



## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### Research Officer

**Reporting to:** Science Director

#### Introduction

Ya'axché staff are expected to work cooperatively with others, demonstrate flexibility in organizing work, have good communication skills and demonstrate thoughtfulness in decision making. Staff must be non-judgmental and receptive, live up to the values of integrity, respect and professionalism while reflecting genuine concern toward both the biosphere and the communities where Ya'axché is active.

#### Purpose:

The **Research Officer** is responsible for supporting Ya'axché's Science Program by assisting with trainings for research and monitoring activities, overseeing research, and monitoring related to freshwater and vegetation, managing databases, conducting analysis, and writing reports. The position also assists with equipment inventory and disseminating results of research and monitoring to communities. The Research Officer maintains strong relationships with the Science Program staff, PAM and COL staff, and student partners of Ya'axché.

**Officer Level:** Entry Level (Level 1)

#### Primary Relationships

- Supervisor: Science Director
- COL/PAM Program Directors
- Protected Areas Manager
- PAM/COL/SCI Teams
- Communications & Education Staff
- Visiting researchers & student groups

#### Key Areas of Responsibility

- Science Program Support
- Biodiversity Research & Monitoring Support
- Fieldwork & Logistics Coordination Support
- Data Analysis & Reporting Support

#### Main Duties and Responsibilities:

The Research Officer is accountable for:

1. Providing support and training to research and monitoring rangers to ensure proper data collection in field activities related to freshwater quality and vegetation.
2. Continuous data management, cleaning, and entry to appropriate databases for freshwater and vegetation, and other program areas as needed.

3. Work with the Science team in planning, designing, and modifying monitoring methodologies where appropriate and ensuring that the ranger team is informed of any changes.
4. Assisting with data analysis for freshwater quality and vegetation and contribute to annual and project reports requiring this data.
5. Assisting in coordinating field work, logistics, and implementation for any projects which require freshwater and vegetation expertise.
6. With Science team, developing and refining investigative data sheets for the program as needed and inform rangers.
7. Identifying native bees and freshwater macroinvertebrates with guidance from the Science Director.
8. Assisting the Science Manager in the maintenance and seasonal inventory of equipment for the Science Program.
9. Supporting the Science Program with the development of Education and Outreach materials for dissemination to schools and Ya'axché educational activities and community forums and meetings.
10. Contributing to the development of technical documents such as Farmscape Biodiversity and State of the Protected Areas reports.
11. Liaising with COL team to share results of research and monitoring activities to communities.
12. Managing external relationships related to this position.
13. Performing any other tasks from time to time that may be requested, highlighting skills and experience.

Outcomes and Performance Indicators to be achieved by the position:

Outcomes	Performance Indicators
<b>1. Research &amp; Monitoring Support</b> Scientifically sound and effectively functioning research, inventory, and monitoring activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Research, Inventory and Monitoring activities are scheduled each month according to the Biodiversity Research, Inventory, and Monitoring protocol</li> <li>▪ High quality data is collected by the ranger team</li> <li>▪ 90% of scheduled monitoring activities are accomplished on time having considered logistical limitations beyond Ya'axché's control</li> <li>▪ At least 4 biodiversity training sessions are held annually for Research and Monitoring rangers based on needs assessment</li> <li>▪ BRIM guidelines are updated as the need arises based on new developments in science and technology</li> </ul>

## **2. Data Management and Reporting**

Accurate and complete freshwater and vegetation data entered in databases on a regular basis.

- Ranger monitoring data are entered in an accurate and timely manner
- Databases are maintained and improved where necessary where recommendations are made, new databases created to accommodate new data sets
- Data storage safeguards are in place (backup of electronic and proper storage of hard copy)
- All data are ready for analysis by the end of the year
- Farmscape Biodiversity and State of the Protected Areas reports are produced annually in collaboration with Science Director

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## **3. Research & Monitoring Project Activities Implementation**

Efficiently implement projects as outlined in the funding agreements.

- 100% of project research activities are completed where feasible and modified where necessary
- Project supporting documentation submitted to project manager in a timely manner
- Ya'axché's donors satisfied with quality and professionalism of the science program
- Project research activities contribute to Ya'axché's decision making process for management of protected areas
- Public awareness of research and monitoring activities is increased

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## **4. External Relationships and Outreach**

Contribute to the organization's overall success by supporting the science team in maintaining communications with partners.

- All current partner relationships remain strong and support establishment of new collaborations
- Ya'axché is represented at national working groups, workshops, and other relevant meetings
- With COL and Communications teams, science program activities/findings are regularly shared with communities and the public
- Contribute to Ya'axché's reputation as a reliable, science-based organization
- Raise public awareness of the science behind Ya'axché's messages
- Science Program contributes effectively to the implementation of education and awareness events

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**Place(s) of work:**

- Main Office: #3 Ogaldez Street, Punta Gorda, Toledo District, Belize
- Golden Stream Field Station, Golden Stream Community, Toledo District, Belize
- Maya Golden Landscape in southern Belize

## **Qualifications:**

### ***Education Level, Experience, and Specific Skills:***

- Under-Graduate Degree in natural resource management, wildlife management, biodiversity conservation, or related field
- Alternatively, 2 years in field research and data handling and management
- Ability to work with a diverse team and diverse cultures
- Proactive at work and willing to learn
- Experience working on research projects
- Experience identifying Belizean flora
- Excellent communication skills, verbally and in technical writing
- Excellent interpersonal skills to build collaborative relationships and network effectively
- Ability to work independently and within a team
- Ability to work in remote and dense jungle for an extended period of time
- Working knowledge and basic capacity to do statistical analysis of datasets

### ***Desired Qualities:***

- Familiarity with the culture and traditions in Toledo District is an asset
- Sensitivity to the needs of persons with low literacy and/or English as a Second Language (ESL) when creating written materials
- Self-motivated and able to work independently with minimal supervision
- Ability to work with a wide variety of individuals (including a multicultural in-house team) by using tact, diplomacy and flexibility, resolve conflict effectively
- Ability to work under pressure, manage multiple tasks and allocate time effectively to meet internal and external deadlines
- Ability to think strategically, logically and to apply common sense, meticulous attention to detail, dependable and reliable, with a positive attitude
- Effective team player and committed to support and improve the overall work of Ya'axché
- Valid driver's license