Deadline: June, 15th

2016 Call for applications

Blue Economy for the MAR

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MAR LEADERSHIP
Mesoamerican Reef Leadership Program

FONDO MEXICANO
PARA LA CONSERVACIÓN
DE LA NATURALEZA, A.C.
Institución privada
FMCN 20años

Deadline: June 15th, 2016

Overview

The Mesoamerican Reef Leadership Program (MAR Leadership Program) is looking for 12 motivated individuals based in the MAR Ecoregion shared by Belize, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico (*state of Quintana Roo only*) who are committed to conservation of the region's coastal and marine ecosystems and wish to develop leadership skills to advance their careers.

The MAR Leadership Program offers training and project incubation opportunities to emerging leaders from all relevant sectors (non-profit, government, private, academic institutions, local communities and media,) as long as their professional activities and interests have a direct connection with the health and environmental sustainability of the region. The theme of this year's program – described in detail below – is **Promoting a Blue Economy Approach to Sustainable Development.** Individuals interested in telling a compelling story about Blue Economy using numbers (economic tools) are encouraged to apply to become part of a cohort of MAR Leadership Program Fellows who receive training, mentoring and project incubation support throughout 2016 and early 2017.

About the Program

MAR ecoregion boundaries (gray line) with barrier and fringe reef formations shown in purple.

The **MAR Leadership Program** is an ambitious joint initiative of the Mexican Fund for the Conservation of Nature and the Summit Foundation. The program seeks to accelerate conservation impacts in the MAR Ecoregion (*see map*) by empowering emerging leaders who are at the early-career level to develop innovative and replicable projects that address present or emerging threats facing the region's coastal and marine ecosystems. The program aims to advance long-term conservation of the MAR by equipping and empowering a critical mass of local leaders with the knowledge, skills, necessary tools and networking opportunities they need to initiate and implement high impact conservation projects.

The MAR Leadership Program operates on the basis of "cohorts" of professionals (accepted MAR Fellows) that coalesce to address the most pressing environmental threats facing the MAR. Each year, the program selects a theme in order to maximize synergies among Fellows, facilitate group networking and encourage project design around a common goal. Past themes and projects that Program Fellows continue to advance throughout the region include the following:

2010 – Sustainable Coastal Development and Tourism
2011 – Promotion of Sustainable Fisheries and Establishment of Marine Protected Areas
2012 – Establishment of a Network of Multi-functional Marine Reserves
2014 – Solid Waste Management
2015 – Conservation and Valuation of Mangroves

The MAR Leadership Program recognizes the importance of fostering a range of creative and innovative solutions to environmental threats facing the MAR. For this reason, **the program recruits Fellows from a variety of backgrounds and professions**, including but not limited to community leaders, local tourism entrepreneurs, media professionals, government agencies, non-profit conservation organizations, and others whose professional or community-led endeavors bear a direct connection to the health and sustainability of the coastal/marine environment. The program also promotes interaction and cooperation among members of each cohort as well as between distinct cohorts. Such interaction fosters a network of supportive professionals and provides Fellows a holistic perspective on how to resolve complicated environmental conservation issues.

Thematic Approach of the 2016 Cohort: Promoting a Blue Economy Approach to Sustainable Development in the MAR

Rationale

All coastal nations depend primarily on the wealth of resources provided by the oceans. The global ocean market is estimated to be valued at approximately US $1,345 billion per annum, contributing approximately 2% to the world's GDP. Marine services, such as tourism and shipping, provide the largest proportion (US $880 bn), followed by sectors categorized under marine resources (US $377 bn) and marine manufacturing (US $107 bn) (Roberts 2014).

In a world where population is expected to grow from 7 to 9.6 billion people by 2050 (FAO 2014), with two thirds living in coastal areas (Hinrichsen, 1998), and where more than 800 hundred million people suffer from chronic malnourishment, the first challenge that humanity is facing is how to feed the planet's populations without depleting the natural marine resources.

According to FAO (FAO 2014) world production of fish has increased at a steady annual rate of 3.2 percent in the past five decades, and world average per capita consumption has increased from 9.9 kg in 1960 to 19.2 kg in 2012. Globally 350 million jobs are related to fisheries and 90 percent of the world's fisheries are located in developing countries. Aquaculture is the world´s fastest growing food industry, providing 47 percent of the fish for human consumption (FAO 2010). Thus, protein dependence on fish and seafood is increasing, and fishing and aquaculture activities are becoming even more critical to sustaining development.

The oceans transport 80 percent of the world market and it is expected that maritime traffic will increase fivefold over the next 40 years (UNCTAD 2012). This will result in a significant increase in shipping and port infrastructure. Thirty-two percent of the total hydrocarbons explored globally come from marine and coastal production, and this is projected to increase to 34 percent by 2025 (IEA 2010). It is estimated that half the remaining recoverable oil is located at sea, a fourth of which is expected to be in deep water seabeds (IEA 2012). New technologies evolution and increasing market pressures are making remote production increasingly profitable and new research is beginning to offer a glimpse of the immense potential of the oceans as a source of alternative energy.

Other industries such as tourism are also expected to increase significantly and will depend even more on the oceans. About 80 percent of global tourism is developed on the coast. UNWTO statistics (UNWTO, 2007a) place tourism as the largest industry in the world, and coastal tourism as the fastest growing industry, with cruises heading the list. This industry that depends on the aesthetic beauty of the marine and coastal environment is consuming large amounts of marine resources such as food, energy and water. There are some signs that the tourism sector is changing gradually to more responsible consumption practices, such as

the increase in ecotourism of 20 percent annually. In addition, in places like the Small Island Developing States (SIDS), tourism may soon become the main economic activity. In those states, tourism may become one of the main contributors to poverty alleviation. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC, 2008), the coastal tourism industry generated US $8 trillion in 2008, and is expected to reach US $15 trillion by 2018.

Blue Economy

FAO (2014) defines "Blue Growth" or "Blue Economy" as a rational approach to sustainable, comprehensive and socioeconomic management of the oceans and coasts. It is focused on fisheries, aquaculture, ecosystem services, and social protection of the coastal communities. Under a Blue Growth framework, responsible, sustainable and inclusive economic practices are promoted. Through capacity building, Blue Economy strengthens environmental legislation and institutional arrangements that empower communities, civil society organizations and public entities. The Blue Economy, similar to the Green Economy (UNCS 2012), breaks with the paradigm of "business as usual" and follows the principle of improving human welfare without destroying ecosystem health. However, the Blue Economy focuses on countries where dependency on the oceans is higher and where the prevailing development model has viewed marine ecosystems as infinite sources of free resources and waste bins, with environmental and social costs externalized from economic calculations.

The concept of Blue Economy has become synonymous with a sustainable ocean economy, where governments, NGOs and the private sector are aligned to decouple economic development from environmental degradation, harmonizing economic growth with the long-term resilience capacity of the ocean. Economic studies support sound decisions where resources are directed towards social needs, and they help investors to return their investments linked to environmental protection. Fundamentals of this new economy are: optimizing the benefits from the use of marine resources (fisheries, bio-prospecting, mining) to have higher profitability; reinvesting the benefits in environmental management, social capital, reducing national external debt and contributing to the eradication of poverty; promoting equity in access to the benefits so that there is a constant cash flow to all parties involved; and innovation in the production of circular solutions (blue solutions) that bring together economy and environment.

The four countries that share the MAR region: Mexico, Belize, Guatemala and Honduras, are intimately linked to coastal marine ecosystems. The diversity of natural resources in the area has influenced local cultures for generations. The region now subsists mainly on the tourism and fisheries industries. It is estimated that three quarters of the population lives within 200 kilometers from the coastline. As the region continues to experience substantial and unprecedented changes along its coastline, including coastal pollution, fisheries decline and increased vulnerability to climate change; it becomes necessary to redefine the direction where economic activities are heading. It is urgent to change the traditional development paradigm towards a more (blue) economy, where human well-being and social equity rises, while natural resources are safeguarded for future generations (UNEP 2013).

2016 Trainers/Mentors

Conservation Strategy Fund (CSF) will be training and mentoring 2016 cohort. CSF's mission is to sustain natural ecosystems and human communities through strategies powered by conservation economics. Their economics trainings, analyses and timely expertise make development smarter, quantify the benefits of nature, and create enduring incentives for conservation. Conservation Strategy Fund is the world's only organization specifically focused on ensuring that economic insight is rigorously applied and embedded in conservation policy. Founded in 1998, CSF has trained over 2200 people from 90 countries in 70-plus economic tools courses across North America, South America, Africa, Asia and the Pacific and conducted dozens of economic analyses that have shaped decision-making across the globe. Their applied environmental economic analysis projects have influenced over $20 billion in investment decisions and helped conserve over 21 million acres of natural ecosystems and human communities. CSF has provided economics training and analysis support to every major international environmental organization and multi-lateral environmental institution, and hundreds of national NGOs and government agencies. CSF's 17-year

track record of demonstrating the decisive role economics can play in finding effective long-term conservation solutions was recognized with the MacArthur Foundation's 2012 Award for Creative and Effective Institutions. Since CSF launched its Marine program in 2012, they have delivered six courses focused on environmental economic tools for marine and coastal conservation, and have conducted applied analysis projects on benefits of marine protected areas, sustainable tourism, fisheries value chains, fisheries policy, protected areas financing, coastal development scenarios, and economic incentives for mangrove conservation by coastal communities. CSF staff has experience with designing economic analysis projects for conservation impact, including project scoping, design, methodology, analysis and strategic communication.

[Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide](#) (ELAW) helps communities speak out for clean air, clean water, and a healthy planet. They are a global alliance of attorneys, scientists and other advocates collaborating across borders to promote grassroots efforts to build a sustainable, just future. ELAW advocates, working in their home countries, know best how to protect the environment. By giving their partners the legal and scientific support they need, ELAW helps challenge environmental abuses and builds a worldwide corps of skilled, committed advocates working to protect ecosystems and communities for generations to come. ELAW will provide a training on Advocacy and Leadership including the development of effective campaigns; public participation in environmental decision making, and use of legal tools. In addition they will provide mentoring and technical assistance to fellows in the development and implementation of a advocacy campaign or communication strategy for their projects.

Fellow Applicant Profile

The MAR Leadership Program is looking for ***bold, forward thinking leaders!*** Individuals interested in becoming a Fellow should meet the following eligibility requirements, possess some or all of the following personal, professional, and community-based experiences, and demonstrate potential to develop leadership skills listed below.

Eligibility Requirements – Applicants should:

- Be a resident of the Mesoamerican Reef ecoregion, which includes locations within Belize, the Caribbean basin of Guatemala and Honduras, and the State of Quintana Roo in Mexico;
- Be at the early - mid career level;
- Have a clear professional connection to natural resources or conservation field of relevance to the MAR.
- Be passionate and capable of generating change.
- Have regular access to the internet in order to participate in exchanging data, email, activities, and experiences from a remote location.

Preferred Personal, Professional, and Community Experiences – Through her/his personal, professional, or community activities, it is preferred that applicants have some or all of the following proficiencies:

- Knowledge of environmental issues through work experience, high school, university coursework or community work;
- Minimum three years' experience working on environmental, coastal resource related conservation issues;
- Experience working with local community groups and/or initiatives;
- References from colleagues and supervisors; and
- Demonstrable long-term commitment to conservation.

Existing Leadership Skills –Before applying ask yourself the following questions:

- Are you self-motivated with a positive and proactive attitude?

- Are you determined to grow professionally and personally?
- Are you interested to work individually, as a member of a team and as part of a collaborative conservation effort?
- Are you interested to develop and implement new ideas for solutions to environmental problems?
- Are you interested to create change in social behaviors that are harmful to natural ecosystems?
- Are you interested in finding creative and innovative solutions to challenging environmental problems?
- Are you focused and determined to achieve results?

What will Fellows Learn from the MAR Leadership Program?

The MAR Leadership Program will provide Fellows an opportunity to gain real world, hands-on experience and develop personal, professional, and environmental conservation leadership skills. These skills will enable Fellows to become frontrunners in protecting the Mesoamerican Reef and associated marine ecosystems, and lead efforts to conserve, protect and restore marine ecosystems in their communities, countries and across the region.

Personal Leadership Skills – To develop personal and professional leadership skills, Fellows will learn how to:

- Communicate effectively through various forms of media and to various audiences;
- Improve his/her ability to collaborate with people from different sectors and cultures;
- Have more self-knowledge and identify his/her strengths and weaknesses; and
- Build a foundation of tools and resources that can be used beyond this program.
- Become strong opinion leaders and advocates with solid positions and great ideas/solutions.

Professional Leadership Skills – To advance career development, Fellows will learn to:

- Conceptualize a project idea (described in the "Thematic Approach of the 2016 Cohort" and "Application and Selection Process" sections below), develop a proposal and potentially secure financing to implement a project;
- Use capacities, abilities, tools, and knowledge of coastal ecosystems to achieve future higher level positions;
- Establish working partnerships with clearly shared responsibilities of all partners;
- Build relationships, negotiate, and develop funding opportunities;
- Share acquired knowledge on economic tools, case studies and personalized advice to successfully develop projects in the MAR which would result in positive impacts of the MAR.
- Increase level of professional abilities and responsibilities.

Environmental Stewardship – To protect the Mesoamerican Reef and associated marine ecosystems and become better environmental stewards, Fellows will learn how to:

- Identify the impact and ensure the sustainability of personal and professional habits and actions;
- Use tools to create and support innovative legislative frameworks and public policies;
- Strengthen the capacities of stakeholders to collaborate and use tools to promote behavioral changes;
- Apply skills gained toward a project incubated under the MAR Leadership Program toward future projects; and
- Become an active member of the MAR Leadership Program network and continue to share relevant and novel information and resources with like-minded peers facing similar conservation challenges.

Blue Economy in the MAR – To support the 2016 cohort theme, Fellows will:

- Learn about the Blue Economy concept and its potential development in the MAR region.
- Learn about the application of environmental-economic tools to promote coastal and marine conservation, social welfare and equity.

- Build outreach and communication skills to promote a Blue Growth model of sustainable development..
- Design and launch a strategic project to raise awareness of the importance of the Blue Economy approach;
- Navigate the social, legal and political landscape to achieve conservation success and long-term impact;
- Conduct, communicate and utilize the results of self-designed projects to further enhance protection of marine ecosystems;
- Work with government agencies, non-profits, and other stakeholders to build long-term collaborative capacity for marine protection.

Time Commitment and Fellow Responsibilities

Each cohort cycle lasts 12 months. During this period, Fellows carry out normal work responsibilities, but also dedicate approximately 90 days over the course of a year to MAR Leadership Program activities.

A typical cohort cycle includes four in-person, one-week workshops (around 36 days total, including travel time) and up to three online webinars (two hours each). The workshops will take place in different locations across the region in mid-September 2016, late-November 2016, March 2017 and June 2017 (*Note dates may change*). All Fellow travel, food and accommodation costs are covered to attend the workshops.

During the cohort cycle, Fellows will develop—with support from a mentor and the program team—a project proposal that aims to build their own individual and/or organizational capacity and also supports the goals of the cohort theme. As noted above, Fellow proposals will raise awareness of the importance of a Blue Economy approach to sustainable development in the Mesoamerican Reef Region using "conservation economy" in a storytelling fashion to advance the goals of the cohort.

The MAR Leadership Program does not offer any type of individual remuneration or salary for Fellow participation. It is hoped that selected Fellows have full time jobs at the time of acceptance in the program and that participation in the program will enhance capacity for improved job performance and professional development.

Need More Information?
Follow us on our social networks or contact:
Elisa López at *elisa.lopez@fmcn.org,* or **Tel. +52 (998) 5001899 Ext. 133**.
WEBSITE: www.marleadership.org FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/MARLeadership
Twitter: https://twitter.com/#!/MARLeadership YOUTUBE: www.youtube.com/user/marleadership

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Application and Selection Process

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If you think you meet the above program requirements and you support the 2016 program theme, then we invite you to apply to become a MAR Leadership Program Fellow by following these steps:

Application

STEP 1:   1) Contact Elisa López (elisa.lopez@fmcn.org) to request the "application form" in order to begin the application process, OR
2) Download the application form from our website or
3) Upload your information into the online application form www.marleadership.org
The application process **is open until June 15th, 2016**.

STEP 2:   You must submit the application form with all of the following materials **no later than June 15th 2016:**

- Current résumé
- Two letters of recommendation from professional colleagues with whom you have worked in the past.
- A letter of support from your current supervisor.
- A motivation letter (600 – 800 words) or a 3-minute video that describes the following:
  - Your educational background and current profession.
  - Why you want to be a MAR Fellow.
  - The value and type of storytelling effort, conservation project, economic study or other environmentally oriented initiative you would like to design and implement related to the 2016 Blue Economy theme.
  - How your project idea will help you develop professionally and help your agency, organization or company achieve its goals.
  - How your project idea will raise awareness of the importance of a Blue Economy approach to sustainable development in the MAR region.

Applicants are encouraged to utilize the bullets in the "Fellow Applicant Profile" section above to help craft an application. However, please do not simply copy text from this document into your application. We want you to be unique and creative in telling us why you want to be a MAR Fellow.

All documents should be submitted in **MS Word format** or **PDF**. Applications may be submitted in English or Spanish. You will receive an e-mail confirming our receipt of your application materials. Missing documents or late submissions will result in applicant disqualification.

Interviews

STEP 3:   A preliminary telephone or Skype interview will be conducted by MAR Leadership staff with qualified applicants during late June and July
STEP 4:   An in-person interview will be conducted by MAR Leadership staff with qualified applicants during July.

Notification

STEP 4:   Applicants selected as Fellows in the 2016 MAR Leadership Program will receive official notice of acceptance by **August 15th, 2016** in order to start participating in the program's activities by early September 2016. (*All prospective applicants should mark on their calendar that the first workshop is tentatively planned for September 10th – 18th*).

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