

SUMMARIES OF MEETINGS OF THE OEWG AND NUTRIENTS AND MICRO PLASTIC SUB-GROUPS

Meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) and Thematic sub-groups to the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol) to the Cartagena Convention

4 April, 2024

9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. (GMT-5)

1. Welcome:

The Chair of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) welcomed everyone to the meeting which commenced at 9:07am. He apologized for the delayed start and acknowledged that not all working group members would have been able to attend this meeting due to it being rescheduled. He invited the Secretariat to say a few words and review the proposed agenda. The AMEP Programme Manager presented the draft agenda for the consideration of the Working Group members. She proposed including the review of minutes of the last OEWG meeting to the agenda and indicated that an item related to Global Partnership of Nutrient Management (GPNM) was to be considered under any other business.

The Chair indicated that he wanted to bring some issues forward for the consideration of the OEWG. This included the working modality of the working group, particularly the proposed subgroups. He suggested that both the working groups and subgroups could consider setting up shared drives which would allow members to have access to information and documents previously shared by Chair and Secretariat and to allow simultaneously work on the shared documents.

2. Comments on Summary of Last Meeting:

The Chair noted that since the meeting summary was shared days before the meeting, any comments on the draft summary of the last OEWG meeting could be sent to the Chair and the Secretariat no later than 12 April 2024. The Chair then reviewed the action points that emanated from the last OEWG meeting. The OEWG members agreed on dates to finalize pending action points. For more information on this matter, please refer to the action points section.

3. Agenda Item Updates and feedback on actions

The following items were discussed under this agenda item:

3a. Work Plan development:

The Chair referred to the action item in the summary report of the last OEWG which called for the development of a short-term indicative work plan for the working group. He noted that the Secretariat had prepared a draft work plan with input from him. The meeting then reviewed and revised as necessary the proposed activities listed in the work plan, along with the associated timeframe. The revised work plan is attached to this meeting report. During the review and revision of the draft work plan, it was noted

that some of the activities listed were very specific whilst others were very broad. The meeting acknowledged that whilst it was possible to be specific for some activities, this was not possible for other activities, which were dependent on other activities being completed before they could commence. Regarding activities to be led by RACs IMA and CIMAB on the small-scale funding agreements (SSFA) projects, the Chair indicated that the two RACs would meet to agree on specific timeframes of the project activities and produce a draft for review by the working group members.

It was further acknowledged that the work plan would be a working document which would be updated as necessary.

In relation to the thematic sub-groups, the meeting acknowledged that there was previous agreement on the establishment of a nutrient and wastewater standard subgroup and an information management subgroup as defined in the OEWG TORs. However, the Chair indicated that additional discussion was required in relation to the thematic areas to be considered under the emerging issues subgroup. Some of the topics which were proposed by members included microplastics, sargassum and early warning systems. It was also suggested that the thematic areas which are to be considered under the emerging issues sub-group could be considered as needed. Specifically, when certain expertise is required to provide guidance on a specific area, a thematic group can be established to provide guidance on the topic. The Chair further proposed that all subgroups should have a lead who would be, amongst other things, responsible for convening meetings of the subgroups and coordinating the work of the subgroups, including meetings of the specific thematic areas within the emerging areas subgroup.

3b. TORs of OEWG

The meeting agreed that any additional comments on the OEWG TORs, which were recently developed, will be shared by 12 April 2024.

3c. finalizing the areas of focus of the Sub-Groups – WG

The following subgroups were discussed and agreed to during the meeting:

- a. Nutrient & Wastewater Standards Subgroup
- b. Information Management Subgroup
- c. Emerging areas subgroup thematic areas:
 - a. Microplastics
 - b. Sargassum
 - c. Early Warning Systems

4. Presentation of other Updates (meetings, activities) -Chair /Secretariat/WG

The AMEP Programme Officer informed the meeting that the Cartagena Convention Secretariat was invited to participate in a Project Steering Committee Meeting of an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) funded project being implemented to support REMARCO. She noted that laboratories within REMARCO were undertaking monitoring and analysis of several environmental parameters that could be of interest to the Cartagena Convention Secretariat. As such, it was advantageous to strengthen the partnership arrangement with them. She also suggested that the OEWG may wish to invite REMARCO (possibly represented by INVERMAR) to present at a meeting of OEWG and/or LBS STAC. In relation to the IAEA project, she noted that the project consisted of four or five components. She further went on to indicate that the component on microplastics was very relevant as IAEA would also be undertaking a project in the English-speaking Caribbean focusing on agriculture and food safety, but that one of the project components would also address the issue of microplastics. Based on foregoing, she noted that IAEA would be providing capacity support to most of the convention area to monitor microplastics. The



representative from Colombia requested more information on the project that was developed to support the REMARCO network and it was suggested that INVERMAR would be best placed to provide this update once the project is being fully executed.

The AMEP Programme Officer also informed the meeting that the regional environmental monitoring data portal (REMDAP) developed as part of the GEF UNEP IWEco Project was recently launched as part of the IWEco Project Final Partners Meeting which took place in March.

The OEWG Chair informed the meeting that he represented the OEWG at the Sargassum Working Group meeting of the SPAW Protocol which took place on 22 March. He noted that the Working Group was not too clear on its expected mandate. To assist them better define the mandate of the Working Group, it was agreed that a questionnaire should be sent out to countries asking them to prioritize the areas of focus. Example questionnaires developed by the OEWG in the past related to water classification and the nutrient strategy were shared as potential examples. The Chair further noted that his participation in the Sargassum Working Group meeting was a step towards the integration of the SPAW and LBS Protocols as articulated through a COP Decision.

The Chair also informed the Working Group that he attended a meeting on the Tobago Oil Spill. One of the topics which was discussed was the issue of waste management of oil, which was noted to be lacking in the region. He noted that the storage and remediation of the waste associated with oil spills was at times more costly than the clean-up and removal of the waste at the oil spill areas. As such, he wondered if a regional plan for waste associated with oil spills exists and if this issue was something that the OEWG may wish to consider in the future. The representative from Barbados indicated that the issue of a regional waste management plan should be addressed by RAC REMPEITC and suggested that the Secretariat may wish to bring this to their attention. The Secretariat informed the meeting that RAC REMPEITC would be having a Steering Committee meeting in May and that the Secretariat would be represented by Mr. Corbin. It was noted that these issues raised by the Working Group would be shared with Mr. Corbin so that he could raise them during the meeting.

5. Any Other Business

The Chair informed the meeting that the Global Partnership of Nutrient Management (GPNM) had written to the Secretariat indicating that they are interested in renewing the GPNM Steering Committee and were looking for interested candidates from our region. The Chair went on to share the responsibilities expected of the Steering Committee Member, as well as the requirements which included that the candidate be endorsed by their government or organization and be fluent in English. Interested persons were asked to reach out separately to the Chair.

6. Decision on next meeting date

The OEWG agreed that meetings of the Working Group should take place every 8 weeks. Noting this and the previous agreement to have the meeting of the Thursday of the second to last week of month, the next meeting of the Working Group is proposed for the 23 May, 2024.

With no other matters down for discussion the meeting was adjourned at 10:32

Action Items	By When
OEWG members provide updates to the OEWG members list which was circulated	12 April

OEWG members to share comments on the Summary Report from 20 February Meeting	12 April
OEWG members to share any comments on the OEWG TORs	12 April
RACs CIMAB and IMA to meet to discuss status of projects activities and dates of expected outcomes under their SSFAs and provide information for development of work plan	End of April

Participants List:

Name	Country/Organisation
Anthony Headley	Barbados
Felicia Adams-Kellman	Guyana
Darryl Banjoo	Trinidad and Tobago
Hugh Sullivan	United States of America
Troy Pierce	United States of America
Marlen Pérez Hernández	RAC CIMAB, Cuba
Luisa Fernanda Espinosa	INVERMAR, Colombia
Paola Obando	INVERMAR, Colombia
Denise Beckles	University of the West Indies, St Augustine, LBS Regional Activity Centre- Institute of Marine Affairs (IMA)
Marko Tosic	Universidad EAFIT, Colombia
Wendy Nelson	LBS Regional Activity Centre- Institute of Marine Affairs (IMA)
Laverne Walker	Cartagena Convention Secretariat

Meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) and Thematic sub-groups to the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol) to the Cartagena Convention

23 May, 2024

9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. (GMT-5)

1. Welcome:

The Chair called the third meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) and Thematic sub-groups to the LBS Protocol to order at 9:05 (GMT-5) on Thursday 23 May 2024. He welcomed working group members to the meeting and noted that a few of the members sent their apologies for not being able to attend. These included: Mr. Lugdiwine Burtshell (France); Ms. Marlen Pérez Hernández (RAC CIMAB); Mr Deanish Ramsewk (UTT); and Marko Tasic (Observer). He then reviewed the proposed meeting agenda and asked if there were any comments. With no comments on the meeting agenda, the Chair moved to the next agenda item.

2. Comments on Summary of Last Meeting:

The representative from INVERMAR noted that in the previous meeting summary report, REMARCO was referenced as a project instead of a network and that this should be corrected. The Chair informed the INVERMAR representative that the change would be reflected in the meeting summary.

3. Agenda Item Updates and feedback on actions

The Chair then asked the Secretariat to provide feedback to the meeting on the following subitems under this agenda item:

3a. Work Plan development:

The Secretariat informed the meeting that RAC CIMAB had shared comments on the draft work plan and that these comments had been incorporated into the version which was sent to the OEWG members prior to the meeting. She noted that the amendments reflected changes to the timeframe of certain activities, as these were dependent on work which was to be advanced by both RAC CIMAB and IMA. This was reiterated by the Chair who informed the meeting that the two RACs met after the last OEWG meeting to discuss the status of the documents and agree on dates of outputs that were referenced in the work plan.

3b. TORs of OEWG

The Secretariat informed the meeting that RAC CIMAB had submitted comments on the TORs for the LBS OEWG and that these comments were shared with the working group prior to the meeting. She noted that the comments recommended that certain paragraphs in the TORs be broadened to avoid specific references to reports, meetings, and topics. After some discussion on the way forward, it was agreed that

the Secretariat would write the members of the LBS OEWG to ask if there was agreement to broaden the language of the TORs. If there was an agreement to advance in this way, the working group could possibly consider establishing a smaller drafting group to come up with proposed language which would then be shared with the wider working group.

3c. Review of draft documents from RACs

The Chair informed the meeting that draft reports produced by RAC IMA on classification of waters and standards and criteria for wastewater were previously shared with LBS Focal Points for their comments, however no input was received. It was noted that the reports would be reshared with members of the LBS OEWG and that written comments received will be amalgamated and shared with the working group for their consideration. The Chair reiterated the importance of the LBS OEWG reviewing documents that are referenced as agenda items and in the workplan.

3d. LBS Working Group Members & Expert Nominees updated list

The Secretariat informed the meeting that there was most interest in the Nutrients and Wastewater Subgroup. It was also noted that no nominees were received for the Information Management Subgroup. The UWI representative stressed the importance of the latter subgroup. In relation to the thematic groups under the Emerging Issues Subgroup, the microplastics thematic area had the most interest, followed by *Sargassum* and finally the early warning systems thematic area.

As a result of the increased interest in the Nutrients and Wastewater Subgroup, the Secretariat suggested that it could be the first subgroup to start working and that when it was well established, the working group could consider moving forward with the other subgroups. Members of the Working Group noted that all the subgroups were important but agreed to start with the Nutrients and Wastewater Subgroup and the microplastics thematic area under the Emerging Areas Subgroup.

In relation to *Sargassum* thematic area, the meeting agreed that nominees to that thematic areas should participate in the *Sargassum* working group which is being convened by SPAW RAC. The Secretariat agreed to inform the SPAW working group and further noted that the last COP called for increased integration amongst the two Protocols on the issue of *Sargassum*.

4. Mode of activity of working groups/subgroups on thematic areas, expected outputs, time, lead of groups.

The Secretariat informed the meeting that some members of the OEWG had requested additional information regarding the subgroups and thematic areas before identifying nominees. Specifically, information regarding the focus of the thematic areas and subgroups, outputs and the amount of time members would be required to commit to the group were requested.

In relation to the nutrients and wastewater subgroup, the Chair indicated that one of the tasks of the subgroup would be to review and provide comments on the documents that RACs IMA and CIMAB would be producing under the small-scale funding agreements (SSFA) with the Cartagena Convention Secretariat. He also suggested that the subgroup could work on providing a literature review and report of nutrient reduction strategies done in Caribbean region such as water reuse, demonstration projects and lessons learnt to assist the RACs in implementation of project 9 of the SSFA.

In relation to the microplastics thematic areas, Dr Mohammed, the UWI representative suggested that the subgroup may wish to prepare a paper outlining where studies on microplastics have occurred in the

region, including hotspot areas which we may need to pay greater attention to. The Chair also suggested that the subgroup may also wish to review the region's capabilities for undertaking microplastic assessments and compile methodologies for assessing the concentration of microplastics in water, sediments and biota which would be an important component in the next state of the area convention report (SOCAR).

The representative from INVERMAR noted that the IAEA regional project had a microplastics component and that it was seeking to develop regional protocols, as well as define a platform where the information could be stored. She went on to note however that it was first necessary to determine how to better align and integrate the different microplastic activities being undertaken in the region. It was suggested that this could be assessed as part of the microplastic subgroup.

In reference to further defining the scope, and outputs of the two subgroups, the Chair agreed to convene a meeting of the Nutrients and Wastewater subgroup and the microplastics thematic area, prior to the meeting of the next LBS OEWG.

5. Presentation of other Updates (meetings, activities) -Chair /Secretariat/WG.

The Secretariat informed the meeting that the Coordinator of the Cartagena Convention Secretariat attended the 11th Ordinary Meeting of the Steering Committee of RAC REMPEITC CARIBE. It was further noted that the Steering Committee endorsed the creation of a working group to review and update the Caribbean Island Regional OPRC Plan which should be presented to the 12th Ordinary Meeting of the Steering Committee in 2026.

The Chair informed the meeting that he had attended the second meeting of the Sargassum working group. He noted that the working group was working on a questionnaire which would be administered to working group members to better understand how the Sargassum blooms were impacting countries' ability to successfully implement their obligations under the SPAW and LBS Protocols. He also informed the meeting that from 6-10 May an expert from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) had undertaken an assessment of IMA's hydrocarbon laboratory to determine its current state of testing due to the recent oil spill in Trinidad and Tobago and provided recommendations for improved results for water, sediment and biota quality.

6. Any Other Business

The meeting was informed by the Secretariat of an invitation from IOCARIBE to be part of a core group to establish a regional working group on Ocean Data and Information (ODI). The communication referenced the issue of microplastics, particularly the support which will be afforded to the region, both Latin America and CARICOM by the IAEA. Further, the Secretariat noted that it was important to see how linkages could be made to the Secretariat's own Regional Platform and the State of Convention reports. Further information about this working group will be sourced from IOCARIBE.

7. Decision on next meeting date

Noting the agreement by the Working Group to convene meetings every 8 weeks, the Chair informed the meeting that the next meeting of the LBS OEWG was scheduled for Thursday, 25 July 2024.

With no other matters down for discussion the meeting was adjourned at 10:28.

Action Items	By When
Secretariat to send communication to LBS OEWG members asking if they are in agreement to make the TOR language broader based on the recommendations of RAC CIMAB	30 May
Secretariat to reshare the draft documents sent to LBS Focal Points to LBS OEWG members for their review and input.	30 May
Chair to convene meetings of the Nutrients and Wastewater subgroup and Emerging Areas – microplastics thematic subgroup prior to the next OEWG meeting	No date given in meeting. Suggested week of 10 th June 2024.

Participants List:

Name	Country/Organisation
Darryl Banjoo	Trinidad and Tobago
Lisa Kirland	Jamaica
Daniela Wojtalewicz	United States of America
Hodayah Finman	United States of America
Hugh Sullivan	United States of America
Troy Pierce	United States of America
Yamiris Gomez	Cuba/RAC CIMAB
Paola Obando	INVERMAR
Luisa Fernanda Espinosa	INVERMAR
Cesar Bernal	INVERMAR
Denise Beckles	UWI
Azad Mohammed	UWI
Jhenelle Barrett	Cartagena Convention Secretariat
Laverne Walker	Cartagena Convention Secretariat

Meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) and Thematic sub-groups to the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol) to the Cartagena Convention

25 July, 2024

9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. (GMT-5)

1. Welcome:

The Chair called the fourth meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) and Thematic sub-groups to the LBS Protocol to order at 9:15am (GMT-5) on Thursday 25 July 2024. Whilst the Chair indicated that apologies were received by Mr. Anthony Headley, Barbados, Ms. Marlen Perez, CIMAB, Ms. Wendy Nelson and Dr Maurice Narcis both from IMA, attendance to this fourth meeting of the LBS OEWG was low, with the meeting lacking a quorum. Noting this, the Chair asked participants if they were willing to go forward with the meeting. The participants agreed to continue with the meeting but noted that no decisions were to be taken and the meeting would be primarily to share information. Annex 1 presents the email with proposed agenda for the meeting on July 25th 2024.

2. Agenda Item Updates and feedback on actions

The following items were discussed under this agenda item:

2a. Revised Work Plan:

The Secretariat informed the meeting that RAC CIMAB had proposed some changes to dates in the OEWG Work Plan which were a result of an amendment to the timeframe to complete some of the deliverables being developed by RACs CIMAB and IMA and which are to be reviewed by the members of the OEWG.

2b. TORs of OEWG (updates, inclusion on role of observers)

The Chair informed the meeting that RAC CIMAB was supportive of the US's comments related to the original suggestions proposed by CIMAB on the TORs for the LBS OEWG. The representative from Jamaica also expressed support to the comments shared by the US. The Secretariat also informed the meeting that the Cartagena Convention Secretariat would be undertaking a consultancy to analyse the existing governance structure and functioning of Working Groups established under the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols and propose guidelines for their operations in accordance with the Rules of Procedure for the Cartagena Convention and recommendations on how they could be strengthened for supporting the work of the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols. It was noted that the recommendations from this consultancy could inform how the working group moves forward in revising their TORs. The Chair indicated since the meeting did not have a quorum, the decision on how to approach the revision of the TORs would be postponed till the next meeting.

2c. LBS Working Group Members & Expert Nominees updated list

The Secretariat informed the meeting that since the last meeting of the LBS OEWG, more recommendations for members to both the OEWG and subgroups were received and are reflected in the latest version of the list shared. She informed the meeting that the master list was shared with the Chair and the Sub-Group Leads so that they could also edit the document.

2d. LBS and SPAW integration on working group.

The Chair asked the Secretariat to provide an update on this agenda item. The Secretariat informed the meeting that she had spoken to the SPAW Programme Management Officer and it was agreed that members from the LBS OEWG who indicated interest in the thematic area of Sargassum under the Emerging Issues sub-group could attend meetings of the Sargassum working group being convened by SPAW RAC. She noted that she was to write SPAW RAC informing them of the two LBS OEWG members.

Noting the link between increased nutrient outflow and the Sargassum influx, the Nutrients and Sub-Group lead indicated interest in participating in the Sargassum subgroup. Ms. Lisa Kirkland, Jamaica, and Dr Deanesh Ramsewak, UTT also indicated interest in participating in the Sargassum working group. The representative from the USA noted interest in the US participating in the Working Group but indicated that she would provide the name(s) of their representatives after she confers internally with her colleagues.

3. Updates of working groups, subgroups

The Chair expressed his congratulations to Ms. Paola Obando, Invemar and Dr Marko Tomic, Universidad EAFIT, on being nominated as the two leads for the Microplastics and Nutrients and Wastewater thematic sub-groups respectively.

The Chair then invited Dr Tomic to provide an overview of the work of the sub-group. Dr Tomic informed the meeting that the thematic sub-group would seek to provide technical support, advice and input to the Secretariat and LBS RACs on the implementation of the 2023-2024 work plan. He went on to list some of the tasks the thematic sub-group could focus on including support to the implementation of the Regional Nutrient Pollution Reduction Strategy and Action Plan and the development of regional marine and coastal water quality criteria. He also noted that the thematic sub-group would be required to review and provide input into the integrated reports being prepared by RACs IMA and CIMAB.

Noting that the micro-plastics lead was not at the meeting, the Secretariat informed the meeting that when she and the Chair met with the working group Vice Chair, he indicated an interest in participating in the microplastics thematic sub-group. A coordination meeting between the Chair, Vice Chair, Micro Plastics Lead and the Secretariat was being planned but was unable to take place due to conflicting schedules.

4. Presentation of other Updates (meetings, activities, US EPA Capacity building water quality project,)

The Secretariat informed the meeting that through the support of the US/EPA a new Capacity Building Project on Water Quality was launched virtually on 24 July. The LBS OEWG was represented by the

Chair, and the Leads of the Nutrients and Wastewater Subgroup and the Microplastics thematic area from the Emerging Issues Subgroup.

The Secretariat went on to indicate that this new three-year Capacity Building Project on Water Quality was being co-implemented by UNEP’s Source to Sea Unit and the Cartagena Convention Secretariat. She noted that the project is expected, amongst others, to build capacity at the national and regional level, and specifically in the WCR, including the Gulf of Mexico Coast region, on scaling up sustainable water quality monitoring programs, reporting and management and prevention of pollution from different sources (incl. wastewater and nutrient among others).

The Chair informed participants that the Cartagena Convention Secretariat had convened a meeting with GRID Geneva and the LBS RACs to discuss opportunities for raising awareness of the Cartagena Convention Secretariat’s regional environment monitoring platform which is part of the World Environment Situation Room. The meeting discussed capacity needs required by Contracting Parties to ensure increased use of the platform. It was noted that the new capacity building water quality project could potentially result in countries undertaking increased monitoring at the national level resulting in the increased upload of national data and information to the platform. The link to the regional environment monitoring platform was shared in the group chat of the meeting (<https://wesr.unep.org/>)

5. Any Other Business

The Secretariat informed the meeting that she and the Chair met with the Vice Chair of the LBS OEWG who indicated interest in participating in the meetings but noted that the meeting dates were often not convenient for him.

6. Decision on next meeting date

Noting that the Secretariat will be unavailable on Thursday, 26 September it was suggested that the next meeting of the LBS Working Group could be convened on either Thursday 19 September or Thursday, 3 October and that LBS OEWG members would be invited to indicate their preferred date. The Chair of the subgroup on wastewater and nutrients, Dr Marko Tomic, indicated that the meetings of the sub groups should take place before the meetings of the LBS OEWG.

With no other matters down for discussion the meeting was adjourned at 10:27am.

Action Items
Secretariat to inform SPAW RAC about the members of the LBS OEWG which will be participating in the Sargassum Working Group Meeting
Sub-Group Leads to reach out to Working Group members to determine a date for the subgroup meetings
Secretariat to reach out to LBS OEWG members regarding the date for the next LBS OEWG meeting

Participants List:

Name	Country/Organisation
Darryl Banjoo	Trinidad and Tobago
Oneiro Cherrington	Jamaica
Lisa Kirland	Jamaica

Daniela Wojtalewicz	United States of America
Troy Pierce	United States of America
Marko Tomic	Universidad EAFIT, Colombia
Deanesh Ramsewak	UTT
Laverne Walker	Cartagena Convention Secretariat

Annex 1. Email on meeting agenda for July 25th 2024.

From: Dr Darryl Banjoo

Sent: Monday, July 15, 2024 2:18 PM

Subject: Link and Agenda for Next LBS OEWG meeting Thursday 25th July 2024

Dear Members of LBS OEWG, Colleagues,

Thank you very much for your feedback since our last meeting on May 23rd 2024.

The next meeting is carded for **Thursday 25th July 2024, 9:00am - 10:30am Jamaica time**. Please see below link to meeting.

The draft agenda is as follows:

1. Updates and feedback on action items
 - Revised Work Plan
 - TORs (updates, inclusion on role of observers) -
 - LBS Working Group and Subgroups Members & Expert Nominees updated list.
 - LBS and SPAW integration on working group.
2. Updates of working groups, subgroups
 - update on the Nutrients and Wastewater Subgroup, Status on Review on draft documents from RACs.
 - update on the Emerging Issues - Micro Plastics Subgroup
3. Presentation of other Updates (meetings, activities, US EPA Capacity building water quality project,)
4. Way Forward and next steps -Chair /Secretariat.
5. Any Other Business.
6. Decision on next meeting date (Subgroups, OEWG).

Please find attached the following documents for your reference.

1. LBS Working Group Members and Expert Nominee July 2024.
2. Comments on the Terms of Reference by RAC CIMAB and US.
3. Draft LBS OEWG Minutes 23 May 2024.
4. OEWG Work plan 16/05/24.

Best
Darryl

Chair of the LBS Open Ended Working Group.

Dr. Darryl Banjoo
Senior Research Officer
Environmental Quality Programme
Institute of Marine Affairs
Hilltop Lane, Chaguaramas
Trinidad and Tobago
West Indies
Cell # 868 299-7641
Office# 868 634 4291-4 Ext 1218
Email; dbanjoo@ima.gov.tt, banjoodarryl@gmail.com

Meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) and Thematic sub-groups to the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol) to the Cartagena Convention

3 October, 2024

9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. (GMT-5)

1. Welcome:

The Chair called the fifth meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) and Thematic sub-groups to the LBS Protocol to order at 9:06am (GMT-5) on Thursday, 3 October 2024. Noting that there were some new persons in attendance, the Chair invited them to take the floor. Mr. Juan Saldarriaga introduced himself, noting that he was representing INVEMAR. The meeting was informed that Ms. Paola Obando who had represented INVERMAR in the LBS OEWG would no longer be able to participate due to personal reasons. Ms. Laura Coral also from INVEMAR introduced herself indicating that it was her first time attending the working group meeting and looked forward to participating. Mr. Richard Nelson, Jamaica's National Focal Point for the LBS Protocol also took the floor to indicate that whilst Jamaica was usually represented in the meetings by Ms. Lisa Kirkland, this was the first time he was attending the LBS OEWG. The Vice Chair of the Working Group, Dr. Linroy Christian took the floor as well, noting that this was the first meeting that he has been able to attend for the year. He also reiterated his interest in participating in the microplastics thematic subgroup. The Chair indicated that the representative of France had written to indicate that they would be joining the meeting later.

The Secretariat also introduced Ms. Olga Koubrak, Cartagena Convention Working Groups Review Consultant who joined the meeting as an observer.

2. Confirmation of meeting agenda

The Chair asked the meeting if anyone had any comments on the proposed agenda, which was circulated on 24th September 2024 (Annex A). Receiving none, the Chair acknowledged that the agenda was approved.

3. Update on LBS OEWG work plan, status of consultancies being implemented by CCS on Working Groups

The following items were discussed under this agenda item:

3a. Revised Work Plan:

The Chair provided a brief update on the work plan implementation status, noting that the two regional activity centers (RAC CIMAB and IMA) continued to work to advance on the draft documents that they were to produce as part of the Small-Scale Funding Agreement which are to be initially reviewed by the working group members before being shared more widely amongst LBS Contracting Parties for review. He noted that the RACs had submitted draft Guidelines for the Classification of Waters According to the LBS Protocol to the Nutrients and Wastewater subgroup for their review which would be discussed further in the agenda items of the sub-groups.

3b. TORs of OEWG

The Chair reminded the meeting that RAC CIMAB and the USA had submitted comments on the Working Group TORs. He noted that whilst there was not a quorum during the fourth LBS OEWG meeting held on July 25th, 2024, the meeting recommended that a decision on how to proceed with the TOR revision be deferred to this meeting.

The Secretariat shared with the working group the objectives of the consultancy to review the Cartagena Convention Working Groups which included:

- Analyzing existing governance structures and functioning of the WGs established under the Cartagena Convention;
- Proposing guidelines for their operation in accordance with the Rules of Procedure for the Cartagena Convention; and
- Developing recommendations to improve the workings of the WGs.

The Secretariat also noted that the consultant would be undertaking interviews with working group members as part of her assessment. Ms. Koubrak was invited to take the floor. She provided a summary of her background and indicated that whilst she had participated in the SPAW Protocol meetings and working groups, she was not familiar with the LBS Working Group and as such, was very happy to be an observer in this meeting to better understand how the LBS OEWG operates.

The Chair thanked Ms. Koubrak for her intervention. He then went on to ask the Working Group members what version of the TORs should be submitted to Ms. Koubrak for her review. Moving forward, the meeting agreed that the clean version of the TORs as well as the revised version, with the recommendations by CIMAB and the USA should be shared in track changes. It was further recommended that any suggestions to the TORs made by the consultant should also be done in track changes.

Lastly, it was suggested that a small group be established to revise the document within a weeks' time based on the comments received, as the document had to be shared with the consultant for her review.

3c. LBS Working Group Members & Expert Nominees updated list

The Secretariat reminded all new members to share their e-mail addresses with the Secretariat so that the Working Group list could be updated and all members would be able to receive e-mail communication.

4. Updates of working groups, subgroups
 - *Nutrients and Wastewater Subgroup:*

Dr. Marko Tosic, lead of the Nutrients and Wastewater subgroup indicated that the last meeting of the subgroup took place on 12 September 2024. He went on to state that the meeting summary had been shared with the subgroup members on 2 October. He also informed that the meeting that members were asked to indicate their preference for the next meeting on either 7 or 14 November 2024. He also noted that the subgroup was working on the review of the integrated report on classification of waters and reminded members that the agreed deadline for the submission of comments was 10 October 2024. This would allow the RACs sufficient time to review comments prior to the next meeting of the subgroup.

- *Microplastics Thematic Subgroup*

The Chair informed the meeting that Ms. Paola Obando who had agreed to lead the Microplastics thematic subgroup had to excuse herself, a result of personal matters. Noting this, she recommended that Mr. Juan Saldarriaga, also from INVEMAR, take on the lead of the thematic subgroup. The Chair noted that he wanted to ensure that the working group in favour of this recommendation. He also informed the meeting that during the first meeting of the thematic subgroup, Dr. Azad Mohammed had also indicated interest in serving as lead of the subgroup. Both Dr. Mohammed and Mr. Saldarriaga indicated interest in leading the subgroup. After some discussion it was recommended that they could both act as co-leads. This was agreed by acclamation by working group members present during the meeting, nevertheless it was also recommended that working group members be given another opportunity to indicate if they support the proposal of the two co-leads for this thematic subgroup via e-mail.

In relation to the way forward, the Secretariat agreed to convene a meeting with the two co-leads in lieu of a meeting of the thematic subgroup.

- *Sargassum Thematic Subgroup*

The Chair informed the meeting that the Secretariat had provided the SPAW RAC with the names of the LBS OEWG members who had indicated interest in participating in the Sargassum working group immediately after the last OEWG meeting in July. Noting this, the Secretariat wanted to confirm that members who had indicated interest in participating in the working group had been added to the teamwork sargasso platform and were informed about the next meeting of the Sargassum working group. Members confirmed receipt of communication about the next Sargassum working group meeting slated for October 16. The representative of the USA indicated her interest in participating in the Sargassum Working Group and being added to the portal.

The Chair informed the meeting that third Meeting of the Sargassum Working Group took place on 4 September 2024 and that the meeting sought to review a draft report of a questionnaire which was administered to countries. He noted that one section of the questionnaire had an LBS component. He indicated that as he was the only LBS OEWG member in attendance, he had undertaken the analysis and prepared the responses for the LBS component, which was shared with SPAW RAC. He noted that LBS OEWG members would have an opportunity to review the entire document, including his input to the LBS components, during the next meeting of the working group, scheduled for 16 October 2024

5. *Updates on meetings attended and future meetings relevant to LBS OEWG.*

The Secretariat informed the meeting that the Coordinator was attending the Meeting of the Partners of the Nutrient Partnership- Global Action Network and Ms. Susana Perera Valderrama, the SPAW Coordinator was in Grenada attending the Second EU Sargassum Global Gateway Conference. She further went on to indicate that she had attended the 10 International Waters Conference the previous week in Uruguay where projects, the Secretariat was executing, were highlighted. She also noted that the assessment to be undertaken as part of the US/EPA Water Quality Capacity Building Project was expected to commence soon.

The Chair noted that he had read an interesting [article](#) about Sargassum which he promised to share with working group members.

6. Any Other Business

The Secretariat informed the meeting that PROCARIBE+ Project was establishing a few working groups and had reached out to the members of the Interim Coordination Mechanism for nominees. She indicated that one of the Working Groups was a Marine Data Infrastructure Working Group (MDI WG). The MDI WG is expected to coordinate knowledge management and facilitate data and information sharing by providing countries, IGOs and the wider stakeholder community access to data, information, knowledge and technology on voluntary and mutually acceptable terms. The Secretariat indicated that she was reaching to see if any member of the LBS OEWG or an expert from their country would be interested in participating in the WG. She asked that members share the names of experts interested in participating in the WG with the Secretariat by Monday, 7 October.

7. Decision on next meeting date

The proposed date of the sixth meeting of the LBS OEWG is Thursday, 5 December, 2024.

With no other matters down for discussion the meeting was adjourned at 10:22am.

Action Items
New LBS OEWG members share their email addresses with the LBS OEWG Secretariat as soon as possible so that they can be added to the Working Group List
Incorporate the comments from CIMAB and USA in track changes to the LBS OEWG TORs and share with consultant working on the review of the Cartagena Convention Working Groups
The Secretariat will ask Working Group members via e-mail to indicate if they have an objection to Dr. Mohammed and Mr. Saldarriaga acting as co-leads for the microplastics thematic subgroup
Co-leads of the microplastics thematic subgroup and the Secretariat are to meet before a meeting of the thematic group is convened
Individuals interested in participating in the Marine Data Infrastructure Working Group should inform the LBS OEWG Secretariat by 7 October 2024

Participants List:

Name	Country/Organisation
Darryl Banjoo	Trinidad and Tobago/ RAC IMA
Linroy Christian	Antigua and Barbuda
Richard Nelson	Jamaica

Oneiro Cherrington	Jamaica
Lisa Kirland	Jamaica
Daniela Wojtalewicz	United States of America
Hugh Sullivan	United States of America
Marlen Perez	RAC CIMAB
Maurice Narcis	RAC IMA
Marko Tosic	Universidad EAFIT, Colombia
Luisa Espinosa	INVEMAR
Juan Saldarriaga	INVEMAR
Laura Coral	INVEMAR
Cesar Bernal	INVEMAR
Azad Mohammed	UWI St. Augustine
Olga Koubrak	Consultant, Cartagena Convention Working Groups Review
Issa Oscar Kigongo	Cartagena Convention Secretariat
Laverne Walker	Cartagena Convention Secretariat

Annex A- Circulation of draft LBS meeting agenda for October 3rd 2024.

From: Dr Darryl Banjoo

Sent: Tuesday, September 24, 2024 9:40 AM

To: Subject: RE: Save the Date - 3rd October Next LBS OEWG Meeting

Dear Members of LBS OEWG, Colleagues,

Please find the **draft agenda** for the meeting as follows:

- (1) Confirmation of agenda of meeting.
- (2) Update on LBS OEWG work plan, status of consultancies being implemented by CCS on Working Groups
- (3) Update on subgroups meetings
Nutrients & WW Sub-Group, Microplastics Subgroup, Sargassum.
- (3) Updates on meetings attended and future meetings relevant to LBS OEWG.
- (4) Any other business.
- (5) Date of next meeting.

If you have anything to add to the draft agenda, please indicate by email, thanking you very much.

Best
Darryl

Meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) and Thematic sub-groups to the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol) to the Cartagena Convention

5 December, 2024

9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. (GMT-5)

1. Welcome and confirmation of Agenda:

The Chair called the sixth meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) and Thematic sub-groups to the LBS Protocol to order at 9:05am (GMT-5) on Thursday, 5 December 2024. The proposed agenda was reviewed and the Secretariat asked to introduce two topics under Any Other Business. As there were no other comments on the agenda, the Chair acknowledged that the agenda was approved. Noting that there were new LBS OEWG members in attendance, the Chair asked them to introduce themselves. Three members representing France introduced themselves. They were Alexane Lovat, Marie-Pierre Halm and Antoine Pebayle. Ms. Wendy Nelson from the Institute of Marine Affairs, Trinidad and Tobago also introduced herself. The LBS OEWG Vice Chair, Dr. Linroy Christian also introduced himself for the benefit of new members. The Chair and other LBS OEWG members welcomed the new members to the working group and the Chair advised that the Secretariat would share the TORs and summaries of the previous meetings with them.

2. Updates and feedback on action items

The Chair and the Secretariat provided feedback on the following action items from the fifth LBS OEWG meeting:

2a. Working group email list:

The Secretariat informed the meeting that communication was sent to Working Group members to ask that names, affiliations and email addresses for new members of the LBS OEWG and Thematic Subgroups be shared with the Secretariat so that the names could be added to the mailing list.

2b. LBS OEWG TORs comments

The Secretariat noted that based on the recommendations from the fifth LBS OEWG meeting, which took place on October 3rd 2024, the comments and suggestions received on the TORs were amalgamated and included in a revised draft in track changes and shared, first with the Chair and Vice Chair and then with the Working Group Consultant, along with the original version of the Working Group's TORs for her consideration as part of the consultancy.

2c. Feedback on Co-lead for microplastics subgroup

Acknowledging that not all members were in attendance at the fifth LBS OEWG meeting, members requested that communication be sent to all Working Group members informing them of the recommendation that Dr. Azad Mohammed with the UWI and Mr. Juan Saldarriaga with INVEMAR both serve as co-leads to the microplastics thematic subgroup. The Secretariat informed that communication was sent to all Working Group members and that many people responded in favor of the recommendations. There was no communication received indicating an objection to Dr. Mohammed and Mr. Saldarriaga leading the microplastics subgroup.

2d. Meeting of Secretariat and Co-lead for microplastics subgroup

The Secretariat informed the LBS OEWG that a meeting was convened with both Dr. Mohammed and Mr. Saldarriaga to brief them about the Working Group and the meeting procedures prior to the convening of the microplastics subgroup meeting.

2e. Feedback on LBS OEWG interest in participating in the Marine Data Infrastructure Working Group

The meeting was informed that after the last meeting, the US delegation submitted a name of someone interested in participating in the Marine Data Infrastructure Working Group as part of the Interim Coordinating Mechanism under the UNDP GEF PROCARIBE+ Project. The name was then submitted to the ICM Secretariat on behalf of the Cartagena Convention Secretariat for consideration.

3. Updates of working groups, subgroups

• Nutrients and Wastewater Subgroup:

Dr Marko Tosic, lead of the Nutrients and Wastewater subgroup indicated that the last meeting of the subgroup took place on 14 November 2024 where the working group discussed the draft document - Guidelines for the Classification of Marine Waters according to the LBS Protocol - which was prepared by RACs IMA and CIMAB. He also noted that the working group received the draft Regional Criteria and Standards for N and P Loads in Domestic and Industrial Wastewater Discharges from the RACs which is currently being reviewed, with feedback expected to be sent to the RACs by the end of 2024.

Dr Christian queried about the focus of the classification of marine waters documents. The Nutrients and Wastewater lead indicated that the classification document did not pertain to any parameters but aligns more closely to the uses of marine waters as per the classification under the LBS Protocol.

Dr Narcis of IMA provided the meeting with an update on the status of the revision of the classification of marine waters document. He noted that the comments received from the Nutrients and Wastewater subgroup were being integrated into the document and that it was expected that the revised document would be shared with the Secretariat and Nutrients and Wastewater subgroup lead the following day. It was further noted that the document would be shared with the Nutrients and Wastewater subgroup for a second review before being finalised for review by the STAC. Noting the interest of the wider LBS OEWG on the topic, the Chair suggested that the revised document be shared with the full LBS OEWG for review until the end of the year. This recommendation was endorsed by the Nutrients and Wastewater lead and the subgroup members.

The Chair noted that whilst many countries had legislation which sought to classify their waters, he was interested in knowing the methodology and number of countries that went beyond the legislation for

implementing the classification of coastal waters. This led to a detailed discussion amongst working group members.

Ms. Marlen Perez of RAC CIMAB noted that the scope of the assessment of the classification of marine waters document was to focus on the legislation, policies or methodologies countries had adopted in relation to classification of marine waters. The document did not assess the success of countries in implementing the legislation. Whilst members noted Ms. Perez's point, they also queried as to whether a regional methodology for assessing implementation of classification of marine waters was needed under the Protocol. It was acknowledged that these were important points particularly in relation to the degree of implementation. The RACs sought to obtain further information via a survey, but there were very low responses. Considering this the focus of the document became a desk assessment on legislation status as this information was more readily available online. It was recommended that this could be further discussed as part of the LBS STAC as the effectiveness of implementation would also contribute to the SOCAR. However, countries would be required to report on implementation status regularly and this approach has not been very successful in the past. Dr Christian recommended that the LBS COP may wish to consider how countries could provide information on the state of implementation of their marine water classification measures. In closing this agenda item, the Chair acknowledged that this was a very technical discussion and invited colleagues to the next Nutrients and Wastewater subgroup meeting where this conversation could be continued.

- *Microplastics Thematic Subgroup*

The Chair invited the co-leads of the microplastics thematic subgroup to provide an overview of the last meeting. Mr. Saldarriaga stated that the meeting of the microplastics subgroup took place on 4 November 2024. He noted that it was the first meeting of the thematic subgroup that he led along with Dr. Mohammed. As such members were invited to introduce themselves and indicate work that they do in the area of microplastics and discuss the potential scope of the thematic subgroup. He noted that members were asked to complete a survey which was put together by his predecessor. This survey, which is an excel file, was shared via one drive with participants, with the proposed date of completion being prior to this meeting. Mr. Saldarriaga noted that responses to date had been low and as such the deadline for responses will be extended.

The Secretariat noted that at the next meeting of the thematic subgroup, INVEMAR and a representative from Antigua and Barbuda would be invited to present on the microplastics components under the two regional IAEA projects. A date for the next meeting of the thematic subgroup would also need to be confirmed.

- *Sargassum Thematic Subgroup*

The Chair informed the meeting that the fifth Sargassum Working Group meeting took place on 29 November 2024. He indicated that attendance was low, but that the LBS OEWG was represented by Ms. Lisa Kirland from Jamaica, himself and the Secretariat. He informed that the meeting sought to review a draft report which captures the responses of countries to a questionnaire. He noted that the report is expected to be completed by the end of the year with the input from experts and invited the members of the LBS OEWG to review and provide feedback on the document.

Ms. Kirland informed that she had reviewed the document, but she wanted to know if her comments should be submitted through the Chair or if she could comment directly into the document. The Chair advised that comments could be made directly into the document as they were done in track changes.

The Chair and Secretariat encouraged the LBS OEWG to try and review not only the Sargassum report on the survey but also the workplan of the Sargassum working group that deals with the integrated LBS - SPAW report which also needs to be finalised by the end of the year.

4. Updates on meetings attended and future meetings relevant to LBS OEWG.

The Secretariat informed the meeting that they had recently submitted a concept note for technical assistance on the issue of water quality for two Contracting Parties, Jamaica and Guyana, through the Sustainable Blue Economies Technical Assistance Platform and are awaiting input from the organization.

The meeting was also informed about a survey which was expected to be administered soon under the USEPA funded Capacity Development Project on Water Quality in the Wider Caribbean Region, including the Gulf of Mexico. It was noted that once administered LBS OEWG members would work towards ensuring that it is completed.

5. Any Other Business

The Secretariat informed the meeting that the Working Group consultant had submitted her draft final report which was being reviewed internally before being finalised. She went on to present some of the preliminary findings and recommendations from the report to the working group members.

The meeting was also informed of a Joint Sargassum – LBS Working Group meeting which is being planned for March 2025. The Secretariat noted that a draft concept note was prepared and was being reviewed. The proposed meeting objectives were also outlined. The representative from Barbados recommended that an agenda item should be included that allowed countries to present on existing management approaches and initiatives which are seeking to address the Sargassum influxes as part of the meeting.

Mr. Hugh Sullivan provided updates on the US EPA National Coastal Condition Assessment, the monitoring and assessment programme for estuarine waters around the contiguous US including South Florida and the Gulf of Mexico. He noted that the monitoring data for the period 2020-22 had been posted in the [US EPA National Aquatic Resources Data page](#). Working group members were invited to review the data sets on the page. Mr. Sullivan also informed that the report on the assessment of the data would be published in the spring of 2025. It was indicated that as part of the US EPA 2025 national coastal condition assessment, an assessment of waters along beaches in the US Virgin Islands will be undertaken. This will allow the US government to update the data sets for the islands. Mr. Sullivan encouraged members to reach out to him if they had any questions or queries on the updates provided.

6. Decision on next meeting date

The proposed dates of the seventh meeting of the LBS OEWG are Thursday, 30 January and 6 February 2025.

With no other matters down for discussion the meeting was adjourned at 10:30am.

Action Items
The Secretariat was to share the TORs and summaries of previous LBS OEWG meetings with new members.
The Secretariat was to share the revised Guidelines for classification of waters according to the LBS Protocol with the full LBS OEWG and that members provide input by the end of December 2024
The LBS OEWG members review and revise the report on the Sargassum survey as well as the integrated Sargassum Action Plan by the end of December 2024
The LBS OEWG fill out the survey administered as part of the Capacity Building Water Quality Project

Participants List:

Name	Country/Organisation
Darryl Banjoo	Trinidad and Tobago/ RAC IMA, Chair
Linroy Christian	Antigua and Barbuda, Vice Chair
Anthony Headley	Barbados
Marie Pierre Halm	France
Lovat Alexane	France
Antoine Pebayle	France
Felicia Adams-Kellman	Guyana
Eromonsele Akhidenor	Jamaica
Lisa Kirland	Jamaica
Oneiro Cherrington	Jamaica
Daniela Wojtalewicz	United States of America
Hugh Sullivan	United States of America
Troy Pierce	United States of America
Marlen Perez	RAC CIMAB
Maurice Narcis	RAC IMA
Wendy Nelson	RAC IMA
Marko Tomic	Universidad EAFIT, Colombia
Juan Saldarriaga	INVEMAR
Cesar Bernal	INVEMAR
Issa Oscar Kigongo	Cartagena Convention Secretariat
Laverne Walker	Cartagena Convention Secretariat

Annex A- Circulation of draft LBS meeting agenda for 5 December 2024.

Dear Members of LBS OEWG, Colleagues,

Please find below Draft Agenda for the captioned meeting

1. Updates and feedback on action items
 - Working group email list
 - LBS OEWG TORs comments
 - Feedback on Co-lead for microplastics subgroup

- Meeting of Secretariat and Co-lead for microplastics subgroup
 - Feedback on LBS OEWG interest in participating in the Marine Data Infrastructure Working Group
2. Updates of LBS OEWG working group, subgroups
 - Nutrients and Wastewater Subgroup
 - Emerging Issues - Micro Plastics Subgroup
 - Integrated work of LBS /SPAW Sargassum working group.
 3. Presentation of other Updates (meetings, activities, US EPA Capacity building water quality project, SOCAR)
 4. Any Other Business.
 5. Decision on next meeting date (Subgroups, OEWG).

A meeting link will be sent by the Secretariat before the meeting. Please feel free to add to the Draft agenda.

Best
Darryl

Meeting of the Seventh Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) and Thematic sub-groups to the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol) to the Cartagena Convention

6 February, 2025

9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. (GMT-5)

1. Welcome and confirmation of Agenda:

The Chair called the seventh meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) and Thematic sub-groups to the LBS Protocol to order at 9:05am (GMT-5) on Thursday, 6 February 2025. The proposed agenda was shared with members for their consideration and was posted in the chat in MS Teams meeting. The representative from RAC IMA, Dr Maurice Narcis, asked to introduce one topic under Any Other Business. With no other comments on the agenda, the Chair acknowledged that the agenda was approved. The meeting was informed that the Vice Chair had sent his apologies in advance for not being able to attend the meeting. The Chair acknowledged that the representative from Panama, was present after a long absence and asked him to introduce himself for the benefit of members who may not be familiar with him.

2. Updates and feedback on action items

The Chair and the Secretariat provided feedback on the following action items from the sixth LBS OEWG meeting:

2a. TORs shared with new members

The Secretariat informed the meeting that the Terms of Reference of the LBS OEWG was shared with the new members who joined during the sixth meeting of the Working Group for their information.

2b. Revised Guidelines for classification of waters Report shared with WG

The Secretariat informed the meeting, that on the request from OEWG members during the last working group meeting, the second version of the “Guidelines for Water Classification according to the LBS Protocol” was shared with members of the full LBS OEWG for their review. Comments were submitted by one member of the LBS OEWG and they were shared with the RACs for consideration.

2c. Review and revise the report on the Sargassum survey and integrated Sargassum Action Plan

The Chair acknowledged that some members of the LBS OEWG had reviewed and provided comments on the report of the Sargassum Questionnaire survey, as well as a draft Sargassum Action Plan. He

noted that the Sargassum Action Plan provided a work plan with an objective for the consolidated Sargassum working group. He acknowledged that it was important for the integration of work from LBS OEWG and the Sargassum Working Group to also be reflected in the document and encouraged members to review the document.

2d. Fill out the survey administered as part of the Capacity Building Water Quality Initiative

The Secretariat informed the LBS OEWG that an email was shared with all LBS Focal Points on 17 January 2025 requesting their assistance to fill out the survey. The deadline for the submission of responses was extended to 6 February 2025. It was noted that an additional update on the responses received were to be shared under another agenda item during the meeting.

3. Updates of working groups, subgroups
 - *Nutrients and Wastewater Subgroup:*

Dr Marko Tomic, lead of the Nutrients and Wastewater subgroup provided a summary from the last meeting of the Nutrients and Wastewater Subgroup which took place on 11 November 2024. He informed the meeting that the Nutrients and Wastewater Subgroup discussed the second document being prepared by the RACs which focused on the determination of standards and criteria for nutrients loads in wastewater. It was noted that many of the subgroup members had provided comments which were shared with the RACs for their consideration and update of the document.

Dr. Tomic noted that the date for the next subgroup meeting had not been defined and that members would be contacted soon to indicate their preferred date and time.

- *Microplastics Thematic Subgroup*

The Chair invited the co-leads of the microplastics thematic subgroup to provide an overview of the last meeting. Mr. Saldarriaga indicated that the last meeting of the thematic subgroup was convened on 14 January. During the meeting, there were two presentations made by members, Antigua and Barbuda and Colombia, which outlined the activities being carried out in relation to the management of microplastics in their countries through the support of IAEA projects. As part of the presentations, the thematic subgroup members detailed the existing capacity in their countries, the available technologies and the monitoring programmes in place for microplastics.

Mr. Saldarriaga also informed the LBS OEWG that members of the microplastics thematic subgroup were completing out a spreadsheet about the existing capacity for microplastics management in their countries. It was noted that the information obtained would then be used to define the scope of work of the thematic subgroup moving forward.

In relation to the date for the next meeting of the microplastics thematic subgroup, Mr. Saldarriaga informed the meeting that it would be in the first week of March, but that he would send an email to the members to confirm the day and time.

- *Sargassum Thematic Subgroup*

The Chair reiterated that the Integrated Sargassum Working Group meetings which were held on January 2025 focused on discussion of the report of the Sargassum survey, as well as the Integrated Sargassum

Action Plan. The two meetings of the working group took place on January 9 and 28, 2025. He noted that there were not many members from the Emerging Issues – Sargassum thematic subgroup in attendance at both meetings. He reiterated the importance of the LBS OEWG members reviewing and providing their comments to the proposed action plan. The finalization of the Integrated Sargassum Action Plan was perceived as a priority and to ensure that advancements with the document could take place the SPAW RAC had planned two meetings in February, the first on 12 February and the second on 18 February, 9:00 -10:00am Jamaica time.

Some members indicated that they had not been receiving communication about the working group meetings or the documents from SPAW RAC. In relation to the draft action plan, the OEWG members were informed that the document was in a google drive so that once people had permission to access the drive, they could review the document. The Secretariat also committed to resharing the list of the Emerging Issues – Sargassum thematic subgroup members with the colleagues at SPAW RAC.

4. Subgroup to review and update LBS OEWG TORs

The Secretariat noted that early in 2024, the LBS OEWG was seeking to revise their TORs. However, this was paused as a consultant was contracted by the Cartagena Convention Secretariat (CCS) to assess, review and make recommendations towards improving the functioning of Working Groups established under the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols. Noting that the consultancy was over, and that the consultant had submitted her final report, the Secretariat was seeking to determine if members of the LBS OEWG would be interested in establishing a small subgroup to review and propose recommendations to the TORs for the consideration of LBS OEWG. It was noted that the draft TORs would need to be revised by the LBS OEWG by the end of April if it was to be tabled during the LBS STAC. Noting this, the Secretariat asked that members interested in participating in the subgroup reach out to the Secretariat via email no later than 14 February 2025.

5. Presentation of other Updates (meetings, activities, water quality project capacity development, SOCAR)

The Secretariat informed the meeting that CCS did not participate in any meetings for the month of January and as such had no updates to provide. In relation to SOCAR, the Secretariat noted that they were still in the process of trying to secure funding to advance its development.

The Chair informed the meeting that the CCS had contracted a consultant to undertake a review and revision of the Regional Activity Center (RAC) and Regional Activity Network (RAN) guidelines and that a consultation was held to discuss the proposed revisions to the guidelines on 29 January 2025.

The Chair invited Dr. Tasic to provide an update on the responses received for the survey which was conducted to learn about the capacity development needs of Contracting Parties in relation to water quality monitoring and analysis. Dr. Tasic noted that 18 responses were received from 15 countries. He noted that most of the respondents worked in coastal water quality monitoring or coastal water policy formulation, many of which were in environmental authorities or health authorities. In relation to the primary challenges being faced in ensuring successful water quality monitoring programmes, the three most common responses were adequate policies and regulations, data collection and reporting, and funding. The main capacity development priorities identified included reporting, partnerships and funding, data management and analysis.

The Chair asked if more than one representative from a country could respond to the survey which Dr. Tosic confirmed.

6. Way Forward and next steps -Chair /Secretariat.

The Secretariat informed the meeting that the LBS STAC will most likely take place in July 2025 and that the LBS COP is being planned for the fourth quarter of 2025. It was further noted that all documentation which will be tabled for the LBS STAC, and which is being reviewed by the LBS OEWG needs to be reviewed and revised by end of April 2025.

7. Any Other Business

Dr. Narcis of RAC IMA informed the meeting that as part of the Small Scale Funding Agreement that IMA had with UNEP CCS, the IMA and the Caribbean Waste Water Association (CWWA) will be convening a virtual workshop entitled “Regional and International Approaches to Wastewater Management: Exploring Innovative and Low-Cost Management Alternatives and Wastewater Reuse”. The workshop was scheduled to take place Tuesday, February 18, from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM (AST). He noted that he would share a poster and encouraged members to share it through their networks. The Chair noted the importance of communication within the RACs as he was unaware of the planning of the meeting.

The Secretariat reminded all members who had not yet done so to please fill out the registration form for the Joint LBS/SPAW Working Group meeting slated to take place 18-20 March 2025 in Trinidad and Tobago as the deadline for registration was 7 February.

8. Decision on next meeting date

The representative from RAC CIMAB noted that Thursdays were generally not convenient for her to attend meetings of the LBS OEWG. Noting this and the fact that the meeting was not able to agree on a date for the next meeting, it was agreed that a doodle poll would be shared with LBS OEWG to confirm the date of the next meeting.

With no other matters down for discussion the meeting was adjourned at 10:00am.

Action Items
The Secretariat was to reshare the names and email addresses of the emerging issues -sargassum thematic subgroup members with the SPAW RAC to ensure that they are included on the mailing list.
LBS OEWG members try to participate in the virtual meetings of the Sargassum Working Group and contribute to the documents being prepared.
Interested LBS OEWG members interested in being part of a subgroup to review and provide recommendations for the revision of the LBS OEWG should inform the Secretariat by 14 February 2025.
The Secretariat will send out a doodle poll to confirm the dates for the next Nutrients and Wastewater Subgroup meeting, as well as the next LBS OEWG.

Participants List:

Name	Country/Organisation
------	----------------------

Darryl Banjoo	Trinidad and Tobago/ Chair/RAC IMA
Antoine Pebayle	France
Felicia Adams-Kellman	Guyana
Eromonsele Akhidenor	Jamaica
Lisa Kirland	Jamaica
Oneiro Cherrington	Jamaica
Marino Eugenio Abrego	Panama
Digna Barsallo De Leon	Panama
Daniela Wojtalewicz	United States of America
Marlen Perez	RAC CIMAB
Maurice Narcis	RAC IMA
Marko Tosic	Universidad EAFIT, Colombia
Juan Saldarriaga	INVEMAR
Cesar Bernal	INVEMAR
Paola Sofia Obando Madera	INVEMAR
Issa Oscar Kigongo	Cartagena Convention Secretariat
Jhenelle Barrett -Cohen	Cartagena Convention Secretariat
Laverne Walker	Cartagena Convention Secretariat

Annex A- Agenda for 6 February meeting.

1. Updates and feedback on action items
 - TORs shared with new members
 - Revised Guidelines for classification of waters Report shared with WG
 - Review and revise the report on the Sargassum survey and integrated Sargassum Action Plan
 - Fill out the survey administered as part of the Water Quality Capacity Development Activities
2. Updates of working groups, subgroups
 - update on the Nutrients and Wastewater Subgroup
 - update on the Emerging Issues - Micro Plastics Subgroup
 - Update on integrated work of LBS /SPAW Sargassum working group.
3. Subgroup to review and update LBS OEWG TORs
4. Presentation of other Updates (meetings, activities, water quality project capacity development, SOCAR)
5. Way Forward and next steps -Chair /Secretariat.
6. Any Other Business.
7. Decision on next meeting date (Subgroups, OEWG).

Meeting of the Eighth Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) and Thematic sub-groups to the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol) to the Cartagena Convention

8 April, 2025

9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. (GMT-5)

1. Welcome and confirmation of Agenda:

The Chair called the seventh meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) and Thematic sub-groups to the LBS Protocol to order at 9:05am (GMT-5) on Tuesday, 8 April 2025. The proposed agenda (Annex A) was shared with members for their consideration which were agreed to in the meeting. The Chair invited the new LBS Focal Point from France, Ms. Maëlynn L'Hoir who works on Coastal Ecosystems in the Directorate of Water and Ecosystems to introduce herself.

2. Updates and feedback on action items

The Secretariat provided feedback on the following action items from the seventh LBS OEWG meeting:

2a. Reshare the names and email addresses of the emerging issues -sargassum thematic subgroup members with the SPAW RAC

The Secretariat informed the meeting that this was done via email on 11 February 2025.

2b. Encourage LBS OEWG members to participate in virtual meetings of the Sargassum Working Group

This was done, however participation of members in virtual meetings remained low.

2c. Interested LBS OEWG members indicate their interest in joining a small subgroup to review and revise the Working Group TORs.

The Secretariat informed the meeting that this was done, however there was a low response of interest received.

2d. Send doodle poll for dates for the new Nutrients and Wastewater Subgroup meeting and the LBS OEWG meeting

A Doodle poll was sent and the dates for Nutrients and Wastewater Subgroup and the LBS OEWG meetings were finalized.

3. Review and update LBS OEWG TORs

The Secretariat informed the meeting that due to the low response to a creation of a subgroup to review the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the OEWG, the draft document with proposed changes in track changes was shared with the OEWG member for their review and input. The proposed timeframe for receiving all comments on the document was 18 April 2025. Working group members were asked to include comments or their proposed changes in track changes.

Once all comments and suggestions have been received, the Secretariat will work on cleaning up the document and sharing a clean document with the LBS OEWG for their final endorsement by the end of April.

The Chair noted that the reason for the timeframe was to ensure that the document was finalized and included as an information document to be considered at the upcoming 7 LBS STAC which is slated to take place virtually 22- 24 July 2025.

4. Updates of working groups, subgroups

- *Nutrients and Wastewater Subgroup:*

The chair then invited subgroup leads to provide their updates. Dr Marko Tomic, lead of the Nutrients and Wastewater subgroup provided a summary from the last meeting of the Nutrients and Wastewater Subgroup which took place on 1 April 2025. He noted that he presented a summary of the results of the water quality needs assessment which was undertaken through the support of the USEPA Water Quality Capacity Development Project. He stated that members of the subgroup had requested access to the survey report and that the Secretariat was awaiting some guidance from colleagues in UNEP HQ before it is shared. Nevertheless, he informed the meeting that the report should be shared with the subgroup soon.

Dr Tomic also informed the meeting that the Secretariat provided an overview of the Joint LBS/SPAW Working Group meeting on Sargassum which took place 18-20 March in Trinidad and Tobago.

Dr Tomic also noted that the subgroup would be defining recommendations to be taken to the 7 LBS STAC through the OEWG.

In closing, Dr. Tomic informed the meeting that the proposed date for the next Nutrients and Wastewater Subgroup meeting would be late May 2025.

- *Microplastics Thematic Subgroup*

The Chair invited the co-leads of the microplastics thematic subgroup to provide an overview of the last meeting. The Secretariat informed the meeting that Mr. Saldarriaga, INVEMAR co-lead, was successful in obtaining a 6-month internship position with the International Atomic and Energy Agency (IAEA). As such, Mr. Saldarriaga would no longer be able to co-lead the microplastics subgroup. In his place, Mr. Saldarriaga recommended that his colleague, Ms. Paola Sofia Obando from INVEMAR continue to co-lead along with Dr. Azad Mohammed from the UWI St. Augustine. Ms. Obando, an environmental engineer with INVEMAR was invited to introduce herself to the meeting.

Ms. Obando provided the meeting with an overview of the last Microplastics thematic subgroup meeting which took place on 6 March 2025. She noted that the meeting had agreed that the REMARCO protocol for monitoring microplastics would be presented at the next meeting of the subgroup slated for either 15 or 19 May 2025. She also reminded members to confirm their preferred date for the Working Group meeting.

In relation to an action point on contacting the IAEA to suggest a call to discuss potential opportunities for collaboration, the Secretariat informed the meeting that this was done and that a meeting with IAEA took place on 4 April 2025. The meeting participants included representatives from IAEA, INVEMAR, the Cartagena Convention Secretariat, the Chair and Vice Chair of the LBS OEWG and the lead and co-lead of the Microplastics Subgroup.

The main outputs from the call included: potential opportunities for collaboration between IAEA and the Cartagena Convention through an MOU on the issue of microplastics; IAEA agreed to share the NUTEC monitoring protocol with the CCS; and agreement towards enhancing collaboration between REMARCO and Caribbean laboratories.

The Chair also noted that the meeting discussed the possibility of building the capacity of a regional laboratory in the region to provide support on microplastics monitoring and by extension the next State of Convention Area Report (SOCAR).

Dr. Christian noted that on the issue of a regional consortium of laboratories for the Caribbean islands that this had been under discussion for a while with initial discussions taking place under the GEF IWECO project. He noted that going forward there were two options for consideration: (i) either the Caribbean laboratories meet and define their own consortium of laboratories; or (ii) that the Caribbean laboratories join the REMARCO network of laboratories. He noted that for the first option funds would need to be sourced to facilitate a meeting of the Caribbean laboratories. He further noted that this had implications not only for microplastics but was an issue to be considered more broadly within LBS Protocol and the Cartagena Convention.

In relation to the standardized monitoring guideline, it was clarified that a 'global' guideline has been developed as part of the NUTEC initiative, and that this guideline has been shared with the regions IAEA is working with and that the regions have tweaked it to address their regional circumstances. Further Dr. Christian indicated that IAEA is supporting several capacity building projects in the LAC region. There is an inter-regional project that is seeking to develop a micro-plastics monitoring network, and it is being supported by IAEA in the regions that they are working with. He also went on to note that there is a regional project for CARICOM countries and that under this project capacity building is being provided in the form of equipment and training to monitor microplastics 300 microns and larger. Specialized equipment to monitor microplastics 300 microns and smaller will also be distributed to a few labs in Antigua and Barbuda, Belize and Jamaica.

Ms. Kirland asked if the equipment which the laboratory in Jamaica was expected to receive could be shared with her and Dr. Christian promised to do so.

In relation to the standardized monitoring protocol for the CARICOM region Mrs Wendy Nelson noted that she had participated in meetings to review it, but that she does not recall seeing a final version. Dr Christian noted that once the document is finalized IAEA would officially distribute it.

- *Sargassum Thematic Subgroup*

The Chair provided an update on the Sargassum thematic subgroup meeting, noting that before the Joint LBS/SPAW working group meeting which took place at the Institute of Marine Affairs in Trinidad and Tobago from the 18-20 March the Joint Working Group met virtually to review and update the draft the proposed Sargassum Action Plan.

He also shared some of the points noted in the Sargassum Survey report relevant to the LBS component, which includes assessing and monitoring the sources of pollutants and the need for environmental impact assessments on Sargassum inundations.

The Secretariat then went on to provide a summary of the major recommendations emanating from the meeting. She noted that Sargassum is an important habitat for many marine species, however it becomes a pollutant once it is washed on beaches and in shallow bays and such is of interest to both the SPAW and LBS Protocols. Considering this, the Joint LBS/SPAW Working Group meeting recommended the establishment of a new Sargassum Working Group to be established under the Cartagena Convention, proposed a definition of Sargassum inundation and proposed that for the next SOCAR an integrated chapter with input from SPAW and LBS Protocols could be developed on Sargassum.

Dr. Christian noted Antigua and Barbuda's support of the proposed recommendations from the Joint Working Group meeting, as nationally Antigua and Barbuda have discussed the potential impact of Sargassum removal from beaches and have also discussed how it can be utilized as a resource. He noted that the paper developed by FAO and UWI CERMES on opportunities on the use of Sargassum could be used as a basis for further discussion of this issue.

The Chair reminded LBS OEWG members that were also participating in the Sargassum Working Group that the SPAW RAC had sent out communication requesting the review of the proposed Sargassum Action Plan.

Ms. L'Hoir indicated her interest in joining the Sargassum working group. She also queried about the availability of research on Sargassum and plastics. The chair indicated that it was something for further discussion. The Secretariat noted that once Ms. L'Hoir sends a separate email to the Secretariat about her interest, the Secretariat would forward her request to SPAW RAC, however she noted that no more meetings of the Working Group were planned before the SPAW STAC.

5. *Presentation of other Updates (meetings, activities, water quality project capacity development, SOCAR)*

It was noted that points under this agenda item were addressed under previous agenda items and as such there was nothing additional to add.

6. *Discussion of possible recommendations from the LBS OEWG to the LBS STAC*

The meeting held a preliminary conversation regarding the recommendations the LBS OEWG may wish to make to the LBS STAC:

- a. That the approach towards the development of the State of Convention Area Report should remain as is – that is a consultant(s) be contracted to develop the report with LBS OEWG reviewing and providing input on sections and chapters as defined.
- b. That the LBS OEWG undertake a review of the primary and optional parameters used to inform the first State of Convention Area Report to determine if they should continue to be used during the next State of Report for data comparability.
- c. That the region develop harmonized recommendations for monitoring and analysis for agreed pollutant parameters.
- d. That the LBS STAC consider the recommendations of the Joint LBS/SPAW Working Group meeting when formulating LBS STAC recommendations.
- e. That the Cartagena Convention Secretariat continues to explore capacity development opportunities within the region with IAEA.
- f. That the issue of the management of Sargassum inundations continues to be considered within the framework of the LBS Protocol, noting its significance to the region.
- g. Contracting Parties to the LBS Protocol with the support of the Cartagena Convention Secretariat continue to explore opportunities for the establishment of a consortium of laboratories in the Wider Caribbean Region

The lead of the Nutrients and Wastewater subgroup also informed the meeting that the subgroup was working on recommendations to be submitted to the 7 LBS STAC through the LBS OEWG. He also asked the Secretariat if these recommendations could be submitted at the end of May. The Secretariat informed the meeting that ideally all recommendations to the 7 LBS STAC should be included in the Report of the Chair which needs to be submitted to the Secretariat at the end of April, however it is possible to provide a revised version of the Report of the Chair reflecting recommendations obtained after that date.

7. Any Other Business and Decision on next meeting date

It was recommended that the next LBS OEWG meeting would take place mid-June, with the Secretariat sending out a doodle poll to members to confirm the preferred date.

With no other matters down for discussion the meeting was adjourned at 10:37am.

Action Items	Deadline
The Secretariat to share names and email addresses with SPAW RAC of LBS OEWG members interested in participating in the Sargassum WG	11 April 2025
Water quality assessment survey report shared with Nutrients and Wastewater subgroup	11 April 2025
Working group members to review the draft TORs for the LBS OEWG	18 April 2025
Secretariat to share revised clean version of OEWG TORs with WG members for endorsement	23 April 2025
Working Group members to review the proposed recommendations from the OEWG to the 7 LBS STAC	25 April 2025
Secretariat to send out Doodle poll for date of next LBS OEWG in mid-June	

Participants List:

Name	Country/Organisation
Darryl Banjoo	Trinidad and Tobago/ Chair/RAC IMA
Linroy Christian	Antigua and Barbuda
Anthony Headley	Barbados
Maëlenn L'Hoir	France
Felicia Adams-Kellman	Guyana
Eromonsele Akhidenor	Jamaica
Lisa Kirland	Jamaica
Oneiro Cherrington	Jamaica
Troy Pierce	United States of America
Daniela Wojtalewicz	United States of America
Marlen Perez	RAC CIMAB
Wendy Nelson	RAC IMA
Marko Tomic	Universidad EAFIT, Colombia
Paola Sofia Obando Madera	INVEMAR
Issa Oscar Kigongo	Cartagena Convention Secretariat
Jhenelle Barrett -Cohen	Cartagena Convention Secretariat
Laverne Walker	Cartagena Convention Secretariat

Annex A- Agenda for the Eighth LBS OEWG Meeting on 8 April 2025 as follows.

1. Updates and feedback on action items
2. Review and update LBS OEWG TORs.
3. Updates of working groups, subgroups
 - Update on the Nutrients and Wastewater Subgroup
 - Update on the Emerging Issues - Micro Plastics Subgroup
 - Update on integrated work of LBS /SPAW Sargassum working group.
4. Presentation of other Updates (meetings, projects, activities)
5. Proposed recommendations from LBS OEWG for LBS STAC 7.
6. Way Forward and next steps -Chair /Secretariat.
7. Any Other Business.

Meeting of Nutrients and Wastewater Thematic Sub-group of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) to the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol) to the Cartagena Convention

July 5th, 2024

8:55 am – 10:06 am (GMT-5)

1. Welcome and Introduction

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:00 on Thursday 5 July 2024. He welcomed members to the meeting and reiterated the objective of the meeting was to discuss the purpose and scope of the sub-group as well as identify a lead. The Chair then reviewed the proposed meeting agenda. As there were no comments on the meeting agenda the chair moved onto the next agenda item.

2. Identification of Project lead

Ms. Kirkland, Jamaica representative, inquired about the presence of expertise in the field of wastewater within the current OEWG with respect to identification of a potential sub-group lead. The Chair stressed the importance of the role of the thematic sub-group lead and required functions of the position and noted that the designate may not necessarily have technical expertise, the member can still execute a leadership role of the sub-group i.e. ensure meetings are held and the completion of work.

The Secretariat reinforced what was expressed by the Chair in terms of selecting a suitable member as leader. Ms Wojtalewicz, Observer-USA, inquired if an Observer would be eligible to lead the sub-group and the Chair was unopposed to this as an option. The Secretariat agreed with the Chair and stated it would be left up to the members to decide who would be preferred to lead. The Chair agreed that feedback should be received from members and suggested use of nomination procedure. The floor was opened to members for feedback.

Dr Beckles, UWI representative, noted that if a member is willing and able to lead then they should be allowed to do so. Dr Tomic, Observer-Colombia, was in agreement and suggested each member put forth a nomination to advance selection of group lead. Dr Mohammed, UWI representative, indicated that clarity should be provided on the key outputs required of the sub group lead, with a stipulated timeframe. Ms. Kirkland expressed her need for greater familiarity with subgroup members to effectively nominate a leader which led the Chair to request a short introduction and note of experience by all members. On completion of this introduction process, members put forward nominations. General consensus was found to select Dr Tomic as the subgroup lead to which he accepted.

3. Potential areas on work of subgroups

The subgroup leader then identified work to be done by the subgroup with respect to review of technical documents. Dr Narcis, RAC-IMA representative, noted the two documents were water classification and N&P standards under the SSFA and also there were updated versions (English speaking countries) of previously shared documents. The RAC-CIMAB representative, Ms Hernandez, also explained the preference for the integration of the Spanish speaking countries document and

English speaking countries document before review by the subgroup. The Secretariat indicated they would send the updated versions of these documents to the sub-group upon receipt from RACs.

4. Any Other Business

The Secretariat informed members about an upcoming project between UNEP and the US/EPA to support capacity building towards the improvement of water quality data in the region. Mr Piece, US EPA representative, expressed his pleasure in supporting this project (valued at USD \$3.5M).

With no other matters for discussion the meeting was adjourned at 10:06.

Action Items	Due Date
The subgroup lead indicated his intention to be in contact with the Secretariat and RACs for clarification of documents required for review by sub-group.	No date given in meeting.

Participant List

Name	Country/Organization
Cesar Bernal	INVEMAR
Azad Mohammed	UWI
Lisa Kirkland	JAMAICA
Hugh Sullivan	USA
Daniela Wojtalewicz	USA
Marlen Hernandez	RAC CIMAB Cuba
Victor Sende	RAC CIMAB Cuba
Marko Tomic	Colombia
Darryl Banjoo (Unverified)	RAC IMA Trinidad and Tobago
Denise Beckles	UWI
Maurice Narcis	RAC IMA Trinidad and Tobago
Troy Pierce	USA
Yamiris Gomez	RAC CIMAB Cuba
Laverne Walker	Cartagena Convention Secretariat

**Meeting of the Nutrients and Wastewater Thematic Sub-group of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) to the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol) to the Cartagena Convention
September 12th, 2024
9:00 am – 10:05 am (GMT-5)**

1. Welcome and Introduction

The Leader of the LBS OEWG Nutrients and Wastewater Subgroup, Dr Marko Tosic, called the meeting to order at 9:00 on Thursday 12 September 2024. He welcomed [members](#) to the meeting and reviewed the proposed meeting [agenda](#) which was circulated beforehand and had received feedback for adjustments. As there were no comments on the meeting agenda, Dr Tosic moved on to refresh members on the subgroup's objective and defined activities:

Objective: Providing technical support, advice, and input to the Secretariat and LBS RACs on the implementation of project activities in the current 2023/24 work plan:

Activities:

- Provide technical support to the RAC Activities (Cimab & IMA)
- Support the implementation of the Regional Nutrient Pollution Reduction Strategy and Action Plan
- Support the development of Regional Marine and Coastal Water Quality Criteria
- Provide technical oversight to the State of the Convention Area Report on Marine Pollution (SOCAR)
- Support the implementation of the UNEP/EPA Capacity Building Water Quality Project

2. Thematic Discussion: Classification of Waters, Standards and Criteria

Dr Tosic introduced the thematic discussion with a brief presentation aimed at establishing basic concepts and terminology on the subject of water quality, classification and standards. The take-home messages were that water quality is defined according to its adequacy and that adequacy depends on the water body's use, hence the importance of water classification to define the use of coastal water bodies. He went on to describe some common uses of marine waters (swimming, aesthetic, fishing, sensitive marine ecosystems), how the water quality parameters that are analysed should depend on the water body's use, and finally how threshold values (also called standards, criteria or reference values) can then be determined for each parameter associated with a water body's use (e.g. a threshold value of 30°C has been identified for the parameter temperature in water bodies used to protect the sensitive marine ecosystems of coral reefs).

Ms Lisa Kirkland, Jamaica representative, started off the ensuing discussion by sharing her experiences with the classification of waters in Jamaica. She explained that Jamaica is currently in the process of classifying its coastal waters in alignment with the LBS Protocol's Class 1 and Class 2 definitions and that this process is largely directed by the country's wastewater regulations. Ms Kirkland further explained that Jamaica's process of water classification requires a large amount of time dedication due to the

complexity of aligning the multiple agencies responsible for the island's different ecosystems and watersheds, and so there is a need for external support to accomplish the country's coastal water classification.

Dr Azad Mohammed, UWI representative, described the challenges observed in Trinidad and Tobago to define a use for waters when in fact they have multiple uses. Their approach to resolving this issue was to carry out a watershed sustainability analysis in order to identify the most frequent use of each water body or area. In recognizing that aquatic life had the strictest needs for water quality preservation among the multiple uses, they ultimately defined multi-use areas in accordance with the use of aquatic life conservation to ensure an adequate water quality for all uses.

Dr Troy Pierce, USA representative, explained how water uses are designated at the State and Tribe level in the USA, in accordance with the Clean Water Act. A common challenge is balancing the upstream needs of agricultural fertilizers with the downstream impacts of nutrient pollution. Dr Pierce described the USA's continuous efforts to increase wastewater treatment coverage in smaller populations as well as studies using improved microbiological indicators to identify, track, and control sources of wastewater, bacteria, and viruses. He also related the economic challenge of maintaining the country's Beaches Program due to increasing costs. Mr Hugh Sullivan, USA representative, complemented this response by highlighting the challenges involved in States and Tribes having different designations for the use of their waters. He also noted that in some cases, a specific water use may not be attainable due to the geographic conditions of the water body, such as for example the impossibility of attaining a high level of water transparency for aesthetic purposes in the area of a river mouth.

Ms Marlen Pérez Hernández of RAC Cimab commented via chat of her agreement on the importance of achieving connectivity between the classified use of marine waters and the marine water quality standards for each use, as well as the connectivity between the water quality standards of receiving marine waters and the discharge limits of land-based sources of wastewater.

3. Introduction to RAC Report #1: Guidelines for Classification of Waters

Dr Maurice Narcis, RAC-IMA representative, presented an introduction to the first technical document for the subgroup's review which compiles the joint effort of RAC-IMA and RAC-Cimab on guidelines for the classification of waters. Dr Narcis explained how the document synthesizes RAC-IMA's research on the subject among the English-speaking countries of the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR) with RAC-Cimab's research on that of the Spanish-speaking countries. He went on to describe how the technical document focuses on what is written in the national legislations of the WCR countries and how these are aligned with the LBS Protocol. Dr Narcis presented the document's table of contents as well as some tables and figures illustrating the LBS Protocol's classification system and the findings from each country. He also explained the methodology carried out in this research which began with a survey of Member State representatives and was then followed by a process of desktop research.

Ms Lisa Kirkland, Jamaica representative, raised the question of whether the technical document extends into the issue of funding mechanisms, which are an express need of some Member States to effectively carry out their marine water classification activities, to which Dr Narcis clarified that unfortunately the aspects of funding mechanisms were beyond the scope of the study. Dr Troy Pierce, USA representative, expressed his enthusiasm about the study and the significant value it holds for the region's progress on pollution control and LBS Protocol implementation. Dr Narcis took the opportunity to also clarify the approach taken in compiling the USA's legislation for marine water classification, which as discussed is complex due to each State and Tribe having their independent process for water use designation. As such, the technical report focuses on the legislation of the State of Florida and on the Clean Water Act.

The subgroup agreed on a 1-month timeline to complete the technical review of the report, setting the deadline for 10th of October 2024.

4. Updates on SOCAR & Regional Nutrient Pollution Reduction Strategy

As recommended by the representatives of USA and Jamaica, an update on the progress of the SOCAR and the Regional Nutrient Pollution Reduction Strategy and Action Plan were included in the meeting agenda as standing items with the goal of keeping Subgroup members up to date on these important activities.

Ms Laverne Walker, Cartagena Convention Secretariat representative, began with an update on the SOCAR. While the report is planned for the next biennium, Ms Walker explained that initial steps are being taken presently to identify the funding to support the SOCAR’s development. She also explained the importance of holding discussions between the AMEP and SPAW Sub-Programmes to define an approach to integrating the aims of both Sub-Programmes into the SOCAR.

Regarding the Regional Nutrient Pollution Reduction Strategy and Action Plan, Ms Walker presented a timeline for its implementation indicating that current activities are in phase one of the plan. She highlighted the importance of the strategy being supported by the work of the OEWG and its thematic subgroups on Nutrients and Wastewater as well as Sargassum. Ms Walker further described how the strategy will align with various activities of the Secretariat, including key studies on nutrient management valuation, the work on developing regional water quality standards, and the new UNEP/EPA Capacity Building Water Quality Project.

5. Any Other Business

Subgroup members were advised that the next meeting of Open-Ended Working Group will be held on the 3rd of October. The Subgroup lead indicated that he will be in contact with subgroup members via email to confirm the date of the next subgroup meeting.

With no other matters for discussion the meeting was adjourned at 10:05.

Action Items	Due Date
Subgroup members agreed to review and provide feedback on the technical document “RAC Report #1: Classification of Waters.”	Thursday 10 October 2024
The subgroup lead indicated his intention to be in contact with subgroup members to confirm the date of the next subgroup meeting.	No date given in meeting.

Participant List

Country	Organization	Name
Colombia	Universidad EAFIT	Marko Tomic
Colombia	Invemar	Cesar Bernal
Cuba	Cimab	Marlen Pérez Hernández
Jamaica	NEPA	Lisa Kirkland
Trinidad & Tobago	IMA	Maurice Narcis
Trinidad & Tobago	IMA	Wendy Nelson
Trinidad & Tobago	UWI (St. Augustine)	Denise Beckles
Trinidad & Tobago	UWI (St. Augustine)	Azad Mohammed
USA	EPA	Troy Pierce
USA	EPA	Daniela Wojtalewicz
USA	EPA	Hugh Sullivan
Wider Caribbean Region	Cartagena Convention Secretariat	Laverne Walker

Meeting Agenda

1. Agenda approval
2. Refresh on sub-group activities
3. Thematic Discussion: Classification of Waters, Standards and Criteria
4. Introduction to RAC Report #1: Guidelines for Classification of Waters
5. Updates:
 - SOCAR
 - Regional Nutrient Pollution Reduction Strategy & Action Plan
6. Any other business
7. Date for next meeting

**Meeting of the Nutrients and Wastewater Thematic Sub-group of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) to the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol) to the Cartagena Convention
November 14th, 2024
9:00 am – 10:10 am (GMT-5)**

1. Welcome and Introduction

At 9:00am on Thursday 14 November 2024, the Leader of the LBS OEWG Nutrients and Wastewater Subgroup, Dr Marko Tomic, called the meeting to order. He welcomed [participating members](#) to the meeting and reviewed the proposed meeting [agenda](#) which was circulated beforehand and had received feedback for adjustments. As there were no comments on the meeting agenda, Dr Tomic moved on to refresh members on the subgroup's objective and defined activities:

Objective: Providing technical support, advice, and input to the Secretariat and LBS RACs on the implementation of project activities in the current 2023/24 work plan:

Activities:

- Provide technical support to the RAC Activities (Cimab & IMA)
- Support the implementation of the Regional Nutrient Pollution Reduction Strategy and Action Plan
- Support the development of Regional Marine and Coastal Water Quality Criteria
- Provide technical oversight to the State of the Convention Area Report on Marine Pollution (SOCAR)
- Support the implementation of the UNEP/EPA Water Quality Capacity Development Project

2. Discussion: RAC Report #1 Guidelines for Classification of Waters

Dr Tomic thanks subgroup members for sending feedback on the 1st RAC Report and asked Dr Maurice Narcis, RAC IMA Representative and co-lead author of the report, how the review of feedback was going. Dr Narcis thanked those who sent feedback and explained that the reviews were well received and simple to understand, and while it will be a challenge to incorporate all the suggestions into the report, he affirmed that all suggestions will be duly considered.

Ms Laverne Walker, Cartagena Convention Secretariat Representative, asked when the subgroup could expect the revised document to which Dr Narcis responded that the new version would be prepared by the next OEWG meeting on 5 December. Ms Daniela Wojtalewicz, USA Representative, requested clarification if there would be a final opportunity to review the new version of the report. Ms Walker responded that yes, there would be a final opportunity to review the report, with the understanding that the final version of the report is needed for February 2025 in order to be provided to participants of the next LBS STAC Meeting which will likely be held in the 2nd quarter of 2025. Ms Marlen Pérez Hernández, RAC Cimab Representative, reminded the subgroup that there would also be two more RAC reports available for review prior to the STAC: firstly, a report on regional criteria for N & P wastewater loads, planned for dissemination the following week, and secondly a report on proposed amendments to the LBS Protocol on wastewater reuse and discharge standards. Given the multiple reports needing review prior to the STAC, it was recommended that a maximum of two reviews be made available.

Dr Tomic then introduced a series of discussion questions to guide technical discussions on the subject of the 1st RAC Report. The first question was "Do national classification systems need to follow the LBS Protocol *exactly* or is it sufficient that they *align* with the classifications of the LBS Protocol?" Ms Lisa Kirkland, Jamaica representative, stated she believes that alignment should be enough, to which Dr Tomic agreed. Dr Troy Pierce, USA Representative, also suggested reviewing the SOCAR report to find if there was any language in it regarding the classification of marine waters.

The second discussion question was “Do countries need to classify all their coastal waters or is it sufficient to only classify the waters in the vicinity of a new potential wastewater discharge?” Ms Pérez responded via chat that all coastal waters should be classified. Dr Pierce, USA Representative, explained that for planning purposes it is best to classify all coastal waters. Dr Darryl Banjoo, RAC IMA Representative, agreed with Dr Pierce and clarified that while the LBS Protocol is specific to domestic wastewater, given that new amendments will be proposed to include industrial wastewater discharges, it would be best to classify all coastal waters. Ms Kirkland also agreed to the benefits of classifying all coastal waters.

The third discussion question was “Which countries have already implemented the classification schemes defined in their legislation?” Ms Kirkland stated that Jamaica had legislation on classification but that it has not yet been implemented. Dr Narcis explained that unfortunately the level of national implementation was difficult to ascertain from the desktop study conducted in producing the report. He highlighted that having national legislation doesn’t always lead to implementation, but that if a country has both legislation on classification and on effluent limitations, the perhaps there is a higher probability of implementation. Ms Pérez clarified that the objective of the report being reviewed was to recommend guidelines for classification, not to report on national implementation nor to propose methodologies as the Secretariat is not in a position to instruct countries regarding the method by which they classify their waters. Ms Wojtalewicz stated that the USA does have national zoning defined in its Clean Water Act and provided a [link](#) via the chat.

The fourth discussion question was “What methodology is used for determining the delimitation line /boundary between class I and class II waters in the marine environment?” Dr Banjoo responded by agreeing with Ms Pérez’s comment that there is no “one size fits all,” though that it would be helpful to develop a step-by-step guide on how countries might approach delimiting their coastal area between classes I and II. He raised the importance of defining mixing zones for this purpose and queried if Saint Lucia might have carried out this exercise and defined criteria by distance or depth. Ms Walker recalled that Saint Lucia had described its process of classification, aimed mainly at its swimming waters, and agreed that a step-by-step guideline for coastal water classification would be helpful. Dr Narcis highlighted how varied the process could be from one country to another due to differences in their coastal industries. He went on to describe that WCR countries do have beaches and tropical ecosystems in common, and that the key would be to first identify all MPAs and swimming areas but concluded that it is uncertain whether a standardized methodology could be developed with so much variation. Ms Pérez agreed with Dr Narcis on the complexity of the aspect of boundaries between classes I and II but emphasized that recommendations could be made regarding the importance of assessing transboundary impacts between zones. She also stated that the recommendation to assess mixing zones is appropriate, though it would not be appropriate to explicitly include distance or area values for class zones given the variability from one coast to another depending on oceanographic conditions and the types of discharges.

Ms Walker commented that perhaps criteria could be that industries effluents outfalls should go beyond the class 1 water boundaries, which was something that was considered when Saint Lucia did its classification. Ms Kirkland explained that Jamaica is in the process of defining buffer zones after having identified all of its coastal activities, however, it has been a long process due to the sensitivity of the issue with some stakeholders.

3. Updates on SOCAR & Regional Nutrient Pollution Reduction Strategy

With time running out on the meeting, Ms Walker provided a quick update on the processes of the SOCAR and the Regional Nutrient Pollution Reduction Strategy and Action Plan, which continue as to be on track as planned.

4. Any Other Business

Dr Tasic informed members that they would soon be receiving a request to complete a Needs Assessment Survey as part of the UNEP-UESPAC Capacity Development Project on Water Quality in the Wider Caribbean Region, including the Gulf of Mexico.

Ms Walker shared progress on mobilizing additional support for capacity development activities from the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS), part of the UK government.

Ms Walker also shared that plans are being made for a future joint meeting with the OEWG as requested by the Sargassum Sub-Group.

5. 6. Date for next meeting

Subgroup members were advised that the next meeting of Open-Ended Working Group will be held on the 2nd or 3rd Thursday of January 2025 and that subgroup members would be contacted via email to confirm their preferred date.

With no other matters for discussion the meeting was adjourned at 10:10am.

Action Items	Due Date
RAC IMA agreed to send the next technical document "RAC Report 2: Standards and Criteria for N and P Wastewater Loads."	Thursday 5 December 2024
The subgroup lead indicated his intention to be in contact with subgroup members to confirm the date of the next subgroup meeting.	No date given in meeting.

Participant List

Country	Organization	Name
Colombia	Universidad EAFIT	Marko Tasic
Cuba	Cimab	Marlen Pérez Hernández
Jamaica	NEPA	Lisa Kirkland
Trinidad & Tobago	IMA	Maurice Narcis
Trinidad & Tobago	UWI (St. Augustine)	Denise Beckles
Trinidad & Tobago	UWI (St. Augustine)	Azad Mohammed
USA	EPA	Troy Pierce
USA	EPA	Daniela Wojtalewicz
USA	EPA	Hugh Sullivan
Wider Caribbean Region	Cartagena Convention Secretariat	Laverne Walker

Meeting Agenda

1. Agenda approval
2. Refresh on sub-group activities
3. Discussion: RAC Report #1 Guidelines for Classification of Waters
4. Updates:
 - SOCAR
 - Regional Nutrient Pollution Reduction Strategy & Action Plan
6. Any other business
 - Survey for WQ Needs Assessment (UNEP-EPA)

7. Date for next meeting

Meeting of the Nutrients and Wastewater Thematic Sub-group of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) to the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol) to the Cartagena Convention
January 23rd, 2025
9:00 am – 10:10 am (GMT-5)

1. Welcome and Introduction

On Thursday 23 January 2025 at 9:00am, the meeting of the LBS OEWG Nutrients and Wastewater Subgroup began. Dr Marko Tasic, Subgroup leader, welcomed [participating members](#) to the meeting and reviewed the proposed meeting [agenda](#) which was circulated beforehand. As there were no comments on the agenda, the meeting moved on to refresh the members on the subgroup's objective and defined activities:

Objective: Providing technical support, advice, and input to the Secretariat and LBS RACs on the implementation of project activities in the current 2023/24 work plan:

Activities:

- Provide technical support to the RAC Activities (Cimab & IMA)
- Support the implementation of the Regional Nutrient Pollution Reduction Strategy and Action Plan
- Support the development of Regional Marine and Coastal Water Quality Criteria
- Provide technical oversight to the State of the Convention Area Report on Marine Pollution (SOCAR)
- Support the implementation of the UNEP/EPA Water Quality Capacity Development Project

2. Discussion: RAC Report #2 Criteria and Standards for N & P Wastewater Loads

Dr Tasic thanked subgroup members for sending feedback on the 2nd RAC Report on Criteria and Standards for N & P Wastewater Loads. He asked Dr Maurice Narcis, RAC IMA Representative and co-lead author of the report, how the review of feedback was going. Dr Narcis thanked those who sent feedback, confirmed the reviews received to date, and explained that the RACs' review of the feedback is underway. He encouraged members to identify any gaps in the report's assessment of current regulations and explained that next steps for the report's improvement will include the inclusion of graphs and basic statistics for the interpretation of the assessed discharge criteria and standards. Dr Troy Pierce, USA Representative, expressed his thanks to the report's authors and his enthusiasm for the progress made towards proposing these important regional criteria. Ms Laverne Walker, Cartagena Convention Secretariat Representative, also expressed her thanks to reviewers and noted the many differences in regulations between countries. A series of questions were introduced to guide technical discussions on the subject of the 2nd RAC Report. The first question was "should the LBS Protocol include load limits, or just concentration limits, considering that only two countries have load limits?" Dr Pierce raised the point that it would be challenging to define load limits as they would depend on the receiving water bodies. Dr Tasic asked if the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) method used in the USA was done on a case-by-case basis, which Dr Pierce confirmed. Mr Hugh Sullivan, USA Representative, shared insights regarding the USA's use of [SPARROW](#) (SPAtially Referenced Regression On Watershed attributes) models which estimate the amount of a contaminant transported from inland watersheds to larger water bodies by linking monitoring data

with information on watershed characteristics and contaminant sources. Dr Tosic thanked him for this contribution and reiterated the benefits of using models to link watershed transport to river outlets, as well as hydrodynamic models linking coastal outlets with nearshore mixing processes to ensure compliance with ambient marine water quality standards.

Ms Lisa Kirkland, Jamaica representative, recommended a possible solution to the question of defining discharge limits as concentrations or as loads. She explained that it would be more practical to begin with limits defined as nutrient concentrations, though also recognized the importance of eventually achieving an agreement on limits defined as loads. In this consideration, Ms Kirkland recommended that the proposed discharge limits be defined as concentrations and be accompanied by a statement explaining that load limits should also be established within a given period of time. Ms Wendy Nelson and Dr Darryl Banjoo, IMA Representatives, Mr Sullivan, and Dr Tosic all expressed their agreement with Ms Kirkland's proposal.

The second discussion question was "Should discharges into class 1 waters be prohibited completely?" Dr Tosic explained how some of the report's findings showed that some countries defined limits of zero discharges into class 1 waters and asked the subgroup for their thoughts on this approach. Dr Banjoo explained that whether or not a discharge impacts the quality of class 1 waters largely depends on its level of wastewater treatment, and so it may be unnecessary and impractical to prohibit discharges completely. Therefore, he concluded that he wouldn't recommend completely prohibiting discharges into class 1 waters but would state the important criteria that discharges into class 1 waters should ensure that their loads do not cause detriment to receiving water quality. Ms Kirkland, Ms Walker, and Ms Daniela Wojtalewicz, USA Representative, agreed with this perspective.

The third discussion question asked whether it was more beneficial to state discharge limits as ranges or as single values? Ms Kirkland noted that the ranges of the report's proposed discharge limits were quite wide and recognized the benefit of proposing single values but ultimately felt that ranges would be more prudent as they would allow countries to select limits within the proposed range depending on the particularities of their coastal areas and priorities. Mr Sullivan also explained that it would be a risk to propose a single value that may not adequately protect different coastal areas with varying characteristics. Dr Banjoo noted that the wording of a "maximum permissible limit" does suggest a single value but agreed that ultimately a range allows for more flexibility to account for varying coastal conditions. Dr Narcis clarified that the report's proposed limits are a work in progress and that the ranges could of course be modified. He stated the intention to refine the proposed limits with the aim of reflecting the limits used in the region's countries. Dr Tosic also requested clarification if the proposed limits will be separated into those discharging into class 1 waters and those discharging into class 2 waters, which Dr Narcis confirmed.

Dr Banjoo recommended that the report and subsequent recommendations for amendments to the LBS Protocol be precise in the use of its terminology when referring to "standards", "limits", "criteria" and the like, including a glossary to ensure that the definitions used for these terms are clearly stated. Dr Tosic agreed that this would be important but also recognized the challenge for the report's authors in using consistent terminology while also properly citing the different terms used in each country's regulations. Mr Sullivan raised the point that by proposing discharge limits only in the forms of total nutrients (TP, TN, TKN) it may be complicated for some countries or states that are currently reporting on discharges in the dissolved nutrient forms (NO_3 , NO_2 , PO_4). Dr Narcis explained that it would be a challenge to propose limits for the many different nutrient forms being used in the discharge limits across the region but recognized that by proposing discharge limits only in the forms of total nutrients there would be some gaps between regional and national discharge limits. Ms Kirkland pointed out the importance of

standardizing discharge limits across the region and reflected that even if the current proposal for limits includes too many or too few nutrient forms, the key is to take steps towards regional standardization. Dr Banjoo clarified that in the case of end-of-pipe discharge limits, the total nutrient forms are definitely the preferred form to report on, while standards based on the dissolved nutrient forms are more commonly used for receiving waters.

Time did not allow for discussion of the fourth question of whether the proposed limits are too high or too low. Dr Tasic highlighted that there is no simple answer to this important question and suggested that members consider the question for a future discussion.

3. Updates on SOCAR and the Regional Nutrient Pollution Reduction Strategy and Action Plan

Ms Laverne Walker provided updates from the Cartagena Convention Secretariat on the progress of the State of the Convention Area Report on Marine Pollution (SOCAR) and the Regional Nutrient Pollution Reduction Strategy and Action Plan. Ms Walker stated that funding is currently being sought out to implement the next cycle of the regular SOCAR report. With regards to the Regional Nutrient Pollution Reduction Strategy and Action Plan, Ms Walker explained that work is currently being done towards its implementation, which is on track as planned.

4. Any Other Business

Dr Tasic briefly shared preliminary results of the Needs Assessment Survey as part of the UNEP-USEPA Water Quality Capacity Development Project, for which responses have been received from 8 countries: Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, Panama, Saint Lucia, Suriname, USA, and Venezuela. He highlighted some of the more frequent responses for capacity needs and encouraged countries which have yet to respond to please do so.

5. Date for next meeting

Subgroup members were advised that they would be contacted via email to confirm their preferred date and time for the next meeting. The date would likely fall in the final week of March or the first week of April. Given that two subgroup members have schedule conflicts with meeting on Thursday mornings, the Doodle application will be used to determine a day and time that works well for subgroup members. With no other matters for discussion the meeting was adjourned at 10:10am.

Action Items	Due Date
The subgroup lead will be in contact with subgroup members to confirm the date and time of the next subgroup meeting.	No date given in meeting.

Participant List

Country	Organization	Name
Colombia	Universidad EAFIT	Marko Tomic
Colombia	INVEMAR	Cesar Bernal
Jamaica	NEPA	Lisa Kirkland
Trinidad & Tobago	IMA	Darryl Banjoo
Trinidad & Tobago	IMA	Maurice Narcis
Trinidad & Tobago	IMA	Wendy Nelson
USA	EPA	Troy Pierce
USA	EPA	Daniela Wojtalewicz
USA	EPA	Hugh Sullivan
Wider Caribbean Region	Cartagena Convention Secretariat	Laverne Walker

Meeting Agenda

1. Agenda approval
2. Refresh on sub-group activities
3. Discussion: RAC Report #2 Criteria and Standards for N & P Wastewater Loads
4. Updates:
 - State of the Convention Area Report on Marine Pollution (SOCAR)
 - Regional Nutrient Pollution Reduction Strategy & Action Plan
6. Any other business
 - Survey for Water Quality Capacity Needs Assessment (UNEP-EPA Project)
7. Date for next meeting

Meeting of the Nutrients and Wastewater Thematic Sub-group of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) to the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol) to the Cartagena Convention
April 1st, 2025
9:00 am – 10:00 am (GMT-5)

1. Welcome and Introduction

On Tuesday 1 April 2025 at 9:00am, the meeting of the LBS OEWG Nutrients and Wastewater Subgroup began. Dr Marko Tomic, Subgroup leader, welcomed [participating members](#) to the meeting and reviewed the proposed meeting [agenda](#) which was circulated beforehand. As there were no comments on the agenda, the meeting moved on to refresh the members on the subgroup's objective and defined activities: **Objective:** Providing technical support, advice, and input to the Secretariat and LBS RACs on the implementation of project activities in the current 2023/24 work plan:

Activities:

- Provide technical support to the RAC Activities (Cimab & IMA)
- Support the implementation of the Regional Nutrient Pollution Reduction Strategy and Action Plan
- Support the development of Regional Marine and Coastal Water Quality Criteria
- Provide technical oversight to the State of the Convention Area Report on Marine Pollution (SOCAR)
- Support the implementation of the UNEP/EPA Water Quality Capacity Development Project

2. Survey results of UNEP-USEPA Water Quality Needs Assessment

Dr Tomic presented a summary of survey results relevant to the Sub-Group, extracted from the needs assessment survey conducted as part of the UNEP-USEPA Water Quality Capacity Development Project. Responses were received from 22 individuals located in 19 countries of the WCR, acknowledging that not all respondents were in positions to provide an official response on behalf of their countries, but rather contributed insights based on their personal perspectives as professionals working in the region. It was found that 14 of the 19 surveyed countries (74%) have coastal water quality monitoring programs. The survey's results showed that the primary challenges in conducting coastal and marine water quality monitoring were closely related to funding limitations. While 'funding' itself was selected by nearly all participants, the next most selected primary challenges (infrastructure, access to equipment, geographic coverage of monitoring) can all be related directly to funding limitations, rather than knowledge or skills. However, the top training needs identified all related closely to knowledge and skills. The most commonly described training needs were field sampling and laboratory analysis; complementary monitoring approaches; data management, analysis and sharing; and communication of findings. The latter two training needs aligned with the top two selected options of LMS modules of most interest: reporting and data management & analysis. Other popular LMS modules included the design of coastal water quality monitoring programs and monitoring and prevention of plastic pollution, including microplastics. All 14 surveyed countries conduct laboratory analyses of microbiological fecal pollutants, reflecting the region's priority on beach safety and wastewater risks. Nearly all countries analyze nutrients (13) and physical-chemical properties (12), while many also assess sediments (9). Fewer countries analyze metals (8), hydrocarbons (7), chlorophyll-a (6), microplastics (5), persistent organic pollutants (4), and pharmaceuticals (2). Among the 13 countries analyzing nutrients, specific compounds vary: 10 analyze nitrate and total phosphorus, nine analyze total nitrogen, and eight analyze nitrite, ammonia, and phosphate. Only five analyze all six nutrient compounds. Notably, only eight countries report laboratory methodologies

sensitive enough to detect the low concentrations typical of marine waters, raising concerns about data reliability and resource efficiency. Most of the laboratories (12) forming part of the surveyed countries' coastal water quality monitoring program are also equipped to analyse the water quality of domestic or industrial wastewater samples.

Regarding the availability of data on wastewater discharges (domestic or industrial) to national coastal water quality monitoring programs, half of the 22 surveyed respondents have access to wastewater pollution concentration data. Relatively few have information on the type of wastewater treatment (9) or pollutant loads (4), while four responded "none of the above".

The survey also showed that policy updates on pollution control and water quality criteria are infrequent, with most occurring every 20+ years or every 10-20 years, while only a few update every 5-10 years or less than every 5 years. Coastal and marine policies in the 22 surveyed countries cover coastal/marine water classification (15), wastewater discharge limits (12), ambient water quality standards (12), beach water quality standards (11), wastewater treatment targets (9), and wastewater/sludge reuse standards (8). However, only seven respondents indicated a clear link between marine water quality standards and wastewater discharge limits in national policies. Additionally, just 10 of 22 confirmed mechanisms exist to enforce coastal water quality policies.

The group was asked if they would like to share anything else regarding needs to address capacity gaps and challenges in water quality monitoring and management which are considered as priority, but not reflected in the presentation of summarized survey results. No additional needs were mentioned, though the need for standardized (or harmonized) monitoring protocols was highlighted again. As shown in the survey results, there is a strong need to harmonize data collection and reporting methods to ensure consistency within countries and across the WCR. Standardizing national monitoring programs is necessary to enhance water quality management and improve regional assessments and cooperation.

3. Joint working group meeting on Sargassum in Trinidad and Tobago

Ms Laverne Walker of the Cartagena Convention Secretariat provided a summary of the first Joint LBS OEWG/SPAW Sargassum Working Group Meeting held recently in Trinidad and Tobago on 18 -20 March 2025. The meeting included members of the SPAW Sargassum Working Group and some members of the LBS OEWG Nutrient and Wastewater Sub-Group.

The meeting's activities included a review of the Sargassum Working Group action plan with a view to having it adopted at the next SPAW STAC meeting. Members of the meeting agreed on a proposed definition of when Sargassum becomes a "pollutant," considering it serves both as a habitat for species in the open ocean but can become a pollutant when it inundates the coastal zone. Members agreed to present the proposed definition of "Sargassum inundation" to both the upcoming SPAW and LBS STACS. The role of nutrients in the impact on Sargassum inundation was also discussed, finding that nitrogen does not have a great impact on Sargassum, while there may be more of an impact due to phosphorus.

It was recommended to develop an integrated "State of" report on the impact of Sargassum as a "test case." The idea was discussed of creating a new Sargassum Working Group under the scope of the Cartagena Convention, rather than under the SPAW and LBS Protocols.

There was also discussion on the reuse of sargassum, such as in skin care products for example. However, further research is still needed in this field in order to first address the risk of arsenic contamination and potential ways to remove it. There are some ongoing demonstrations of Sargassum reuse, but these are still in their early stages.

4. Updates on SOCAR and the Regional Nutrient Pollution Reduction Strategy and Action Plan

Ms Walker provided updates on the progress of the State of the Convention Area Report on Marine Pollution (SOCAR) and the Regional Nutrient Pollution Reduction Strategy and Action Plan.

Ms Walker stated that funding is currently being sought out to implement the next cycle of the regular SOCAR report and some possible funding sources (e.g. PROCARIBE, USEPA) are currently being explored. The next SOCAR may also consider a more integrated approach, considering the interconnected nature of Sargassum across the LBS and SPAW Protocols. Ms Marlen Pérez of RAC Cimab recommended that the scope of the new SOCAR be defined in advance, taking into account the results of the first SOCAR and the regional studies that have been carried out recently, so as not to duplicate efforts.

With regards to the Regional Nutrient Pollution Reduction Strategy and Action Plan, Ms Walker explained that work is currently being done towards its implementation, continuing with the activities defined in its work plan, which is on track as planned.

5. Any Other Business

Ms Walker raised the question on behalf of the Cartagena Convention Secretariat whether the Sub-group would like to bring forward any recommendations to the overall Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) to be considered for presentation at the next LBS STAC. It was noted that there were various recommendations for improved capacity in coastal water quality monitoring expressed during Dr Tosic’s presentation of results from the needs assessment survey. The Sub-group members requested if it would be possible to share the presentation as well as the survey report, as these would better assist them in considering potential recommendations to the LBS STAC. It was determined that the Sub-group’s recommendations with regard to the survey results would thus be prepared after the full report is shared with Sub-group members. Dr Tosic also offered to prepare some draft recommendations based on his presentation with the aim of making progress in the meantime. Ms. Walker further noted that the recommendations emanating from the subgroup did not only need to reflect the discussions from today’s meeting but could also reflect recommendations coming out of other meetings of the subgroup, such as those focused on the RAC reports on the classification of marine waters and maximum nutrient loads in coastal wastewater discharges.

6. Date for next meeting

Subgroup members were advised that they would be contacted via email to confirm their preferred date and time for the next meeting. The date would likely be at the end of May.

With no other matters for discussion the meeting was adjourned at 10:00am.

Action Items	Due Date
The subgroup lead will be in contact with subgroup members to confirm the date and time of the next subgroup meeting.	No date given in meeting.
The subgroup lead will share the presentation from the meeting and the full survey report with subgroup members.	No date given in meeting.
The subgroup lead will prepare draft recommendations based on his presentation of the needs assessment survey to be considered by the sub-group to bring forward to the overall OEWG.	No date given in meeting.

Participant List

Country	Organization	Name
Colombia	Universidad EAFIT	Marko Tomic
Colombia	INVEMAR	Cesar Bernal
Cuba	Cimab	Marlen Pérez Hernández
Jamaica	NEPA	Lisa Kirkland
Trinidad & Tobago	UWI	Denise Beckles
USA	EPA	Daniela Wojtalewicz
USA	EPA	Hugh Sullivan
Wider Caribbean Region	Cartagena Convention Secretariat	Laverne Walker
Wider Caribbean Region	Cartagena Convention Secretariat	Jhenelle Barrett

Meeting Agenda

1. Agenda approval
2. Refresh on sub-group activities
3. Survey results of UNEP-EPA WQ Needs Assessment
4. Updates:
 - Joint working group meeting on Sargassum in Trinidad and Tobago
 - State of the Convention Area Report on Marine Pollution (SOCAR)
 - Regional Nutrient Pollution Reduction Strategy & Action Plan
6. Any other business
7. Date for next meeting

Meeting of Microplastics Thematic Sub-group of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) to the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol) to the Cartagena Convention
July 5th, 2024
10:07 am – 10:59 am (GMT-5)

1. Welcome and Introduction

The Chair called the meeting to order at 10:07 on Thursday 5 July 2024. He welcomed members to the meeting and then reviewed the proposed meeting agenda. As there were no comments on the meeting agenda members were asked by the chair to give a brief introduction of themselves and to state their experience with micro-plastics. After introductions were completed, the group moved onto the next agenda item.

2. Identification of Subgroup Lead

A nomination procedure was initiated by the members in order to select a lead for the sub-group. After nominations were completed, the Secretariat, noted that there were two members identified as potential lead - UWI representative, Dr Azad Mohammed and INVEMAR representative, Ms Paola Madera. Cuba representative, Ms Marlen Hernandez-RAC CIMAB, noted the wealth of experience held by INVEMAR within the microplastics field. The secretariat then suggested a vote be held but Dr Mohammed decided to support INVEMAR nomination as Lead. A general consensus was found by members and Ms Madera was selected to be the Microplastics Subgroup Lead. Ms Madera accepted the role, but could not take over the meeting due to ongoing connectivity issues. As a result, the chair continued to lead the meeting.

3. Potential Areas of Work

The Chair initiated discussion on this topic with suggestion of preparing a report that outlines where Microplastic studies have occurred within the region. Dr Mohammed then shared a publication on the topic within the group. The Chair acknowledged this and inquired about what would be the output of the subgroup. Ms Hernandez-RAC CIMAB indicated that they will share as much information as possible to the subgroup about microplastics in the region. The Secretariat then brought some existing projects to the attention of the subgroup that are currently being supported through the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Dr Mohammed advised on current variety of methodologies for sample analysis.

Barbados representative, Mr Anthony Headley, noted the possibility of reviewing current status of microplastic assessments as ongoing work status of laboratories and determination of priority. The Chair was in agreement that a report consisting of a review of monitoring methodologies and laboratories with analysis capacity in the region would serve as good output for the subgroup. The Secretariat informed there was an existing report from a completed IWEco project regarding laboratory capacity that will be shared after the meeting. USA representative, Ms Daniela Wojtalewicz, stated support for suggestions by Dr Mohammed and Mr Headley and noted that eventually they would like to focus on capacity building efforts as it relates to laboratory support.

4. Any Other Business

The Chair noted that the subgroup lead would decide working arrangements and organize future meetings. The Secretariat indicated the date for the next OEWG meeting would be Thursday 25th July. With no other matters for discussion the meeting was adjourned at 10:59.

Participant List

Name	Country/Organization
PAOLA Sofia Obando Madera	INVEMAR

Azad Mohammed	UWI
Anthony Headley	BARBADOS
Hugh Sullivan	USA
Daniela Wojtalewicz	USA
Marlen Hernandez	RAC CIMAB, Cuba
Victor Sende	RAC CIMAB, Cuba
Marko Tomic	Colombia
Darryl Banjoo (Unverified)	RAC IMA Trinidad and Tobago
Maurice Narcis	RAC IMA Trinidad and Tobago
Hodayah Finman	USA
Troy Pierce	USA
Yamiris Gomez	RAC CIMAB, Cuba
Laverne Walker	Cartagena Convention Secretariat

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OEWG Emerging Issues Sub-Group Micro Plastics Subthematic Group Meeting	Minute N° 01		
	Date		
	Day	Month	Year
	04	11	24

Hour	03:00 to 04:00 pm	Next Meeting	Día	Mes	Año
Place	Virtual, Microsoft Teams				

ATTENDANTS			
N°	Position	Name	Dependencia/Entidad
1	Chief scientist	Troy Pierce	USA Environmental Protection Agency
2		Daniela Wojtalewicz	USA Environmental Protection Agency
3	Graduate Assistant	Alexandra Hughes	Department of Analytical Services
4	Scientific Researcher	Juan Fernando Saldarriaga Vélez	Colombia INVEMAR
5		Azad Mohammed	Trinidad and Tobago University of Western
6	Secretariat	Laverne Walker	Cartagena Convention
7		Oneiro Cherrington	Jamaica National Environment and Planning Agency
8			
19			

AGENDA		
N°	Thematic	Responsible
1	Brief Introduction of members.	All
2	Updates and comments on the LBS OEWG meeting held on October 3rd	Juan Saldarriaga
3	Roles of participants	All
4	Expected outcomes of the group and work plan	All
5	Conclusions	All

N°	DEVELOPMENT OF THE AGENDA
1	<p>Brief Introduction of members</p> <p>The meeting began with Juan Saldarriaga presenting the agenda and politely requesting the participants present to introduce themselves. This was particularly important as it was their first time participating in these meetings and assuming co-leadership of the group alongside Azad Mohammed. Each member introduced themselves, stating their name, country, and the entity they represent.</p> <p>Before the introductions, Daniela Wojtalewicz pointed out that the introductions may not be strictly necessary, considering the nature of the working group and some points indicated in the agenda regarding the roles of the participants.</p> <p>After the introductions, Laverne explained what it meant to be an observer in a larger working group and clarified that, as part of the microplastics subgroup, all members would work collaboratively and none would necessarily be an observer.</p> <p>Updates and Comments on the LBS OEWG Meeting Held on October 3rd</p>

Juan Saldarriaga referred to the summary from the meeting held on October 3, 2024, to recap the commitments made and to clarify the current status of these commitments. Additionally, he mentioned Paola Obando's recommendation to propose Juan Saldarriaga as the leader of the group, with a suggestion that the group be co-led by Azad Mohammed and Juan Saldarriaga. Laverne confirmed that this proposal was endorsed by the wider group. It was emphasized that the microplastics subgroup is not responsible for making decisions.

Roles of Participants

This agenda item was not addressed, given that the nature of the group was clarified at the beginning of the meeting.

Expected Outcomes of the Group and Work Plan

In general, Juan Saldarriaga revisited the Excel file shared by Paola Obando on October 2, 2024, as a foundational resource for each participant to propose ideas on what additional information could be included and how it could be enhanced. Moreover, Laverne indicated it might be useful to discuss what the group truly aims to achieve and to hear what aspects the participants want to focus on moving forward. She suggested bringing these ideas to the table to be thoroughly considered regarding whether the subgroup could work on them within a given timeframe. She also noted that the thematic subgroup lacks broad representation from the entire Caribbean region.

Laverne further mentioned the projects by the IAEA that are underway, considering that there are components related to microplastics being addressed in the Latin America and Caribbean region. This was to ensure that efforts are not being replicated in some way.

During the meeting, it was agreed that Juan Saldarriaga will create a shared folder on OneDrive, which will include the Excel file and the comments for each group member to contribute both technical content and any additional information they find relevant for the report.

Conclusions

Juan Saldarriaga will send all participants the meeting summary for feedback from everyone. He will also create the folder on OneDrive, where he will upload the Excel file for all members to make their contributions.

Laverne suggested that representatives from Colombia and Antigua and Barbuda give a brief presentation regarding the IAEA's microplastics component and the topics being pursued within the framework of regional cooperation projects. Participants from Colombia and Antigua and Barbuda agreed to this.

It was tentatively agreed that contributions to the Excel file should be submitted by early December, prior to the OEWG meeting. However, this was left to the discretion of all members according to the progress achieved.

Juan Saldarriaga and Azad Mohammed will send a reminder one day before each scheduled meeting of the microplastics thematic subgroup

Commitments and tasks	Responsible	Date	Control (Executed/Pending)	Comments
Draft of memory aids for participants' input	Juan Saldarriaga	22/11/2024	Executed	
Create folder in OneDrive with all participants and upload Excel proposal	Juan Saldarriaga	22/11/2024	Pending	
Technical input and suggestions to the Excel file	Todos	-	Pending	
Propose a date for the next meeting of the sub-group.	Azad Mohammed and Juan Saldarriaga		Pending	

Commitments and tasks	Responsible	Date	Control (Executed/Pending)	Comments
Brief presentation on IAEA projects by Antigua and Barbuda and Colombia	Juan Saldarriaga and Alexandra Hughes		Pending	For the next subthematic working group meeting

**Meeting of the OEWG Emerging Issues Sub-Group
Micro Plastics Subthematic Group
14 January, 2025**

10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. (GMT-5)

1. Welcome

Laverne Walker introduced Jhenelle Barret, a member of Laverne's team at the Secretariat, and confirmed that she is included in the email distribution list. Mr. Linroy mentioned that he is currently in the same location attending the meeting with Ms. Alexandra Hughes and that other colleagues may join later. Juan Saldarriaga expressed gratitude to all participants for attending the meeting and shared his screen to review the agenda points.

2. Updates on the list of members of the Microplastics Thematic Subgroup:

The first agenda item featured Calista Mills, a microplastics specialist, who was introduced by Troy Pierce. Calista shared her background in the Trash-Free Waters program and her focus on circularity and upstream solutions to mitigate microplastic pollution.

3. Presentation of the microplastic component under IAEA Regional Projects for the Caribbean and Latin America

a. Antigua and Barbuda

Ms. Alexandra Hughes, Jahrika Samuel, and Christian Linroy from the Department of Analytical Services presented the microplastic component under IAEA Interregional, Regional, and National projects for the Wider Caribbean. They outlined their institutional capacity and training for microplastic sampling, detailing a sampling plan targeting key marine areas in both Antigua and Barbuda under projects RLA/0/063, ANT/7/001, RLA001, and RLA7027.

Ms. Alexandra Hughes explained that the objective of project RLA0/063 is to strengthen and maintain human and institutional capacities for the safe, peaceful, and secure use of nuclear technology to support climate resilience in the Caribbean. She also noted that ANT 7001 is a national project aimed at creating conditions for the production of data on pollution in marine and terrestrial areas.

Furthermore, she discussed previous training and meetings within the framework of other Technical Cooperation Projects, such as RLA001, which aims to enhance the contribution of nuclear science and technology to the development priorities of Latin America and the Caribbean, and RLA7027, which seeks to strengthen human resources and institutional capacity for the application of nuclear technology in agriculture, water resource management, and environmental protection in the Caribbean region.

Regarding the sampling plan for the marine ecosystem monitoring program, the focus will be on seawater and beach samples from five locations in Barbuda and three in Antigua.

Troy Pierce remarked that these are exciting projects that align well with the cooperative agreement that the U.S. has with UNEP, particularly concerning microplastics as a collaborative focus area. Laverne Walker also congratulated the colleagues in Antigua and Barbuda for their efforts in this initiative and the work they are undertaking.

b. Colombia – INVEMAR

Continuing with the meeting, Juan Saldarriaga from INVEMAR-Colombia presented INVEMAR's involvement in the microplastic component of the IAEA Interregional, Regional, and National projects. He

provided insights into the National Marine Environmental Quality Network (REDCAM) in Colombia, which has actively monitored microplastics since 2017, achieving over 3,000 records and establishing monitoring protocols primarily for sandy beaches.

Regarding the technical cooperation projects funded by the IAEA that involve microplastics and in which INVEMAR is participating, Juan Saldarriaga mentioned three key projects: RLA7022 (2017-2019), during which the consolidation of REMARCO occurred; Project RLA7025 (2020-2024), which aims to strengthen REMARCO and establish protocols for determining microplastics in beach sand and surface water, harmonizing the size range of 300-5000 µm; and Project RLA7028 (2024-2027), led by INVEMAR, which aims to standardize a procedure for determining microplastics in surface water, the water column, and marine sediments, focusing on sizes from 20-5000 µm. He emphasized the importance of collaboration between projects 7027 and 7028 for capacity building in the Caribbean and highlighted the cooperation facilitated by the IAEA among technical cooperation projects across different regions, such as Latin America and the Caribbean.

Following Juan Saldarriaga's presentation, Troy Pierce expressed excitement about the progress made by various countries in these initiatives and thanked everyone for their participation. Christian Linroy expressed special thanks and suggested that both regions could explore further collaboration within the framework of projects RLA7027 and RLA7028 to share experiences and build capacity, noting the absence of a laboratory network in the Caribbean region.

Laverne Walker added that when she joined the Secretariat, she participated in a meeting regarding one of the IAEA projects at INVEMAR. She also mentioned a decision from the LBS that tasked the Secretariat with increasing collaboration with REMARCO. Laverne sought clarification on whether INVEMAR is still designated to represent REMARCO at meetings with the Convention Secretaries and if there are any training capacity development initiatives planned for 2025 through IAEA projects, as well as potential collaboration opportunities. Juan Saldarriaga responded that he would confirm this information and noted that INVEMAR is available to support the development of training courses and meetings, among other events.

Christian Linroy suggested that representatives from Antigua and Barbuda and Colombia could have a separate discussion to explore collaboration between their respective projects, especially within the context of this working group and the LBS protocol, to which Juan Saldarriaga agreed wholeheartedly.

c. Context video of REMARCO

Due to time constraints, this item was not reviewed.

4. Discussion on the envisioned scope of the activities of the thematic subgroup / Review of the Excel spreadsheet

Juan Saldarriaga introduced the next agenda item but, given the limited time, requested suggestions from participants regarding this point. Christian Linroy indicated that they are beginning to populate the spreadsheet and will send a separate Excel file with the equipment listing, while other aspects will be filled in directly.

Juan Saldarriaga emphasized the importance of contributing information to the spreadsheet, as it is crucial for defining the subgroup's potential activities. Laverne suggested setting a deadline of January 31 for completing the spreadsheet, allowing the group to provide a brief update at the meeting of the wider working group scheduled for February 6. Laverne also noted that the discussions and presentations are planting seeds among the members for potential future initiatives.

5. Proposed date for the next meeting, additional matters, and conclusions

Laverne Walker reminded colleagues to respond to the capacity development survey, asked by Marko Tomic, as part of the US EPA water quality project. She shared the links, which Laverne Walker also disseminated through the meeting chat (<https://forms.gle/o9DRnd2p7pA49k1v9> ; <https://forms.gle/2zWkz8crNrnHpfoW7>). She concluded by stating that the deadline for responses is January 23.

Finally, Juan Saldarriaga requested members to propose possible dates for the next meeting, suggesting the first or second week of March. Most participants agreed to hold the meeting in the first week. Juan Saldarriaga will send the proposed dates to the members.

Commitments and tasks

Commitments and tasks	Responsible	Deadline	Comments
Prepare and distribute a draft of memory aids to solicit input from participants.	Juan Saldarriaga	18/01/2025	
Communicate the proposed dates for the upcoming subgroup meeting to all members.	Juan Saldarriaga	31/01/2025	
Confirm whether INVEMAR is the institution responsible for representing REMARCO in meetings with the secretariats of the agreement.	Juan Saldarriaga	31/01/2025	
Inquire about any planned training and capacity development initiatives for 2025 by INVEMAR through IAEA projects, as well as potential opportunities for collaboration.	Juan Saldarriaga	31/01/2025	
Complete the Excel spreadsheet to update the agenda for the larger group meeting scheduled for February 6th.	All members	31/01/2025	
Investigate opportunities for collaboration between both regions within the framework of projects RLA7027 and RLA7028, focusing on sharing experiences and enhancing capacity, especially considering the lack of a laboratory network in the Caribbean region.	Christian Linroy and Juan Saldarriaga		
Complete the capacity development survey as part of the US EPA water quality project.	All members	23/01/2025	

Participants List:

Name	Country/Organisation
Juan Saldarriaga	INVEMAR Colombia
Jhenelle Barrett	Cartagena Convention Secretariat

Laverne Walker	Cartagena Convention Secretariat
Daniela Wojtalewicz	United States of America
Troy Pierce	United States of America
Calista Mills	United States of America
Marko Tomic	(Observer)Universidad EAFIT, Colombia
Azad Mohammed	UWI
Alexandra Hughes	Antigua and Barbuda
Christian Linroy	Antigua and Barbuda
Jahrika Samuel	Antigua and Barbuda

**Meeting of the OEWG Emerging Issues Sub-Group
Micro Plastics Subthematic Group
06 March, 2025**

10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. (GMT-5)

1. Welcome

Juan Fernando Saldarriaga welcomed the participants and thanked the majority of the members of the microplastics subgroup for their successful attendance. He noted that Andrew Rickert, a new member from the US EPA, would be joining the group in place of Daniela.

The agenda included discussions on the group's activities, a review of shared information, and planning for future meetings.

Juan Fernando Saldarriaga started the meeting by revisiting the tasks and commitments established in the last meeting of the thematic working group. He addressed concerns regarding representation, confirming that Luisa Fernanda from INVEMAR is available to represent REMARCO in future meetings with the secretariats of the Cartagena Convention. He also reported that once the 2025 Action Plan of the Regional Technical Cooperation project RLA7028 is developed, potential collaboration opportunities can be identified; and that the opportunities related to the RLA7027 and RLA7028 projects, focusing on sharing experiences, can be aligned with the 2025 Action Plan.

2. Discussion on the envisioned scope of the activities of the thematic subgroup / Review of the Excel spreadsheet

Juan Fernando Saldarriaga presented to the group, through a brief PowerPoint presentation, the spreadsheet that was filled out by the group members. He emphasized the importance of inter-regional cooperation and shared information from Daniela regarding national tracking plans and research efforts by organizations such as US EPA, NASA and NOAA. Saldarriaga also pointed out gaps in existing protocols that overlook microfiber pollution.

Briefly, Juan Saldarriaga outlined the main objectives of a study aimed at assessing behaviours related to plastic consumption and disposal. Dr. Azad Mohammed complemented the discussion by highlighting the need for community engagement and proposed the use of educational toolkits to involve the public, particularly school-age children, in addressing plastic pollution.

Ms. Wendy Nelson presented IMA's participation in the IAEA project, highlighting the acquisition of sampling equipment and FTIR for analysis. She noted that their vessels are currently out of service due to a theft, which has hindered their ability to begin sampling. Ms Wendy Nelson expressed hope to conduct initial trials before the end of the dry season, around May.

Juan Saldarriaga asked the member states participating in the IAEA regional project RLA7027 whether the protocol for determining microplastics in beach sand is finalized. Wendy responded that it has not been distributed, causing a delay in testing. Dr. Linroy Christian mentioned that internal approvals for Barbuda are still needed, but training sessions for FTIR equipment are set to begin soon. He anticipates that monitoring could start in the second semester of the year.

Laverne Walker inquired about the feasibility of countries contributing data for the next State of the Convention report, emphasizing the importance of monitoring activities and the complementarity of data. Dr. Linroy Christian confirmed that they would provide any collected data, pending clarification on timelines.

Juan Saldarriaga outlined the protocols developed for monitoring microplastics in Latin America and the Caribbean, which are already public and in use. Laverne Walker sought clarification on whether these protocols apply to all CARICOM countries. Mr Saldarriaga confirmed that the protocols have the same

scope and aim to be standardized under the Interregional NUTEC Plastics Program. These protocols are designed for both beach sand and surface water, focusing on particles larger than 300 microns.

3. Next steps

Juan Saldarriaga initiated a conversation about the group's next steps, focusing on tasks and commitments for future meetings. Dr. Linroy Christian proposed that they work on advancing the protocol and suggested a presentation to educate colleagues on its details. Laverne Walker agreed to reach out to relevant contacts, such as Dr Carlos Alonso from the IAEA, to facilitate communication and collaboration.

4. Proposed date for the next meeting, additional matters, and conclusions

Dr. Linroy Christian suggested the second or third week of May for the next meeting, but Laverne Walker indicated she would be unavailable from May 7th to 13th. The group considered May 15th as a viable option, with Juan Saldarriaga confirming that it works for him as well. They agreed to finalize the date based on colleagues' availability. Juan Saldarriaga will send the proposed dates for the next meeting along with the draft of the meeting notes.

Commitments and tasks

Commitments and tasks	Responsible	Deadline	Comments
Prepare and distribute a draft of memory aids to solicit input from participants	Juan Saldarriaga	14/03/2025	Sent
Communicate the proposed dates for the upcoming subgroup meeting to all members.	Juan Saldarriaga	14/03/2025	Proposed dates: May 15, 10 AM (COL) May 19, 10 AM (COL)
Communication via email with relevant contacts at the IAEA, such as Dr. Carlos Alonso, to facilitate communication and collaboration.	Laverne Walker	14/03/2025	Email sent by Laverne Walker on 07/03/2025
Brief presentation of protocols of REMARCO and RLA7027 project for the determination of microplastics in beach sand and superficial water.	Juan Saldarriaga and Christian Linroy		
Dr. Linroy Christian will provide a separate listing of equipment and activities under the national project to Juan Saldarriaga.	Christian Linroy		

Participants List:

Name	Country/Organisation
Juan Saldarriaga	INVEMAR Colombia

Jhenelle Barrett	Cartagena Convention Secretariat
Laverne Walker	Cartagena Convention Secretariat
Andrew Reighart	United States of America
Troy Pierce	United States of America
Calista Mills	United States of America
Marko Tomic	(Observer)Universidad EAFIT, Colombia
Azad Mohammed	UWI
Alexandra Hughes	Antigua and Barbuda
Christian Linroy	Antigua and Barbuda
Oneiro Cherrington	Jamaica
Wendy Nelson	IMA