

Annual Report 2025

5th anniversary



Sureste
Sostenible



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Our Approach

Mission

To channel financial resources and promote collaborative and integrated initiatives with long-term impact. Through an approach based on trust, flexibility, and transparency, we seek to be the financial engine for regional transformation, connecting socio-environmental efforts with the fundamental needs of local communities.

Vision

Achieving a balance between biodiversity conservation and human well-being is key to a sustainable future where nature and people thrive in harmony.

Values

- Commitment to the community
- Integrity and transparency
- Innovation and adaptability
- Collaboration and collectivity
- Excellence and accountability



Five Years: Growing from the Roots

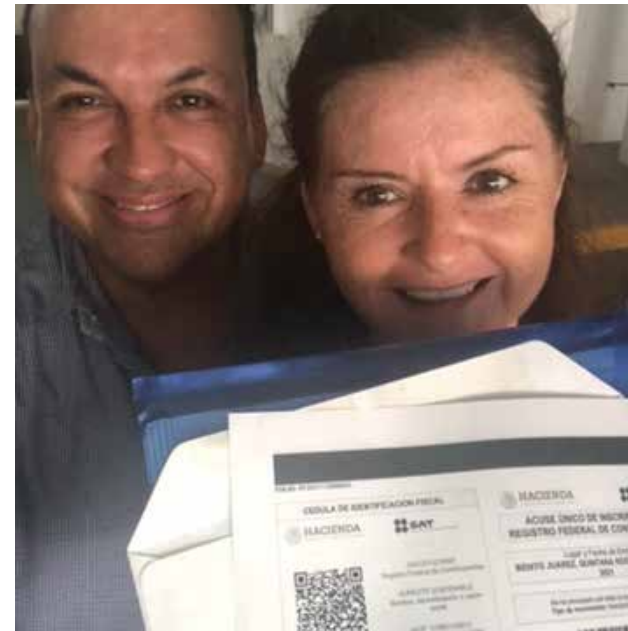
We didn't reach 2025 by chance. Behind every project there is a story of resilience, of decisions made in adverse contexts, and of long-term trust.



2020

The Beginning

In the midst of the pandemic, when the world came to a standstill, we incorporated as a civil association. We were born with the conviction that the recovery of nature and community well-being should go hand in hand.



2021

Institutional framework

We obtained our federal taxpayer registry number and authorized donee status. The Board of Directors met four times and laid the groundwork for managing resources with transparency and trust.



2022

Gaining Ground

We opened bank accounts, brought on our team, and took over the management of three established projects: Mesoamerican Reef Leadership Program, Kaanbal Suut, and the Kanan Kay Alliance. We also joined the MAR+Invest consortium, approved by the Global Fund for Coral Reefs.

In 2025, we celebrated our fifth anniversary. And we're aiming for the next fifty.

2023

Growth

Sureste Sostenible underwent a due diligence process to access funding from the Green Climate Fund, as well as to meet the international fiduciary standards established by the Conservation Finance Alliance. We also co-created the Alliance for the Yucatán Peninsula.



2024

Maturity

We shared ACCIÓN's safeguard plans with five communities across the peninsula. We listened, adjusted, and learned that there is no effective conservation without community dialogue.



2025

Effectiveness

The Green Climate Fund approved the ACCIÓN project, securing ten years of work in the region. A dream that began in 2020 is now an operational reality.

To Our Community

Looking back today, we recognize that every step has been part of a larger process of collective building.

The year 2025 marked a milestone for Sureste Sostenible: we celebrated our fifth anniversary. We marked the occasion in the way we know best: by working, strengthening alliances, and seeing projects that, for years, were a shared vision, come to fruition.

Sureste Sostenible was born in a global context that more clearly demonstrated the interdependence between the health of ecosystems and the well-being of people. Since then, we have focused our efforts on building solutions that originate at the local level, recognizing that conservation is only possible when communities are the protagonists, when local knowledge engages with technical evidence, and when alliances multiply the impact.

Over these five years, we have supported processes that strengthen capacities, promote leadership, and generate opportunities for coastal and rural communities of the Yucatán Peninsula and the Mesoamerican Reef System (MAR) to manage their resources sustainably. Each project, each initiative, and each collaboration reflects the conviction that development and conservation are not opposing paths, but inseparable dimensions of a shared future.

This year, the path became clear. The **Mesoamerican Reef Leadership Program** celebrated 15 years of developing agents of change across the four countries committed to the MAR: Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, and Honduras. The **Kanan Kay Alliance** advanced in generating technical evidence to strengthen fishing refuges alongside communities. **Kaanbal Suut** affirmed the value of networks and collective creativity as drivers of transformation. And **ACCIÓN** reached a major milestone with its launch, opening new opportunities to scale ecosystem-based adaptation solutions across the region.

Looking back today, we recognize that every step has been part of a larger process of collective building. This report is a reflection of that journey: of the people, communities, organizations, and partners whose commitment makes it possible to move toward a more sustainable Southeast.

With gratitude and a vision for the future,

José Luis Funes Izaguirre
President



Mesoamerican Reef Leadership Program (MAR Leadership)

15 Years Developing Agents of Change Across the Region

In 2025, MAR Leadership celebrated 15 years proving that its training model transcends generations and borders. We supported four ventures from the 2023 cohort, strengthening their business models and providing guidance on marketing and branding, legal matters, strategic alliance-building, and funding pathways to scale their impact across the region.

In June, the 2025 cohort began, focused on public policy and comprised of 15 decision-makers from the MAR. Throughout their training, participants designed legislative proposals, water security strategies, and payment-for-ecosystem-services frameworks. Fourteen participants successfully completed the program, laying the groundwork for advancing structural change across the territory.

As part of the 2025 cohort closing, our partners at the International Conservation Caucus Foundation (ICCF Mexico) organized the public policy dialogue “Voices for the Mesoamerican Reef: Toward a Regional Agenda Grounded in Science, Cooperation, and Legislation” at the Senate of the Republic in Mexico City. At this event, Sureste Sostenible presented MAR Leadership, while MAR+Invest partners shared updates on the state of the MAR and its financing mechanisms.

In October, in Cancún, Quintana Roo, we celebrated the program’s 15th anniversary – a gathering that brought together 41 leaders from across the program’s 11 cohorts and 7 international experts. The event sparked 94 new alliances around key topics including restoration, sustainable tourism, fisheries, and environmental education.

Looking ahead to 2026, the program will consolidate a MAR+Invest learning community, drive the scaling of the most advanced ventures, and strengthen the public policy proposals with the greatest potential for implementation.

15
Leaders trained in the 2025 cohort

93%
Successful graduation rate

94
New alliances formed at the 15th anniversary



Kanan Kay Alliance (KKA)

Community-Based Fisheries Governance

In 2025, the Kanan Kay Alliance carried out 63 interventions in fishing communities across the Yucatán Peninsula, reaffirming its role as a key space for the responsible management of small-scale fisheries. A highlight was the support provided to the Management Committee for the submission of a technical study that supports the establishment of a new Fisheries Refuge Zone (FRZ) in the Manatee Sanctuary in Quintana Roo. This study, the result of a participatory process with scientific evidence, was submitted to the National Commission of Aquaculture and Fishing. If approved, it would be the first FRZ within this state-protected natural area. Collaborative science advanced through nine biological monitoring efforts in partnership with institutions including Universidad Marista, Comunidad y Biodiversidad, the Mexican Institute for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture Research in Campeche, and community groups. The Denuncia Pesquera 2.0 app was also consolidated, promoting participatory monitoring and shared responsibility for the care of fisheries resources.

At the institutional level, the Coordinating Committee¹ – the governance body that guides the KKA’s operational decisions – was renewed, internal bylaws were updated, and the formation of a scientific committee was initiated. A diagnostic funded by the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) identified strong local leadership, but also gaps in financing, staffing, and monitoring, reinforcing the need to continue strengthening community governance.

At the 5th Latin American Summit on Fisheries and Aquaculture Sustainability, the KKA, in collaboration with the Small Grants Program (SGP) and Comunidad y Biodiversidad, facilitated a dialogue session with representatives from coastal communities across the Yucatán Peninsula and other states including Sinaloa and Baja California Sur. The main outcome was a joint declaration defining community priorities for FRZ management. In addition, the map of “KKA Members’ Community Fishing and Tourism Projects” was presented, a cartographic tool that highlights responsible management practices and leadership.

436
People benefited (143 women and 293 men)

63
Collaborative actions in fishing communities

1
Technical study to establish a new FRZ



Kaanbal Suut

Capacities That Endure, Communities That Move Forward

In 2025, Kaanbal Suut faced a challenging operational context that demanded greater efficiency and creativity in the use of resources. It was also a period that confirmed the strength of collaboration. We supported 97 people – 69 women and 28 men – from 32 organized groups on the Yucatán Peninsula through three training processes focused on tax compliance, community security, and the ethical use of artificial intelligence.

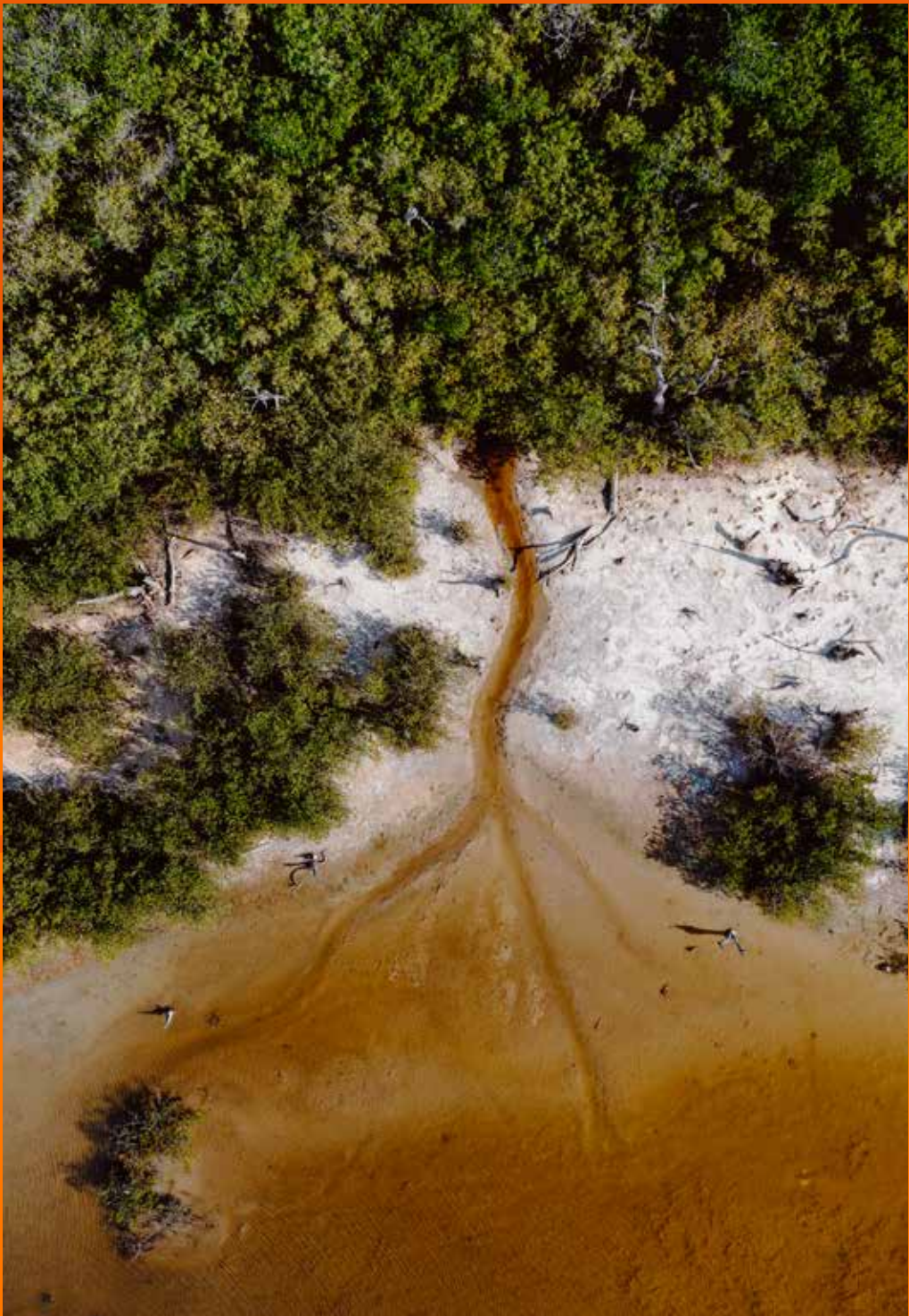
In April, 34 people received training on the 2025 Fiscal Miscellaneous Resolution and the obligations of authorized donees, reinforcing the importance of keeping documentation and accreditations up to date. In addition, 15 people – mostly women – participated in the workshop titled Community Security for Women Defenders, facilitated by the Project on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ProDESC, for its acronym in Spanish), which addressed comprehensive protection strategies in high-risk contexts. Meanwhile, 48 people from 15 groups strengthened their capacities in the safe and strategic use of artificial intelligence tools.

Challenges such as limited connectivity and digital literacy gaps persist, but so does the growing commitment among organizations to professionalize their work. Thanks to the support of partners like ProDESC and the collective effort of all involved, we were able to maintain the quality and reach of the program in a demanding environment.

97
People who received
training (69 women and
28 men)

3
Workshops delivered

32
Groups strengthened



Sustainable Communities for Climate Action in the Yucatán Peninsula (ACCIÓN)

The Year the Dream Came True

On March 18, 2025, the Green Climate Fund approved the Sustainable Communities for Climate Action in the Yucatán Peninsula (ACCIÓN) project. It is the most ambitious initiative we have undertaken to date, aimed at strengthening the climate resilience of communities and ecosystems across the region, with a long-term vision.

Following its approval, we held a planning workshop with the Mexican Fund for the Conservation of Nature (FMCN, for its acronym in Spanish) to review indicators, budgets, and coordination mechanisms. In May, we signed a regional agreement and began drafting the subsidiary agreement for fund disbursement. In August, we received formal authorization to launch the project, marking its official start and consolidating its transition from the design phase to implementation.

From then on, we activated the project's operational structure: we held monthly meetings with FMCN, launched and concluded the call for project coordination, securing its hiring, and advanced in building work agendas with

the governments of Yucatán, Campeche, and Quintana Roo, as well as with the National Autonomous University of Mexico.

The challenges for 2026 include strengthening capacities in safeguards, harmonizing methodologies among federal and state actors, and defining clear pathways for community co-implementation. However, the technical, financial, and institutional foundations are firmly established. ACCIÓN is already underway.

ACCIÓN seeks to strengthen the climate resilience of communities and ecosystems across the region, with a long-term vision.



Joining Forces Toward the Regional Agenda



Sureste Sostenible strengthened its role in the spaces where the region's environmental agenda is being built. The Alliance for the Yucatán Peninsula – made up of seven civil society organizations, including Sureste Sostenible – mapped 77 regional projects, which allowed for the identification of synergies between organizations and state agencies, as well as the development of thematic plans in agriculture, livestock, fisheries, beekeeping, community governance, conservation, and restoration. Water quality, mangrove restoration, land-use planning, and community tourism were consolidated as priority areas for joint advocacy.

We also participated in all three meetings of the Yucatán Peninsula Regional Climate Change Commission, strengthening coordination across the three states.

Our presence extended to strategic spaces including the Subnational Governments Climate, Biodiversity and Just Transition Summit, the Blue Carbon Dialogue Table at the Chamber of Deputies, the Network of Environmental Funds of Mexico (RedFAM, for its acronym in Spanish) capacity-building workshops, and the Latin American Impact Investment Forum, contributing to positioning a regional vision of sustainable development.

Growing from Within



2025 was also a year for strengthening our internal foundation. We launched a specialized human resources consultancy that allowed us to update job profiles, adjust the salary scale, and implement, for the first time, a 360-degree evaluation, which gathers feedback from multiple perspectives. This tool gave us a comprehensive view of the team's performance and areas of opportunity, strengthening internal communication and consolidating a culture of continuous improvement.

In July, we held our annual team retreat, during which we reviewed strategic progress, refined internal processes, and strengthened administrative and financial capacities. We also dedicated time to team well-being, grounded in the conviction that a strong organization starts with caring for the people who make it possible.

On the financial and governance front, we reaffirmed our commitment to transparency and operational excellence. We concluded the external audit of our 2024 financial statements with a positive opinion. We renewed our NGO-source Equivalency Determination, a recognition that strengthens the confidence of international foundations. We also maintained our Institutional and Transparency Accreditation from the Mexican Center for Philanthropy. This certification validates that we operate with high standards of transparency, legality, and good governance, based on ten indicators that serve as a benchmark for donors and companies in Mexico. We consistently comply with our tax and regulatory obligations, strengthening our position as a reliable organization prepared to manage large-scale resources. In addition, we opened new offices in Mérida, a space designed to foster collaboration, efficiency, and institutional growth.

To request our financial statements, contact Lourdes Barrera at: elena.barrera@surestesostenible.org



Collaboration Moves Us Forward

Board of Directors

- José Luis Funes, President
- Vicente Ferreyra, Secretary
- Alejandra Serrano, Treasurer
- Evelia Rivera, Board Member

Oversight Committee

- Laura Santana, Commissary

Ethics Committee

- María del Carmen García
- Minerva Rosette
- Sébastien Proust

Operations Team

- María Eugenia Arreola, Executive Director
- Lourdes Barrera, Administrator
- Aileen Fernández, ACCIÓN Coordinator
- Janet López, Accounting Assistant
- Noelia Morell, Project Officer
- María Fernanda Onofre, Project Officer
- Mariana Ordiales, Technical Analyst
- Laura González, Kanan Kay Alliance Coordinator
- Luis Quijano, Kanan Kay Alliance Field Officer
- Sergio Marcos, Kanan Kay Alliance Field Officer

Operational Support

- Lorena de la Rosa, Consultant

KKK Coordinating Committee

- Israel Molas, Sociedad Cooperativa Carey
- Mateo Sabido, Instituto de Biodiversidad y Áreas Naturales Protegidas de Quintana Roo
- Méline Soto, Healthy Reefs for Healthy People
- Minerva Alonso, Centro para el Desarrollo y la Pesca Sustentable
- Mirian Martin, Fundación Haciendas del Mundo Maya
- Pastor Contreras, Secretaría de Pesca y Acuacultura Sustentables de Yucatán
- Raziel Villegas, Fundación Claudia y Roberto Hernández.

Donors

- Fondo Mexicano para la Conservación de la Naturaleza (FMCN)
- Green Climate Fund, through FMCN
- Mesoamerican Reef Fund (MAR Fund)
- Global Fund for Coral Reefs, through MAR Fund
- The Summit Foundation
- The David and Lucile Packard Foundation
- The Walton Family Foundation
- Alternativas y Capacidades
- Builders Vision Philanthropy (formerly Builders Initiative)
- The Nature Conservancy

Credits

Photography

- Cover: Ulises Vera - FMCN
- Page 3: Blackday
- Pages 4, 5, 7, 8: Sureste Sostenible
- Pages 6, 9: Cookie Maestri
- Page 10: Miracle Moments
- Page 11: Secretaría de Medio Ambiente, Biodiversidad, Cambio Climático y Energía (SEMABICCE)
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