Position Announcement

USAID/Madagascar Marine Conservation, Sustainable Development and Governance project

Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, and Learning (MERL) Specialist

The University of Rhode Island, Coastal Resources Center (https://web.uri.edu/crc/) and Blue Ventures seek a **Monitoring, Evaluation Research and Learning (MERL) Specialist** for a USAID-funded project for marine conservation, sustainable development, and governance in Madagascar. Key investment areas of this project include sustainable management of natural resources, protected areas, complimentary natural resource production for household uses, governance, advocacy and anti-corruption efforts around natural resource management, local resilience to climate and other shocks, marine tenure policy implementation and marine use planning. The project will be implemented in Atsimo Andrefana, Menabe, Antongil Bay, and BATAN. The MERL Specialist will be responsible for the design, coordination, and implementation of the MERL framework for the project. The project is anticipated to start by November 2023. The MERL Specialist will be based in Antananarivo, Madagascar. This position is contingent upon receipt of donor funding and candidate approvals by the donor. This position will be a local project staff contract. For at least the first year, the position will be hired by Blue Ventures. The MERL Specialist will report to the Director of Programs. No employment visas or expatriate benefits are offered with this position.

Key Responsibilities:

- **Develop and support implementation of a project-level MERL framework.**
  - Lead the development of program for MERL Plan and provide MERL support in refining results framework and identifying relevant indicators to report on results.
  - Develop program field-monitoring framework that allows for systematic planning and tracking of program monitoring, e.g. templates for field monitoring and reporting by multiple international and local project consortium partners.
  - Develop evaluation design, data collection tools, and analysis frameworks and align these with existing USAID frameworks.
  - In collaboration with project technical and geographic area leads, strengthen data collection to measure progress towards project-level targets
  - Coordinate and participate in MERL field visits.
  - Develop appropriate database following USAID requirements (quality data, Performance Management Plan (PMP), Performance Indicator Reference Sheet (PIRS), georeferenced data)
- **Finalize, update, track, and report on Plans including for Environmental Monitoring and Mitigation, Climate Risk Management, and Protected Area Social Safeguards.**
- **Analyze data**
- **Organize review of program work plans with partners and other stakeholders in liaison with Principal Investigators.**
  - Foster and support within and cross-project learning and lessons learned workshops, including annual USAID pause and reflect workshops, Learning Review, Outcome harvesting and strengthen a Community of Practice for the sharing of best practices and lessons for adaptive management.
  - Update the project Theory of Change.

- o Provide advice to the strategy and project managers on improving project performance using MERL findings.
  - o Contribute to the preparation of reporting according to donor requirements.

- **Develop annual workplans and budget for MERL program and support regular reporting as needed**.
- **Provide capacity-building support to relevant team members and other stakeholders on MERL and any IT-based support that may be required.**

Qualifications:

- Master's Degree in social or natural sciences or related field and 3 years of experience or equivalent combination of education and experience in conservation practice, social sciences, MERL, development studies, statistics, project management, or related disciplines.
- Demonstrated experience in monitoring and evaluating USAID project activities.
  - o Demonstrated experience in developing MERL approaches and frameworks including Theories of Change, intermediate results and outcomes, qualitative and quantitative data collection tools and methods, indicators, data quality control, data management, and reporting. Learning questions,
  - o Experience in managing and supervising data collection and leading and working with cross-functional teams.
  - o Experience in analyzing data and using statistical packages such as Excel and /or R or and other data analysis tools.
- Demonstrated experience in marine science and conservation.
- Demonstrated experience in synthesizing, interpreting, technical writing and communicating scientific information to a broad range of audiences and stakeholders.
- Ability to travel frequently in Madagascar as required.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills in English, French and Malagasy.

Application Instructions:

To apply, submit a cover letter, CV, and three references (all in English) to the following email:

applications@crcuri.org, email subject line: MERL Specialist

Applications accepted immediately and on a rolling basis.

URI is an equal opportunity employer.