



## CURRICULUM VITAE

**NAME** María Elena Martínez Murillo Cuervo

**NATIONALITY** Mexican

**LANGUAGES** Spanish - Fluent  
English - Fluent

### EXPERTISE

Maria is a consultant with 20 years of experience in the agricultural sector and sustainable rural development in Latin America. Her areas of expertise include value chains, innovation networks, climate smart practices and stakeholder engagement to foster conservation and economic opportunities in the rural sector in Latin America. She is founder and Director of Strategink, a consulting firm on sustainable rural development and strategic planning.

She worked for The Nature Conservancy in Mexico and North Central America under several roles and served as Undersecretary of Rural Planning in Jalisco, where she developed a comprehensive agenda for key value chains, innovative capacity building strategies and stakeholder engagement. Earlier, she was Executive Coordinator for the Diagnosis of Property Rights in Mexico at the Ministry of Social Development (SEDESOL) in collaboration with the Federal Office of the Presidency. She also served at the Federal Commission for Regulatory Improvement (COFEMER).

Her experience in the private sector includes working as Project and Content Coordinator for the Mexico Business Forum (MBF), an associate firm in Mexico of the Economist Intelligence Unit and being a content analyst at TV Azteca. She holds a BA on International Relations from ITAM, a MA on Development Economics with specialization in Agriculture and Sustainability from The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University; she studied the MA program in Politics and Public Policy at ITESO. Maria was awarded the Fulbright-García Robles scholarship.

### QUALIFICATIONS

#### **The Fletcher School, Tufts University**

*Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy (M.A.L.D.)*

- Fields of study: Development economics and sustainable agriculture
- Certificate in International Sustainable Development
- Thesis: "The innovation process in the Mexican agricultural sector: three case studies"
- Awarded **Fulbright García-Robles** scholarship and 40% **The Fletcher School** scholarship

**Medford, Massachusetts**

2011-2013

#### **Instituto Tecnológico de Estudios Superiores de Occidente (ITESO)**

*M.A. in Politics and Public Administration*

**Guadalajara, Mexico**

2006-2008

#### **Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México (ITAM)**

*B.A. in International Relations (Special mention)*

**Mexico City**

1997-2002

### EMPLOYMENT

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#### **Consultant on sustainable rural development**

Projects include:

- *Mexico Private Sector Landscape Assessment (PSLA)*. Environmental and Value Chain Expert. *Client: IBTCI/USAID*

**Mexico City**

April 2018 - YTD

- *Analysis of the deforestation determinants and forest degradation in the AFOLU sector for the States of Chihuahua, Coahuila, Durango and Nuevo León.* Client: BioCarbon Fund-World Bank.
- *Design of collaboration platforms for sustainable ranching with private sector in Nicaragua.* Client: TNC
- *National Climate Change Strategy for Natural Protected Areas. Lead Consultant to update through desk review, consultations, and workshops.*
- *Analysis of tropical forests and biodiversity in Mexico.* Team leader. Client: IBTCI / USAID Mexico
- *Technical senior advisor. REDD+ Investment Plans and State Strategy, Chiapas, Mexico.* Client: TNC
- *Diagnosis of Sustainability Criteria. Smallholder Farmer Program.* Client: Technoserve/ Fundación Walmart Mexico
- *Design and development of two online courses for sustainable ranching in Mexico and Argentina's Gran Chaco Region.* Updated versions. Clients & partners: IICA, CATIE, UNAM / IICA, TNC and IADB.
- *Analysis for investment promotion in restoration activities and climate smart rural development.* Client: IUCN
- *Strategic planning for COBIOCOM, a cultural and biological corridor in 8 states of Western Mexico.* Client: Reforestamos México

### **The Nature Conservancy**

**Mexico City**

*Interim Lands Director & Chief of Party, MREDD+ project*  
2018

*September 2017 – February*

- Lead the development of strategies for sustainable landscapes in Mexico and North Central America.
- Established and maintained key relationships for the Lands program, both internally and externally.
- Lead a team of 11 core staff and supervised technical and financial achievement of goals for MREDD+ project in Mexico, a 970k grant plus several matching funds.
- Developed international funding proposals for the program.
- Coordinated with TNC's Latin America Lands Unit for alignment of conservation and productivity strategies & outcomes.

*Sustainable Intensification Specialist*  
2017

*July 2015 – August*

- Promoted high-level commitments for increasing agricultural productivity, integrating small-holder farmers and achieving conservation outcomes in TNC priority areas in Mexico in alignment with international goals.
- Lead the development of key tools, analyses, and agreements, such as the public-private Agreement on Sustainability for Yucatan Peninsula where the state governments and 70 companies signed.
- Coordinated with TNC's Lands Regional Unit in Latin America and with the Latin American Conservation Council, a group of multinational companies with sustainability commitments in the region

*Monitoring and Evaluation, REDD+ Project*  
2015

*October 2013 - July*

- Technical evaluation, planning and reporting process for the project.
- Designed the strategy for sustainable agriculture for the entire program, a 30 million grant from USAID. Oversaw and followed-up for its implementation, including decision-making platforms and maps, collaboration agreements (CIMMYT, CONAFOR, SIAP), measurement and proposals to scale-up field projects.

### **Ministry of Rural Development, State Government of Jalisco**

**Guadalajara, Mexico**

*Under minister of Planning*

*2009-2011*

- Defined with the Minister and other Directors the public policy top 25 priorities. Articulated and communicated policies, working plans, teams, and milestones to fulfill those goals.
- Established and managed the organization's USD \$ 77,000,000 annual budget in accordance with strategic issues. Negotiated budget with the different areas of the Ministry and with agricultural stakeholders. Integrated final proposal and supported the Minister for approval at the Governor's office, at local Congress and with Federal Ministries.
- Achieved a shift from 100% untargeted subsidies to 75% targeted and project-oriented budget.
- Interfaced regularly with strategic agricultural companies, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, the Governor's cabinet, farmers, universities, research centers and development agencies.
- Started up pioneer projects (e.g., geo-referenced repository of climate, productive parameters and market data for decision making at several levels).

- Directly managed a staff of 20 people, managers, and professionals, four programs and an annual budget of USD \$10,000,000.

*Director for Special Projects* 2009

- Established and monitored five new strategies directed to springboard the seven most important products in Jalisco (account for 70% of the State's value in agriculture).
- Planned such initiatives and high impact projects through research agendas in coordination with other stakeholders.

*Project Manager, Consultancy Project appointed by the Rural Development Minister*

- Designed instruments and crafted proposals for institutional change and improvement of the organization. Implemented such recommendations in coordination with the Minister and Departments.
- Analyzed and proposed new processes for key public programs. Interviewed and documented the profile of 800 employees.
- Coordinated a team of three analysts.

**MBF Consultants, an associate of Economist Intelligence Unit** **Mexico City**

*Project and Content Coordinator* 2005 – 2006

- Tailored public policy and political advisory services on business environment and institutional reform that the firm delivered to NGOs, public and private organizations (e.g. Shell and Young & Rubicam) in the form of reports and integration of task groups with advisory experts.
- Supervised contents for programs developed by the firm in conjunction with Economist Conferences.
- Coordinated two support analysts and an external senior advisor.

**Ministry of Social Development (SEDESOL), Mexican Federal Government** **Mexico City**

*Executive Project Coordinator – Diagnosis of the Mexican informal sector* 2004

- Led logistics and participated in negotiations for hiring *Instituto Libertad y Democracia*, a Peruvian NGO.
- Documented the process and personally delivered briefings to the parties (Inter American Development Bank, Office of the Mexican Presidency, and private consultants).

**Federal Commission on Regulatory Improvement, Mexican Federal Government** **Mexico City**

*Head of Department* 2003

- Participated in the Federal regulatory simplification initiative through a consulting and participatory process with Business and Commerce Chambers, Office of the Mexican Presidency and COFEMER.
- Led the communication strategy of the Commission's achievements.
- Designed and oversaw the internal strategy for the Commission's compliance of transparency Federal mandates, according to the newly passed law.

**MBF Consultants / Economist Conferences** **Mexico City**

*Support staff for roundtables and content development* 2002-2006

- Supported five Roundtables with the Government of Mexico (with the participation of the President and his cabinet, presidential candidates, governors, business leaders and analysts), and more than 20 meetings with prominent figures in politics and economics.

**Seminar “The International Experience of Political Transitions”** **Mexico City**

*General coordinator of lectures, speakers, and logistics* 2002

- Organized for Partido Acción Nacional (PAN) Parliamentary Group after it was elected the first opposition party to rule in 70 years

## OTHER ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE AND RELEVANT TRAINING

**Mashav Program** **Shefayim, Israel**

*Climate change and its influence on agriculture* June 2011

- Participant in a two-week seminar and field work, by invitation of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Israel and the Israel Meteorological Service. 20 participants from 15 different countries

**United States of America, Guatemala and  
Mexico**

2006- 2019

***The Liberty Fund Colloquiums***

*Academic participant by invitation*

One of sixteen attendants to discuss relevant topics on public policy and political philosophy.