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Sixth 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, 01 to 03 February 2023

## **DECISIONS OF THE 6<sup>TH</sup> IWEco REGIONAL PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE (RPSC) MEETING (JULY 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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## DECISIONS

(6<sup>th</sup> IWECO Regional PSC Meeting)

**The representatives of participating co-executing and implementing partners of the IWECO Project:**

**Having convened** the Sixth Meeting of the IWECO Regional Project Steering Committee Meeting on 19 and 20 July 2022;

**Recalling** their respective Project Cooperation Agreements (PCAs) and other contracts and **welcoming GEF funding and technical support** provided for supporting the implementation of the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols;

**Recognizing** that ecosystem restoration is a complement to conservation activities and that priority should be given to conserving biodiversity and preventing the degradation of natural habitats and ecosystems by reducing pressures and maintaining ecological integrity and the provision of ecosystem services;

**Acknowledging** the work of the Cartagena Convention Secretariat in general which addresses emerging issues such as Sargassum influx, as well as the continued work on conservation of coral reefs, mangroves, seagrasses, fishes and other marine life as well as Land-Based Sources of pollution (the latter which is being addressed by many of the IWECO-supported interventions);

**Acknowledging** the progress in execution of project activities during the years 2021-2022 by the IWECO Project partners as reported in general compared to the previous Regional Steering Committee Meeting, despite the extremely difficult circumstances in the region not only because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, but also because of continuous capacity constraints, executing governance structures, insufficient resources at most levels, as well as climatic conditions and (specifically for project country Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) the eruption of volcano La Soufriere on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2021;

**Assuming** that all contracted partners submit Quarterly Financial Expenditure Reports and Half Yearly Progress Reports in a timely manner to the IWECO Project Coordination Unit (PCU) allowing for timely reporting to UNEP and the donor;

**Acknowledging** the continuous need for partnering with other UN and non-UN agencies and organisations in the region in order to combine forces and resources to better respond to the needs of the countries;

**Noting** that IWECO project activities have been delayed, also because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic which has hit all participating countries and project partners hard for a prolonged period of time;

**Taking note** of the recommendations of the IWECO Mid Term Review (MTR), which took place in mid-2020, as well as of the follow-up measures undertaken by all involved with the IWECO Project;

**Taking note** of the proposed dates of extension for most of the project execution arrangements in place;

**Taking note** of the fact that even 'no cost extensions' for the project partners will incur costs for the Cartagena Convention Secretariat even though -as agreed upon during the previous IWECO Regional Steering Committee in 2021- the Secretariat will charge 3% to all projects with undisbursed funds as

per 31 August 2022 also considering the budgetary and human resource challenges faced by the Cartagena Convention Secretariat (as host of the regional PCU) regarding the coordination and execution of project activities after August 2022;

**Considering** the significant work of the IWECO Project Coordination Unit (PCU) that has been carried out to make interventions possible by all partners despite reduced staff and other limiting conditions, as well as in the area of communications, awareness raising and training;

**Acknowledging** the successful completion of the by IWECO Project Coordination Unit (PCU) organised training as a follow-up on the Regional Environmental Laboratory Assessment (as requested by the 5<sup>th</sup> Regional Project Steering Committee Meeting);

**Having reviewed and approved** the minutes of the Fifth IWECO Regional Project Steering Committee Meeting, which was a virtual meeting and took place in September 2021, hosted by the Government of St. Kitts and Nevis;

**Recognizing** the importance of ratification, implementation and reporting for relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements including the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols by IWECO participating countries;

**Recognizing** the upcoming mandatory retirement age of the IWECO Regional Project Coordinator Mr. Jan Betlem and thank him for his professional guidance and his tireless and unbridled commitment to the project and to the region over the past few years.

**Decide to:**

1. **Encourage** the governments of the region, which have not yet done so, to become Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols by end of project.
2. **Urge** all IWECO Participating Countries to honour their voluntary contributions with support of the Executing Partners to the Caribbean Trust Fund for Implementation of the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme in order to sustain the Cartagena Convention Secretariat based in Kingston, Jamaica.
3. **Approve** the 2022-2023 IWECO workplan and budget as presented by the IWECO Regional Project Coordinator.
4. **Recall** that the IWECO Regional Project end date for all activities in the field was extended at the Fifth Regional Project Steering Committee Meeting to 31 August 2023, with no further extension possible.
5. **Recall** that the IWECO Regional Project end date to complete all financial and administrative arrangements related to the project, including conduct of the Terminal Evaluation, is 31 December 2023.
6. **Urge** all Participating Countries and Partners to accelerate execution of agreed project activities.
7. **Urge** all Participating Countries and Partners to submit progress and financial reports in a timelier manner and to ensure that all final products are also submitted for sharing with the wider project community.
8. **Begin implementing** the previously approved 3% charge to all projects with undisbursed funds **from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022** to support the Secretariat in continued hosting of the Regional IWECO Project and associated administrative and financial services.

9. **Support the further development and implementation of the** Regional Environmental Monitoring Data Portal (REMDAP) in collaboration with other regional efforts to improve environmental data and information management.
10. **Request** that following the training for regional environmental laboratories, the IWEco PCU and the Cartagena Convention Secretariat continue efforts to procure already determined equipment with support from the specialized consultant, preferably through involvement of an established regional institution with relevant experience and interest.
11. **Encourage** the Cartagena Convention Secretariat, regional partners and participating countries to maximize on existing capacity in the region and the availability of already existing resources when developing and/or implementing new training programmes.
12. **Recommend** that Cartagena Convention Secretariat and regional partners explore mechanisms for the formalization of the Regional Environmental Laboratory Network in order to optimize greater collaboration on environmental monitoring and assessment.
13. **Solicit** offers from governments of the IWEco project's beneficiary states to host the Final Project Conference/Closing Event during the first half of 2023 with first consideration being given to countries that have not previously hosted and noting the 6<sup>th</sup> PSC meeting's preference for an in-person or blended meeting.
14. **Urge the UNEP/Cartagena Convention Secretariat** to engage in discussions with UNEP Headquarters towards keeping the current Regional Project Coordinator involved in the IWEco project as appropriate given the fact that it is entering the final year of implementation. (preamble)
15. **Request** the UNEP to convey a message of thanks to the CEO of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) for the support received for the region through the GEF IWEco Project.
16. **Further request** UNEP, regional partners and country focal points to emphasise to the GEF and other development partners the need for a longer-term programmatic approach to addressing integrated resource management for Caribbean SIDS. (preamble)