

Women for Whale Protection

The methodology will be implemented using a participatory, community-based, ecosystem-oriented, and gender-inclusive approach, recognizing that the conservation of marine-coastal resources must go hand in hand with strengthening local communities—and, in particular, ensuring the active participation of women. The project aims to build capacity for the protection of whales and their habitats while simultaneously promoting sustainable economic opportunities for women in the region

1. participatory diagnosis

The first stage will involve a participatory environmental and socioeconomic assessment within the communities linked to the Los Cóbano Complex Ramsar site. Key whale-watching locations, potential threats to these marine mammals, marine-related economic activities, and the level of women's participation in such activities will be identified.

Interviews, focus groups, community workshops, field visits, and participatory mapping will be used to gather information and establish a project baseline

2. Environmental education and awareness-raising

An environmental education program will be developed, targeting women, youth, fishers, tourism service providers, students, and local communities. The content will cover the ecological importance of whales, their migratory routes, behavior, threats, marine ecosystem conservation, and best practices for responsible whale watching

Participating women can become community conservation promoters, helping to share the knowledge they have gained with their families and communities

3. Community-based whale monitoring

A participatory cetacean monitoring system will be established by training women and community members in basic observation and recording techniques. Data such as date, location, approximate number of individuals, behavior, species observed, and potential threats will be collected

The information obtained will help strengthen local knowledge regarding the presence of whales and contribute to decision-making for their conservation, ensuring that monitoring is conducted according to protocols that avoid disturbing the animals.

4. Strengthening women's leadership

The project will implement training workshops aimed specifically at women, covering topics such as community leadership, organization, environmental education, entrepreneurship, administration, marketing, and participation in conservation processes.



The creation or strengthening of women's groups capable of actively participating in the management of environmental and economic initiatives linked to marine conservation will be promoted.

5. Development of sustainable livelihoods

As an alternative to activities that may place pressure on natural resources, economic initiatives compatible with conservation will be promoted, such as responsible marine wildlife-watching tourism, handicraft production, sustainable local cuisine, products with a distinct territorial identity, environmental education, and community-based tourism services.

The initiatives will be supported through business training and business plans, aiming to ensure that economic benefits remain within the communities and contribute to women's economic empowerment.

6. Conservation and responsible tourism

Best practices for whale and other cetacean watching will be designed and promoted, including recommendations regarding distance, vessel speed, the number of vessels around the animals, the duration of encounters, and visitor behavior.

The trained women will be able to participate as guides, environmental educators, community facilitators, and entrepreneurs, linking conservation with a responsible tourism experience

Cross-cutting approach

Four principles will be applied throughout all stages:

- * Conservation: protection of whales, cetaceans, and marine ecosystems.
- * Community participation: incorporation of the knowledge and experiences of local communities.
- * Gender equity: effective participation of women in decision-making and income generation.
- * Sustainability: promotion of economic activities compatible with the conservation of the Ramsar site.

Expected results

By the end of the project, the expected outcomes include women trained as leaders and conservation advocates, a community-based whale monitoring system, greater knowledge regarding cetaceans and the threats they face, improved responsible tourism practices, and new income-generating opportunities for women involved in the conservation of the marine-coastal resources of Los Cóbano.

This methodology can be readily adapted into a project profile for submission to an international cooperation fund, incorporating objectives, activities, indicators, a timeline, a budget, and a logical framework.

