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

Virtual, 22 – 25 July 2025

TERMS OF REFERENCE

OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT

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

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Terms of Reference

OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT

1.0 Purpose

These Terms of Reference (TORs) provide the background and scope of work for the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on Monitoring and Assessment and each thematic sub-group. The OEWG will provide technical input and support to the further development and implementation of the obligations of the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol) of the Cartagena Convention, including oversight of the final publication and dissemination of the State of Convention Area Report (SOCAR).

Any recommendations proposed by the OEWG related to the implementation of the LBS Protocol will be submitted to Meetings of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) and/or Conferences of Contracting Parties (COPs) to the LBS Protocol for their further consideration and/or approval as appropriate, and when required to the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP) to the Cartagena Convention.

2.0 Background

The 15th Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP) to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region was held June 5-6, 2019 in Roatan, Honduras.

Decision III (1) of the 15th COP stated that the Parties:

- (a) decided to establish an Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) for Monitoring and Assessment to support the work of the LBS Protocol including the finalization of the State of the Convention Report for formal dissemination.
- (b) recognized the importance of the OEWG on Monitoring and Assessment in providing technical guidance and oversight for the development and completion of this report and further implementation of pollution-related activities.
- (c) invite all Contracting Parties who have an interest in participating in the OEWG to indicate that in writing to the Secretariat no later than 15 September 2019.
- (d) requests that the OEWG, once convened, develop a new Terms of Reference for the Group and elects a new Chair.
- (e) further requests that the OEWG work virtually while encouraging the Secretariat to mobilize additional financial sources to enable face to face meetings, as appropriate.
- (f) requests that the OEWG establish other thematic sub-groups, as appropriate, in order to provide technical guidance for the work of the Secretariat including on areas of concern raised during the meetings of the LBS STAC, LBS COP and meetings of Contracting Parties to the Convention.
- (g) requests that the OEWG provide a report of its work to the Fifth LBS STAC and as appropriate to the Fifth LBS COP and Sixteenth Meeting of Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention.

Decision 7 of the 4th Conference of Parties of the Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the LBS Protocol further encouraged the adoption of the State of the Convention Area Report (SOCAR) and for the Secretariat to develop communication and knowledge products from the SOCAR for targeted audiences, inter alia, policy makers, schools, local community, and private sector.

Other elements relevant to the scope of the work of the OEWG included the need to:

- (a) support the integration of the SOCAR and State of Habitat reports with State of the Marine Environment and Associated Economies (SOMEE) report; and
- (b) the collaborative integrated SOMEE reporting effort including visualization and dissemination, pursuing alignment and synergies between the SOCAR-Land-based Sources and State of Marine Habitats reports and the SOMEE approach, and incorporating such a support role to the SOMEE development process as part of the Secretariat's 2019-2020 work programme and beyond.

3.0 Scope of Work

Under Article XIV (Scientific, Technical and Advisory Committee) of the LBS Protocol:

3. The Committee shall be responsible for reporting to and advising the Contracting Parties regarding the implementation of this Protocol. To carry out this function the Committee shall:

(d) provide guidance to the Contracting Parties: (i) on measures and methodologies to assess pollutant loads in the Convention area, and to ensure regional compatibility in data; and (ii) on the development of plans, programmes and measures for the implementation of this Protocol.

(e) advise on the formulation of common criteria, guidelines and standards for the prevention, reduction and control of pollution of the Convention area from land-based sources and activities.

(f) propose priority measures for scientific and technical research and management of pollution from land-based sources and activities as well as for control, management practices and monitoring programmes, bearing in mind regional trends and conditions and any information available.

Based on the designated activities under Article XIV and the Biennial Work Plans for the Assessment and Management of Environmental Pollution Sub-Programme, as well as decisions taken during meetings of Conference of Parties (COPs) for integration of work among LBS and SPAW subprogrammes, the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) will:

- Provide technical input and guidance for the completion and dissemination of products requested by the STAC. These products of the OEWG include, but are not limited to, the State of Convention Area Report and any other technical reports.
 - Provide technical input and guidance for the development and implementation of the strategies, actions plans and investment plans and other products requested by the STAC, *including* the Regional Nutrients Pollution Reduction Strategy, Action Plan and Investment plan and the Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP) Regional Strategy
- Provide input to the agenda for the STAC and COP meetings to the LBS Protocol to be

convened.

- Provide technical input or recommendations on the adequacy of current measures and methodologies; plan and programmes; and common criteria, standards and/or guidelines within the LBS Protocol, on national and regional capacity building opportunities, regional laboratory capacity for water quality parameter measurements, and, as appropriate, other issues relating to the prevention, reduction and control of pollution in the Wider Caribbean Region in accordance with the obligations of the LBS Protocol;
- Provide technical input and guidance on the commonalities of the LBS and SPAW subprogrammes, where applicable, appropriate, and within the scope of work for the LBS and SPAW Protocols.
- Actively participate in teleconference calls and e-mail discussions.

4.0 Membership of the Committee

The membership of the OEWG consists of representatives from the Governments of Contracting Parties to the Convention that express interest in participating in the Open-Ended Working Group (at this time: Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Honduras, France, Guyana, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, St. Maarten, Turks and Caicos Islands, Trinidad and Tobago and the United States of America).

The LBS Regional Activity Centres (RACs) - CIMAB (Cuba) and IMA (Trinidad and Tobago) may also be a part of the Secretariat's representation on the OEWG, providing additional technical input as needed.

Representatives of the Regional Activity Network (RANs) and experts within the region may also be invited to participate in the OEWG as observers following nomination by a contracting party or by the Secretariat.

The Secretariat will coordinate and administer activities of the OEWG and, at the request of the Chair of the OEWG, may also take part in discussions and provide updates on the work of the Secretariat as appropriate.

The Officers of the OEWG are a Chair and Vice Chair which will be selected by consensus of the OEWG members. The Chair must be a representative of a Contracting Party to the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol). Leaders of the Thematic Sub-groups may be selected by consensus from any of the OEWG members, including observers.

The Secretariat of the Cartagena Convention will provide note taking support to meetings of the OEWG.

The OEWG may wish to request national and/or regional experts as appropriate to provide specific input and advice on any issue being discussed as deemed appropriate and agreed to by consensus of the OEWG.

5.0 Function of Officers

The function of each Officer is as follows:

Chair

- The Chair is responsible for presiding over each meeting, except as otherwise decided by the group and should monitor the operation of all activities of the OEWG.
- The Chair determines the agenda for meetings with input from the members of the OEWG and the Secretariat before its finalization.
- The Chair should endeavor to ensure that the recommendations made and assigned tasks are completed by the OEWG in a timely manner and should coordinate the arrangements for meetings in collaboration with the Secretariat.
- The Chair and/or their designate prepares and circulates notices for meetings three weeks prior, and no later than two weeks, prior to the meetings; and should circulate reminders for each meeting.

Vice Chair

The Vice Chair assists the Chair and, as appropriate, coordinates additional technical input and/or review of technical reports relevant to the work of the LBS Protocol.

Recording Secretary

The Secretariat of the Cartagena Convention supports the Chair, as required, in preparing the minutes and relevant action sheets generated from each meeting within two weeks of same.

- I. **Thematic Sub-groups: Nutrient & Wastewater Management Sub-Group:** This sub-group is a standard working group and focuses on mechanisms to allow for the efficient management of nutrients and wastewater into the WCR. This includes recommendations for standards and criteria on comparable data, standards on nutrients, wastewater effluent standards and definition of Class I and II waters.
- II. **Information Management Sub-Group:** This sub-group is a standard working group and focuses on the management of information of relevant reports or information papers for future capacity building and training with respect to monitoring and assessment.
- III. **Emerging Issues Sub-Group:** This sub-group focuses on the future planning of emerging topics such as, freshwater management, microplastics and sargassum.

The Working Group, may propose and approve the creation of thematic working subgroups aligned to the mandate of the LBS Protocol and according to the themes and projects of regional interest.

Leads and Co-leads of thematic sub-groups will be nominated by OEWG members and confirmed by consensus of the group. The mandate of the sub-group will be defined by the OEWG in keeping with its scope of work. The outputs of the sub-groups are subject to the confirmation of the OEWG.

5.1 Mode of Meetings

The OEWG is expected to participate in Teleconference Calls and E-mail discussions facilitated by the Secretariat. The Chair and/or any members of the OEWG may be expected to participate in relevant regional technical meetings on behalf of the Secretariat.

5.2 Language

Discussions of the OEWG are to be conducted in English, but the Secretariat should make efforts to have important background technical documents available in English, Spanish and French.

5.3 Meeting Schedule

To be decided by OEWG in which the Chair coordinates the arrangements for meetings in collaboration with the Secretariat. The Chair or his designate informs the OEWG twenty-one days in advance on the date of OEWG meetings, including the rescheduling of meetings.

6.0 Recommendations

The OEWG may only make recommendations. Recommendations made by the OEWG within their mandate should be made through a quorum consisting of half of the country representative membership of the OEWG plus one, not including the RACs. All OEWG recommendations are to be referred to meetings of the LBS Protocol's STAC for review and evaluation before being forwarded to meetings of the LBS Protocol Contracting Parties for their consideration.

The OEWG should attempt to decide on recommendations by consensus. However, if consensus cannot be reached, a recommendation should be reported to the LBS STAC showing opinions for and against the recommendation.

In the event that decisions on recommendations are needed at meetings and a quorum is not present, the Secretariat should submit written notices to all member countries of the OEWG for a recommendation by consensus or, if consensus cannot be reached, include information for and against the proposed recommendation, which may be via electronic mail or other written communication.

All reports and outputs of the OEWG should be submitted to the Secretariat of the Cartagena Convention for the attention of the Programme Officer responsible for the Assessment and Management of Environmental Pollution (AMEP) Sub-Programme.

7.0 Duration of the Open-Ended Working Group

The OEWG will continue to operate unless terminated through a subsequent Decision of the Meetings of Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention. The Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention may undertake a review of the OEWG every six years to determine its continued relevance.
