

MacArthur Foundation

Grant Guidelines

International Programs

Conservation and Sustainable Development

Watersheds of the Tropical Andes Region of South America

Request for Letters of Inquiry for the Northern Tropical Andes (Colombia & Ecuador) for 2014

Introduction

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's Conservation and Sustainable Development (CSD) area has launched a 10-year grant making initiative in the Watersheds of the Tropical Andes.

The 2014 call for Letters of Inquiry announced here will target a limited number of Andean watersheds and thematic priorities in Western Amazon Basin, Choco Ecoregion and the Inter-Andean region of Ecuador and Colombia. Grant portfolios were supported in Bolivia and Peru in 2012, and at the Tropical Andean region-wide scale in 2013. This sets the order for subsequent annual cycling of three grant packages for the remainder of the strategy in the Andes. Three rounds of grants are anticipated for each of the portfolios at three year intervals.

The overall goal of the Foundation's investment in the Tropical Andes program area is to reduce current rates of biodiversity and natural habitat loss and sustain the ecosystem services that underpin human well-being. The theory of change guiding the Foundation's strategy is that

understanding the benefits that ecosystems provide to humans is necessary, but insufficient alone to spur effective conservation responses at the appropriate scales. To close the gap that exists between concern and effective action, sufficient incentives must be created for individuals, communities, and societies to slow current trends of ecosystem degradation and service loss and eventually reverse them.

We will test the theory of change by supporting actions that:

- *Describe the importance of high biodiversity ecosystems* to sustainable economic growth in a persuasive fashion to key decision makers;
- *Illustrate ways to generate positive incentives* for environmental stewardship at high priority watersheds and sites;
- *Strengthen resource use rights of local communities*, particularly of Indigenous and Afro-descendent Peoples, who manage many high biodiversity ecosystems that provide benefits to society at large;
- *Contribute to testing and evaluating policies* that distribute the costs and benefits of ecosystem management efficiently and equitably among users and providers of these services;
- Integrate and downscale to the Tropical Andes actions that address *global drivers of natural resource destruction and degradation*, including:
 - Environmental impact of development financing from China and Brazil;
 - Influence of global climate change on biodiversity, with a focus on adaptation actions;
 - Assimilation of social and environmental standards into international commodities markets;
- *Monitor the status and trend* in the health of ecosystems, pressures on them, and the effectiveness of conservation responses.

Watershed Priorities

Watershed priorities were informed by data assessments and expert consultations conducted by NatureServe for the Western Amazon Basin, by World Wildlife Fund for the Choco Ecoregion,

and by The Nature Conservancy and CORMAGDALENA for the Magdalena-Cauca Basin. Together these assessments cover the Foundation's geography of interest in the Tropical Andean region. In addition, Foundation staff consulted representatives of civil society, government, private donors, bilateral aid providers, and intra-regional organizations on thematic priorities for investing.

These exercises and consultations resulted in the selection of a limited number of watersheds for site-based grant making in 2014 based on the following criteria:

- Provision of *significant ecosystem services* (biodiversity, water generation, and carbon storage);
- Pressure from *specific human activities* (infrastructure development, extractive industry, agro-commodities, climate change);
- Presence of *well-developed enabling conditions* for conservation (policy frameworks, technical capacity, political commitment, social benefits, reasonable costs, manageable security);
- Opportunities for the Foundation to *collaborate* with other donors; and
- Opportunity to build upon the Foundation's *legacy* investments in the region.

The priority watersheds are:

The Marañon Watershed of Ecuador Site-based work in this binational watershed will be limited to Ecuador and focus mostly on the Santiago sub-basin.

Napo Watershed of Ecuador Site-based work in this binational watershed will be limited to Ecuador and focus on the Alto Napo and Isla sub-basins.

Caqueta Watershed of Colombia. Site-based work will be considered in the Caguan, Yari and Mecaya sub-basins.

Atrato Watershed of Colombia Site-based work as well as opportunities for basin-wide conservation planning and practice that include coastal marine resource management will be considered.

Mira Watershed of Ecuador and Colombia Site-based work as well as opportunities for basin-wide binational conservation planning and practice that include coastal marine resource management will be considered.

Magdalena-Cauca of Colombia Work that contributes to integrated river basin management policy, either at the whole basin or within a major sub-basin will be considered.

The watersheds identified in this call for the Northern Andes will receive primary attention during the life span of the CSD strategy.

Projects may be considered in other watersheds in Ecuador and Colombia in 2014 when they offer an unusual opportunity to engage on the central objectives of the Foundation's strategy and in a way that influences a policy or sector with broad regional relevance. Support for these projects will be more limited in time and are not likely to be funded for more than three years.

Lines of work to be considered

We will prioritize grants that support our objectives, either within the priority watersheds or as more broadly designed topics. Illustrations of interesting lines of work include:

Understand and respond to increased environmental pressures from development and climate change impacts, such as:

- Analyze development policies, plans and programs, evaluate their impact on biodiversity and ecosystem services, and propose alternative development scenarios and appropriate mitigating measures including regulatory, licensing and compensatory mechanisms.
- Strengthen the voice of affected communities in approval processes for agro-industrial plantations, hydropower dams, mining and oil extraction, and other large-scale developments.
- Influence the development of best practices or socio-environmental guidelines for locating, developing, and operating agro-industrial plantations, mining and oil extraction, and dams.

- Strengthen the capacity of subnational governance structures including indigenous and Afro-descendent communities to effectively design for the sustainable use and conservation of natural resources.
- Strengthen compliance with environmental laws, policies, and regulatory frameworks, particularly in reference to infrastructure development and extractive industries;
- Develop climate change narrative based on real experiences and that impacts public thinking and public policy.

Create and expand incentives to conserve ecosystems, such as:

- Raise awareness of the value of natural goods and services and increase the capacity of public decision-makers and civil society leaders to apply valuation methods that improve natural resource management, enhance local livelihoods and integrate natural assets to national accounting systems.
- Integrate biodiversity and terrestrial and aquatic ecosystem service values into local, municipal, and regional land-use and development planning.
- Pilot and expand payment or compensation for ecosystem services through water funds and similar conservation finance and reciprocal agreement mechanisms.
- Develop and strengthen non-economic incentives for natural and cultural resource stewardship, including the development of indigenous life plans.
- Engage the media as a way of improving policy decisions and increasing the accountability of public officials on environmental issues.
- Improve the reach and quality of reporting on important conservation and development issues relevant to the Foundation's strategy.

Assist the rural poor in protecting and managing their resources for multiple benefits, such as:

- Support land tenure registration at priority sites for local communities and ethnic groups that recognizes historical and ancestral territorial claims.
- Pilot and expand community-managed forestry, fisheries and natural resource enterprises that include value added certification of commodities and greater local involvement in supply chains.

- Develop co-management mechanisms for formal protected areas that enable community participation.
- Pilot and expand innovative approaches to site conservation, including linking livelihood support to conservation actions through negotiated agreements and private management of land through conservation concessions.

Evaluate the impacts of conservation investment on biodiversity and human wellbeing through systematic monitoring, such as:

- Develop common standards and systems for monitoring the impacts and effectiveness of conservation actions.
- Invest in the professional development of current and future conservation leaders and practitioners through support to established academic and training institutions in the region.
- Develop and test mechanisms for ensuring that monitoring results inform national policy debates and local adaptive management.
- Develop innovative means to finance conservation and sustainably monitor its impact.

Eligibility

Letters of Inquiry should respond to one or more of these geographic and thematic priorities. Organizations may submit more than one Letter of Inquiry. Letters should be succinct three page summaries of the proposed project, identifying its purpose, the significance of the issue, actions to be carried out and how the activities respond to the issue, geographic location, time period of the project, institutional competency and legal status. An estimate of the total cost and how much is being requested of MacArthur is required.

The Foundation typically makes three-year grants in the Conservation area with the possibility of renewal based on performance and continued relevance of the project to the established need, and to current Foundation priorities.

Please note that the Foundation does not support political activities or actions to influence specific legislation. We do not provide scholarships or tuition assistance for undergraduate,

graduate, or postgraduate studies outside the region; nor do we support annual fundraising drives, institutional benefits, honorary functions, or similar projects.

Review Process

All eligible Letters of Inquiry will be evaluated and responded to by the Foundation.

The MacArthur Foundation's Conservation and Sustainable Development (CSD) program is collaborating with other private foundations in making grants in the Tropical Andes. As part of this collaboration, Foundation staff may circulate Letters of Inquiry, proposals or other information provided by applicants requesting funding for projects in the Northern Tropical Andes to staff of these foundations for review. By submitting your LOI or other information in response to a request for proposal or otherwise to seek funding in connection with work in the Northern Tropical Andes, you agree that the MacArthur Foundation may share the LOI and other information you provide with other potential donors unless we agree otherwise with you in writing. The Foundation may also ask outside experts or persons with relevant professional experience to review LOIs or provide input.

Deadlines

LOIs should be submitted no later than November 18, 2013 by e-mail to:

4answers@macfound.org. A suggested LOI format is available at:

http://www.macfound.org/site/c.1kLXJ8MQKrH/b.913959/k.E1BE/Applying_for_Grants.htm

Decisions to invite full proposals based on the review of submitted LOIs are anticipated by January 24, 2014. Final decisions regarding approval of invited proposals will be made by June 10, 2014.