****

**Concept Note Template**

**Version – April 2021**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Project summary (1 page max.) | |
| Project title |  |
| Grantee |  |
| Subgrantees |  |
| Contact person: | Name and email |
| Country(ies) of implementation |  |
| Project duration |  |
| Total costs (EUR) |  |
| Blue Action funding | In Euro (percentage of total project volume) |
| Match funding | In Euro (percentage of total project volume) |
| # of MPAs targeted |  |
| New MPA km² |  |
| More effectively managed MPA km² |  |
| # of affected people |  |
| # individuals targeted by sustainable livelihoods measures |  |
| Project summary |  |

Table of Contents

[1 Context 3](#_Toc69227874)

[2 Problem description 3](#_Toc69227875)

[3 Objective and strategy 3](#_Toc69227876)

[4 MPA contributions 3](#_Toc69227877)

[5 Local communities and sustainable livelihood contributions 4](#_Toc69227878)

[5.1 Local communities 4](#_Toc69227879)

[5.2 Sustainable livelihoods contributions 5](#_Toc69227880)

[6 Gender mainstreaming 5](#_Toc69227881)

[7 Sustainability of long-term impact 5](#_Toc69227882)

[8 Project Logframe 5](#_Toc69227883)

[9 Planned activities 8](#_Toc69227884)

[10 Partners and project management 8](#_Toc69227885)

[11 Budget/Costs etc 8](#_Toc69227886)

[12 Anything else you wish to share with the evaluators? 9](#_Toc69227887)

[Annex 1: Applicant Information 10](#_Toc69227888)

[Annex 2: Letters of Endorsement 11](#_Toc69227889)

[Annex 3: Financial and Organisational Due Diligence Questionnaire 12](#_Toc69227890)

General instructions

* Please try to avoid repetition of ideas throughout the proposal (consider the most appropriate section to present them).
* Please respect size limits

# Context (1 page max)

1. What is the context or background that gives rise to the project?

# Problem description (2 pages max)

1. Describe the scope of the problem and its urgency.
2. What are the relevant past initiatives in the region and what challenges remain?

# Objective and strategy (4 pages max)

1. What is the objective of the project?
2. Please present your Theory of Change.
3. What is your strategy to achieve the objective?
4. Why is the chosen approach the best to address the problem? What evidence or lessons learned from previous projects support this?
5. What opportunities do you want to seize through the project?
6. What assumptions is your strategy based on?

# MPA contributions (2-3 pages, excluding Maps and Table)

1. Please list and describe your proposed intervention sites (i.e. new MPA sites and existing MPAs that will benefit from enhanced management), including information about their specific ecological value and how the project will benefit key species and habitats. If you are proposing to work on multiple sites, please explain if and how they are connected.
2. In which manner has the government expressed its support for the MPA objectives and what specific commitments have already been made?
3. With regard to government commitment, what risks and potential roadblocks remain to achieve the desired MPA objectives?
4. Please complete the following table to indicate how many km2 of MPAs will be newly established or benefit from enhanced management and their IUCN category.

| **Area** | **New** | **Better managed** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| MPAs IUCN categories |  |  |
| I Strict Nature Reserve / Wilderness Area | km² | km² |
| II National Park |  |  |
| III Natural Monument or Feature |  |  |
| IV Habitat/Species management Area |  |  |
| V Protected Seascape/Landscape |  |  |
| VI Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources |  |  |
| Buffer zone |  |  |

1. Please provide maps of your intervention sites and – to the extent possible – include protected area and buffer zone delineations for the areas described in the table above.

# Local communities and sustainable livelihood contributions

## **Local communities** (2 pages max)

1. Please provide a short description of the socio-economic context (e.g. economic activities, income levels, population growth, etc.)
2. Please describe the natural resource users utilizing the project area, for example disaggregating the fishery by gear and other user groups (traders, gatherers, etc.) as appropriate.
3. In the table below, please indicate the number of communities/villages at risk of being negatively affected by the project.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Estimated potential degree of affectedness | Total number of communities/villages | Population size |
| High |  |  |
| Medium |  |  |
| Low |  |  |

1. Please describe very briefly any potential positive and negative effects of proposed project activities on people’s livelihoods, considering in particular any project-related restrictions in land/marine and natural resource use.
2. Please indicate if the project has identified any groups that are vulnerable and will be affected by the project and briefly describe these groups.

## **Sustainable livelihoods contributions** (2 pages max)

1. What are the specific needs or challenges that have been identified with regard to sources of livelihood and income among the communities dependent on marine and coastal resources in the area(s) of intervention?
2. What is the nature of your involvement with the targeted communities thus far?
3. How will villages and individuals be selected for livelihood support? Please explain how people potentially negatively affected by the project (e.g. due to access restrictions), including vulnerable groups, will be included in the planning and implementation of livelihood activities.
4. Please describe the nature and scope of the interventions designed to contribute to improving sustainable livelihoods, including estimated number of targeted individuals.
5. Please comment on the feasibility of the proposed livelihood interventions. For example, are these livelihood trials or is there already a track record of these interventions in the project area or similar areas?

# Gender mainstreaming (1 page max)

1. Please briefly describe the prevailing gender norms and gender roles in economic activities and decision-making in the region(s) of implementation.
2. Please describe what steps your project will take to address and make significant contributions to gender equality, for example through promotion of women in leadership positions, economic empowerment, capacity building and/or other activities?

# Sustainability of long-term impact (1 page max)

1. Please briefly explain if there is an existing financial management plan for the MPA(s) and how the project will contribute to it. If such a plan does not exist, the project is expected to produce an analysis of financial needs for long-term management of the MPA(s) and a strategy for how to address the gaps (i.e. financial management plan including modelling of costs and available funding for the next years, plus potential additional sources and strategies). Please elaborate.
2. How will the project support the capacity development of local partners and communities (including building financial literacy and social resilience)?

# Project Logframe

General instructions

The project logframe explains at a glance the project’s goals and objectives and how it contributes to the Blue Action Fund Programme Results Matrix.

* To the extent possible, use “SMART” indicators:
  + Specific: should be a single factual statement, precisely formulated and one-dimensional.
  + Measurable: should have baseline and target indicators; change should be expressed through absolute numbers or percentages; the effort-to-control indicator should correspond to its relevance and the total project volume.
  + Achievable: the changes captured by the indicator can be achieved and require reasonable resources.
  + Relevant: should measure the central dimension of the project objective/result.
  + Time-bound: a specific point in time for achieving the target should be indicated (usually end of project duration).
* The structure of the project logframe must be aligned with the Blue Action Fund Programme Results Matrix (see Grants Procedures Manual). **All projects are required to report on all indicators at goal level as listed below.** Please insert your own indicators at the outcome and output level, but make sure to also include at least a number of indicators from the Blue Action Fund Programme Results Matrix to clearly demonstrate how the project will contribute to Blue Action Fund’s stated goals and objectives. Please highlight which Blue Action Fund indicators the project will be contributing to. Blue Action Fund will only fund projects that clearly contribute to its Programme Results Matrix.
* Assumptions are typically formulated as “positive risks” (e.g. “Government of Madagascar does not worsen fishery regulations”). Please do not include assumptions that should be achieved by the project (e.g. “project staff is in place”).
* If not available during proposal preparation, all baseline indicators should be obtained at latest by the end of the project’s inception phase (i.e. first six months of the project).

|  | **Indicators** | **Assumptions / Risks** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal (Impact / Overall Objective)**  Networks of globally significant marine protected areas and their sustainable use zones are conserved. | Indicator G.1: At the end of the project, the biomass of one or more relevant umbrella/ indicator species is maintained or increasing in the project areas.  Base value (At project start): x tons of relevant umbrella species in the project areas (umbrella/indicator species will be determined by grantee in collaboration with IUCN or another competent scientific advisor)  Target value (End of project): The biomass of umbrella species in the project areas is maintained or increased. |  |
| Indicator G. 2: At the end of the project, improved livelihood conditions of affected households in project areas.  Base value (At project start): Average household income in affected project villages  Target value (End of project): Average household income in affected project villages increased |  |
| Indicator G. 3: At the end of the project, substantially more households affected in project areas have a positive attitude towards protection of marine biodiversity  Base value (At project start): ---  Target value (End of project): On average, majority of households in project areas have a positive attitude towards protection of marine biodiversity. |  |
| **Outcome** | Indicator O.1:  Base value (At project start):  Target value (End of project): |  |
| Indicator O.2:  Base value (At project start):  Target value (End of project): |  |
| Indicator O.3:  Base value (At project start):  Target value (End of project): |  |
| Indicator O.4:  Base value (At project start):  Target value (End of project): |  |
| Indicator O.5:  Base value (At project start):  Target value (End of project): |  |
| **Outputs** |  |  |
| Output 1: | Indicator 1.1:  Base value (At project start):  Target value (End of project): |  |
| Indicator 1.2:  Base value (At project start):  Target value (End of project): |  |
| Output 2: | Indicator 2.1:  Base value (At project start):  Target value (End of project): |  |
| Indicator 2.2:  Base value (At project start):  Target value (End of project): |  |
| Indicator 2.3:  Base value (At project start):  Target value (End of project): |  |
| Indicator 2.4:  Base value (At project start):  Target value (End of project): |  |
| Indicator 2.5:  Base value (At project start):  Target value (End of project): |  |
| Output 3: | Indicator 3.1:  Base value (At project start):  Target value (End of project): |  |
| Indicator 3.2:  Base value (At project start):  Target value (End of project): |  |
| Indicator 3.3:  Base value (At project start):  Target value (End of project): |  |

# Planned activities

Based on the logframe, please outline below the proposed activities to achieve each output.

* Output 1 “Name”
  + Indicator 1.1 “Name”
    - Activity 1.1.1:
    - Activity 1.1.2:
    - Activity 1.1.3:
  + Indicator 1.2 “Name”
    - Activity 1.2.1:
    - Activity 1.2.2:
    - Activity 1.2.3:
* Output 2 “Name”
  + Indicator 2.1 “Name”
    - Activity 2.1.1:
    - Activity 2.1.2:
    - Activity 2.1.3:
  + Indicator 2.2 “Name”
    - Activity 2.2.1:
    - Activity 2.2.2:
    - Activity 2.2.3:
* Etc.

# Partners and project management (2 pages max)

1. For each partner organisation in the consortium[[1]](#footnote-2) please describe its respective area of expertise, role and expected contributions to the project.
2. Please describe how efficient management of the project will be ensured.

# Budget/Costs etc

**Draft Total Budget**

Please refer carefully to the Grant Procedures Manual for definitions and guidelines regarding categories such as “Indirect Costs”, “Contingency” or “Capital expenditures” and provide the following information about your project’s total budget:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Costs** | **Total €** | **Blue Action €** | **Match €** |
| Field implementation |  |  |  |
| Output X |  |  |
| Output X |  |  |
| Output X |  |  |
| Project management and field staff |  |  |
| Project staff (field and admin) |  |  |
| Staff travel costs |  |  |
| Other operating costs |  |  |
| Indirect costs | (≤ 20%) | (≤ 10%) |
| Contingency | (4-5%) |  |
| **Total** |  |  |  |

What amount do you plan to spend on the capital expenditures category? What are the measures you intend to fund in this category?

**Draft budget allocation among different partners**

| **Partner** | **Total €** | **Blue Action €** | **Match €** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Lead organisation |  |  |  |
| Sub-grantee |  |  |  |
| Sub-grantee |  |  |  |

**Key sources of match funding**

| **Source** | **Project / Objective** | **Funding in €** | **Status** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  | Secured |
|  |  |  | Applied |
|  |  |  | Invited to apply |
| **Total** | |  |  |

# Anything else you wish to share with the evaluators?

# Annex 1: Applicant Information

Please fill in the following tables for the lead organization as well as for each subgrantee (if applicable).

| Applicant information | |
| --- | --- |
| Name of organisation |  |
| Total number of staff in the organisation | Total staff number (% staff in non-ODA countries; % staff in ODA countries; % of administrative staff). |
| Do you have offices in the proposed implementation sites? How many staff work there? | Include distance to project sites. |
| Start of operations in the proposed country |  |
| Staff number in the proposed country (national/international) |  |
| Will the organisation hire new staff for the project and if so for what positions? |  |
| Annual budget in EUR for each of the last three years[[2]](#footnote-3) | Total budget and % of budget implemented in the project region for each of the last three years. |
| Financial management | Briefly describe who is responsible for financial management. Is the country office externally audited? How frequently are such audits carried out? |
| ESMS management[[3]](#footnote-4) | Briefly describe who is responsible for management of ESMS and previous experiences. |
| Is the organisation legally authorised to receive charitable funds? |  |
| Contact person | Name and email |
| Website Address |  |

| Key experiences | |
| --- | --- |
| Project 1 | Indicate name, duration, donor, country, budget (in million EUR) and activities relevant for the proposed project. |
| Project 2 |  |
| Project 3 |  |
| Project 4 |  |
| Project 5 |  |

# Annex 2: Letters of Endorsement

Please enclose the signed letters of endorsement provided by the appropriate authorities/authorized bodies of the country or region presenting the agreed cooperation. If these are not yet available, please indicate from whom you expect they can eventually be obtained.

# Annex 3: Financial and Organisational Due Diligence Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions with respect to the lead partner/grantee

| Question | Answer |
| --- | --- |
| Financial situation and financial statements of applicant | |
| Do you prepare annual financial statements? |  |
| Are annual financial statements prepared in English? |  |
| Are the financial statements audited annually by an independent auditor licensed in your jurisdiction? |  |
| Are audit reports available in English? |  |
| Who is your auditor? |  |
| Have you changed auditors in the last five years? If so, please state the reasons. |  |
| Please list the total revenues and expenditures for each of the last 3 financial years. |  |
| Have you reported a loss in the last 3 financial years? |  |
| Are your financial statements prepared on a “going concern”[[4]](#footnote-5) basis? |  |
| Please provide (or provide a link to) audited financial statements covering your last 3 financial years. |  |
| Has the auditor qualified its opinion[[5]](#footnote-6) on your financial statement in any of the most recent 3 years? If so, please provide a copy of the qualified opinion. We may have further questions. |  |
| Financial management of grants | |
| Do you use grants management software? If so, which software? |  |
| Which internal bookkeeping software are you using? |  |
| Will your software/internal bookkeeping system support automated reporting against the Blue Action Fund budget by category? If not, will you be able to manually extract information from your system to report against the template? |  |
| Will your software/internal bookkeeping system allow to track time of staff dedicated to the Blue Action project? |  |
| How will you track and report on spending by sub-grantees? |  |
| Blue Action will require evidence of expenditures by sub-grantees for purposes of its audit procedures in respect of the grant. How will you capture such evidence? |  |
| How do you assure appropriate authorization of financial expenditures? Do you adhere to a “four-eyes” policy or a similar mechanism? Please describe. |  |
| In connection with the grant, we require that lists of purchased goods, works and associated services or consultancy services be prepared with the following information:  Item (designation of the goods, works and associated services), date, contractor/vendor, relevant reference number(s), total costs and amount financed with BAF funds.  Will you be able to provide such a list? |  |
| Miscellaneous | |
| We will require annual submission of a charitable donation certification e.g. proof that you are registered as a charitable organisation and are exempt from tax. Is your organisation legally authorised to receive charitable funds and will you be able to provide such a certification? |  |
| We will require financial records relating to the grant to be retained for 7 years following grant completion. Please describe your customary record retention procedures. Will you be able to comply with our 7-year requirement? |  |
| What is your policy in relation to conflicts of interest and how do you avoid them? |  |
| What is your policy in relation to money laundering & corruption and how do you avoid them? |  |
| Have you reviewed Blue Action Fund’s procurement policy? Will you be able to comply with it? |  |
| Environmental and Social Risk Management[[6]](#footnote-7) | |
| Have you reviewed the Blue Action Fund ESMS Manual, including procedures? Will you be able to comply with it? |  |
| Can you confirm that you have reviewed the updated [April 2021] [Blue Action Fund Exclusion List](https://www.blueactionfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Blue-Action-Fund-Exclusion-List_April-2021.pdf), and that your proposed project does **not** include any of these excluded activities? |  |
| Has the country office of your organisation been involved in, or accused of, any human rights infringements in the last five years? If so, please state the status of any inquiries. |  |
| Does your organisation have experience with application of international safeguard standards (e.g. World Bank Environmental & Social Standards, etc.)? Please describe. |  |
| What is your experience with conducting environmental and social assessments (e.g. ESA, ESIA, SIA) and developing environmental and social safeguard tools (e.g. grievance mechanisms, stakeholder engagement plans, FPIC protocols, access restriction process frameworks)? |  |
| Do you have environmental and social (E&S) safeguard experts in your organisation? How will they support the project? |  |
| Will you work with external or internal staff to do further E&S assessments (if needed)? For external staff, have you identified suitable expertise for ESAs and safeguard tool development? |  |

Place and date

By\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of authorized Grantee Signatory

Name of Signatory:

Function of Signatory:

1. This refers both to subgrantees as well as any pre-identified subcontractors, as defined in the Grant Procedures Manual. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Question to be filled out by subgrantees only, as for the main applicant this topic is dealt with in more depth in the due diligence section. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Question to be filled out by subgrantees only, as for the main applicant this topic is dealt with in more depth in the due diligence section. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Under both US Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (US GAAP) and the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), presentation of financial statements on a “going concern” basis implies that the business/organisation both intends and is able to keep operating its activities at least for the next year and requires the organization to conclude that it will not need to liquidate or to materially curtail the scale of its operations in that period. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. A qualified opinion is a statement issued in an auditor's report that accompanies a company's audited financial statements. It is an auditor's opinion that suggests the financial information provided by a company was limited in scope or there was a material issue with regard to the applicable accounting principles (e.g. GAAP, IFRS, HGB) —but one that is not pervasive. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Blue Action Fund has developed an Environmental & Social Management System and requires its grantees to put in place necessary Environmental & Social Safeguards in their projects. With the topic of adequate safeguarding in conservation projects continuing to evolve, Blue Action is keen to learn about applicant NGOs’ experience with it. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)