

## Terms of Reference

### **A Consultancy A Consultancy to Conduct an Economic Impact Assessment on Sargassum-affected sites**

#### **1. PROJECT TITLE**

SICA AZUL, an Intersectoral Management for the Protection of the Marine Environment

#### **2. BACKGROUND**

Currently, 11 million tons of plastic waste are thrown into the oceans, causing serious damage to the oceans, their biodiversity and human health itself. The region suffers significant social, economic, and environmental impacts on the member countries of the Central American Integration System (SICA) and the Caribbean, including the reduction of tourism, negative effects on the fishing sector, loss of employment, the high cost of beach cleanups, and impacts on human health, among others.

Belize is no stranger to this problem, currently reporting significant problems due to plastic pollution in its territory

In this sense, the regional environmental strategy (ERAM), which is approved by the Council of Ministers of Environment of the SICA region and executed by the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD), establishes in its strategic line of environmental quality, wastewater management and waste management to mitigate pollution. In the same way, in its line of seas and biodiversity, it establishes the sustainable management of marine-coastal areas,

To put these strategic lines into action, the CCAD implements an integrated portfolio of projects that support specific activities.

The SICA AZUL project is part of the set of projects of the XVIII Joint Commission for Cooperation between the Countries of the Central American Isthmus and the Republic of China (Taiwan) which seek to strengthen SICA intersectoral initiatives for the development of the region. One of them is the protection of the marine environment, worked on jointly by OSPESCA, CCAD and CAC.



Through the SICA AZUL project, the CCAD seeks the development of national actions in Belize the program to manage the impact of sargassum in the terrestrial and marine-coastal zone, with the leadership of the Department of Environment of the Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Waste Management of Belize, pilot actions have been planned to make waste management and plastic pollution prevention effective. among them the strengthening of national laws and policies related to the topic previos mentioned..

The Government of Belize, through the Department of the Environment (DOE), under the Sustainable Development, Climate Change & Solid Waste Management, is committed to the sustainable management of the country's marine and coastal resources. The increasing influx of sargassum along Belize's coastline has presented significant environmental, economic, and social challenges, particularly impacting tourism, fisheries, and coastal community livelihoods yet such economic and social impacts have not been scientifically evaluated.

Under the SICA AZUL Project, Belize is implementing activities to promote science-based decision-making for the protection and management of its marine environment. Within Component 1: Towards Sustainable Sargassum Management, a core objective is to conduct monitoring activities to gather baseline information to support evidence-based decision-making. In this context, an economic impact assessment of sargassum generation and collection is critical to inform sustainable management interventions.

The DOE, with the support of the Comision Central America of Environment and Development(CCAD), aims to conduct a rapid economic impact assessment based on field data from key sargassum-affected sites, thereby contributing to the broader goal of science-based marine resource management.

### **3. PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS**

The project is executed by the Directorate of the Executive Secretariat of the Central American Commission for Environment and Development SICA/CCAD, in coordination with the Organization of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector of the Central American Isthmus -OSPESCA- and the Central American Agricultural Council -CAC and with the participation of the authorities of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of the 8 countries of the SICA region.



The administration of the funds of the pilot project is carried out by the International Regional Organization for Agricultural Health (OIRSA), in accordance with the OIRSA-OSPESCA Agreement.

#### 4. OBJECTIVES

This consultancy aims to collect and analyse baseline data on the economic impacts of sargassum influxes in the tourism sector at five (5) designated coastal sites, namely San Pedro Ambergris, Caye Caulker, Hopkins, Seine Bight and Placencia in Belize

#### 5. SCOPE AND FOCUS OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Under the guidance and direct supervision of the Department of the Environment (DOE) the Consultant shall be responsible for executing the following tasks in support of a rapid economic impact assessment of sargassum generation in the tourism sector of Belize:

**a. Inception Phase:**

Prepare an **Inception Report** outlining the Consultant's understanding of the assignment, including:

- A detailed **work plan** with timelines and key milestones.
- The **methodology** to be used for field data collection, including sampling strategy and site selection rationale.
- The assessment shall focus on the tourism sector including but not limited to hotels, restaurants, tours and other services
- A **stakeholder engagement strategy** that ensures inclusive participation from relevant actors across affected regions, including government agencies, NGOs, private sector representatives, and community members.
- Identification of key risks, limitations, and mitigation measures to ensure smooth execution of activities.

**b. Field Data Collection:**

- On-site field assessments will be conducted at five designated coastal locations to collect data on:
  - Sargassum landings, volume and frequency over a defined period.
  - Collection efforts, techniques, manpower, equipment, and time required
  - Cleaning expenses

- Booking losses for hotel rooms and tours
  - Hiring of additional manpower or re-designation of duties, etc
- Engage a range of stakeholders including:
  - Local government authorities.
  - Tourism Stakeholders (hotels, restaurants, tour operators etc)
  - Coastal and marine tourism operators.
  - Fisherfolk associations and cooperatives.
  - Affected households and community-based organizations.
- Gather both quantitative and qualitative data on:
  - Economic losses (cleaning expenses, loss of room booking, etc) due to sargassum accumulation, collection and disposal.
  - Disruptions to livelihood activities.
  - Financial funding sources to combat sargassum issue.
  - Perceptions on existing response mechanisms and policy gaps.
- c. Data Analysis and Economic Assessment:
  - Process and analyse collected data to:
    - Estimate direct costs, such as those associated with decreased or cancelled room bookings, clean-up operations, equipment depreciation, manpower, and disposal methods.
    - Estimate indirect and opportunity costs, including income loss from reduced tourism, fisheries decline, public health impacts, and property damage or depreciation.
    - Identify seasonal trends, geographic variations, and key economic vulnerabilities tied to sargassum influx.
  - Conduct comparative analysis using regional data or case studies, where applicable.
  - Prepare a Rapid Economic Impact Assessment detailing:
    - Key cost drivers.
    - Sectoral vulnerabilities.
    - Disparities in coping capacities among communities.
    - policy and regulatory bottlenecks impeding effective response.
- d. Reporting and Recommendations:
  - Prepare and submit the following:
    - Draft Report presenting preliminary findings, for review and feedback by the DOE and other relevant stakeholders.
    - Final Report incorporating feedback, structured to include:
      - Executive summary.
      - Methodology.
      - Key findings.
      - Economic impact estimations.
      - Stakeholder insights.
      - Lessons learned.
  - Evidence-based, actionable recommendations for:
    - Improved national and local-level policy planning.

- Resource allocation.
- Community-based response mechanisms.
- Long-term mitigation and adaptation strategies.
- Prepare a presentation or briefing session to disseminate findings and recommendations to stakeholders.

The consultant shall also be responsible for coordinating necessary field visits, facilitating stakeholder meetings, and ensuring timely submission of high-quality deliverables.

## 6. PRODUCTS

Description	Timeline
<b>Product 1:</b> Inception Report Outlining work plan, methodology, site selection rationale, stakeholder engagement strategy, and risk mitigation measures.	Week 2
<b>Product 2:</b> Monthly Progress Reports Summarizing field activities, stakeholder engagement, preliminary findings, and any challenges encountered.	At the end of each month (Months 1–3)
<b>Product 3:</b> Draft Economic Impact Assessment Report Preliminary findings and analysis for stakeholder review, including direct and indirect cost estimates and emerging trends.	Week 8
<b>Product 4:</b> Final Report and Presentation Comprehensive final report incorporating feedback, with recommendations and a presentation to stakeholders.	By end of Month 3

## 7. SOURCE OF FUNDING

The financial resources for the contracting of this technical assistance come from the SICA AZUL project, an Intersectoral management for the protection of the marine environment, through component 1: Contribute to the ecological stability of the coastal-marine zone of the SICA region through the management of sargassum and plastic waste.

The Consultant will be responsible for all logistical arrangements related to fieldwork (including travel, accommodation, and materials) and must coordinate with the DOE for access to any available data or support.

The DOE will facilitate stakeholder contacts where necessary and approve all draft and final documents produced.

## **8. PLACE AND DEADLINE**

The technical assistance will compile and develop the outputs described in item 6 for Belize.

The contracting period will be four (4) months from the signing of the contract, under these terms of reference, which in turn will be an integral part of the contract.

The consultancy will be conducted remotely with necessary travel to the Department of the Environment (Belmopan) and the five (5) coastal survey sites (Caye Caulker, Hopkins, Placencia, Seine Beight y San Pedro). Travel to additional locations may be required depending on stakeholders consultations. Travel logistics and expenses to be covered by the consultant.

## **9. SUPERVISION AND COORDINATION**

The technical assistance will be under the general direction and supervision of the Executive Secretariat of CCAD (Coordination of the SICA Azul Project) and the focal point of the Department of Environment of the Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Waste Management of Belize, to whom it must inform of the particular situations for the development of the project and the progress, as well as the delivery of the corresponding reports.

## **10. ECONOMIC CONDITIONS**

The consultancy will have a maximum duration of four (4) months. Payments will be issued in monthly instalments, based on the consultant's qualifications, relevant experience, and the satisfactory completion and approval of each phase of work. The Consultant is responsible for any applicable taxes.



## 11. QUALIFICATION AND EXPERIENCE

The following aspects will be count on the evaluation:

### 11.1 Academic Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree in Environmental Economics, Marine Resource Management, Natural Resources Management, Environmental Science, Social Science, Tourism Management or a related field.
- Postgraduate qualification (Master's degree) in a relevant field is considered an asset.

### 11.2 Professional Experience:

- Minimum of three (3) years of experience in conducting economic or environmental impact assessments, preferably in coastal or marine sectors.
- Experience in data collection, field surveys, and stakeholder consulta.
- Demonstrated familiarity with sargassum issues and marine ecosystem management.

### 11.3 Skills:

- Strong analytical, statistical, and report writing skills.
- Ability to coordinate multi-stakeholder consultations.
- Fluency in English is required; Spanish is an asset.

### 11.4 Economic Proposal

- The consultancy's financial proposal will be taken into consideration, and it must include the costs of local travel and per diem expenses.

## 12. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Criteria	Value
<b>Academic Qualifications</b>	10%
Bachelor's degree in Environmental Economics, Marine Resource Management, Natural Resources Management, Environmental Science, Social Science, Tourism Management or a related field.(5%)	
Postgraduate qualification (Master's degree) in a relevant field is considered an asset.(5%)	
<b>Professional Experience</b>	30%
Minimum of three (3) years of experience in conducting economic or environmental impact assessments, preferably in coastal or marine sectors. (10%)	

Experience in data collection, field surveys, and stakeholder consulta. (10%)	
Demonstrated familiarity with sargassum issues and marine ecosystem management. (10%)	
<b>Skills</b>	<b>30%</b>
Strong analytical, statistical, and report writing skills.(10%)	
Ability to coordinate multi-stakeholder consultations. (10%)	
Fluency in English is required; Spanish is an asset. (10%)	
<b>Economic proposal</b>	<b>30%</b>
Se considerará la propuesta económica de consultoría, la cual debe de contemplar los costos de traslados y viáticos locales.	

### 13. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

The data and results generated by this technical assistance are for the exclusive use of the project "An Intersectoral Management for the Protection of the Marine Environment (known as SICA AZUL and the Department of Environment of the Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Waste Management of Belize)".

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