and Central America, East and West Africa and Asia-Pacific. 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.

At this point in time, Blue Action is initiating its call for Expressions of Interest with a specific focus on the Asia-Pacific region. Blue Action currently has a grant under way in the Melanesia region with others in the pipeline in East Asian Seas. A first expert is needed to undertake a technical evaluation in Melanesia before the end of 2020, or early 2021 – depending on the development of COVID-19. While it is certainly preferable 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 its meet its needs. More information about Blue Action and the scope of the technical evaluations can be found in the Annex.

We look for experts who fulfil 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 the Asia-Pacific region.
- 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 September 4 by email to info@blueactionfund.org. Please indicated in the subject line ‘First Name Last Name Expression of Interest’.

NOTE: Please also get in touch with us if you are an expert in the Asia-Pacific region meeting the above qualifications but are not available for consideration in the context of the aforementioned Melanesia grant evaluation. We are looking to build-up our network of experts and remain interested in your candidature.
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 eight grant agreements are in force, while several others are currently being negotiated. A map of the current programme and 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 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 and 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
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task/Output</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Estimated Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PREPARATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluator identified and contracted</td>
<td>Approx. 3 month before field visit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dates for the review mission set</td>
<td>After contract is signed.</td>
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<td>Relevant project/programme information provided to evaluator</td>
<td>Approx. 2 weeks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluator reviews project/programme information, knowledge gaps are filled in by grantee and Blue Action</td>
<td>2-3 weeks</td>
<td>3-4 days</td>
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<td>Grantee organises review mission, including staff and stakeholder interviews, site visits, and logistics. Organisation should be conducted in close communication with evaluator.</td>
<td>Organisation of the mission starts as soon as dates are set.</td>
<td>1 day</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>FIELD VISIT</strong></td>
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<td>Evaluator visits the region, begins report drafting and presents preliminary findings to grantee (at the end of visit). Grantee provides first reactions, which are to be incorporated into report.</td>
<td>Within 3 months after contract signed</td>
<td>Mission usually takes 7-10 days.</td>
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<td><strong>REPORT</strong></td>
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<td>Writing of draft final report.</td>
<td>Within 1 month after completion of the field mission</td>
<td>5 days</td>
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<td>Presentation of evaluation results to Blue Action Fund staff.</td>
<td>Within 1 week after submission of the draft final report</td>
<td>1 day</td>
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<td>Finalising Report</td>
<td>Within 1 week after presentation of draft final</td>
<td>1-2 days</td>
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*To be agreed with consultant in connection with contract signing*