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Seventh Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) to the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities in the Wider Caribbean.

Virtual, 22-25 July 2025

Draft Work Plan of RAC IMA (2026-2027)

RAC IMA WORK PLAN 2026/2027

SUBMITTED BY

INSTITUTE OF MARINE AFFAIRS

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BACKGROUND

The work plan includes ongoing projects and activities from the Regional Activity Centre of the Institute of Marine Affairs (RAC IMA) 2023-2025 biennium and proposed projects and activities for the 2026-2027 biennium. These ongoing projects includes those of the small scale funded agreement (SSFA) between IMA and UNEP (2022) based on the project/programme, Capacity Building Related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements in African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries (ACP MEAs III) and Global Environment Facility CReW+ Project: An integrated approach to water and wastewater management in the Wider Caribbean Region using innovative solutions and sustainable financing mechanisms (GEF CReW+).

The development of the work plan considered recommendations of previous Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) Meetings of the LBS Protocol, Decisions of Conferences of Parties (COPs) to the LBS Protocol, and Decisions of the Cartagena Convention COPs. Feedback and recommendations from Contracting Parties to the LBS Protocol, and the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on Monitoring and Assessment also informed the development of the work plan.

Decision V of the Fifth Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP) to the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS) in the Wider Caribbean Region endorsed the Medium-Term Strategic Plans presented by RAC IMA and RAC CIMAB and further requested the development of biennial work plans to be presented to the Scientific, Technical and Advisory Committee (STAC).

Decision 1 of the Sixth Meeting of the Contracting Parties (LBS COP6) Encourage continued integration of the AMEP and SPAW sub-programmes in the implementation of the 2023-2024 work plan and budget including on strengthening linkages on issues such as Nutrient pollution and its impacts on Sargassum and Marine Biodiversity, as well as between the LBS Protocol and the work of all the Regional Activity Centres (RACs) of the Cartagena Convention.

The work plan will support the Assessment and Management of Environmental Pollution (AMEP) Sub-Programme of the Cartagena Convention Secretariat, the implementation of the Medium-Term Strategy for the Cartagena Convention (2022-2030), and other regional strategies that have been adopted by Parties including the Regional Marine Litter Strategy and Regional Nutrients Pollution Reduction Strategy. These support the continued development of the Land Based Sources of Marine Pollution (LBS) Protocol and assist Non-Contracting and/or Contracting Parties in overcoming barriers to ratification, accession and/or implementation of their national obligations to the Cartagena Convention and specifically the LBS Protocol. It further reflects continued efforts by the LBS RAC and Cartagena Secretariat to integrate relevant activities of the SPAW and AMEP Sub-Programmes and facilitate greater cooperation among Regional Activity Centres (RACs) and other agencies that form part of Regional Activity Networks (RANs).

WORK PROGRAMME

1.1 A. Programme Coordination and Management

Strategic objectives:

- Assist the Cartagena Convention Secretariat in strengthening regional and national governance mechanisms, where appropriate; resource availability and capacity for the implementation of and compliance with the Cartagena Convention, the Oil Spills, SPAW and LBS Protocols; and approved regional strategies and/or action plans on pollution.
- Strengthen synergies and collaboration among RACs, international and regional partners, and organizations active in the Wider Caribbean region, and enhance broad stakeholder participation in the design and implementation of projects and activities.

Main activities:

- Promote ratification of the LBS Protocol by Non-Contracting Parties
- Organize meetings/workshop (online or face to face) between Contracting parties and Non-contracting parties to share experiences and lessons learnt on the process of ratification and implementation of the LBS Protocol.
- Support in organizing LBS STAC, LBS COP and meetings of the Open-Ended Working Group.
- Support Development of National Pollution Reduction Strategies.

1.2 B. Land and Marine-Based Sources of Pollution

Strategic objective:

- Control, prevent and reduce marine pollution from land and as appropriate, marine-based sources.

This will be achieved by:

1. Assisting Parties with implementation of their obligations under the Land-Based Sources of Marine Pollution and Oil Spills Protocols and related regional strategies on Marine Litter and Nutrients.
2. Developing, and/or updating and/or implementing of new/existing regional and/or national strategies and action plans including complying with guidelines, standards and criteria.
3. Supporting further discussions on issues raised during the seventh LBS STAC meeting, such as water classification guidelines and regional criteria for nitrogen and phosphorus.
3. Enhancing national marine pollution prevention and control policies, legislation and regulations, where appropriate.
4. Ongoing implementation of National and Pilot projects with a focus on addressing marine litter, agrochemical run-off and wastewater management, while contributing to new, alternative and sustainable livelihoods.
5. Identifying and addressing new and emerging issues such as microplastics, wastewater impacts, and potential links between nutrients and Sargassum.

C. Monitoring and Integrated Ecosystems Assessment

Strategic objective:

- Improve Science-Policy Interface by enhanced generation and use of pollution related data and information for more informed decision making.

This will be achieved through:

1. Development of a more comprehensive integrated State of Convention Area Reports on Marine Pollution with expansion on monitoring capabilities for microplastics and other pollutants.
2. Continued integration of the AMEP and SPAW subprogrammes on strengthening linkages on issues such as Nutrient pollution and its impacts on Sargassum and Marine Biodiversity.
3. Developing/Strengthening national pollution monitoring programmes and facilitating professional and technical exchanges.
4. The Secretariat, the RACs and OEWG and subgroups in collaboration with REMARCO and IAEA, will work on the development of regional protocols for monitoring microplastics in the water column and sand.
5. Update CReW+ clearinghouse mechanism on financial options, small- and large-scale wastewater treatment technologies, and wastewater and water management policies and practices developed
6. Strengthening of RAC IMA capacities in order to improve the clearinghouse mechanism related to wastewater treatment technologies, and wastewater and water management policies and practices developed
7. Providing training and capacity building in collaboration with partners in areas such as wastewater effluent monitoring, classification of recreational waters, developing behavioural change programmes focusing on pollution reduction and reuse of treated wastewater, monitoring impact of run-off & poor land-use practices; and in the identification and tracking of priority pollutants to the environment.

1.3 D. Knowledge Management and Communications

Strategic objectives:

- Strengthen knowledge and awareness on best practices, lessons learned and appropriate technologies for the control, reduction and prevention of marine pollution;
- Compile, analyze and present pollution related data and information for informing policy and decision-making in the Wider Caribbean Region;
- Enhance visibility of the LBS Protocol including value and relevance to the region and general population;

Main activities:

- Provide support to Contracting Parties to facilitate the process of national reporting obligations on pollution indicators linked to Global MEAs, where appropriate.
- Promote/Identify research and educational programmes in cooperation with academic and research institutions, focusing on control, reduction and prevention of marine pollution.
- Support the further development of national and/or regional databases and information platforms relating to resource management and impacts of pollution on economies.
- Support the implementation of the Communications Strategy of the Secretariat.
- Facilitate exchange of best practices, lessons learned through partnerships and experience between and among Contracting Parties.
- Facilitate implementation of relevant global campaigns on nutrients, marine litter, wastewater and other issues relevant to the LBS and Oil Spills Protocols, as appropriate.
- Improve Communication and Outreach with LBS Focal Points.

The draft work plan 2026/2027 for RAC IMA is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: DRAFT RAC IMA WORK PLAN 2026/2027

Project Name and Code	Activity	Dates of Activity	Objective(s)	Source of Funds	Budget (USD)	Recipients/ Participants	Outputs
	Further development of potential Regional Standards for N and P in domestic and industrial wastewater	2026-2027	[Support Contracting Parties in the implementation of the regional nutrient pollution reduction strategy and action plan in countries of the Wider Caribbean Region at national and regional levels	Unfunded		RAC IMA RAC CIMAB, Cartagena Convention Secretariat LBS Focal Points	Additional information to guide proposal for parameters and limits for domestic wastewater identified. National discharge standards for industrial effluent to facilitate improved management of coastal and marine waters developed.
	Further development of potential Regional Standards for Reuse of Domestic Wastewater	2026-2027	Provide support to Secretariat in convening an meeting of the OEWG, subject to the availability of resources to discuss and review: proposed domestic wasterwater discharge parameters and limits in the WCR and effluent limits in Class I and Class II waters.	Unfunded		RAC IMA RAC CIMAB, Cartagena Convention Secretariat LBS Focal Points	National discharge standards for industrial effluent to facilitate improved management of coastal and marine waters developed. Potential Regional Standards for Reuse of Domestic Wastewater Developed.

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	Capacity development for Contracting Parties	2026-2027	To support implementation of the LBS Protocol	Unfunded		RAC IMA RAC CIMAB, Cartagena Convention Secretariat LBS Focal Points	Meetings/Technical Workshops/Training by Secretariat/RACs Project development based on needs of Contracting Parties, etc.
Global Eutrophication Monitoring (GEM-in-a-Box) This initiative seeks to develop and provide a cost-effective kit, known as 'GEM-in-a-Box' that can be used to monitor nutrient levels and eutrophication risk, generating comparable, standardized global-scale datasets that can help communities make more informed	Monitoring coasts of Trinidad and Tobago for coastal eutrophication	2025-2026	To investigate eutrophication of coastal waters of Trinidad and Tobago through the monitoring of its indicators using the GEM in a box program.	The Ocean Foundation, Fisheries and Oceans Canada	5000	RAC IMA	Report of results collected using the GEM-in-a-box kit and comparison with results collected using traditional methods.

Project Name and Code	Activity	Dates of Activity	Objective(s)	Source of Funds	Budget (USD)	Recipients/ Participants	Outputs
evidence-based decisions.							
Marine Space Remote Sensing in Trinidad and Tobago The use of remotely sensed products, such as optical and SAR imagery and oceanic variables for marine pollution surveillance including oil spill detection and monitoring, sargassum tracking and trajectory modelling and ocean health monitoring for ecosystem management.	Daily oil spill monitoring by IMA, and MEEI in waters of Trinidad and Tobago Proposed expansion to other areas of the Caribbean region including the Eastern and Southern Caribbean. Currently started Grenada in June 2024, and will expand to include St Vincent and the Grenadines in July 2025.	Ongoing PSIP allocation started 2022/2023 for 3 years Currently requesting 1 year extension, pending confirmation	To train staff in Trinidad and Tobago to detect and monitor for oil spills in region. To link oil spills with suspected sources by satellite monitoring. To upscale and expand initial Marine Surveillance Programme in Trinidad and Tobago for the wider Caribbean Region. Purchase of equipment, reagents and consumables, GIS software and Licences	Trinidad and Tobago Government (currently), would need further funding	504,000.00 Breakdown below 144,000 for 1 tech/year 72,000 for software licences	SAB NOAA, RAC IMA, RAC REMPEITC, MEEI, EMA, Cartagena Convention Secretariat Focal points of LBS protocol	Oil spill remote sensing capabilities for the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of Trinidad and Tobago. (ongoing) Trained staff in Trinidad and Tobago to monitor for oil spills in region (Eastern and Southern Caribbean). (completed, ongoing for legacy planning_ Oil pollution reports on oil spills in region (ongoing). A remote sensing water quality assessment product for the Trinidad and Tobago EEZ. (to be launched fiscal 2025/2026, if extension is granted)

Project Name and Code	Activity	Dates of Activity	Objective(s)	Source of Funds	Budget (USD)	Recipients/ Participants	Outputs
Trinidad and Tobago and subsequent upscaling in the wider Caribbean Region			for monitoring and ground truthing remotely sensed information. Training and application of drone technology in marine pollution monitoring.				Sargassum detection product for Trinidad and Tobago and the wider region. (detection programme to be launched in May/June 2025)
Prevention of Marine Litter in the Caribbean Sea (PROMAR) – Promoting Circular Economy Solutions in Trinidad and Tobago	Activity 1- Analyse Material Flows and Establish Monitoring Mechanisms 1.1 Conduct a stakeholder consultation; select a demonstration site and the most suitable monitoring methodology. 1.2 Collect data through on-site sampling (e.g. drone sampling and physical shoreline debris survey) and identification/ quantification of sources.	January 2025-November 2026	Analyse material flows and establish monitoring mechanisms at selected demonstration sites.	German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, and Nuclear Safety (BMU) Project Cooperation Agreement between	Total Project Budget $612,014	RAC IMA (Technical Partner for Implementation). Main Implementing Organisation- Adelphi; Implementing Partner- CCS/ UNEP CEP; Government/Ministries, Ministry of Planning, Economic	Reduction in the flows of plastic waste (mainly single-use plastic and packaging materials) from terrestrial sources into aquatic environments in the Caribbean Sea. OUTPUT 1: Monitoring systems are anchored in local and/or central public authorities at selected demonstration sites in Trinidad and Tobago. OUTPUT 2: Circular economy solutions are implemented at selected demonstration sites to achieve measurable reductions in plastic waste entering aquatic environments. OUTPUT 3: Capacities of Government/Ministries, are strengthened to implement EPR systems, and/or policy instruments for managing packaging waste, replicate pilot cases beyond the selected

Project Name and Code	Activity	Dates of Activity	Objective(s)	Source of Funds	Budget (USD)	Recipients/ Participants	Outputs
	1.3 Carry out material flow analyses as baselines of waste entering aquatic environments based on collected data at the selected demonstration site. 1.4 Prepare a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)/ Guidance Document including lessons learnt during the monitoring exercises. 1.5 Conduct training on the SOP/ Guidance Document for relevant stakeholders. Activity 2- Implement a Pilot Case for Marine Litter Prevention 2.1 Conduct a stakeholder consultation; select the most suitable tools and	January 2025-November 2026	Implement a pilot case for marine litter prevention, and document success stories and lessons learnt.	UNEP and RAC IMA		Affairs and Development.	demonstration sites. and engage in transnational policy dialogue OUTPUT 4: Awareness of stakeholders on marine litter prevention is enhanced and contributes to behavioural change.

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	technologies from the Toolbox developed under the project for prevention of marine litter at the demonstration site. 2.2 Implement a pilot case for reduction of waste entering aquatic environments through circular economy solutions in partnership with local communities, informal workers, public and private actors. 2.3 Document the pilot case, capture success stories and disseminate lessons learnt. Activity 3- Capacity-Building and Transnational Policy Dialogue	January 2025-November 2026	Strengthen capacities of Government/Ministries to implement EPR systems and/ or policy instruments, and				

Project Name and Code	Activity	Dates of Activity	Objective(s)	Source of Funds	Budget (USD)	Recipients/ Participants	Outputs
	3.1 Strengthen capacities of Government/Ministries to implement EPR systems and/ or policy instruments for managing packaging waste and national initiatives. 3.2 Facilitate south-south learning on EPR between public and private stakeholders in Latin America (e.g. exchange with Chile as case study) and the Wider Caribbean Region (e.g. small island states). 3.3 Participate in capacity-building and transnational policy dialogue on marine litter prevention and management of packaging waste. Activity 4- Stakeholder Awareness and		engage in transnational policy dialogue				

Project Name and Code	Activity	Dates of Activity	Objective(s)	Source of Funds	Budget (USD)	Recipients/ Participants	Outputs
	Information Dissemination 4.1 Organise three awareness-raising events on waste prevention (e.g. beach and river clean-ups to collect marine debris). 4.2 Conduct surveys and evaluations to assess knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) on marine littering amongst stakeholders from civil society, the public and private sector, as part of events and stakeholder interactions. 4.3 Disseminate public awareness and education material on marine litter prevention, developed as part of the project, to local stakeholders.	January 2025-November 2026	Enhance stakeholder awareness and disseminate information on marine litter prevention				

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National Coastal Conservation Programme: Long Term Environmental Monitoring and Assessment in Trinidad and Tobago	On-going water, water quality monitoring. Parameters include, physiochemical (pH, temperature, Dissolve oxygen, salinity, turbidity) nutrients (ammonia, nitrites, nitrates, reactive and total phosphates), total suspended solids, chlorophyll a, and, hydrocarbons.	Sampling conducted during the dry and wet 2026/2027 at 6 inland and 12 marine sites Gulf of Paria, Trinidad.	Monitoring programme established to provide timely and continuous data and information on the environmental status and impacts of Trinidad and Tobago so as to effect policy changes/making for the improvement in the quality of life of citizens and preservation of our natural environments. To assess the contribution of land- based sources of pollution in Trinidad	Government of Trinidad and Tobago	5,000	Trinidad and Tobago, IMA	Data used towards producing a State of the Marine Environment Report 2020 for Trinidad and Tobago. Research Reports Water quality data for future SOCAR reports.
National Coastal Conservation Programme Bacteriological Water Quality at Popular Recreational Water-Use Sites in Trinidad and Tobago	Bacteriological Water Quality Surveys at popular bathing beaches along all the coasts of Trinidad and Tobago.	Bacteriological Water Quality Surveys during the wet and dry season of 2026 to 2027	To identify possible sources of sewage contamination for beaches surveyed for mitigation measures. To provide data and information to safeguard public health from risk of illness and infectious disease.	Government of Trinidad and Tobago	10,000	Trinidad and Tobago, IMA	Data used towards producing a State of the Marine Environment Report 2020 for Trinidad and Tobago. Research Report- Bathing beach water quality at various beaches in Trinidad and Tobago Water quality data for future SOCAR reports.

Project Name and Code	Activity	Dates of Activity	Objective(s)	Source of Funds	Budget (USD)	Recipients/ Participants	Outputs
			To ensure representative bacteriological water quality data is obtained at popular beaches				
Monitoring of coral reef and seagrass beds in Trinidad and Tobago	Coral reefs in Tobago are monitored annually to determine changes in % coral cover Productivity and biomass of seagrass beds at selected sites in Trinidad and Tobago are monitored 2 times per years	Ongoing	To monitor ecosystem health and determine impacts from land-based sources of pollution and acute disturbance events such as marine heat waves, disease outbreaks and storm damage Inclusion of disease assessments and coral recruitment surveys as indicators of impacts related to pollution. Sedimentation analysis on the reef (carried forward from 2023. To provide timely and continuous data and	Government of Trinidad and Tobago	10,000 (annually)	Trinidad and Tobago	Publication on the sedimentation analysis at monitoring coral reefs sites in Tobago Publication on the coral disease prevalence and trajectory in Tobago (2022 – 2025) Publication on coral recruitment trends in Tobago in conjunction with the Marine Resilience Initiative Tobago project (2023 - 2025). Data is contributed to the IMA's State of the Marine Environment Report and in implementing T&T ICZM Policy Framework (2023)

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	Water quality sampling (nutrient, TSS, chl A, bacteria) is conducted at 12 sites in SW Tobago twice per year. Water quality sampling at 4 sites along the NW peninsula of Trinidad is collected 2 times per year Maintenance of 2 Coral Reef Early Monitoring System (CREWS) installed in 2013 Planning and installation of new CREWS system, building on efforts by NOAA and 5C's Outfitting of new instrument with water quality probes		information on the environmental status and impacts of Trinidad and Tobago so as to affect policy changes/making preservation of our natural environments. To monitor coral reefs systems for detection of environmental conditions linked to degradation and risk to coral reef health.				Data on ecosystem health that is shared with Management Agencies such as THA.