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Tenth Meeting of the Scientific and Technical  
Advisory Committee (STAC) of the Protocol  
Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife  
(SPA/W) in the Wider Caribbean Region

Virtual, 30 January – 1 February 2023

**PROJECT UNDER DEVELOPMENT: CARIBBEAN MARINE  
MEGAFUNA AND ANTHROPOGENIC ACTIVITIES (CAMAC)**

*This meeting is being convened virtually. Delegates are kindly requested to access all meeting documents electronically for download as necessary.*

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## CAMAC PROJECT: CARIBBEAN MARINE MEGAFaUNA AND ANTHROPOGENIC ACTIVITES

Submitted by SPAW RAC to INTERREG CARIBBEAN call for project N°2

### PROJECT SUMMARY

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1. The CAMAC project is a **response to a need clearly identified in several SPAW recommendation documents** drafted in recent years to strengthen knowledge and regional collaboration in order to act together effectively for the conservation of the threatened Caribbean marine megafauna (marine mammals, sea turtles, elasmobranchs and seabirds). The general objective of this 5 years project is to **provide the governing bodies of the Caribbean and environmental stakeholders with tools and recommendations aimed at reducing the impacts of human activities on large marine fauna in the region**. The specific objectives are as follows: 1) **enhance knowledge** on Caribbean marine megafauna; 2) **assess the issues** (environmental and socio-economic) **relating to interactions between human activities and marine megafauna**; 3) **strengthen regional cooperation and stakeholders' capacities** (especially via the strengthening of already existing regional networks); 4) strengthen **adherence to issues** relating to the conservation of megafauna and the marine heritage in general **among young people in the Caribbean**; 5) **make recommendations** to national and regional governing bodies aimed at supporting the implementation of the most appropriate possible conservation policies and actions. To achieve these goals, the following actions are planned: fishermen interview surveys, a regional aerial survey, capacity building, strengthening marine megafauna regional networks, mapping hotspots of interactions between human activities and marine megafauna, inter-territorial school twinning programme, and the creation of a regional advisory scientific and technical committee for the project. This project was submitted to INTERREG Caribbean fund, a cooperation program

aiming at strengthening Caribbean cooperation between European French territories and other Caribbean territories and states, notably for protecting and promoting the natural and cultural environments.

## 1 PROJECT SYNTHETIC DESCRIPTION

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2. Marine megafauna, which includes marine mammals, sea turtles, elasmobranchs and seabirds, in addition to its key role in the functioning of marine ecosystems, has always been a source of food, economic development (fishing and tourism) and cultural inspiration for the inhabitants of the Caribbean. However, these species are often in interaction with human activities and particularly vulnerable to their impacts, that is why many of them are currently listed in the IUCN red list of threatened species. **The CAMAC project is a response to a need clearly identified in several SPAW recommendation documents** drafted in recent years to strengthen knowledge and regional collaboration in order to act together effectively for the conservation of the threatened Caribbean marine megafauna<sup>1</sup>.
3. **The overall objective of the CAMAC project is to provide the governing bodies of the Caribbean and environmental stakeholders with recommendations and tools to reduce the impacts of human activities on the marine megafauna in the region.**
4. The specific objectives are the following:
  - Enhance knowledge on the marine megafauna in the Caribbean (marine mammals, sea turtles, seabirds, sharks and rays);
  - assess the issues (environmental and socio-economic) relating to interactions between human activities and marine megafauna;
  - strengthen regional cooperation and stakeholders' capacities (notably by reinforcing already existing networks);
  - strengthen adherence to issues regarding the conservation of megafauna and the marine heritage in general among young Caribbeans, via an inter-territorial school twinning programme;
  - make recommendations to national or regional governing bodies aimed at supporting the implementation of the most appropriate possible conservation policies and actions.

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<sup>1</sup> e.g., SPAW RAC (2020) Implementation of the Action Plan for the Conservation of Marine Mammals (MMAP): A Scientific and Technical Analysis ([UNEP\(DEPI\)/CAR WG.42/INF.29 Add.1](#)); SPAW species Working Group (2020) Recommendations for the protection and recovery of the Caribbean sea turtles ([UNEP\(DEPI\)/CAR WG.42/INF.39](#)); SPAW species Working Group (2020) Effective national legal protection and regionwide management of sharks and rays ([UNEP\(DEPI\)/CAR WG.42/INF.24](#)).

5. **Regional cooperation is one of the keys** for successfully carrying out this objective. In effect, due to its great mobility, marine megafauna makes up an emblematic natural heritage shared by all the countries and territories of the Wider Caribbean region. This vulnerable heritage needs to be promoted and protected in a collaborative manner.
6. This **5 years project** will be divided into two phases:
  - Phase 1 (2023): implementation of a limited number of actions in a limited number of territories; **development of collaborations** in preparation of phase 2, via the networks of SPAW RAC (the Regional Activity Center of the Specially Protected Area and Wildlife Protocol of the Cartagena Convention) and OECS (Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States);
  - Phase 2 (2024-2028): **implementation of actions** at a regional level (see map in chapter 2).
7. The project will be organised in five work packages (WP) and the SPAW RAC will lead or contribute to four of them:
8. **Work package 1: Strengthen links with the fishing sector and assess the socio-economic and environmental issues related to interactions with marine megafauna.**
9. In Phase 1 (first year), three principal actions will be implemented: creating a scientific and technical advisory committee for the action, with notably fishing stakeholders; drawing up a mapped status report of regional fishing activities and potential overlap with marine megafauna, based on existing data; identifying priority areas for knowledge enhancement.
10. In Phase 2 (years 2 to 6), the status report will be completed and fine-tuned by field surveys with willing fishermen (interviews and embarkments). A regional protocol will be set up for the field surveys, with the scientific and technical advisory committee, and local agents will be trained to conduct the surveys on their territory. The final report will present the most significant areas of overlap between fishing activities and marine megafauna, along with recommendations to limit the socio-economic and environmental impacts of their interactions.
11. **Work package 2: Enhance knowledge and monitoring of human-origin impacts on marine mammals and marine turtles via the stranding networks.**
12. In phase 1, the actions will focus on the Caribbean marine mammal stranding networks identified during the CARIMAM project<sup>2</sup>, and will include: drawing up a standard regional

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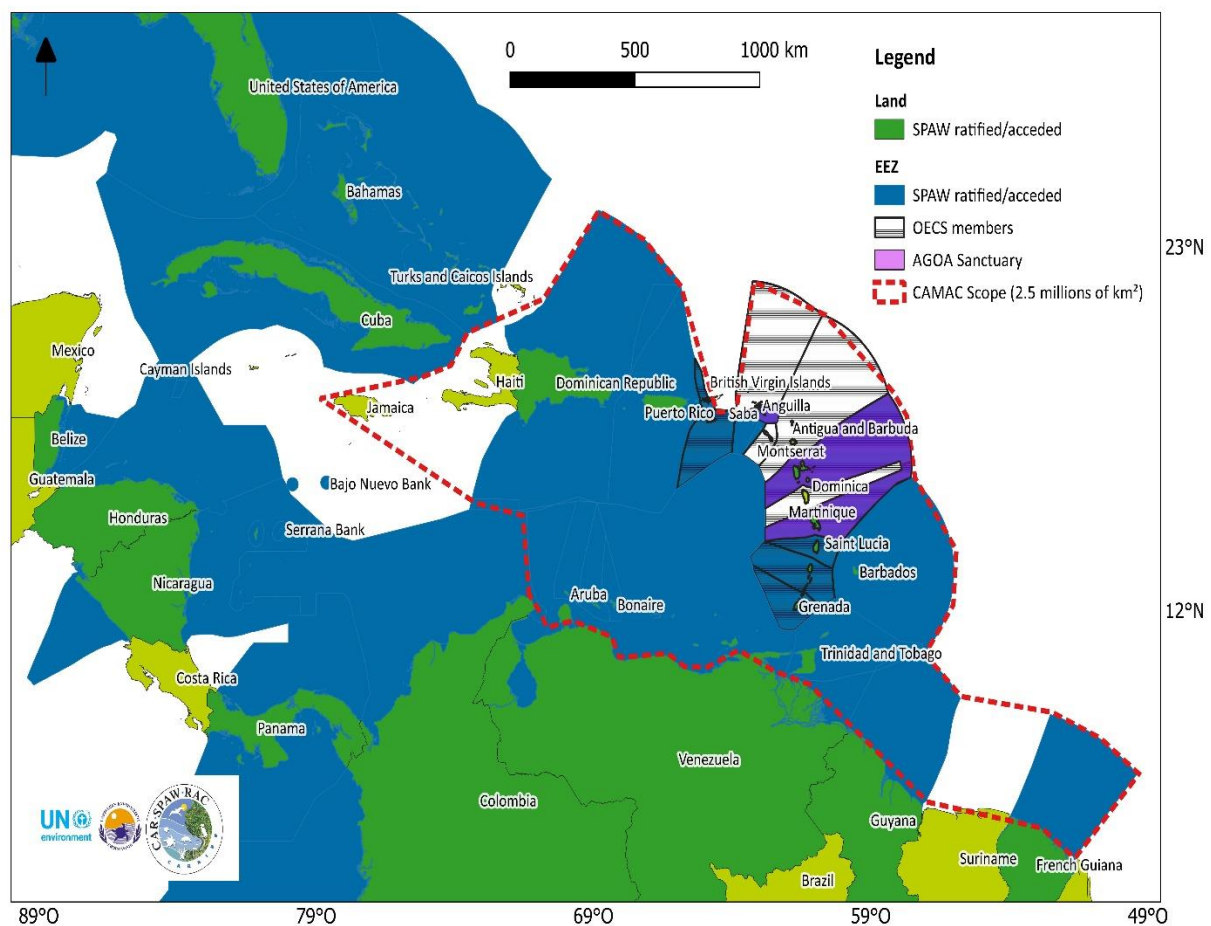
<sup>2</sup> [The Caribbean Marine Mammals Preservation Network project was co-financed by INTERREG Caribbean between 2018 and 2021 and was led by the Agoa sanctuary and the SPAW RAC.](#)

protocol on data collection and stranding response; creating a training kit; organising capacity-building workshops; supplying equipment.

13. In Phase 2, actions will be extended to sea turtle stranding networks of the Caribbean Region.
14. **Work package 3: School exchanges: raising awareness on preserving marine megafauna and marine environment in general and strengthening environmental education skills.**
15. This WP is based on the preparation of a twinning program between high school classes of the Caribbean around marine mammals and the protection of the marine environment in general. Phase 1 will include the inventory, translation and dissemination of educational tools on the marine environment of the Caribbean and in particular the megafauna, as well as the creation of a twinning educational program. In parallel, ministries and other local authorities of education, as well as volunteer teachers and educational NGOs in the Caribbean will be contacted to prepare twinning agreements between schools (prospective: St. Martin, Guadeloupe, Dominica, Martinique, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Grenada, Guyana).
16. Phase 2 will aim to put into practice the twinning between classes, with work throughout the school year with the teachers, school trips between twinned classes, activities, correspondence.
17. The SPAW RAC will not be involved in this work package.
18. **Work package 4: Strengthen knowledge on the biodiversity, abundance, and distribution of marine megafauna of the Caribbean Region via notably regional aerial surveys.**
19. The establishment of an ambitious regional scientific survey requires the commitment of many territories. Phase 1 of this work package will therefore focus on collaboration development: bilateral diplomatic exchanges and regional workshops (via the SPAW RAC and OECS) will be organised to seek the endorsement of the territories, and a scientific and technical advisory committee will be created with territorial organisations to define the protocols and logistic needs for phase 2.
20. Phase 2 will be the materialising of Phase 1, with effective scientific monitoring over the EEZs of partner territories, along with training in protocols for local agents and students involved in fieldwork. The scientific reports from these surveys will aim at orienting large marine fauna conservation policies, both regionally and locally.
21. **Work package 5: Management, communication and project facilitation**
22. This WP includes management and project facilitation and communication actions.

## 2 SCOPE OF THE PROJECT

23. The project will be carried out in an area including all the Lesser Antilles, and also, to the west, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Jamaica, and to the southeast the EEZs of the countries and territories of the Guiana Plateau (see map below).
24. This project has a **strong regional ambition**. To achieve this, it will be necessary to seek the endorsement of the countries and territories, as well as the involvement of the field stakeholders. It will therefore be necessary to devote a significant amount of time to developing and formalising these collaborations. For this reason, phase 1 (year one) of the project will be devoted both to the implementation of a few actions in a limited number of territories and to the development of collaborations via the networks of the SPAW RAC (the Regional Activity Center of the Specially Protected Area and Wildlife Protocol of the Cartagena Convention) and the OECS (Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States). Phase 2 (years 2 to 6) will be entirely dedicated to the implementation of large-scale actions.



### 3 PARTNERSHIP AND BUDGET

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25. The lead Partner of the project will be the Agoa Sanctuary - Office français de la biodiversité (OFB, French Office of Biodiversity) in close collaboration with the SPAW RAC.
26. Other partners have committed to participating in the project, such as: the OECS (Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States), the Regional Council of Guadeloupe (CRG), WECAFC (Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission), the Institute of Marine Affairs (RAC of the Cartagena Convention for Land-based sources of pollution), WIDECAS (Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network), the Pelagis Observatory (University of la Rochelle, France), the NGOs Haiti Ocean Project (HOP), Aruba Marine Mammal Foundation, and Mon Ecole Ma Baleine (MEMB), the University of Technology of Jamaica, the DCNA (Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance). This list will be expanded with the development of the collaborations.
27. During phase 1, SPAW RAC and the Agoa sanctuary will be the only direct beneficiary partners (co-funded partners); however, the other partners will benefit from the project through the implementation of the actions. Besides, with the development of collaborations, a number of non-beneficiary partners from Phase 1 may become direct beneficiaries of the project in Phase 2.
28. The total budget of the project is 750 000 € for phase 1 and 4.5 million euros for phase 2. If it is awarded INTERREG Caribbean, it will be co-financed by 75% by these fundings.
29. [INTERREG Caribbean](https://www.interreg-caraibes.com/program-interreg-caribbean)<sup>3</sup>, which has existed since 2000, is a cooperation program aiming at strengthening Caribbean cooperation between European French territories (Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Martinique and Saint-Martin) and other Caribbean territories and states, notably for protecting and promoting the natural and cultural environments.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.interreg-caraibes.com/program-interreg-caribbean>