



Call for projects Conservation of sea grass beds in West Africa

Context:

MAVA is a family philanthropic foundation based in Gland, Switzerland with a regional representation office for West Africa based in Dakar, Senegal. The Foundation is dedicated to biodiversity conservation and funds projects implemented by partners such as international, national and local NGOs, research institutions, universities or government institutions. The Foundation works through four programs: Mediterranean Basin, West African Coastal Zone, Switzerland, and Sustainable Economy.

Since 2016, MAVA has been working to implement its new strategy for 2016-2022.

The MAVA strategy is based on a set of expected outcomes. For each one an action plan is developed jointly with different partners and implemented in order to achieve the expected results by 2022. One of the outcomes is Seagrass beds, particularly targeted to improving knowledge and conservation of this key habitat. It is worded as follows: "By 2022 improved knowledge and experience from pilot sites will result in effective measures for the conservation of marine meadows at the regional level".

Due to insufficient information on sea grass beds in West Africa, MAVA is launching a call for projects to improve knowledge on these ecosystems in the sub region, in order to identify direct threats and enhance their conservation through appropriate management tools and legal framework.

Why sea grass beds?

Seagrass beds are one of the most productive and important marine ecosystems.

Seagrass grows on the coastal seabed and represent both a habitat, a food source and a breeding ground for many marine fauna species. They play a very important ecological, economic and social role and provide many ecosystem services. Sea grass beds contribute to maintain water quality, store carbon, and produce a large amount of oxygen used by different organisms. They thus play a predominant role in the climate cycle and the oceanic carbon cycle and in the protection of the coastline. Despite this, the attention paid to this habitat remains well below the importance of services rendered.

Seagrass beds are confronted with several anthropogenic threats. Dredging of the seabed, pollution by sewage, excess of sediment etc.

The support of MAVA aims to strengthen knowledge on marine seagrass meadows in West Africa and to conduct pilot actions on selected sites, aiming at implementing management tools and improving their protection status.

Issues in the sub-region:

The conservation of sea grass beds in West Africa integrates several important issues.

Scientific research on this subject is not very developed and expertise at national and regional level in this field is rare.

Due to the limited knowledge and inadequate expertise, the awareness and valorization of this ecosystem is negligible hence the weakness of existing management tools and the inadequacy of the protection status. Moreover, the commitment of the various stakeholders concerned in the conservation of sea grass beds remains insufficient.

Approach:

A single multi-stakeholder and regional project will be selected. It will include research institutions, national and international universities, partners of our priority sites, managers of marine protected areas, civil society ... The project will be based on the four main strategies of the action plan developed during the workshop organized in Saly on 16-17 March and endorsed by MAVA: 1) improving knowledge, 2) capacity building, 3) sensitization and advocacy, and 4) promoting legal framework, tools and management of key sites.

The orientations of the action plan should be used as a reference (in annex) to the drafting of the project proposal.

Geographical area of intervention:

The call for proposals concerns seven (7) coastal countries, Mauritania, Senegal, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Cape Verde and Sierra Leone

With the exception of the Banc d'Arguin in Mauritania, knowledge of marine meadows is still rudimentary in the sub region.

Object of the call for projects:

The MAVA Foundation is launching this call for projects to improve knowledge and strengthen the protection status of sea grass beds in West Africa.

The project will focus on achieving the following key outcomes:

- Knowledge on the spatial distribution of sea grass beds at national and regional levels is improved;
- National and regional operational expertise is available;
- The ecosystem services of sea grass beds are demonstrated and highlighted;
- The ecological and economic value of sea grasses are understood and disseminated by partners;
- Appropriate management tools for sea grass beds are implemented at key sites

The proposed project should focus on:

- Mapping of sea grass beds at national and regional level;
- Assessing the biodiversity of sea grass beds and determining their vitality;
- Prioritization of sites mapped to their biodiversity and health status;
- Development and implementation of conservation plans and management tools in priority sites (pilot actions);
- Identify socio-economic activities around priority sites and identify direct threats;
- Assessment of key ecosystem services;
- Strengthening the capacities of the various actors concerned on monitoring and research on sea grass beds;
- Development and dissemination of communication tools on the value of ecosystems for the benefit of decision makers and communities;
- Strengthening the consideration of sea grass beds in national, local and regional regulations.

Evaluation of Proposals

Proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. Comprehensive:

In order to create a bridge between scientific research, awareness-raising and conservation actions and to promote a diverse collaboration of actors, a single multi-stakeholder project will be selected. The project will bring together research institutions, national and international universities, national and regional institutions, partners of our priority sites, managers of marine protected areas, civil society...

2. Relevance:

It is particularly focus to the role of the various stakeholders.

- Detail, stakeholder involvement, their role in their respective areas and consistency between proposed actions and the four strategies of the action plan.

- Propose a clear and detailed partnership strategy between the various national and international research institutions;
- Demonstrate a regional approach on the implementation of activities while taking into account the specificity of each country and sites;
- Highlight the collaborations that will be developed with existing initiatives at regional and international level

3. Sustainability:

Sustainability is essentially linked to the strategy that will be put in place to perpetuate conservation actions, to secure funds after 2022, to maintain regular monitoring on sea grass beds and to ensure the effective and sustainable involvement of the actors concerned.

Eligibility criteria

The proposal should be submitted by national, regional and international institutions and / or organizations involved in conservation, and / or research on marine and coastal ecosystems in West Africa.

How to Apply?

All applicants are invited to submit a proposal by filling in the attached templates.

Questions relating to this call for tenders may be addressed to: salla.ba@fondationmava.org

Language?

We prefer to receive the project proposal in French.

Please send your application to:

salla.ba@fondationmava.org/sokhna.ndiaye@fondationmava.org

The deadline for submission of applications: 15 October 2017. Only candidates whose proposals have been selected will be contacted.

Implementation Period and grant

The MAVA Foundation is seeking a proposal covering 3 years of activity for the period 2018-2020. The Foundation will award a global grant of 1.200.000 euros over the 2018-2020 period.