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Sixth Meeting of the Scientific and Technical  
Advisory Committee (STAC) of the Protocol  
Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources  
and Activities (LBS) in the Wider Caribbean  
Region

Virtual, 01 February 2023 – 03 February 2023

**REPORT OF THE OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON  
ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT  
(2021-2022)**

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

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## REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT TO THE LAND-BASED SOURCES PROTOCOL

### Introduction

The Working Group was previously chaired by Stephanie Adrian (USA EPA) and comprised of the following members: Hodayah Finman (USA), Suzanne Archuleta (USA), Andrew Horan (USA), Hugh Sullivan (USA), Troy Pierce (USA), Felicia Adams-Kellman (Guyana), Anthony Headley (Barbados), Linroy Christian (Antigua), Gillian Guthrie (Jamaica), Eromonsele Akhidenor (Jamaica), Danneille Townsend (Jamaica), Lisa Kirkland (Jamaica), Richard Nelson (Jamaica), Luisa Espinosa Diaz (INVEMAR, Colombia), Marko Tosic (Universidad EAFIT, Colombia), David Olarte (Colombia); Erick Castro González and Marino Abrego (Panama), Marnie Xiomara Portillo Rodriguez (Honduras), Alberto Thompson and Milagros De Camps (Dominican Republic), John Bowleg (The Bahamas), Emmanuelle Thiesse (France), Valeria Cruz Blancas (México), Claudius Carty (Sint Maarten), Lormeka Williams (Turks and Caicos), Rahanna Juman and Darryl Banjoo (RAC IMA), Marlen Pérez and Zunilda Parra (RAC CIMAB).

At the Fifth Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP) to the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS) in the Wider Caribbean, Contracting Parties adopted [Decisions Nos. 8, 9 and 10](#), which mandated the Cartagena Convention Secretariat to share the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Group with Contracting Parties and establish 3 sub-groups of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) to support issues of importance for the further development of the LBS Protocol, this includes: (i) standards and criteria that would include discussions on comparable data, nutrients standards, wastewater effluent standards and defining Class I & II waters, (ii) information management, and (iii) future planning including consideration of emerging issues such as freshwater management. In addition, invite Contracting Parties and LBS Regional Activity Centres (RAC IMA and RAC CIMAB) to nominate national and/or regional government and/or non-government experts to participate in the OEWG and the newly established thematic sub-groups.

On 26 August 2021, an email was sent to Contracting Parties requesting that they submit their expression of interest in chairing the group and nominations to the OEWG and its thematic sub-groups (see Annex I). The original ToR was shared for information.

Following the LBS COP-5, the first meeting of the OEWG was held on 1 December 2021. During this meeting, Christopher Corbin, in his capacity as Officer-In-Charge to the Secretariat provided a summary of the history, role, working modality, and outputs of the Working Group. He then facilitated a review of the existing ToR and the relevant Decisions and Recommendations of LBS STAC and COP relating to OEWG & its thematic sub-groups.

The Secretariat introduced technical documents (listed below) to the members of the Group that will provide the framework of the OEWG and support the efforts of training and capacity building within the region.

1. Regional Nutrients Pollution Reduction Strategy and Action Plan for the WCR: <http://gefcrew.org/carrcu/19IGM/LBSCOP5/Info-Docs/WG.41INF.10Rev.1-en.pdf>
2. Regional Marine Litter Strategy for GPML-Caribe: <http://gefcrew.org/carrcu/19IGM/LBSCOP5/Info-Docs/WG.41-INF.19-Rev.1-EN.pdf>
3. Proposed Criteria for Nutrients Discharges for Domestic Wastewater Effluent: [http://gefcrew.org/carrcu/19IGM/LBSCOP5/Info-Docs/WG.41.INF.23\\_Rev.1-en.pdf](http://gefcrew.org/carrcu/19IGM/LBSCOP5/Info-Docs/WG.41.INF.23_Rev.1-en.pdf)
4. Outline of Technical Paper on the incorporation of freshwater issues into the LBS Protocol: <http://gefcrew.org/carrcu/19IGM/LBSCOP5/Info-Docs/WG.41INF.24-Rev1-en.pdf>
5. Laboratory Assessment Report for Caribbean Countries Participating in the GEF-IWEcoProject: [http://gefcrew.org/carrcu/19IGM/LBSCOP5/Ref-Docs/IWEco\\_Report\\_LA.pdf](http://gefcrew.org/carrcu/19IGM/LBSCOP5/Ref-Docs/IWEco_Report_LA.pdf)

On June 02, 2022, the Secretariat convened the second meeting of the OEWG to include the newly nominated members to the Group and the thematic sub-groups. During the meeting, the revised ToR (Annex II) was presented to the members of the OEWG for comments and adoption. The Secretariat informed the Group that the revised ToR was derived from the mandate given at the technical meetings (LBS STAC-5 and LBS COP-5).

Additionally, the Secretariat outlined the Work Plan and work of the Thematic Sub-groups. To include technical support, advice, and input to the RACs (IMA and CIMAB) who have entered into a contractual agreement with the Secretariat to further support the Secretariat's work, focusing on issues of nutrient and freshwater management. A summary of activities under the agreements with RAC IMA and RAC CIMAB was shared with the group (Annex III).

A preview of the [Regional Data and Information Platform](#) developed by GRID Geneva was also shared with members of the OEWG.

On November 23, 2022 the Secretariat convened the third meeting of the OEWG (Summary meeting notes in Appendix IV). In this meeting, the Secretariat introduced the newly appointed Chair of the OEWG, Dr. Darryl Banjoo and Vice-Chair, Dr Linroy Christian. During the meeting, discussion was focused on the preparation for the 6th LBS STAC meeting, upcoming tasks of the OEWG on the three subgroups which were 1) the nutrient and wastewater standard, 2) the information management, and 3) emerging issues, such as freshwater management, microplastics and sargassum. The RAC/RAN network overview was discussed on current activities undertaken indicating the need for building networks in the region in both English and Spanish speaking countries in supporting the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols.

## Working Group Activities 2021-2022

- 9 people were nominated as experts to the OEWG which brings the group to a total of 30 people. A total of 10 people were nominated to the thematic sub-groups, sub-group 1 on Nutrients had 5 expert nominations, sub-group 2 on Information Management received 2 expert nominations and sub-group 3 on emerging issues received 3 nominations.

- Following recommendations from Contracting Parties and Observers, Dr. Darryl Banjoo as the LBS Focal Point for Trinidad and Tobago has accepted the role of Chair and Dr. Linroy Christian has accepted the role of Vice Chair of the Working Group.
- Mr. Hugh Sullivan and Mr. Anthony Headley will support an Ad Hoc Working Group on capacity building. This group will also provide input on training needs to ensure sustainability as the Secretariat works with Contracting Parties to enhance their National Monitoring and Assessment Programmes.
- The revised ToR was adopted.
- Members of the OEWG participated virtually in the Regional Workshop on the Index of Coastal Eutrophication & Harmful Algal Bloom held on 25-26 July 2022. The workshop was organized by the RAC IMA with technical support from RAC CIMAB.
- Members of the OEWG participated virtually in Day 1 of the Regional Eutrophication Workshop held on 13 December 2022. The workshop was organized by the Secretariat to facilitate the professional exchange of experiences and lessons learned in the development of National Nutrient Reduction Strategies and Action Plans in Barbados and Jamaica as well as UNEP's Caribbean priority initiative to develop National Nutrient Reduction Action Plans in other Caribbean nations.

#### Potential LBS STAC-6 Recommendations

- The Secretariat with support of the LBS RACs continue to seek efforts in providing training and capacity development in the region as relates to the three thematic of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) (i) standards and criteria that would include discussions on comparable data, nutrients standards, wastewater effluent standards and defining Class I & II waters, (ii) information management, and (iii) future planning including consideration of emerging issues such as freshwater management and micro plastics.
- The OEWG continue providing technical support, advice, and input to the LBS RACs in implementation of project activities in the current work plan 2023/24.
- The OEWG with support of the Secretariat and LBS RACs develop new sub groups for the development of the new State of Marine Pollution Report.
- The OEWG with support of the Secretariat and LBS RACs develop new sub groups for the development of regional marine and coastal water quality criteria towards good ecological and human health to be used in assessing the state of the environment.
- The Secretariat with support of the LBS RACs and OEWG continue efforts in the implementation of the regional nutrient pollution reduction strategy and action plan in countries of the wider Caribbean region.

## Annexes

Annex I- Nominations to the OEWG and thematic sub-groups

Annex II- Terms of Reference of the OEWG

Annex III- Summary of Activities under the Small-Scale Funding Agreements with the LBS RACs

Annex IV- Summary meeting notes of OEWG on 23 November 2022.

**Annex I: Nominations to the OEWG and thematic sub-groups**

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*Expert Nominees to the OEWG and the Thematic Sub-groups*

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Last updated: December 22, 2022

## **Annex II- Terms of Reference of the OEWG**

**June 2022**

### **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.

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 15<sup>th</sup> 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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, policymakers, 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 the 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 the 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, the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) will:

- Provide technical input and guidance for the completion and dissemination of 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 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; plans 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;
- 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 expressed 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 - CIMAB (Cuba) and IMA (Trinidad and Tobago) will also be part of the Secretariat's representation on the OEWG, providing additional technical input as needed.

Representatives of the RANs have been invited to participate.

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 who will be selected by consensus of the OEWG members. The Chair must be a Contracting Party to the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol).

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.

#### **5.0 Function of Officers**

The function of each Officer is as follows:

##### **Chair**

- The Chair will be 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 will prepare and circulate 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 shall assist the Chair and, as appropriate, coordinate 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 will support the Chair, as required, in preparing the minutes and relevant action sheets generated from each meeting within two weeks of same.

### **Thematic Sub-groups:**

- I. **Nutrient & Wastewater Standards Sub-Group:** This sub-group focuses on standards and criteria to include discussions 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 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

### **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 will coordinate the arrangements for meetings in collaboration with the Secretariat.

## **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 otherwise approved through a subsequent Decision of the Meetings of Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention. The composition of the membership and the TORs of the OEWG may be reviewed at STAC meetings and submitted for approval at the COP meetings.

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### Annex III- Summary of Activities under the Small-Scale Funding Agreements with the LBS RACs

#### *Activities under the SIDA Grant*

Activities	Lead Agency	Comments
1. Develop guidelines for the classification of waters according to the LBS Protocol with support from RAC CIMAB.	RAC IMA	With support from RAC CIMAB
2. Establish regional criteria and standards for N and P loads in domestic and industrial wastewater discharges	RAC IMA	
3. Regional Workshop on Index of Coastal Eutrophication & Harmful Algal Blooms	RAC IMA	

#### *Activities under the GEF CReW+ Project*

Activities	Lead Agency	Comments
4. Develop recommendations for amendments to the LBS Protocol to facilitate increased reuse of domestic wastewater including the adoption of new criteria or standards for domestic wastewater discharges.	RAC CIMAB	With support from RAC IMA
5. Review, Analysis, and Report for developing a new Strategy or Protocol on the management of freshwater resources within the framework of the Cartagena Convention with a focus on Source to Sea and Integrated Watershed Management	RAC IMA	-With support from RAC CIMAB. -A short, integrated report will be developed in both Spanish and English with key recommendations to be presented at the STAC.
6. Promote LBS Protocol Ratification in Non-Contracting Parties (English and Spanish Speaking), including the development of promotional and awareness material for ratification.	RAC CIMAB	RAC IMA will support the activity for English speakers and RAC CIMAB will lead for Spanish speakers.
7. Implement training on innovative low-cost integrated water and wastewater management through webinars, Massive Open Online Course (MOOC), and training programs with the participation of civil society.	RAC CIMAB	
8. Updated GEF CReW+ clearinghouse mechanism on financial options, small- and large-scale wastewater treatment technologies, and wastewater and water management policies and practices developed	RAC CIMAB	To include a range of activities

*Activity under the ACP MEAs III Project*

Activities	Lead Agency	Comments
9. Develop one national pollution or nutrients reduction strategy and plan in an English and Spanish-speaking country, including examples of domestic, agricultural, industrial, and shipping-based pollution		RAC IMA will lead the activity for the English-speaking country and RAC CIMAB will lead for the Spanish-speaking.

**Annex IV- Summary meeting notes of OEWG on 23 November 2022****Meeting of the LBS Open-Ended Working Group Minutes**  
**23 November 2022****Participant's list**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Country</b>
Lisa Senhouse	Barbados
Felicia Adams-Kellman	Guyana
Lisa Kirkland	Jamaica
Denise Beckles	Trinidad and Tobago
Finman Hodayah	United States of America
Hugh Sullivan	United States of America
Azad Mohammed	Trinidad and Tobago
Darryl Banjoo	Trinidad and Tobago
<b>Ernesto</b>	
Yamiris Gómez D'Angelo	Cuba
Linroy Christian	Antigua and Barbuda
Pierce, Troy	United States of America

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Institution</b>
Christopher Corbin, AMEP Programme Officer	UNEP Cartagena Convention Secretariat
Sarah Wollring, Associate Programme Officer	UNEP Cartagena Convention Secretariat
Georgina Singh, Team Assistant, Communications, Education, Training and Awareness Sub-Programme	UNEP Cartagena Convention Secretariat
Jhenelle Barrett, Programme Management Assistant-AMEP Programme	UNEP Cartagena Convention Secretariat
Goergina Janelle Singh, Team Assistant CETA	
Paloma Fraser-Prynne Guzman, intern	UNEP Cartagena Convention Secretariat
Marlen Pérez Hernández	LBS Regional Activity Centre- Centre of Research and Environmental Management of Transport (CIMAB)
Marko Tomic	Universidad EAFIT, Colombia

**Welcome Remarks and Introduction to Elected Officers**

- Mr Corbin introduced the meeting
- Dr Banjoo is the chair
- Dr Christian is the vice chair
- Ms Perez will be representing her organisation RAC CIMAB in this meeting

**Preparation for the 6<sup>th</sup> LBS STAC Meeting**

Mr Corbin provided updates from the 6th LBS STAC Meeting:

- The Secretariat is still working on getting supporting documents. Formal invitations will be sent no later than the end of this month.
- The Meeting will take place beginning the 30th of January 2023, beginning with the SPAW staff meeting. So, the SPAW STAC will likely be the 30th and the 31st and possibly part of the 1st. The LBS meeting will be from the 1st of February to the 3rd of February, and will be fully virtual.
- The Secretariat will upload documents by the 1st week of December 2022 in their original language.
- The Secretariat has received the approval for the job description for a new marine pollution program manager to replace Mr Corbin as he has a new role as Coordinator of the Secretariat. Hoping that that person could be on board by at least the COP in March, but the Secretariat does not always have direct control over the recruitment process in Nairobi. So, it is very likely that Mr Corbin will continue to provide direct support to the work under the LBS protocol until there is a new program manager in place.
- The Secretariat has prepared a summary of the key elements that will be part of the work plan for the next biennium that will be shared both with Members of the group as well as the LBS protocol focal points. While it is not the fully developed work plan and budget, it provides an opportunity for input by the focal points and by members of the open-ended working group.
- One of the Secretariat's projects is to convene a Nutrients Regional Workshop through the support of the two Regional Activity Centres. The results of the report from the workshop will be shared for information with all the members of the working group.

#### **Upcoming Tasks of the OEWG**

- Dr Banjoo stated the three subgroups (by thematic area): 1) the nutrient and wastewater standard subgroup. This group was focused on standard criteria to include our discussion on current, comparable data standards and nutrients. 2) the information management subgroup. This group focused on the management of information or relevant reports or information people on future capacity building and training with respect to monitoring and assessment. 3) emerging issues, such as freshwater management, microplastics and sargassum. Dr Banjoo stated that there is a need to identify the leader for each subgroup.
- Mr Corbin stated that the Secretariat had submitted to all of the contracting parties on at least three occasions requesting focal points for nominations for thematic groups. The Secretariat received low responses.
- Ms Barrett shared her screen with nominees for the subgroups candidates.
- The Secretariat would like to suggest that perhaps the entire open-ended working group be used to provide some feedback on the technical documents related to nutrients or emerging issues such as microplastics.



- Dr Banjoo agreed and stated that there is a need for assistance in reviewing documents.

#### **Status of Activities Update- SSFA with RAC CIMAB and RAC IMA**

- Dr Banjoo read out the nine project activities and stated that one activity was completed which was the Incidence of Coastal Eutrophication Potential (ICEP) workshop held virtually on 25-26 July 2022.
- Ms Perez requested the group members to check the questionnaire whenever possible; hence, group members can incorporate technical information and receive input from various countries. The questionnaires are used for RAC –CIMAB and RAC IMA reports and summary papers for the STAC meeting.
- Ms Barrett will send a formal reminder for the deadline of the questionnaire.
- Ms Barrett reminded the group members that the summary of activities was shared in July 2022; however, she will resend it to all current group members.
- Mr Corbin explained the utilisation of the nutrient workshop as a framework on how to design regional projects. Members of the open-ended working group will be invited to the virtual workshop on the 13<sup>th</sup> of December 2022.

#### **RAC-RAN Network Overview**

- Mr Corbin shared the Secretariat's appreciation for the willingness of all the Regional Activity Centres (RACs) to support the Convention and its protocols. Under our GEF-funded IWeco project, there was a series of training done over the course of last year for laboratories of Small Islands Developing States (SID) that were involved as part of IWEco. There was a strong call from those laboratories to have some form of the network established so that laboratories could share best practices and experiences. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has supported laboratories in Spanish-speaking countries, and they have expressed interest that this network could also be expanded to include laboratories from English-speaking countries. The Secretariat is now planning to have a discussion with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), scheduled for the first week of next month, to explore the possibility of having a network of laboratories, both Spanish and English speaking, that could be recognized as part of a Regional Activity Network (RAN) for the Convention, and in particular for the protocol. This would allow the Secretariat to benefit from a broad range of expertise as well as to promote sharing among the different laboratories.
- Ms Perez stated that they are facing a handicap related to nuclear activity.
- Dr Christian stated that Antigua and Barbuda are executing a national project that was approved through the IAEA and is doing some work on ocean acidification, microplastics and looking at pollution from the marine environment. Dr Christian explained that they are trying to support, under the Stockholm Convention, the global monitoring Plan for Persistent Organic Pollutants in the next round of the Global Monitoring plan. Therefore, it would be good to have a setting where the heads of laboratories actually sit in a space and have discussions on their work programs and how they could collaborate.

- Dr Banjoo suggested the need for more regional monitoring and studies towards human health in terms fish contamination. Dr Banjoo stated that the Trinidad and Tobago Government had received funding through the IAEA for purchasing equipment for conducting work in ocean acidification, micro plastics and persistent organic pollutants through a Technical Corporation Agreement.
- Ms Beckles stated that Academic Institutions such as UWI are willing to collaborate on projects to development capacity building in laboratory analyses of pollutants.
- Mr Corbin shared his appreciation to the institutions and colleagues from the open-ended working group who supported in a recent five-day webinar that occurred with the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) on the topic of microplastics. Mr Corbin explained that the ACS is very interested in collaborating with us. Mr Corbin announced that the Secretariat is developing a regional information platform. This is being done with the support of the University of Geneva. The Secretariat is going to present it formally at the LBS STAC meeting. The work is expected to finish by the end of December 2022, and the Secretariat is happy to share the link to the near-final version in case any members of the open-ended working group are interested.
- Dr Christian suggested exploring possibilities of training and collaboration with the UWI. Dr Christian seeks to have a discussion to see how we can get the working group going so that there is regionally comparable data, something extremely important.
- Meeting ended with Dr Banjoo at 1 hour 8 mins.

#### **Any Other Business (AOB)**

There was no other business and the meeting ended.