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Tenth Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) to the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPA) in the Wider Caribbean Region

Virtual Meeting, 30 January 2023 – 1 February 2023

**DRAFT WORK PLAN FOR THE SPECIALLY PROTECTED
AREAS AND WILDLIFE (SPA) SUB-PROGRAMME FOR
THE
2023 – 2024 BIENNIUM**

Prepared by the Secretariat based on the recommendations of the STAC9 and COP11 Meetings, as well as on the outcome of activities of the 2021 - 2022 Work Plan for SPA and other relevant emerging regional and international issues.

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

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ACRONYMS

| | |
|--------------|---|
| ACP-MEAs III | Enforcing Environmental Treaties in African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries |
| BIOPAMA | Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management |
| CaMPAM | Caribbean Marine Protected Areas Managers Network and Forum |
| CAR-WEN | Caribbean Wildlife Enforcement Network |
| CARICOM | Caribbean Community |
| CariWet | Caribbean Wetlands Regional Initiative |
| CBD | Convention on Biological Diversity |
| CBF | Caribbean Biodiversity Fund |
| CITES | Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora |
| CMS | Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals |
| COP | Conference of Parties |
| CREHO | Ramsar Regional Centre for Training and Research on Wetlands in the Western Hemisphere |
| CRFM | Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism |
| DSS | Decision Support System |
| EBM | Ecosystem Based Management |
| EBM-DSS | Biodiversity for Sustainable Development in the Caribbean through Ecosystem-Based Management |
| EU | European Union |
| FAO | Food and Agricultural Organisation |
| GCFI | Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute |
| GCRMN | Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network |
| GPA | Global Programme of Action |
| IAC | Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles |
| IAS | Invasive Alien Species |
| IOCARIBE | Inter-governmental Oceanographic Commission's Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions |
| IUCN | International Union for the Conservation of Nature |
| IWC | International Whaling Commission |
| LBS | Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities |
| MEA | Multilateral Environmental Agreement |
| MMAP | Action Plan for the Conservation of Marine Mammals in the Wider Caribbean Region |
| MoC | Memorandum of Cooperation |
| MoU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| NGO | Non-Government Organisations |
| NOAA | National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration |
| PA | Protected Area |
| PAME | Protected Areas Management Effectiveness |
| RAC | Regional Activity Centre |
| Ramsar | Convention on Wetlands of International Importance |
| SCTLD | Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease |
| SPAW | Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife in the Wider Caribbean Region |
| SSC | Sargasso Sea Commission |

| | |
|----------|--|
| STAC | Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee |
| STRAP | Sea Turtle Recovery Action Plan |
| TNC | The Nature Conservancy |
| ToR | Terms of Reference |
| ToT | Training of Trainers |
| UNEP | United Nations Environment Programme |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| WCR | Wider Caribbean Region |
| WIDECAST | Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network |

DRAFT WORK PLAN FOR THE SPECIALLY PROTECTED AREAS AND WILDLIFE (SPAW)

SUB-PROGRAMME FOR THE 2023-2024 BIENNIUM

1. INTRODUCTION

1. This workplan covers the 2023-2024 biennium and sets out the priorities for the Regional Programme on Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife in the Wider Caribbean Region (SPAW). During this period, the workplan will focus on activities that assist with the implementation of the SPAW Protocol and its coordination with other regional programmes and organizations dealing with biodiversity conservation and management, particularly regarding protected areas and wildlife, as well as relevant global initiatives and multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs).
2. The SPAW Protocol entered into force on 18 June 2000, and since the Sixth Meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP6), with the most recent accession of Nicaragua in 2021, there are to date eighteen (18) Governments that are Contracting Parties (The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, France, Grenada, Guyana, Honduras, The Netherlands, Nicaragua, Panama, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, United States of America and Venezuela).
3. The objectives of the SPAW Sub-Programme are to:
 - a) Significantly increase the number, and improve the management, of nationally protected areas and species in the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR),
 - b) Support the conservation of threatened and endangered species and the sustainable use of natural resources to prevent them from becoming threatened and endangered,
 - c) Develop a strong regional capability for the coordination of information exchange, training and technical assistance in support of national biodiversity conservation efforts; and
 - d) Coordinate activities and enhance partnerships with the relevant international biodiversity treaties and initiatives such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar), Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), the Convention on the International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC), International Whaling Commission (IWC), and the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) and its global networks.
4. This workplan seeks to ensure the realistic continuation and expansion of the initiatives and tasks emanating from the 2021-2022 SPAW Workplan (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.42/3 Rev.1) on the basis of expected human and financial resources. The Secretariat of the Cartagena Convention prepared this document taking into consideration the decisions and recommendations of previous SPAW Protocol meetings (Conference of the Parties [COPs] and Scientific and Technical Advisory Committees [STACs]), and pertinent issues (regionally and globally) to the objectives of the SPAW Protocol and Programme, as well as inputs from partners. In this context, the Workplan also aims to promote and integrate the ecosystem-based management (EBM) approach to address the degradation of selected priority ecosystem services, and likewise respond through biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of coastal resources, to sustainable development issues, acknowledging the inter-dependency and multidimensional aspects of ecological and social systems. This approach is also supported by other MEAs such as CBD and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.
5. The work plan consists of five (5) major programme elements (sub-programmes):

- a) Programme Coordination;
- b) Strengthening of Protected Areas in the WCR (including training and capacity building for protected area management);
- c) Development of Guidelines for Protected Areas and Species Management;
- d) Conservation of Threatened and Endangered Species; and
- e) Conservation and Sustainable Use of Coastal and Marine Ecosystems (including coral reefs, mangroves and seagrasses using the EBM approach).

2. PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

6. The following sections provide a summary of the objectives, activities, and expected outputs of major projects that will be implemented under the SPAW Programme for the 2023-2024 biennium.

2.1 Programme Coordination

2.1.1 Objectives

7. The coordination objectives of this sub-programme will be to:
 - a) Promote the ratification of, accession to, and effective implementation of the SPAW Protocol.
 - b) Ensure that the formulation and implementation of programme activities satisfy the requirements and needs of the SPAW Protocol and its Contracting Parties.
 - c) Develop coordination, collaboration, and communication mechanisms with other agreements, organizations and programmes relevant to SPAW objectives.
 - d) Improve coordination of regional programming for protected areas and wildlife in the WCR; and
 - e) Oversee the day-to-day activities and general coordination of the various projects and activities of the SPAW Sub-Programme.

Overall objectives, expected accomplishments and indicators for the SPAW Sub-Programme

| Objective 1. SPAW Protocol promotion and improved implementation | | | |
|---|---|--|---------------------------|
| Expected Accomplishments | Indicators of Achievement | Related UNEP Sub-Programme(s) | SPAW Protocol Obligations |
| States increasingly implement their obligations under the Cartagena Convention, the SPAW Protocol and other relevant MEAs while achieving their national environmental priority goals, targets and objectives | Increased number of countries ratified / acceded to the Cartagena Convention and the SPAW Protocol and associated MEAs and establish enabling legislation to fulfil MEA obligations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental Governance | Article 3 |

| Objective 1. SPAW Protocol promotion and improved implementation | | | |
|---|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| Expected Accomplishments | Indicators of Achievement | Related UNEP Sub-Programme(s) | SPAW Protocol Obligations |
| States increasingly integrate EBM approaches into national development and planning processes | Increased number of States within the WCR incorporate integrated watershed and coastal area management approaches into National Environmental Management Strategies /National Planning Processes through legal, institutional and policy reforms | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Action • Nature Action • Environmental Governance | Articles 3, 4, 5,6,10, 17 |
| States increasingly incorporate and facilitate capacity building training and awareness campaigns into national development and planning processes | Increased number of States within the WCR are empowered and have strengthened their ability to identify and address threats to marine and coastal resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature Action • Environmental Governance • Climate Action • Science Policy | Articles 3, 5, 6, 10, 16, 17, 18, 22 |
| Objective 2: Improved coordination on SPAW related issues | | | |
| Expected Accomplishments | Indicators of Achievement | Related Environment UN Sub-Programme(s) | SPAW Protocol Obligations |
| States increasingly collaborate with each other, and the Cartagena Convention, to address emerging environmental issues | Increased number of regional and international collaborations, including working together to address problems faced across the region and data sharing, particularly with respect to shared resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Governance • Nature Action • Climate Action • Science Policy • Digital transformation | Articles 7, 9, 11, 16, 17, 18, 21, 22 |
| States and the Cartagena Convention increasingly partner with non-governmental organisations (NGOs), private sector and civil society to achieve national and regional environmental priorities | Increased number and strengthening of strategic partnerships for development and implementation of activities and projects for improving environmental management at the national and regional levels | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Governance • Nature Action • Climate Action • Finance and Economic Transformations | Articles 7,11, 17, 18, 21, 22 |

2.1.2 SPAW Programme Personnel

8. During the period 2023-2024, the day-to-day coordination for implementation of the sub-programme activities will be overseen by the SPAW Programme Officer, who is responsible for the overall coordination of the SPAW Programme and Protocol Secretariat functions, with support from the SPAW Programme Assistant, Junior Professional Officers (JPOs), United Nations Volunteers (UNVs) and interns when appropriate and applicable.
9. Additional support to meet the objectives of this sub-programme will be received from the SPAW Regional Activity Centre (SPAW-RAC), which is located in Guadeloupe and supported by the Government of France. The SPAW-RAC has been placed institutionally under “DEAL” Guadeloupe (*La Direction de l'Environnement, de l'Aménagement et du Logement*), which is the local representative of the French Ministry in charge of Environment. The SPAW-RAC is dedicated to supporting the SPAW Protocol. The full-time staff consists of one (1) Executive Director, one (1) Programme Officer and one (1) Administrative Assistant funded by the French Ministry for an Ecological Transition. They are assisted by civic service volunteers and other fixed-term contract staff that support specific areas of the workplan dependent on available funding. Currently the team consists of two (2) civic service volunteers with one-year contracts, and three (3) additional employees on three (3) year positions via EU and French Ministry funding to work on specific areas of the workplan, mainly: marine megafauna, marine ecosystems (coral reefs, mangroves & seagrass beds) and MPAs. The division of the tasks between SPAW Programme Officer and SPAW-RAC team with regards to projects is detailed in Annex I.
10. The main responsibilities and functions discharged in the implementation of the SPAW Protocol and Programme are:
 - a) Coordination with relevant programmes, donors and organizations to develop synergies and collaboration on issues of common interest, as appropriate, including but not restricted to the following:
 - With the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) towards e.g. enforcement of conservation measures to protect migratory species and their habitats as well as knowledge exchange with the listing of species and protected areas under SPAW.
 - With the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) towards e.g. enforcement of conservation measures to protect migratory species and their habitats as well as knowledge exchange with the listing of species and protected areas under SPAW, including revisiting Parties' interest in establishing and supporting a regional wildlife enforcement network, Caribbean Wildlife Enforcement Network (CARWEN)¹ as presented in SPAW STAC8.
 - With the International Whaling Commission (IWC) through e.g. the development of joint projects and a technical collaboration between IWC and SPAW-RAC.
 - With Ramsar for e.g. on an integrated protection and monitoring approach of wetlands within SPAW-listed sites.
 - With Regional Fishery Bodies such as the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), the Organization for Fisheries and Aquaculture of the Central American Isthmus (OSPESCA) and the Western Central Atlantic Fisheries Commission (WECAFC) of FAO on topics such as bycatch, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU), MPAs, Sargassum and SPAW-listed species as well as on the implementation of the Regional Fish Spawning Aggregation Fisheries Management Plan, as appropriate.
 - Cooperation will also continue with various other regional agencies on thematic issues with relevance to the SPAW Protocol.
 - b) Support to/Involvement in relevant global processes, initiatives and approaches such as:
 - Support the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) with a specific focus on MPAs and Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECM) and in collaboration with the CBD Secretariat;

¹ Formally named CaribWEN

- Greater integration of Blue Economy approaches under SPAW and links to the Kunming-Montreal GBF;
 - Upon request, provide information about SPAW and its work to the Intergovernmental Conference on an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. Further direction to be provided by Contracting Parties during SPAW STAC10, SPAW COP12 and IGM20/COP17;
 - Support Contracting Parties, where relevant, in their regional approach to include or enhance actions for blue carbon ecosystems in future Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Subject to definition by Contracting Parties on how this support will advance contributions to the SPAW Protocol;
 - Development/Enhancement of national and/or regional databases and information management platforms including preparation for the next Report on the State of Nearshore Marine Habitats in the Wider Caribbean Region;
 - Exploring development of new multifocal area projects which consider nature, climate change, biodiversity, ecosystems, and socio-economic issues including from the Global Environment Facility (GEF).
- c) Support implementation of existing Memoranda of Cooperation (MoCs)/Understandings (MoUs) and of collaborative arrangements with relevant MEAs and initiatives: CBD, CMS, CRFM, Ramsar, IAC, SSC etc.
- d) Develop new partnerships to strengthen the work of the SPAW objectives and address thematic /emerging issues such as:
- Greater integration of activities related to Ocean Acidification (OA) through e.g. collaboration with the Ocean Acidification Community of Practice under the Global Ocean Acidification Observing network (GOA-ON) and communication with the regional sub-commission of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOCARIBE) regarding any potential future work on ocean acidification, including sharing announcements of related funding calls for the region;
 - New or existing Invasive Species in accordance with regional needs;
 - With regard to the issue of Deep Seabed Mining and potential implications for Contracting Parties, Contracting Parties and the Secretariat are encouraged to share relevant information about the SPAW Protocol through the existing mechanisms for the ongoing International Seabed Authority negotiations;
 - Cooperation on Sargassum influx with relevant regional and global initiatives to study the causes and promote synergies and solutions;
 - Strengthen links with civil society including through a potential establishment of a Consortium (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.43/CRP.1) in support of the SPAW sub-programme recognising the contribution of non-governmental organizations to the implementation of the Convention and SPAW Protocol.
- e) Continue implementation of the SPAW Protocol and development of its supporting regional sub-programme through:
- Formulation of the Work Plan and Budget for the 2025-2026 biennium;
 - Convening and servicing the SPAW STAC10 and COP12 in 2023;
 - Promotion of the SPAW Protocol through presentations at relevant fora, communication with Governments; and
 - Enhancing public awareness at different levels and through appropriate channels to engage and support additional Parties and improve implementation of SPAW objectives under the sub-programme.
- f) Continue fundraising with relevant Governments, donors and organizations, including exploring the feasibility of additional fundraising options.
11. A project entitled “Strengthening Regional Ocean governance through enhanced area-based management and marine protected areas including in areas beyond national jurisdiction” that will be funded by the French Facility for Global Environment (FFEM) is in the preparation phase. The project will contribute to

strengthening regional ocean governance through effective collaboration and coordination between different RSCAPs and various sectoral organizations (e.g., fisheries and biodiversity organisations). The provisional schedule of work is for a period of 8 months from September 2023 to April 2024.

2.1.3 **Regional Activity Centre for SPAW (SPAW-RAC) in Guadeloupe (supported by the Government of France)**

12. Joint programming and fundraising for relevant activities and coordination will continue as appropriate with SPAW-RAC during the biennium, specifically to:

- Enhance collaboration and coordination between the Secretariat and RACs in the development and implementation of Projects and the support of implementation of the SPAW Protocol by Contracting Parties.
- Support the conservation of threatened, endangered and migratory species, including parrot fish, Nassau grouper, sawfish, elasmobranchs, sea turtles and migratory birds, in particular via collaboration with WIDECAST, Birds Caribbean, and regional fishery organisations (i.e. WECAFC, CRFM, GCFI), and encourage conservation projects on other SPAW-listed species for which few actions are currently carried out (including plants, fish, reptiles and mammals).
- Continue to cooperate with relevant institutions on the Invasive Alien Species (IAS) issue (strengthen exchanges and actions with LBS and other RACs), contribute to reinvigorate IAS networks and initiatives subject to funding availability.
- Continue to collaborate with the relevant partners to assess and merge information and best practices on managing the *Sargassum* influx impacting Caribbean countries and Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Encourage further collaboration with the LBS Protocol and coordinate with partners in West Africa (e.g. the Abidjan Convention).
- Continue to maintain list of species under Annexes I - III of the SPAW Protocol.
- Prepare and disseminate quarterly releases of the SPAW newsletter and regularly update the SPAW-RAC website with information on, and the outputs of, SPAW projects and activities.
- Participate in and/or support regional projects of relevance to the SPAW work plan.
- Co-chair GCRMN-Caribbean to develop and implement activities, as well as participate as member of the Global GCRM and ICRI.
- Promote the SPAW Protocol and its objectives to assist with further developments as mandated by the Parties, along with fundraising and ratification by non-Parties.
- Launch new calls for proposals for small and medium grants; and find donors interested in financing conservation projects in the WCR.
- Coordinate the STAC Ad Hoc working groups with a view to improving their functioning and work. In particular, motivate Signatories to the SPAW protocol to designate experts in order to diversify skills and expertise and ensure the most exhaustive geographical and political representation. Ensure that the mandatory and specific tasks identified by the STAC are correctly addressed and documented.
- Strengthen active communications with Parties through the teamwork platform and intersessional bilateral meetings with focal points.

2.1.4 **Expected Outputs and Indicators**

13. The major outputs of Programme Coordination, in collaboration with SPAW-RAC and partners as appropriate, and the indicators of their achievement will be:

| Outputs | Indicators of Achievement |
|---|--|
| Twelfth meeting of the SPAW Contracting Parties convened (COP12) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful convening of the meetings with appropriate decisions and recommendations made that will support the protection of important coastal and marine habitats and threatened species of wild fauna and flora • Comprehensive Workplan developed that includes sustainable activities to meet SPAW objectives and is consistent with the priorities of SPAW Contracting Parties as identified in the STAC recommendations and COP decisions. • Increased number of regional and international collaborations and initiatives developed that facilitate data sharing, environmental education and |
| Tenth meeting of the SPAW Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee convened (STAC10) | |
| A strategic and streamlined 2025-2026 SPAW Workplan developed | |
| Funds raised in support of SPAW objectives | |
| Enhanced participation of donors and relevant funding agencies in SPAW activities | |

| Outputs | Indicators of Achievement |
|--|--|
| Collaborations and synergies with relevant organizations and initiatives within and outside the region | awareness, and capacity building. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy for implementation of MoUs jointly developed with the Secretariat and priority actions identified. |
| Implementation of MoUs with relevant partners | |
| Greater involvement by Governments in SPAW activities and additional Parties joining the SPAW Protocol | Increased number of countries ratified / acceded to the SPAW Protocol and increased engagement of those that are already Contracting Parties, as well as the incorporation of SPAW objectives in National Environmental Management Strategies / National Planning Processes More Contracting Parties paying their contribution to the Protocol and making every effort to address their outstanding contributions |

2.1.5 Proposed Budget (indicative)

| Activity | 2023 | | | 2024 | | |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | CTF | Other Sources* | Total | CTF | Other Sources* | Total |
| Salary of Programme Officer/ Assistant (SMs) and other supporting costs ^{1,3} | 365,664 | 345,846 | 711,510 | 419,800 | 360,002 | 779,802 |
| COP12 and STAC10 meeting preparations ² | 0 | 211,143 | 211,143 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL (USD) | 365,664 | 556,989 | 922,653 | 419,800 | 360,002 | 779,802 |

*Includes funding from France through SPAW-RAC for RAC's website, SPAW newsletter, translations, etc.. and funding from the ACP MEA III Project

Note: 1) The Operational costs of the SPAW-RAC (8 persons) are covered directly by the Government of France and projects; for 2023, includes Onboarding Costs of the SPAW Programme Officer and salary from May-December)

2) Support for COP12 to be provided by the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

3) Includes funding from the Gulf of Mexico (GoM) Project

2.2 Strengthening of Protected Areas in the Wider Caribbean Region

2.2.1 Objectives

14. The objectives of this sub-programme are to:

- a) Strengthen the management of parks and protected areas of the WCR, including the communication between parks and protected areas within the region;
- b) Assist Governments and NGOs with the development of human capacity to increase the management effectiveness of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), both sites and national system;
- c) Sensitize Governments of the need for and importance of financing protected areas, and to promote the development of funding mechanisms and strategies for successful park and protected area management;
- d) Promote protected areas in the context of the conservation of important natural resources necessary for the sustainable development of the region.

2.2.2 Activities

15. The day-to-day implementation of activities under this sub-programme will be overseen by the SPAW Programme Officer and the SPAW-RAC. Major projects will include activities as described below:

- MPA capacity building initiatives will be supported under the project “*Enforcing Environmental Treaties in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Countries – ACP-MEAs III*,” funded by the European Union via UNEP’s Law Division (USD \$2,250,000). The five (5)-year project’s (2020-2024) objective focusing on SPAW is to “*develop a functional network of SPAW-listed protected areas that cover interconnected marine habitats and ecosystems for restoring and sustaining the health of the oceans*”.
- MPA capacity building will be further strengthened under the project “*Protecting and Restoring the Ocean’s natural Capital, building Resilience and supporting region-wide Investments for sustainable Blue socio-Economic development (PROCARIBE+)*” ([UNEP \(DEPI\)/CAR IG.43/INF.3](#)), funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The four (4)-year project’s (2023-2027) objective is to “*Protect, restore, and harness the natural coastal and marine capital of the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf LME to catalyse investments in a climate-resilient, sustainable post-covid Blue Economy, through strengthened regional coordination and collaboration, and wide-ranging partnerships.*” Following formal CEO endorsement of the PROCARIBE+ project by the GEF in December 2022, the Secretariat will discuss possible areas of support and respective budget allocations for implementation including on specific outputs and outcomes. Beneficiary countries includes all countries who endorsed the proposal through provision of GEF funding but other countries who have endorsed the project and/or provide co-financing such as the USA and The Kingdom of the Netherlands will also be involved in selected activities.
- MPA networks will be strengthened and support for the effectiveness of MPAs will be provided through the project “*Implementation of the Strategic Action Program of the Gulf of Mexico Large Marine Ecosystem (GoM LME)*” ([UNEP\(DEPI\)/CAR WG.43/INF.39](#)) funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The four (4)-year project (2023-2027) is “*specifically aimed at facilitating the implementation of the Mexico/U.S. endorsed Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA – 2011) and Strategic Action Plan (SAP – 2013) for the integrated management of the GoM-LME. The SAP’s long-term Ecosystem Quality Objective (EcoQO) for the marine environment of the GoM is to improve water quality; enhance economic vitality by avoiding depletion and recover living marine resources; and conserve and restore coastal and marine ecosystems.*”
- MPA management effectiveness will be promoted and enhanced within existing and new MPAs and OECMS through the project *Strengthening Regional Ocean governance through enhanced area-based management*

and marine protected areas including in areas beyond national jurisdiction funded by the French Facility for Global Environment (FFEM). The project is in the preparation phase and the provisional schedule of work is for a period of 8 months from September 2023 to April 2024.

16. The Secretariat and SPAW-RAC, as appropriate, work with Contracting Parties, including managers of SPAW-listed protected areas, and other relevant partners, as appropriate, to develop a proposal for the creation of a network for SPAW-listed protected areas coordinated by the Secretariat or SPAW-RAC with the purpose of understanding and addressing the needs of protected area managers to improve protected area effectiveness. The proposal should include a suggested strategic vision, workplan, institutional structure, and budget and should be presented to SPAW STAC11 and COP13 for consideration.

2.2.2.1 Strengthening of MPAs (prioritising MPAs listed under SPAW)

(a) Continue to update and deliver the Training of Trainers (ToT) course on MPA management.

17. Two (2) Training of Trainers workshops on Protected Areas Management Effectiveness (PAME) and Marine Protected Area (MPA) management and networking will be held for at least fifteen (15) MPA practitioners in the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR). The workshops will be financed through the ACP-MEAs III project and will improve capacity and promote long-term sustainability.

(b) Promote Protected Area Management Effectiveness.

18. With funding from the ACP-MEAs III project, several activities will be implemented to support SPAW MPA practitioners, including the:
 - One (1) PAME regional assessment will be conducted to evaluate the project's success, with at least five (5) MPAs listed under the SPAW Protocol. These will act as baseline and evaluation assessments to determine project success.
 - Convening of two (2) five (5)- day regional training workshops. These workshops will train at least twenty (20) MPA practitioners on the basics of MPA Management Effectiveness and will be offered in English, Spanish and French. The workshops will benefit both SPAW and non-SPAW Protocol Contracting Parties.

2.2.2.2 Enhance the network of MPA practitioners

(a) Strengthen MPA networks to improve regional coordination and bilateral cooperation

19. Under the GoM LME project, several activities will be implemented to strengthen MPA networks including:
 - Mapping of institutions and identification of opportunities for integration through the creation of a Bilateral Coordination Group (BCG), a Gap Assessment and convening of a series of regional meetings.
 - Development and implementation of proposals in support of the enhancement of governance capabilities and transformational opportunities.

(b) Continue to support MPA-related sessions at the annual GCFI Conferences (2023 and 2024).

20. The Secretariat will aim to continue to support an MPA-related session at annual GCFI meetings. This will facilitate discussions on emerging issues and promote the exchange of information among managers, fishers and scientists to ensure on-going collaboration and participation amongst stakeholders.

2.2.2.3 Continued development, maintenance and promotion of the Regional MPA Database

21. Through the implementation of the project EBM-DSS (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.42/INF.13), the CaMPAM

database was restructured and expanded to include information on one thousand and sixty-nine (1069) marine and coastal MPAs from forty-four (44) countries throughout the WCR. The database will be transferred by the SPAW Secretariat to the Cartagena Convention's UN website and will continue to be updated under the ACP-MEAs III project.

2.2.2.4 Synergies with national and international MPA initiatives and efforts

22. Subject to decisions on CaMPAM's reactivation, the Secretariat, SPAW RAC and the network will continue to contribute, as feasible, to national MPA initiatives related to marine conservation science, management and policy, and exchanges that improve MPA effectiveness, as well as coordinate with relevant international efforts. This will include collaboration with regional and international organisations such as: MPA Connect, the Caribbean Challenge Initiative (CCI), the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (CBF), CARICOM Biodiversity Strategy, TNC's Caribbean biodiversity programme, the Caribbean Biological Corridor, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in the frame of the Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management (BIOPAMA), MAR Fund, the networks involved in transatlantic collaboration among MPAs, as well as the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Through the ACP-MEAs III project, learning exchanges will be held through participation in at least four (4) regional and international meetings to identify opportunities for collaboration between SPAW MPAs and with other organisations and programmes. Four (4) learning exchange events, with five (5) participants each will also be held in the Caribbean to enhance management capacity using PAME tools.

2.2.2.5 SPAW-RAC contribution

23. Continue and improve the listing process of Protected Areas under the SPAW Protocol with relevant Contracting Parties, as appropriate, and further develop the cooperation for listed protected areas.
24. If funding is available, the SPAW-RAC could support the development of a proposal for the creation of a network for SPAW-listed protected areas with the purpose of understanding and addressing the needs of protected area managers to improve protected area effectiveness.

2.2.3 Expected Outputs and Indicators

25. The major outputs and indicators of achievement under this sub-programme will be:

| Outputs | Indicators of Achievement |
|--|--|
| Development of a proposal for the creation of a network for SPAW-listed protected areas that would address the need of SPAW listed protected areas managers, including a strategic vision, workplan, institutional structure, and budget | Number of SPAW listed protected areas managers involved in the process of creation of the SPAW listed protected areas network Successful presentation to STAC11 and COP13 |
| Improved regional and bilateral cooperation as well as collaboration with national and international MPA initiatives | Increased number of joint action with regional or subregional protected areas networks or other relevant initiatives. |
| Stronger relationships and collaborations between MPA practitioners, scientists, fishers, other stakeholders, as well as with international/regional experts | Increased numbers participating in activities designed to support and strengthen PA management throughout the WCR. |

2.2.4 Proposed budget (indicative)

| Activity | 2023 | | | 2024 | | |
|--|----------|----------------|----------------|----------|----------------|----------------|
| | CTF | Other Sources | Total | CTF | Other Sources | Total |
| Strengthening of MPAs | | | | | | |
| ToT courses ¹ | 0 | 20,000 | 20,000 | 0 | 20,000 | 20,000 |
| PAME regional assessment ¹ | 0 | 50,000 | 50,000 | 0 | 50,000 | 50,000 |
| Regional training workshops ¹ | 0 | 10,500 | 10,500 | 0 | 15,500 | 15,500 |
| Support the effectiveness of Marine Protected Area management ³ | 0 | 3,710 | 3,710 | 0 | 10,600 | 10,600 |
| Enhance the network of MPA practitioners | | | | | | |
| Support to strengthen MPA networks ² | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 50,800 | 50,800 |
| Support MPA Sessions at GCPI Conferences (2023 and 2024) ¹ | 0 | 15,000 | 15,000 | 0 | 15,000 | 15,000 |
| Continued development, maintenance and promotion of the Regional MPA Database | | | | | | |
| Regional MPA Database ¹ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Synergies with national and international MPA initiatives and efforts | | | | | | |
| Support to national and international MPA initiatives ¹ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Learning Exchanges ¹ | 0 | 147,000 | 147,000 | 0 | 17,000 | 17,000 |
| TOTAL (USD) | 0 | 288,900 | 288,900 | 0 | 205,900 | 205,900 |

¹ Includes funds from capacity building projects related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Countries – Phase III (ACP-MEA)

² Includes funds from the GoM LME project

³ Includes funding from SPAW-RAC, as well as other sources

Approximate amount converted from Euros to USD using the conversion rate €1:US\$1.06

2.3 Implementation of Guidelines for the Management of Protected Areas and Species

2.3.1 Objectives

26. The objectives of this sub-programme are to:

- Promote and assist with the implementation of the guidelines on protected area (PA) establishment, management, and listing developed under the SPAW Protocol;
- Promote national planning for protected areas, including development of relevant legislation and reporting mechanisms, where appropriate and
- Promote and assist with the development and implementation of guidelines on species conservation and management under the SPAW Protocol.

2.3.2 Activities

27. Activities to be implemented during the biennium include:

2.3.2.1 Listing of Protected Areas under the SPAW Protocol, Cooperation Programme and other Tasks of the PA Working Group

28. Following SPAW STAC9 (2021) and the adopted Terms of Reference (ToR) of the SPAW STAC Working Groups (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.42/INF.12/Rev.1), the STAC Ad Hoc Working Group on Protected Areas will continue to assess new proposals from the Parties and to deal with Protected Areas issues, as requested by the STAC10. A call for Parties to submit protected areas nomination proposals will be made by the Secretariat and the SPAW-RAC
29. Support to protected sites will be explored in line with the group's ToR ([UNEP\(DEP\)/CAR WG.42/INF.12/Rev.1](#)) and relevant recommendations from the STAC10. The Working Group may continue, as appropriate, to implement tasks that were not fully completed during the last biennium, especially the revision as needed of the procedure through which Contracting Parties can propose new Protected Areas to be listed as SPAW sites.
30. The activities below could be considered, subject to availability of funding and resources:
- a) The SPAW-RAC continues to maintain, improve and update the database on protected areas listed under the SPAW Protocol, including the web-based tool where Parties prepare and submit reports that have been submitted as part of the STAC nomination for consideration.
 - b) Increase cooperation with regional fisheries bodies and existing MEAs (i.e. CRFM, FAO-WECAFC, OSPESCA and CMS Shark MOU).
 - c) Continue efforts to simplify and update the procedure (including criteria and evaluation table) for listing protected areas under the SPAW Protocol, with the support from the SPAW-RAC and the STAC Ad Hoc Working Group on Protected Areas.
 - d) Disseminate widely, and update as appropriate, the fact sheet on the SPAW listing process and listed sites prepared by the Secretariat in English, Spanish and French.
 - e) In collaboration with the appropriate Contracting Party for each site, continue building dedicated spaces for each SPAW listed PA using the dedicated SPAW-RAC website and the CaMPAM database/sources of information on biological connectivity (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.42/INF.10 and UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.43/INF.9)
 - f) Support protected areas and invasive species management, while considering the *Sargassum* influx as appropriate.

2.3.2.2 Criteria for the Assessment of Exemptions to Article 11(2) of the SPAW Protocol

31. The SPAW STAC Ad Hoc Working Group on Exemptions will continue its work per the revised Terms of Reference (ToR) of the SPAW STAC Working Groups following STAC10 and COP12:

(a) Application of the voluntary format for presenting exemptions and reporting on their implementation to the Contracting Parties.

32. Encourage Parties to use the Guidelines to Assess Exemptions under Article 11(2) of the SPAW Protocol ([UNEP\(DEPI\)/CAR IG.37/3](#)) and utilize the voluntary reporting format ([English](#), [Spanish](#) and [French](#)), to facilitate review of such submissions.

(b) Assist Governments to formulate their reports on exemptions under Article 11(2).

33. The Secretariat and SPAW-RAC support capacity building for improved reporting of exemptions including

through Peer-to-Peer exchanges and assessments of Contracting Parties' needs.

34. Provide assistance to Contracting Parties, as appropriate, in the preparation of their reports on exemptions using the voluntary reporting format.

2.3.2.3 Listing of Protected Species under the SPAW Protocol

35. The STAC Ad Hoc Working Group on Species will work on the tasks assigned by the STAC. The Working Group will review, evaluate, and provide recommendations (including the basis for any recommendations) on proposals from Contracting Parties to add new species to the SPAW Protocol annexes or change the listing status of species.

2.3.2.4 Development of Conservation and Management Plans

36. The STAC Working Group on species will work on adequate species recovery and management recommendations and actions depending on the recommendations from the SPAW STAC 10 and the revised ToRs of the SPAW Working groups.
37. The Species Working Group will develop a set of prioritized recommendations for the conservation and management of parrotfish in the Caribbean.
38. The Species Working Group and Protected Areas Working Group undertake the joint task in UNEP(DEPI)CAR WG.43/INF.26, paragraph 15, for the conservation of Nassau Grouper (*Epinephelus striatus*), and report progress and make recommendations, as appropriate, to STAC 11.

2.3.2.5 SPAW-RAC contribution

39. Continue, in support of the Secretariat, to provide guidance on the use of the guidance document, the criteria and to list species under the Annexes of the SPAW Protocol.

2.3.3 Expected Outputs and Indicators

40. The major outputs, and the indicators of achievement, under this Sub-Programme will be:

| Outputs | Indicators of Achievement |
|---|--|
| An updated procedure for listing protected areas under the SPAW Protocol and an updated list of protected areas under the SPAW Protocol as well as the reactivation of cooperation programmes among sites | Increased number of PAs listed under the SPAW Protocol, as well as ongoing revisions to the information provided on the list, provide comprehensive information on the MPAs found within the WCR |
| Format for presenting exemptions under Article 11(2) is disseminated and its implementation reported on | Improved submissions, and examination, of exemptions under Article 11(2) of the SPAW Protocol in order to ensure the continued survival of the species. |
| Technical assistance, tools, and information products that support Contracting Parties' implementation of the SPAW Protocol for species listed under Annexes I-III, as well as support for preparation of species nomination proposals, in line with the "Procedure for the submission and approval of nominations of species for inclusion in, or deletion from Annexes I, II and III" | Increased understanding, monitoring and cooperation on management of species listed under Annexes I - III of the SPAW Protocol, as well as the implementation of activities designed to ensure the survival of these species |

2.3.4 Proposed Budget (indicative)

| Activity | 2023 | | | 2024 | | |
|---|----------|----------------|--------------|----------|----------------|---------------|
| | CTF | Other Sources* | Total | CTF | Other Sources* | Total |
| Listing of Protected Areas under the SPAW Protocol Cooperation Programme and other Tasks of the PA Working Group | | | | | | |
| Support to cooperation programme of listed protected areas | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Criteria for the Assessment of Exemptions to Article 11 of the SPAW Protocol | | | | | | |
| Assist Governments to formulate their reports on exemptions under Article 11(2) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Strategy development | 0 | 3,710 | 3,710 | 0 | 10,600 | 10,600 |
| Listing of Protected Species under the SPAW Protocol | | | | | | |
| Listing assessment | 0 | 5,000 | 5,000 | 0 | 35,000 | 35,000 |
| Total | 0 | 8,710 | 8,710 | 0 | 45,600 | 45,600 |

*In-kind support being explored from partners

2.4 Conservation of Threatened and Endangered Species

2.4.1 Objectives

41. The objectives of this sub-programme are to:

- Promote awareness and action in the region on priorities for the management of threatened, endangered and migratory species to increase the level of national and regional protection;
- Implement priority activities of existing species recovery and management plans and recommendations developed under the SPAW Protocol;
- Develop, as appropriate, adequate management plans and programmes for priority species of regional concern, including those of economic importance; and
- Address the growing threat of invasive alien species (IAS) that could negatively impact SPAW species and WCR habitats, especially marine or coastal IAS.

2.4.2 Activities

42. The proposed activities for implementation during the 2023-2024 biennium will focus on migratory species, in particular marine mammals, elasmobranchs and sea turtles, as well as support of conservation programmes on sharks and rays, parrotfishes and Nassau Grouper in co-operation with relevant fisheries and scientific bodies, and organizations such as IWC and WECAFC. Subject to availability of funding, efforts will also be made to strengthen collaboration with national and regional fisheries stakeholders for developing bycatch assessments and mitigation programmes.

2.4.2.1 Conservation of Marine Mammals

43. In keeping with the priorities identified by the STAC and COP, notably with the revision of the SPAW marine mammal action plan, the following activities are being proposed for implementation by the SPAW RAC:

a) Support networking

- Continue to reinforce the regional network of natural resource practitioners/MPA managers actively involved in marine mammal research, management and conservation through the use of various platforms to provide sustainability and synergies between various stakeholders in the WCR.
- Promote the inclusion of marine mammals in MPA management plans and enhance the capacity of managers involved in marine mammal conservation.

b) Continue working on an operational framework of a Marine Mammal Regional Activity Network (RAN), and, subject to guidance provided by Contracting Parties, support its creation

c) Enhance knowledge and monitoring of marine mammal populations in the WCR

- Support and promote transboundary cooperation initiatives at the sub-regional and regional levels, such as the Caribbean Marine Megafauna and Anthropogenic Activities (CAMAC) project (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.43/INF.36) and the "Protecting Blue Corridors" Initiative (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.43/INF.42), for the development of transboundary studies to assess and monitor Caribbean marine mammal populations.
- Support Contracting Parties in the development of their national strategies and frameworks including National Conservation and Recovery Plans for marine mammal conservation by considering the revised "Action Plan for the Conservation of Marine Mammals (MMAP) in the Wider Caribbean" 2022 (subject to funding).
- Support national assessments of marine mammal bycatch by Contracting Parties and synthesize these assessments into a report evaluating marine mammal bycatch risk in the WCR (subject to funding).
- Support compliance with the SPAW Protocol and other requirements regarding marine mammal catch and captivity.
- Strengthen regional capacity to mitigate and monitor anthropogenic impacts on marine mammals as indicated in the revised "Action Plan for the Conservation of Marine Mammals (MMAP) in the Wider Caribbean" (subject to funding).
- Promote the national and regional implementation of the Overarching Principles and Best Practice Guidelines for Marine Mammal Watching in the Wider Caribbean Region ([UNEP\(DEPI\)/CAR WG.38/INF.13](#)), the Toolkit for implementing Marine Mammal Watching Guidelines in the Wider Caribbean Region ([UNEP\(DEPI\)/CAR WG.42/INF.32](#)) and the [digital educational kit for whale watchers](#).

d) Improve knowledge and awareness of threats to marine mammals

- Improve awareness of, compile data on, and, where necessary, implement strategies to mitigate the effects of bycatch and entanglements, pollution, and ship strikes, on marine megafauna and especially marine mammals in the Wider Caribbean Region working with Contracting Parties and, when appropriate, in collaboration with the IWC, fishery organisations and other relevant intergovernmental organizations.

e) SPAW-RAC Contribution

- Support the implementation of the Marine Mammal Action Plan (MMAP), and subsequent actions including, (subject to funding) to enhance knowledge on marine mammal populations in the Caribbean, assess anthropogenic impacts (notably fisheries, hunting, pollution, and habitat degradation etc.), strengthen regional capacity to mitigate these threats in the framework of the CAMAC project. **The SPAW-RAC will also assist with efforts** towards strengthening links with the IWC and remains involved

in the twinning projects of the Ocean governance project (said “transatlantic project”) and support the development of a marine mammal RAN

- f) **Finalize and initiate implementation of a joint workplan between the UNEP/Secretariat to the Cartagena Convention and the International Whaling Commission (IWC) given IWC’s decision in 2022 to not establish a formal MoU with the Secretariat.**
- g) **Strengthen collaboration with the Marine Pollution Sub-Programme and its Protocols Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS) and Co-operation in Combating Oil Spills (Oil Spills) including through greater collaboration among the Secretariats RACs. This will include the potential impacts of oil exploration and exploitation of protected species, including marine mammals and associated habitats.**

2.4.2.2 Conservation of Sea Turtles

44. The following activities will be given priority during the biennium:

- a) Recognising the value of the ongoing collaboration with Widecast, the Secretariat and the SPAW-RAC will seek to enhance its cooperation including through the possible signing of a MoU that would recognise Widecast as a RAN, to be signed by the SPAW-RAC in accordance with chapter VII of the guidelines [UNEP\(DEC\)/CAR IG.24/CRP.9/Rev.1](#). Priority would be given to activities as described in [\[UNEP\(DEPI\)/CAR WG.43/INF.24\]](#), subject to approval at SPAW STAC10.
- b) Support the elaboration of Sea Turtle Recovery Action Plans (STRAPs) in countries that do not have plans.
- c) Support existing STRAPs through the implementation of national priority actions, in particular the provision of training as it relates to educators (teacher training), law enforcement officers, veterinarians and first responders.
- d) Collaborate further and renew the MoU with the IAC on sea turtle activities in the work plan to ensure that work is not duplicated.
- e) Provide support, as appropriate, for efforts within regional fisheries organizations /bodies and to reduce sea turtle bycatch and continue to develop bycatch assessment and mitigation programmes.
- f) Support compliance with the SPAW Protocol and other requirements regarding sea turtle catch.
- g) Coordinate with the IAC to develop a cooperative mechanism to facilitate conservation of the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Turtle

2.4.2.3 Support regional efforts to address invasive alien species in collaboration with relevant partners

45. Subject to funding availability, efforts in this area will develop in accordance with regional needs related to new or existing invasive species (e.g. lionfish).

2.4.2.4 Conservation of fish species

- 46. The SPAW Sub-programme will collaborate as appropriate with partners, including interested NGOs and IGOs including regional fisheries bodies, with appropriate expertise to conserve herbivorous fish species in the WCR.
- 47. The SPAW-RAC and/Secretariat supports Contracting Parties in strengthening conservation and sustainable management of parrotfish including through discussions in the Species Working Group as appropriate.
- 48. Support Contracting Parties in their efforts to enact national regulations to explicitly and specifically prohibit sawfish fishing, killing, retention, sale, and trade.

2.4.2.5 Greater collaboration in management and conservation

49. The activities below could be considered, subject to availability of funding and resources:

- Assist in the implementation of the Regional Fish Spawning Aggregation Fishery Management Plan (FMP) drafted by WECAFC.
- Consider opportunities to improve MPA management and protection for Nassau grouper.
- Develop outreach and educational materials to educate the public on sharks and rays.
- Assist SPAW Parties in implementing data collection and report on shark and ray (by)catches, in collaboration with regional fishery organisations.
- Assist SPAW Contracting Parties in developing and implementing national legislation for the sustainable management of each of shark and ray species listed on the Annexes of the SPAW Protocol.

2.4.3 *Expected Outputs and Indicators*

50. The major outputs, and indicators of achievement, under this sub-programme will be:

| Outputs | Indicators of Achievement |
|---|---|
| Increased preparedness and response to anthropogenic impacts on megafauna and marine mammal populations in the WCR | Improved awareness of, and response to, impacts on marine megafauna throughout the WCR |
| Increased knowledge on megafauna critical habitat areas and increased support for transboundary protection - including through the implementation of the CAMAC project and collaborations with local, regional and private stakeholders | Additional protection afforded to megafauna species and their critical habitat areas throughout the WCR, including increased collaborations with Contracting Parties who share marine mammal stocks |
| Support for regional repository on marine mammal stranding data across the WCR. | Improved and increased dissemination and collection of marine mammals stranding data throughout the WCR, particularly with respect to increased participation and collaboration with Member States |
| Strengthen relations with Contracting Parties to further the objectives of the MMAP | Improved and increased dissemination, collection and use of marine megafauna data throughout the WCR, particularly with respect to the direct or indirect take of marine mammals, and the incorporation of measures to reduce their take into national environmental and development policies |
| Existing STRAPs expanded, and new STRAPs developed | Increased number of States have either developed or strengthened strategies for the protection of sea turtle species and their habitats within the WCR |
| Standard guidelines and criteria for Index Site monitoring at sea turtle foraging grounds in the WCR developed | Increased number of States within the WCR are empowered and have strengthened their ability to improve sea turtle monitoring within their countries through coordinated and standardised research methods |
| Training provided on nesting beach and in-water population monitoring | |

| | |
|--|---|
| Continue efforts to address the issue of regional invasive alien species in collaboration with relevant partners | Sustained collaborations and partnerships including improved coordination with Member States to monitor, report and address new and existing invasive species, particularly as it relates to their impact on ecosystems |
| Increased work to conserve herbivorous fish species in the WCR in collaboration with relevant partners | Strengthened collaboration to develop/produce factsheets and educational material for dissemination within the region on parrotfishes |
| Regional wildlife enforcement network supported | Improved protection afforded to endemic species throughout the WCR through enhanced collaboration between Parties, NGOs and other relevant stakeholders |

2.4.4

Proposed Budget (indicative)

| Activity | 2023 | | | 2024 | | |
|---|----------|----------------|----------------|----------|---------------|---------------|
| | CTF | Other Sources | Total | CTF | Other Sources | Total |
| Conservation of Marine Mammals | | | | | | |
| Support networking | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Support to Contracting Parties | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Marine Mammal education and awareness | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Implementation of the CAMAC project ¹ | 0 | 411,916 | 411,916 | 0 | 166,526 | 166,526 |
| Conservation of Threatened Species | | | | | | |
| Call for Proposals for Species Conservation ² | 0 | 104,605 | 104,605 | 0 | 83,821 | 83,821 |
| Control of Invasive Species | | | | | | |
| Support to the Regional Initiatives (e.g. Lionfish) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Greater collaboration in management and conservation | | | | | | |
| Development of outreach and educational materials | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Support to Contracting Parties | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 0 | 516,521 | 516,521 | 0 | 83,821 | 83,821 |

¹ Includes \$578,442 from the CAMAC Project

² Includes funding from France through SPAW-RAC

Note: ***Approximate amount converted from Euros to USD using the conversion rate €1:US\$1.06

2.5 Conservation, Sustainable Use and Restoration of Coastal and Marine Ecosystems

2.5.1 Objectives

51. The objectives of this sub-programme are to:

- a) Assist with the management of the coastal and marine ecosystems of the region on a sustainable basis, particularly through sustainable practices and development of nature-based solutions;
- b) Raise awareness and encourage actions by Governments and other partners for the conservation, sustainable use and restoration of coral reefs and associated ecosystems such as mangroves and seagrass beds;
- c) Effectively communicate the value and importance of coral reefs, mangroves and seagrass beds, including their ecosystem services, the threats to their sustainability, and the actions needed to protect, manage and restore them;
- d) Promote the ecosystem-based management approach and the principles and values of good governance for the conservation and management of marine ecosystems in the region.
- e) Promote the UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration and UN Decade on Ocean Science as a global initiative to safeguard and improve scientific understanding of coastal and marine ecosystems.

2.5.2 Activities

52. Proposed activities to be implemented during the biennium will continue to focus on coastal and marine ecosystems.

2.5.2.1 Conservation of Coral Reefs

53. Continued reactivation of the Caribbean coral reef monitoring network under GCRMN (GCRMN-Caribbean) (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.36/INF.10 and UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG 43 /INF.27). The activities conducted by SPAW-RAC subject to funding will include the:

- Promotion and implementation of the Regional Guidelines for Coral Reef Biophysical Monitoring (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.38/INF.17) as well as Guidelines for Integrated Coral Reef Monitoring (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.37/INF.4) and representation and promotion of the guidelines and GCRMN-Caribbean at relevant fora;
- Continue supporting coral reef monitoring efforts to evaluate their ecological status at regional and global levels;
- Development of an action plan for the next biennium (2023-2024) and the implementation of capacity-building activities such as workshops and small grant funding for field work; and
- Participation at global coral reef initiatives, including ICRI, Reef Resilience Network, and the Coral Reef Consortium.

54. Subject to funding availability, continue work on Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease, and other existing and new invasive species, particularly with respect to the release of ballast water in the WCR (strengthen exchanges and actions with Oil Spills Protocol). The SPAW Sub-programme will also continue to share resources developed by other partners, including GCFI and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

2.5.2.2 Ecosystem-based management approaches

55. With funding from the ACP MEA III Project, local/national Ecosystem-based Management (EBM) projects promoting an integrated approach to pollution reduction and habitat restoration will be implemented in Suriname and Guyana in collaboration with the Marine Pollution (AMEP) Sub-Programme. Guyana is a party to the LBS and SPAW Protocols and Suriname is in the process of ratifying both protocols. This will build on lessons learned

from EBM pilot projects implemented under the GEF CLME+ Project and support countries in implementing activities under their national pollution prevention plans and strategies.

56. The restoration of degraded coastal and marine ecosystems will be promoted and enhanced through the project *Strengthening Regional Ocean governance through enhanced area-based management and marine protected areas including in areas beyond national jurisdiction* funded by the French Facility for Global Environment (FFEM). The project is in the preparation phase and the provisional schedule of work is for a period of 8 months from September 2023 to April 2024.
57. The protection and restoration of marine and coastal ecosystems in the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf LME will be supported by the “*Protecting and Restoring the Ocean’s natural Capital, building Resilience and supporting region-wide Investments for sustainable Blue socio-Economic development (PROCARIBE+)*”, funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF). This four (4)-year project (2023-2027) *will enable region-wide multi-stakeholder cooperation, for the protection, restoration and sustainable use of marine and coastal ecosystems in the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems as well as address the enabling national environments for restoration including EBM approaches.*

2.5.2.3 Conservation of wetlands / mangroves

58. The SPAW-RAC could develop activities designed to promote the conservation, sustainable use and restoration of mangroves. If funding becomes available, proposed activities could include:
 - Re-engaging Ramsar’s Caribbean Wetlands Regional Initiative (CariWet) via the *Regional Centre for Training and Research on Wetlands* (CREHO).
 - Engage with regional initiatives to support (financially and technically) the development of regional capacity building events and network of practitioners and experts on mangrove conservation, monitoring and restoration.
59. Promotion and implementation of the Manual for the ecological restoration of mangroves in the Mesoamerican Reef System and the Wider Caribbean ([UNEP\(DEPI\)/CAR WG.42/INF.16](#)) and representation and promotion of the guidelines at relevant fora

2.5.2.4 Conservation of seagrass beds

60. The SPAW-RAC could develop activities designed to promote the conservation, sustainable use and restoration of seagrass meadows. If funding becomes available, proposed activities could include:
 - Engage with regional initiatives to support (financially and technically) the development of regional capacity building events and network of practitioners and experts on seagrass conservation, monitoring and restoration
 - Participation at global seagrass initiatives, including the World Seagrass Association, Seagrass Watch, SeagrassNet.
 - Development of a regional Manual for the ecological restoration of seagrass beds in the Wider Caribbean

2.5.2.5 Sharing regional data and research on Sargassum

61. Subject to funding availability, activities to be implemented could include:
 - Collaboration with Contracting Parties to engage in and contribute to relevant fora, as appropriate, including the Sargassum Information Hub and the Sargassum Working Group coordinated by the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) Blue Planet Initiative, as well as the IOC of UNESCO Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (IOCARIBE), as well as, as appropriate, the SARG’COOP Program.
 - Upon request, the Secretariat and SPAW-RAC, as appropriate, continue coordination and collaboration with

relevant regional and global initiatives to study the causes of and promote synergies and solutions to coastal Sargassum influxes, within the scope of the SPAW Protocol and the Cartagena Convention, and provide information on SPAW and its work to such fora.

- Mobilize the SPAW Sargassum Working Group to survey Contracting Parties on their needs related to managing Sargassum influx and how such influx may affect their implementation of obligations under the SPAW Protocol and Cartagena Convention, as well as the LBS Protocol, as appropriate.
- Work with the Sargassum Working Group to update and prioritize the action plan of the Sargassum Working Group in UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.42/7 for consideration by SPAW STAC11 and COP13, taking into account the findings of the survey and consultations, as well as any consultations with additional experts as appropriate.
- Coordination of data sharing on the management and impact of Sargassum on wetlands in collaboration with Ramsar's CariWet – see Section 2.5.2.3.
- Coordination of Sargassum-related projects and events throughout the WCR.
- Development and sharing of information documents for the general public, governments, coastal managers, and others affected by Sargassum.
- Coordination on response to Sargassum influxes amongst the Secretariats of the Cartagena and Abidjan Convention, UNEP's Global Programme of Action (GPA) and other UN Programmes involved in assessing Sargassum landings in the WCR and West Africa.

2.5.3 Expected Outputs and Indicators

62. The major outputs, and indicators of achievement, under this sub-programme will be:

| Outputs | Indicators of Achievement |
|---|--|
| GCRMN-Caribbean's sustained reactivation, as well as guidance provided by the Steering Committee Harmonized data on biophysical and socio-economical coral reef monitoring being collected and better integrated | Countries' ability to monitor and protect coral reef ecosystems is enhanced and strengthened, through the use of standardised data collection and reporting methods Increased number of experts and practitioners involved in the GCRMN-Caribbean work |
| Development of a regional database to store and analyse data collected by the GCRMN-Caribbean Contribution to the next GCRMN's Status of Coral Reefs of the World Report as well as GCRMN-Caribbean Status and Trends of Coral Reefs | SCTLD and <i>Diadema</i> die-off monitored and countries of the WCR actively engaged to address these issues |
| Harmonized mangrove and seagrass monitoring protocols in the WCR | Countries' ability to monitor and protect mangrove and seagrass ecosystems is enhanced and strengthened, through the use of standardised data collection and reporting methods |
| EBM management approaches promoted throughout the WCR | Increased capacity within Member States to implement EBM approaches |
| Resilience of coastal ecosystems against climate change pressures improved | Enhanced capacity within Member States to effectively conserve and sustainably use resources found within coastal ecosystems. Increased number of projects and initiatives to restore coastal and marine ecosystems in the WCR and mitigate impacts of climate change |

2.5.4 Proposed Budget (indicative)

| Activity | 2023 | | | 2024 | | |
|---|----------|----------------|----------------|----------|----------------|----------------|
| | CTF | Other Sources | Total | CTF | Other Sources | Total |
| Conservation of Coral Reefs | | | | | | |
| Implementation of the GCRMN Caribbean and support to countries monitoring | 0 | 17,500 | 17,500 | 0 | 62,500 | 62,500 |
| Support work on SCTLD and other invasive species | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| RAC actions for ecosystems conservation (Call for proposals , restoration...) | 0 | 14,688 | 14,688 | 0 | 25,288 | 25,288 |
| EBM Approaches | | | | | | |
| Support to EBM project in Guyana and Suriname ¹ | 0 | 90,000 | 90,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Conservation of wetlands/mangroves | | | | | | |
| Promote the conservation, sustainable use and restoration of mangroves | 0 | 3,710 | 3,710 | 0 | 6,890 | 6,890 |
| Conservation of seagrass beds | | | | | | |
| Promote the conservation, sustainable use and restoration of seagrass beds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Sargassum | | | | | | |
| Sharing regional data and research on Sargassum | 0 | 160,816 | 160,816 | 0 | 213,816 | 213,816 |
| TOTAL | 0 | 286,714 | 286,714 | 0 | 308,494 | 308,494 |

¹ Includes funds from capacity building projects related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Countries – Phase III (ACP-MEA)

ANNEX I: BUDGET OF THE SPAW PROGRAMME FOR THE 2023-2024 BIENNIUM

| Activity | 2023 Budgeted | | | | 2024 Budgeted | | | |
|---|-------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|--|------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|--|
| | CTF | Other Contributions* | Total cost | | CTF | Other Contributions* | Total Cost | |
| 2.1 Programme Co-ordination (salary costs and COP and STAC Meetings) | 365,664 | 556,989 | 922,653 | | 419,800 | 360,002 | 779,802 | |
| 2.2 Strengthening of protected areas in the Wider Caribbean Region | 0 | 288,900 | 288,900 | | 0 | 205,900 | 205,900 | |
| 2.3 Development of guidelines for management of protected areas and species | 0 | 8,710 | 8,710 | | 0 | 45,600 | 45,600 | |
| 2.4 Conservation of threatened and endangered species | 0 | 516,521 | 516,521 | | 0 | 83,821 | 83,821 | |
| 2.5 Conservation and sustainable use of coastal and marine ecosystems | 0 | 286,714 | 286,714 | | 0 | 308,494 | 308,494 | |
| Subtotal | 365,664 | 1,657,834 | 2,023,498 | | 419,800 | 1,003,817 | 1,423,617 | |
| Programme support costs 13% (amount subject to change based on source of funds) | 47,536.32 | 215,518.42 | 263,054.74 | | 54,574 | 130,496.21 | 185,070.21 | |
| TOTAL SPAW | 413,200.32 | 1,873,352.42 | 2,286,552.74 | | 474,374 | 1,134,313.21 | 1,608,687.21 | |

*Includes funding from France through SPAW-RAC from the CAMAC Project

ANNEX II: LIST OF UNFUNDED ACTIVITIES

| Thematic Area | Proposed Activity | Estimated Budget |
|---|--|-------------------------|
| Programme Coordination | Promote the ratification of, accession to, and effective implementation of the SPAW Protocol. Online workshop to promote ratification | USD 1,000 |
| Strengthening of Protected Areas in the Wider Caribbean Region | Continued development, maintenance and promotion of the Regional MPA Database | USD 18,000 |
| | Learning exchange with specific countries (possibly 2-3 MPA managers) | USD 20,000 |
| | Management effectiveness assessment | USD 10,000 |
| | Travel to Training of Trainers Workshop | USD 5,000 |
| Implementation of Guidelines for the Management of Protected Areas and Species | Disseminate widely and update as appropriate, the fact sheet on the SPAW listing process and listed sites prepared by the Secretariat in English, Spanish and French | USD 1,000 |
| | Support to the listing process of protected areas. | USD 10,000 |
| | Support protected areas and invasive species management, while considering the Sargassum influx as appropriate. | USD 10,000 |
| | Online training workshop on the preparation of exemption reports using the voluntary reporting format | USD 20,000 |
| Conservation of Threatened and Endangered Species | Development of outreach and educational materials | USD 6,000 |
| | Support the elaboration of Sea Turtle Recovery Action Plans (STRAPs) in countries that do | USD 20,000 |

| | | |
|---|---|--------------------|
| | not have plans and support existing STRAPs through the implementation of national priority actions, in particular, the provision of training. | |
| | Support contracting parties in the assessment of the populations of some relevant species of the Annexes. i.e | USD 20,000 |
| Conservation, Sustainable Use and Restoration of Coastal and Marine Ecosystems | Support work on SCTLD and other invasive species. | USD 15,000 |
| | Promote the conservation of seagrass beds | USD 50,000 |
| Total | | USD 206,000 |

ANNEX III: LIST OF PROJECTS OUTLINING THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SECRETARIAT AND THE SPAW RAC

| Project | Deliverables | Information (I), Endorsement (E), or Approval (A) | Manager | Funds | Project Partners | Responsible Cartagena Convention Secretariat or RAC, Others | Timeline |
|---|---|---|--------------------------|-------------|---|---|--|
| CAMAC project: Caribbean Marine Megafauna and Anthropogenic Activities | | | | | | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work package 1, <u>Interaction with fisheries</u>: Develop and implement, in collaboration with Caribbean fisheries organisations, an assessment of the socio-economic and environmental issues related to interactions between fisheries and marine megafauna. | Information | SPAW RAC, Agoa Sanctuary | EU INTERREG | OECS (Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States), the Regional Council of Guadeloupe (CRG), WECAFC (Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission), the Institute of Marine Affairs (RAC of the Cartagena Convention for Land-based sources of pollution), WIDECAST (Wider | SPAW-RAC | Phase 1 2023-2024 and second phase 2024-2028 |

‘Enforcing Environmental Treaties in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Countries – ACP-MEAs III’, Result 2.2 Strengthening of Protected Areas

| | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|--|--|---|-----------|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training of Trainers workshops on Protected Areas Management Effectiveness (PAME) and Financial Sustainability and other gaps identified. - Development of an operational network of SPAW MPAs. One (1) PAME regional assessment will be conducted at the end of the ACP-MEAs-III project to evaluate the project's success, with at least five (5) MPAs listed under the SPAW Protocol. - Four (4) learning exchange events, with five (5) participants each from SPAW Countries will also be held in the Caribbean to enhance management capacity using PAME tools. - Two (2) local/national Ecosystem-based Management (EBM) projects promoting an integrated | Information (endorsed and approved at SPAW COP11) | SPAW PO, Guidance of Project Steering Committee including SPAW RAC, partners and consultant as appropriate. | EU ACP MEAs Approximately USD \$ 250,000 for year. No funds for salaries. | EU, ACP, UNEP, IUCN, BIOPAMA, FAO. In addition: WCMC, MPA Connect, CaMPAM, NAMPAM, SPAW RAC, Red Golfo, DCNA, etc. | <u>Secretariat</u> This project includes the SPAW_LBS Sub-Programmes and CETA in collaboration with SPAW-RAC and the PA WG | 2020-2024 |
|--|---|---|---|--|--|---|-----------|

| | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------|---|---|---|--|-----------|
| | approach to pollution reduction and habitat restoration will be implemented in two (2) countries which are parties to the LBS and SPAW Protocols. | | | | | | |
| Implementation of the Strategic Action Program of the Gulf of Mexico Large Marine Ecosystem (GoM LME), Results 3.3 “Improved coordination and bilateral cooperation through strengthening of networks” | | | | | | | |
| | 3.3. - Institutions mapped and opportunities for integration identified - Proposals in support of the enhancement of governance capabilities and transformational opportunities implemented - | Endorsement and Approval | SPAW PO, Guidance of Project Steering Committee including SPAW RAC, partners and consultant as appropriate. | USD \$ 380,000 for entire project duration. | UNEP, UNIDO, FAO, NOAA, SEMARNAT, CONAPESCA, CONANP, NCPC-TU, CONAGUA, IMTA, INAPESCA, UADY, CINVESTAV, CONABIO, CONAFOR, SEMAR, INECOL In addition: MPA Connect, SPAW RAC | <u>Secretariat</u> This project includes the SPAW Sub-Programme and CETA in collaboration with SPAW-RAC and the PA WG | 2023-2027 |
| Protecting and Restoring the Ocean’s natural Capital, building Resilience and supporting region-wide Investments for sustainable Blue socio-Economic development (PROCARIBE+) | | | | | | | |
| | Before the inception phase of the PROCARIBE+ project, financed by the GEF, the Secretariat will discuss possible areas of support to implementation including on specific outputs and outcomes. | Endorsement and Approval | SPAW PO, Guidance of Project Steering Committee including SPAW RAC, partners and consultant as appropriate. | TBD | UNEP, UNOPS, ACS, CARICOM, CCAD, OECS, IOC-UNESCO, UNDP, UNCLAC, including 26 countries and 18 overseas territories. Others TBD | <u>Secretariat</u> This project includes the SPAW Sub-Programme and CETA in collaboration with SPAW-RAC and the PA WG | 2023-2027 |