

TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)

Final Evaluation

Project: Strengthening the institutional and leadership capacities of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the Northwest of Mexico (Pescadero Program)

1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Gulf of California and Northwest of the country has some of the largest, most diverse and most experienced environmental CSO sector in Mexico. The region hosts very old environmental CSOs in the country (for example the Intercultural Center for the Study of Deserts and Oceans, CEDO, opened in 1980 and Niparajá was founded in 1990). This phenomenon has been driven by the presence of local leaders, the region's environmental richness, and the work of environmental CSOs and by the significant investment of United States based foundations in conservation efforts in the Gulf of California.

The local and regional CSOs have played a fundamental role in generating awareness and drawing public attention to environmental issues, in demanding accountability, in defending the public good and environmental values in the face of unsustainable coastal development and in assisting local communities in better managing and defending their natural resources. As CSOs have become more effective and powerful, as seen in the successful campaigns to halt a number of development projects, they are also under increased scrutiny and opposition. At the same time, over the last two decades, the role of the Mexican state in economic development and management of natural resources has changed considerably and continues to evolve. Given these trends, resilient and effective CSOs are vital to the continued success of conservation efforts in Northwestern Mexico.

The region has a number of characteristics that make it an ideal setting to improve the institutional effectiveness of its CSOs and accelerate learning curves: it has a large number of CSOs with a range of experience and capacity, several of the CSOs have a history of working together and there is a general consensus on the main challenges facing conservation in the region. There is therefore an opportunity to implement a more formal, comprehensive and systematic capacity building effort. This is reflected in the recommendations emerging from the review of the Packard Foundation's Gulf of California Subprogram completed in 2011, which states:

"Efforts to build government and NGO capacity to support conservation should be a priority moving forward. Capacity building should become a core and explicit line of work rather than an understated strategy. In particular, the subprogram should increase investments in certain organizational capacities to continue to build the maturity of local organizations, including public policy, sustainable financing, learning across projects, project management, and monitoring".

Under this scenario, the project for strengthening the institutional and leadership capacities of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the Northwest of Mexico (known as "Pescadero Program") begun

implementation in 2014. The Program proposed five expected outcomes at the end of a five-year period:

1. CSOs improve their governance, management and administration.
2. Middle and high ranking personnel improve the leadership capacities to better manage of their organizations.
3. CSOs of the Northwest diversify and increase their funding sources through the development of new strategies.
4. CSOs of the Northwest improve their positioning with the region's stakeholders, through the design of communication and public relations strategies.
5. CSOs develop and execute strategic plans and monitor and evaluate their programs.

The "Pescadero Program" was built from inputs of the Collaborative Capacity Building Strategy and Action Plan for Northwest Mexico (known as "The Pescadero Plan"). Pescadero is a coastal town in Baja California Sur where initial organizations and other stakeholders convened on August 31, 2012 to provide feedback to this plan.

The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the Helmsley Trust¹, the Marisla Foundation, the Sandler Family Foundation, and the Walton Family Foundation offered to support this multi-year program to address the most pressing capacity building needs of the organizations and leaders of the region.

The Program begun operations in January 2014 and is managed by the Northwestern Fund (FONNOR) under the supervision of the Mexican Fund for the Conservation of Nature (FMCN), an independent, non-profit organization founded in 1994.

2. PROJECT OBJECTIVE

The project objective is to strengthen the effectiveness of CSOs to guarantee their sustainability in the long term and make them more effective players in the decisions that impact the conservation and sustainable use of the region's valuable natural resources.

The goal for capacity building investments is to build leaders with increased skills/expertise, organizations with results attributable to the increased skills, and networks where resources and expertise are shared to more effectively create a sustainable environment in Northwest Mexico.

The theory of change is that stronger organizations, inter-institutional collaboration, and collective learning will potentiate conservation outcomes in the region. The continuance of the Program will allow many CSOs to continue to have an impact in the region and be sustainable over time.

3. PROJECT INTERVENTIONS

The Pescadero Program is directed mainly at the CSOs that are grantees of the five foundations backing the project and offers different types of intervention for each capacity building priority.

¹ Funding ended in April 2018

(Annex 1 includes the list of CSOs). It supports all the eligible CSOs (Tier 1) with workshops, key materials (manuals, guidelines, etc.) and general trainings. In addition to the workshops and key materials available to all, Tier 2 CSOs receive personalized support and more in-depth capacity building through one-on-one consultancies with experts. Peer exchanges between Tier 1 and 2 are encouraged in different capacity building efforts. Throughout the workshops and other activities, Pescadero Program coordinator detects needs for individual support, opportunities for mentoring and exchanges between organizations, and clusters of organizations that can address issues collectively. The Program also offered small scholarships that could have great impact on the organizations.

The Pescadero Program seeks to balance capacity building through workshops and via targeted and personalized assistance from experts. Workshops are more cost effective and can accommodate a greater number of individuals and organizations but the learning and application of capacities is not as in-depth or targeted to individual needs. The model applied consisted in offering a one to three-day workshop or series of workshops open to all the Pescadero Program CSOs to impart a basic understanding of the topic in question (tier 1 training) followed by one-on-one time for approximately ten key organizations with the consultant (tier 2 intervention). The selection of the organizations that received personalized support (tier 2) was based on the results of the Institutional Effectiveness Index (IEI) –both baseline and midterm results- the interest of the organization in the topic and needs identified by Pescadero staff and consultants.

The IEI is an online self-assessment tool to assist CSOs in diagnosing their capacities, determining their baseline, and identifying areas that need improvement. The IEI assesses seven processes related to institutional effectiveness and eight topics related to projects and programs. 28 CSOs completed the IEI between 2014 and February 2015 giving the Pescadero Program a baseline score for each topic. The CSOs with a below average score in a particular topic were targeted for tier 2 support in that topic. A mid term IEI score was obtained in 2016 (Annex 4) and the results are also considered. The interest and commitment of the CSO, relevance of the topic for the CSO's intervention model and FMCN and FONNOR's knowledge of the CSOs strengths and opportunity areas were also taken into account.

The workshops and other group activities represent(ed) an opportunity for organizations to exchange ideas, learn from each other and identify common needs and goals that they can address collaboratively or collectively. The interaction between organizations focused on addressing common challenges also fostered companionship and trust, making collective action more likely to succeed in the long term.

4. EVALUATION PURPOSE & USE

The Pescadero Program was a long-term capacity building project involving multiple funders and efforts by the implementing partners and many grantees. The purpose of this evaluation is to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the Program's capacity building model, what was achieved, and what were the conditions that led to both intended and unintended results.

Overall, intended uses of this evaluation will be for learning and program improvement, as well as to contribute to the evidence base of capacity building within the region, and therefore, evaluation findings will be used to:

- to assess the theory of change that stronger and more institutionalized CSOs have a greater impact on conservation;
- provide a benchmark for grantees to assess their achievements within the region;
- apply lessons to future capacity building projects/programs in Mexico with similar attributes;
- present the Pescadero Program as a model to the region and understand how it can be applied to other capacity-building work; and
- learn what the perception of grantees is on additional work that needs to be carried out in the northwest, and how they perceive it could be most effective.

5. EVALUATION KEY STAKEHOLDERS

The primary intended users of this evaluation include the five funders of the Pescadero Program (The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the Helmsley Trust, the Marisla Foundation, the Sandler Family Foundation, and the Walton Family Foundation) and implementing organizations (FONNOR and FMCN).

Grantees of the Pescadero Program are also key stakeholders in that they will benefit from the learnings of what works in capacity building efforts identified through this evaluation.

An Evaluation Advisory Group will be established to provide validation of key evaluation questions, methodologies, and sense-making of data gathered to finalize lessons learned and recommendations.

6. EVALUATION QUESTIONS

This evaluation will seek to understand the achievements, efficiency and sustainability of the Pescadero Program. To do so, the following key evaluation questions, and sub-questions, have been identified. We anticipate these will be further refined and vetted with support of the evaluator.

(1) How did the Funders and Implementors (FONNOR and FMCN) approach and plan for the Pescadero Project?

- What were the Funders and Implementors planning and design process for the Pescadero Project?
- Did the implementing organizations collaborate with other local service providers to plan, design and/or implement the Pescadero program? If so, what role did these other actors play?

(2) How did FONNOR and FMCN organize and structure the Pescadero program?

- How did implementing organizations select capacity strengthening activities to include in the Pescadero program? What role did funders and grantees play in selecting these activities?
- Would the program services provided be different if funders were not involved in designing the program? If so, in what ways?
- Who was involved in implementing the Pescadero program and supporting participants?
- How were those involved in the capacity strengthening activities selected? How were they matched with the CSO participants?

(3) What program services did the implementing organizations provide to Pescadero Program participants (e.g., mentoring, small group trainings)?

- How did services and supports vary across states and type of CSO (i.e. small vs. large, older organizations vs. newest, etc.)? To what degree was there fidelity at each site and across sites to the intended design of the Pescadero Program?

(4) What kinds of outcomes did the Pescadero participants achieve?

- What was achieved through the Program (outputs) and what have been the changes in knowledge, attitudes and practices due to the Program interventions (outcomes)?
- To what extent were the CSOs able to achieve key organizational development outcomes (i.e., capacity to increase their funding base, etc.) and improve collaboration between CSOs?
- How have improved organizational capacity contributed to previously existing or newly created conservation efforts?
- What have been the challenges and weaknesses in the implementation of the Pescadero Program?
- What, if any, are some unintended results experienced within the CSOs and that have had an impact on conservation efforts?

*Note: further questions and approach to be proposed by evaluators.

(5) How efficient was the implementation of the project?

- How well were the trainings applied? Were they time-efficient and cost-efficient?
- Was the implementation model successful in reaching the expected number of CSOs and supporting network building? If not, why?

(6) To what extent did project implementation lead to sustained results?

- How did the project design plan for sustainability?
- How has the capacity gained by CSOs been sustained?

(7) What lessons can we identify to strengthen program implementation and results achievement?

- What challenges or barriers did FONNOR face in implementing the various components of the Pescadero program? Do they vary by site? Do they vary by type of CSO (i.e. small vs. large, older organizations vs. newest, etc.)
- What strategies have worked well to support the Pescadero program implementation?
- What new or innovative program components, structures or practices do CSOs use and identify as particularly promising, especially those important for achieving program goals related to capacity strengthening?
- What are some enhancements that could help strengthening implementation, sustain desired program outcomes, and support program scale-up? (trainings, networks, local economic/social/political conditions) How could monitoring data be used for purposes of continuous program improvement and evaluation?
- How did the program evolve/respond to feedback to opportunities?
*Note: further questions and approach to be proposed by evaluators.

(8) Where the elements of the program adequate for the participant CSOs?

- Where there elements of the program that participant CSOs would recommend not to be repeated?
- Why were there elements/topics that were not necessary?
- Where there focus areas that were missing in the program?

7. METHODOLOGY

The method(s) chosen by the consultant for this evaluation should be appropriate in answering the key evaluation questions. The evaluation must provide credible, reliable and useful evidence, using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies as necessary to triangulate and validate the data gathered.

In conducting any surveys, questionnaires, and/or interviews, attention should be given to the protocols developed to ensure answers would serve useful to the evaluation, language is contextually appropriate, and that ethical practices are used. A list of individuals for the data collection will be provided by FONNOR.

For document review, FONNOR can provide the following list of documents:

- Collaborative Capacity Building Strategy and Action Plan for Northwest Mexico.
- Proposals and reports made to donors from 2014 to 2018.
- Project results framework
- Collaborative Capacity Building Strategy and Action Plan for Northwest Mexico
- Activity reports and surveys
- Institutional Effectiveness Index reports 2014 and 2016 and 2018/19.
- Mid-term evaluation report

8. PRODUCTS AND ACTIVITIES

PRODUCTS / EXPECTED RESULTS	DEADLINE
<p>DOCUMENT REVIEW Desk review of relevant project documents and literature on capacity building. Desk review will be done prior to any field visit.</p>	March 2019
<p>DESIGN WORKSHOP AND DESIGN MEMO A design workshop will be developed and facilitated by the consultant with key evaluation stakeholders in order to refine and validate the intended uses of the evaluation, key evaluation questions, and appropriate evaluation approach(es). Final design will be documented in a design memo to be approved by the Evaluation Advisory Committee. For the workshop, consider possible virtual participation to ensure more participation from CSO involved staff.</p>	April 2019
<p>DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS Design and present the proposed data collection methodologies (i.e., survey and interview protocols) for approval. Once finalized, consultant will carry out the necessary surveys and in-depth interviews, systematize information gathered and present analysis of key trends. It is expected that consultant will provide a stenographic version and / or recordings of each interview.</p>	April - May 2019
<p>FINDINGS REPORT & WORKSHOP Organize and present data for interpretation by key stakeholders in order to validate key findings and collect feedback and recommendations for the final evaluation report. This could take the form of workshop(s) or debriefing session(s). Consider virtual participation to guarantee more participation.</p>	May/June 2019
<p>DRAFT FULL REPORT The report should include at least the following sections:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Introduction (background and methodology used) (2) Evaluation objectives and scope (3) Analysis and interpretation of the results involving stakeholders. (4) Lessons learned (5) Recommendations based on answers to key evaluation questions and stakeholder interpretation workshop (6) Conclusions (7) Annexes: TOR, documents reviewed, surveys and interview sketches, list of individuals interviewed, data collection instruments, etc. 	June/July 2019
<p>FINAL REPORT & 4 PAGE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY The final report after review and approval from Evaluation Advisory Group and the executive summary. The final report should lead to dissemination of significant findings with the broader capacity building field in the region in order to share best practices. The report should also be shared with the Evaluation Advisory Group to facilitate and enhance use of the report findings.</p> <p>Language of deliverable: Spanish and English The report will be handed in Word and a PDF version signed by the consultants.</p>	August 15 2019

To facilitate the evaluation process, the Evaluation Advisory Group will provide documents to be reviewed, contact of individuals to be interviewed, and contribute to the design of questionnaires. However, the evaluation team will keep complete independence.

9. EXPERIENCE AND SKILLS OF EVALUATORS:

- A relevant university degree. A special training in Monitoring and Results Based Management is considered an asset.
- Working experience in evaluation and impact assessment – At least ten projects.
- Ability to produce well written reports demonstrating analytical ability and communication skill.
- Proven ability to undertake self-directed research.
- At least 5 years of proven experience designing and carrying out in-depth interviews.
- Knowledge of capacity building is an asset.
- Familiarity with the political, economic and social situation of Mexico.
- Experience carrying out evaluation of civil society organization's projects.
- Fluent in Spanish and English.

The evaluators are responsible of assuring the quality of the final report. Their specific tasks are:

- Design methodologies, develop and ensure the accomplishment of the work program.
- Assure communication with the Pescadero Program Coordination.
- Attend the virtual meetings requested by the Pescadero Program.
- Facilitate design workshops with the Evaluation Advisory Group
- Collect and analyze information.

Consultants will be asked to sign a confidentially letter if awarded with this job.

10. PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

Interested consultants must send the following information:

- **Technical proposal (max 10 pages)**
 - Background of evaluator(s): Brief description of relevant expertise, services offered, and experience with projects similar in nature and scope. Additional information can be included as attachments (see below).
 - Evaluation questions: While the RFP includes a list of proposed questions, respondents may wish to amend the questions or add other questions.
 - Proposed approach and methodology: Describe the proposed process for undertaking the work described in this RFP. Proposals should include an illustrative methodology and work plan to answer questions described above. The contracted consultant will then develop a detailed methodology and work plan as part of the inception phase of the assignment, in consultation with the Evaluation Advisory Committee.

- Challenges and concerns: Describe any challenges or concerns you may have about this project, and suggestions for how they might be mitigated.
- Work products: Describe work products proposed.
- Workplan and timeline: Describe proposed tasks and when they will be completed.
- **Attachments (no page limit)**
 - Updated CV
 - Three references
 - Budget: Must include consultant fees and travel expenses associated with data collection and workshops (recommended for the data collection could include one visit per city: approximately 8 CSOs in La Paz, Baja California Sur; approximately 6 CSOs in Ensenada, Baja California; approximately 2 CSOs in Mexicali o Hermosillo. Other interviews to be virtually carried out. At least 6 interviews in Mexico City.)

11. PROPOSAL ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The following criteria will be used to evaluate proposals, with the technical component weighted as 65% and the financial proposal as 35% of the proposal's overall assessment.

Criteria for technical component		
1	Methodology	30%
2	Proposed staffing plan (demonstrated technical, managerial, and capacity development experience in team members)	30%
3	Working experience in evaluation	30%
4	Quality and presentation of technical proposal	10%
	Total	100%

Criteria for financial component		
1	Realistic illustration of potential expenses	30%
2	Unit costs for potential expenses	30%
3	Professional salaries	30%
4	Professional presentation of financial proposal	10%
	Total	100%

12. TIMELINE

Proposals due: February 14, 2019

Notification of contract award: February 22, 2019

Project Duration: March 2019 – August 2019

13. Proposal Submission Instructions

Please email your proposal documents to María José Mesén at (mariajose.mesen@fonnor.org). Proposals must be received on or before February 14, 2019. We intend to make a final decision by February 22, 2019 and will work with the selected evaluator(s) to develop a final scope of work for the project.

14. Contact

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