Clear Horizon

CURRICULUM VITAE

Milena Gongora, Principal Consultant

Overview of Expertise

Milena is an evaluation specialist with 15 years expertise in natural resource management, sustainable agriculture, and environmental conservation in the areas of policy development, program design and evaluation. She has been involved in complex programs from climate adaptation in the Mekong River basin to water quality improvement in the Great Barrier Reef. Former Associate Director of Water Quality at the Great Barrier Reef Foundation, she contributed to the program design and developed and implemented MEL frameworks for multi-million-dollar programs, including the $200M Reef Trust Partnership Water Quality program (2019-2025).

Working in Queensland since 2010, Milena holds deep familiarity with the complexities of agriculture and how these may affect program delivery. Her hands-on experience spans roles across diverse organisational contexts including state government, NRM organisations, agricultural industry bodies, and non-profit organisations. This multi-perspective experience enables her to navigate complex stakeholder relationships and understand varied institutional drivers.

With a realist approach to monitoring and evaluation, Milena focuses on transformative learning that improves environmental programs.

Qualifications & Training

2023   Qualitative Methods for Evaluation – University of Melbourne

2023   Most Significant Change Evaluation; and Evaluating Systems Change and Place-Based Approaches – Clear Horizon Academy

2019   Designing and Implementing Monitoring and Evaluation Systems – Australian Evaluation Society

2013   Facilitation and Conflict Resolution Training – Planning Partnerships

2012   Masters in Natural Resource Management - University of Queensland

2003   Masters in Information Technology - University of Queensland

2001   Bachelor in Science (Hons), Major in Marine Biology - University of Queensland

Project Experience

Program and evaluation design and implementation

Milena is an experienced manager and evaluator of large-scale complex programs, including:

- $200M Reef Trust Partnership Water Quality program with the Great Barrier Reef Foundation (2019 – 2025). Designed and implemented the Monitoring Evaluation and Learning framework for the program, using a combination of models and biophysical measurements alongside qualitative methods to demonstrate water quality improvements and understand farmer behaviour change.
- Grazing Resilience and Sustainable Solutions (GRASS) program evaluation for the Reef Water Quality Program, Office of the Great Barrier Reef (2024 – 2025) with the Alluvium Group. Contributed to the design, implementation and analysis of the end of program evaluation of GRASS 1 and mid-term evaluation of GRASS 2.
- $46M Reef Alliance project with the Queensland Farmers' Federation (2017 – 2019). Managed and evaluated an industry led water quality improvement project, which included engaging farmers and other stakeholders across the Reef catchments.
- $8M (annually) Paddock to Reef program with Reef catchments and NRM Regions Queensland (2010 – 2017). Coordinated the program and managed engagement with regional stakeholders (NRMs and industry). Consulted and facilitated forums to obtain data and communicate findings, as well as mediated sensitive negotiations around data provision.
- Greater Mekong Programme, with World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) (2009 – 2010). Planned and co-facilitated consultation workshops with diverse participants from governments, NGOs, community groups and financial institutions across Southeast Asian countries around issues relevant to climate change adaptation policy.

Facilitation and communication

Milena is an experienced facilitator and communicator, having planned and lead workshops on theory of change, MEL frameworks and participatory evaluation as well as undertaken stakeholder consultation. Some recent examples have been:

- Embracing the L in "MEL": A Journey Towards Participatory Evaluation in Government Programs, Speaker on Australian Evaluation Society Webinars (2025)
- Sugarcane program evaluation workshops – designed and facilitated five participatory workshops as part of the Reef Trust Partnership Water Quality Improvement Program, Great Barrier Reef Foundation (2024)
- Lecture: Environmental Planning – Using Behaviour Change to Improve Water Quality in the Great Barrier Reef, QUT Guest Lecturer (2024)
- Reflections on the Eastern Cape York Water Quality Improvement Program – a participatory workshop to make sense of the evaluation findings and lessons learned, Great Barrier Reef Foundation's (2024)
- MEL Framework and Program Logic design for the Eastern Cape York Water Quality Improvement Program, Great Barrier Reef Foundation's (2020)

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Positions held

2025	Now	Principal Consultant, Clear Horizon
2019	2025	Associate Director of Water Quality Program, Great Barrier Reef Foundation
2024	2025	Senior Consultant, Alluvium Group
2017	2019	Project Manager, Reef Alliance, Queensland Farmers' Federation
2011	2017	Paddock to Reef Program Coordinator, NRM Regions Queensland/Reef Catchments
2010	2011	Principal Project Officer, Office of the Queensland Chief Scientist
2009-2010 Programme		Climate Change Support Officer, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Greater Mekong

Memberships

Australian Evaluation Society (AES)

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