



Distr. LIMITED

UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.43/3
1 February 2023

Original: ENGLISH

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.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES	2
2.1 Programme Coordination	2
2.1.1 Objectives	2
Overall objectives, expected accomplishments and indicators for the SPAW Sub-Programme	2
2.1.2 SPAW Programme Personnel.....	3
2.1.3 Regional Activity Centre for SPAW (SPAW-RAC) in Guadeloupe (supported by the Government of France).....	5
2.1.4 Expected Outputs and Indicators	6
2.2 Strengthening of Protected Areas in the Wider Caribbean Region.....	7
2.2.1 Objectives	7
2.2.2 Activities	7
2.2.2.1 Strengthening of MPAs (prioritising MPAs listed under SPAW).....	8
(a) Continue to update and deliver the Training of Trainers (ToT) course on MPA management.	8
(b) Promote Protected Area Management Effectiveness.....	8
2.2.2.2 Enhance the network of MPA practitioners	9
(a) Strengthen MPA networks to improve regional coordination and bilateral cooperation	9
(b) Reactivation and restructuring of CaMPAM.....	9
(c) Guide the Development of a Functional Ecological Network of PAs in the WCR.....	9
(d) Continue to support MPA-related sessions at the annual GCFI Conferences (2023 and 2024)....	9
2.2.2.3 Continued development, maintenance and promotion of the Regional MPA Database	9
2.2.2.4 Synergies with national and international MPA initiatives and efforts	10
2.2.2.5 SPAW-RAC contribution.....	10
2.2.3 Expected Outputs and Indicators.....	10
2.3 Implementation of Guidelines for the Management of Protected Areas and Species.....	10
2.3.1 Objectives	10
2.3.2 Activities	11
2.3.2.1 Listing of Protected Areas under the SPAW Protocol, Cooperation Programme and other Tasks of the PA Working Group	11
2.3.2.2 Criteria for the Assessment of Exemptions to Article 11(2) of the SPAW Protocol	11
(a) Application of the voluntary format for presenting exemptions and reporting on their implementation to the Contracting Parties.	12
(b) Assist Governments to formulate their reports on exemptions under Article 11(2).	12

2.3.2.3	Listing of Protected Species under the SPAW Protocol	12
2.3.3	Expected Outputs and Indicators	12
2.4	Conservation of Threatened and Endangered Species	13
2.4.1	Objectives	13
2.4.2	Activities	13
2.4.2.1	Conservation of Marine Mammals	13
a)	Support networking	13
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	13
c)	Enhance knowledge and monitoring of marine mammal populations in the WCR.....	14
d)	Improve knowledge and awareness of threats to marine mammals	14
e)	SPAW-RAC Contribution	14
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.....	14
2.4.2.2	Conservation of Sea Turtles	14
2.4.2.3	Support regional efforts to address invasive alien species in collaboration with relevant partners	15
2.4.2.4	Conservation of fish species	15
2.4.2.5	Greater collaboration with CITES towards enforcement on illegal trade of species.....	15
2.4.3	Expected Outputs and Indicators	15
2.5	Conservation, Sustainable Use and Restoration of Coastal and Marine Ecosystems	16
2.5.1	Objectives	16
2.5.2	Activities	17
2.5.2.1	Conservation of Coral Reefs.....	17
2.5.2.2	Ecosystem-based management approaches	17
2.5.2.3	Conservation of wetlands / mangroves.....	17
2.5.2.4	Sharing regional data and research on Sargassum.....	18
2.5.3	Expected Outputs and Indicators	18
ANNEX I: LIST OF PROJECTS OUTLINING THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SECRETARIAT AND THE SPAW RAC		20

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
CaribWEN	Caribbean Wildlife Enforcement Network
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CariWet	Caribbean Wetlands Regional Initiative
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBF	Caribbean Biodiversity Fund
CERMES	Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies
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
MamaCocoSea	Marine Mammal Conservation Corridor South East America
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
MMAP	Action Plan for the Conservation of Marine Mammals in the Wider Caribbean Region
MMAP-PA	Action Plan for the Conservation of Marine Mammals in the Wider Caribbean Region's Priority Actions: Five Year Plan
MoC	Memorandum of Cooperation
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPA	Marine Protected Area
NAMPAN	North American Marine Protected Areas Network
NGO	Non-Government Organisations
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
OCTO	Open Communications for the Ocean

OECS-ESDU	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States -Environment and Sustainable Development Unit
OSPAR	Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic
PA	Protected Area
PAME	Protected Areas Management Effectiveness
RAC	Regional Activity Centre
Ramsar	Convention on Wetlands of International Importance
ROLAC	Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean
SAMOA	SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action
SCSCB	Birds Caribbean (formerly Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds)
SCTLD	Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
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
UNEA-4	Fourth session of the United Nations Environmental Assembly
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USF	University of South Florida
WCPA	World Commission on Protected Areas
WCR	Wider Caribbean Region
WECAFC	Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission
WHMSI	Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative
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 work plan 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 work plan 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 principles of 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 supporting 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	• 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 UN Environment 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 on 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 on 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 (Caribwen) 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 Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) with a specific focus on other effective area-based conservation measures (OECM) and in collaboration with the CBD Secretariat;
 - Greater integration of Blue Economy approaches under SPAW and links to the Post-2020 GBF;
 - Support Contracting Parties in their contributions to treaty negotiations for Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) with regards to the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) within the Cartagena Convention Area. 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 data bases 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 OA Task Team;
 - New or existing Invasive Species in accordance with regional needs;
 - Deep sea mining;
 - Improved response coordination, information sharing and strategic guidance between countries throughout the region on how to better control and manage the brown algae Sargassum influx;
 - Subject to the adoption of France's proposal on Sargassum (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.43/INF.37) at SPAW STAC10 and SPAW COP12, mandate the SPAW Sargassum Working Group to carry out tasks together with the Contracting Parties including a sargassum work programme with the objective to improve the involvement of the Cartagena Convention in regional coordination and action.
- 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.

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

11. 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 implementation of the SPAW Protocol by Contracting Parties.
 - Support the conservation of endangered and migratory species, including parrot fish, Nassau grouper, sawfish, elasmobranchs, sea turtles and migratory birds, in particular via collaboration with WIDECAS, Birds Caribbean, and regional fishery organisations (i.e. WECAFC, CRFM, GCFI), and encourage conservation projects on other threatened species for which few actions are currently carried out (e.g. 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 nominate 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

12. 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 (COP13) Tenth meeting of the SPAW Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee convened (STAC11) 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	<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 • Increased number of regional and international collaborations and initiatives developed that facilitate data sharing, environmental education and

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

2.2 Strengthening of Protected Areas in the Wider Caribbean Region

2.2.1 Objectives

13. 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 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

14. The day-to-day implementation of activities under this sub-programme will be overseen by the SPAW Programme Officer. Support for the Caribbean Marine Protected Areas Network and Forum (CaMPAM) activities, once reactivated, will also be provided by the SPAW-RAC, as appropriate. 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 IIP*”, 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.*” Subject to formal approval of the

PROCARIBE+ project by the GEF, the Secretariat will discuss possible areas of support to 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.*”

15. Activities to be implemented during the biennium have been structured under the following objectives and will be subject to further review based on the options developed to implement the CaMPAM recommendations (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.42/INF.7 Addendum 1), (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.42 /INF.8Rev1) and (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.43/INF.8), as well as options developed to implement the recommendations from the Evaluation of Connectivity Between the SPAW-Listed Protected Areas to Guide the Development of a Functional Ecological Network of Protected Areas in the Wider Caribbean (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.42/INF.10) and (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.43/INF.9) as well as decisions from COP 11.

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.

16. 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.

17. With funding from the ACP-MEAs III project, several activities will be implemented to support SPAW MPA practitioners, including the:
 - Development of an operational network of SPAW MPAs. 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 be benefit both SPAW and non-SPAW Protocol Contracting Parties.
18. Under the GoM LME project, several activities will be implemented to support the effectiveness of Marine Protected Area management including:
 - Verification and selection of transformational opportunities to capitalise on existing strengths in MPA networks through e.g. the establishment of a Working Group and improving capacity development for MPA managers.

- Development and implementation of actions in support of selected MPAs.

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) Reactivation and restructuring of CaMPAM

20. During SPAW STAC9, the Contracting Parties requested that the Protected Areas Working Group, in collaboration with the Secretariat and SPAW-RAC, explore the feasibility of the recommendations presented in the “Assessment of the Impact and Effectiveness of CaMPAM” (UNEP(DEPI)/CARWG.42/INF.7 Add.1). This review resulted in the Paper “Exploring the feasibility of implementing recommendations identified in CaMPAM effectiveness assessments” (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.43/INF.8), which provides an overview of possible options to be implemented in the short, medium and long-term to reactivate CaMPAM. The options shall be presented to SPAW STAC10 and SPAW COP12 for consideration by the Contracting Parties. Subject to the decisions by Contracting Parties, the future reactivation and restructuring of CaMPAM including necessary activities and resources shall be decided upon.

(c) Guide the Development of a Functional Ecological Network of PAs in the WCR

21. During SPAW STAC9, the Contracting Parties requested that the Protected Areas Working Group, in collaboration with the Secretariat and SPAW-RAC, explore the feasibility of the recommendations presented in the “Evaluation of Connectivity Between the SPAW-Listed Protected Areas to Guide the Development of a Functional Ecological Network of Protected Areas in the Wider Caribbean” (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.42/INF.10). This review resulted in the Paper “Exploring the feasibility of implementing recommendations identified in the evaluation of the connectivity among MPAs of the Wider Caribbean” (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.43/INF.9), which provides an overview of possible options to be implemented in the short, medium and long-term in order to develop a Functional Ecological Network. The options shall be presented to SPAW STAC10 and SPAW COP12 for consideration by the Contracting Parties. Subject to the decisions by Contracting Parties, the future activities and resources for its development shall be decided upon.

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

22. 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

23. 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

24. 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 post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.
25. 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

26. 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. Depending on the decisions that will be made during STAC 10 and if funding is available, the SPAW-RAC could support and promote the reactivation of CaMPAM.

2.2.3 Expected Outputs and Indicators

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

Outputs	Indicators of Achievement
Improved CaMPAM delivery and management capacity in several MPAs of the WCR subject to decisions on its reactivation	Increased number of MPA practitioners involved in capacity building and training programmes designed to improve their ability to respond to management issues and emerging environmental threats in marine and coastal areas
Improved dissemination of information on MPAs within the region through the transferred CaMPAM regional database and enhanced network forum.	Increased number of MPA practitioners, policy makers, scientists and other stakeholders engaging with, and contributing to, the CaMPAM internet forum and MPA database, as well as other regional and international initiatives that facilitate information sharing

Outputs	Indicators of Achievement
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.

2.3 Implementation of Guidelines for the Management of Protected Areas and Species**2.3.1 Objectives**

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

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

2.3.2 Activities

29. 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

30. 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.
31. A call for Parties to submit protected areas nomination proposals will be made by the Secretariat and the SPAW-RAC. 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.
32. 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) 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

33. The Working Group on Criteria and Procedures to Assess Exemptions under Article 11(2) of the SPAW Protocol 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.

34. Encourage Parties to review 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).

35. 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

36. The STAC ad hoc Working Group on Species will work on the tasks assigned by the STAC. Through the Species Working Group's Chair, 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

37. The STAC Working Group on species will work on adequate species recovery and management plans depending on the recommendations from the SPAW STAC 10 and the revised ToRs of the SPAW Working groups.

2.3.2.5 SPAW-RAC contribution

38. Continue, in support of the Secretariat, to provide guidance on the use of the guidance document Criteria and Process to Assess Exemptions under Article 11(2) of the SPAW Protocol.

2.3.3 Expected Outputs and Indicators

39. 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 programme 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

2.4 Conservation of Threatened and Endangered Species

2.4.1 Objectives

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

- a) Promote awareness and action in the region on priorities for the management of endangered and migratory species to increase the level of national and regional protection
- b) Implement priority activities of existing species recovery and management plans developed under the SPAW Protocol;
- c) Develop, as appropriate, adequate management plans and programmes for priority species of regional concern, including those of economic importance; and
- d) 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

41. 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 and parrotfishes 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 regional fisheries stakeholders for developing bycatch assessments and mitigation programmes.

2.4.2.1 Conservation of Marine Mammals

42. 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**

- Support Contracting Parties in the development of their national strategies and frameworks including National Recovery Plans for marine mammal conservation by considering the revised “Action Plan for the Conservation of Marine Mammals (MMAP) in the Wider Caribbean” 2022.
- 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 (i.e. strengthen stranding response, develop guidelines to mitigate acoustic disturbance)
- 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](#).

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, for the development of transboundary studies to assess and monitor Caribbean marine mammal populations.

d) Improve knowledge and awareness of threats to marine mammals

- Improve awareness of, collect data on, and mitigate the effects of bycatch and entanglements, pollution, and ship strikes, on marine megafauna and especially marine mammal in the Wider Caribbean Region 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 and support the development of a marine mammal RAN. 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”);

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

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

- a) Recognising the value of the ongoing collaboration with Widecast, the Secretariat will seek to enhance its cooperation including through the possible signing of a MoU that would recognise Widecast as a RAN, to be signed either by the Secretariat or SPAW-RAC. 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 Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (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

44. 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

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

2.4.2.5 Greater collaboration with CITES towards enforcement on illegal trade of species.

48. 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 Parties in implementing national legislation for the sustainable management of each of shark and ray species listed on Annex III.

2.4.3 Expected Outputs and Indicators

49. 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, marine megafauna throughout the WCR
Increased knowledge on megafauna critical habitat areas and increased support for transboundary protection - particularly 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 member States 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 the IWC 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	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
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

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

2.5.1 Objectives

50. 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 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 coastal and marine ecosystems.

2.5.2 Activities

51. 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

52. Continued reactivation of the Caribbean coral reef monitoring network under GCRMN (GCMRN-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 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, the Healthy Reefs Initiative, NOAA's SCTLDR Response Caribbean Cooperation Team, Reef Resilience Network, and the Coral Reef Consortium.

53. 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. 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

54. 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, both of which are parties to the LBS and SPAW 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.

2.5.2.3 Conservation of wetlands / mangroves

55. 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/CariWet via the *Regional Centre for Training and Research on Wetlands (CREHO)* with further development under potential CaMPAM ToT workshops/seminars on the management and protection of wetlands.
- 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.

56. 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;

- 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.

2.5.2.4 Sharing regional data and research on Sargassum

57. Subject to funding availability, activities to be implemented through SPAW-RAC, could include:

- Increase collaboration and joint programming between the SPAW and LBS Protocols, in the context of the SPAW Sargassum influx Working Group
- Collaborate with relevant organizations and IGOs, including GEO Blue Planet and IOCARIBE to facilitate the sharing of regional Sargassum data.
- Coordination of data sharing on the management and impact of Sargassum on wetlands in collaboration with Ramsar’s Caribbean Wetlands Regional Initiative (CariWet) – see Section 2.5.2.3.
- Coordination of Sargassum-related projects and events throughout the WCR.
- Collaboration with the Caribbean program on Sargassum (SARG’COOP)
- Development and sharing of information documents for the general public, governments, coastal managers, and others affected by Sargassum.
- Coordination on 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

58. 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 Development of a regional database to store and analyse data collected by the GCRMN-Caribbean Contribution to the GCRMN’s Status of Coral Reefs of the World Report Harmonized mangrove and seagrass monitoring protocols in the WCR	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 SCTL and <i>Diadema</i> die-off monitored and countries of the WCR actively engaged to address these issues 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
----------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

ANNEX I: 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	<u>Responsible</u> Cartagena Convention Secretariat or RAC, Others	Timeline
CAMAC project: Caribbean Marine Megafauna and Anthropogenic Activities							
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Work package 1, 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. • <u>Work package 2, “Stranding networks”</u>: Strengthen marine mammal and sea turtle stranding networks to enhance knowledge and monitoring of human-origin impacts on these groups of species. • <u>Work package 3, “Awareness raising”</u>: A school twinning programme to raise awareness 	Endorsement and approval	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 Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network), the Pelagis Observatory (University of la Rochelle, France), the NGOs Haiti Ocean Project (HOP), Aruba Marine Mammal Foundation, and Mon Ecole Ma Baleine (MEMB), the University of Technology of Jamaica, the DCNA (Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance).	<u>SPAW-RAC</u>	Phase 1 2023-2024 and second phase 2024-2028

	<p>on preserving marine megafauna and marine environment in general and strengthening environmental education skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Work package 4, “Knowledge enhancement”</u>: Strengthen knowledge on the biodiversity, abundance, and distribution of marine megafauna of the Caribbean Region via notably regional aerial surveys. 						
‘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 	<p>Information (endorsed and approved at SPAW COP11)</p>	<p>SPAW PO, Guidance of Project Steering Committee including SPAW RAC, partners and consultant as appropriate.</p>	<p>EU ACP MEAs Approximately USD \$ 250,000 for year. No funds for salaries.</p>	<p>EU, ACP, UNEP, IUCN, BIOPAMA, FAO. In addition: WCMC, MPA Connect, CaMPAM, NAMPAM, SPAW RAC, Red Golfo, DCNA, etc.</p>	<p><u>Secretariat</u> This project includes the SPAW_LBS Sub-Programmes and CETA in collaboration with SPAW-RAC and the PA WG</p>	<p>2020-2024</p>

<p>evaluate the project’s success, with at least five (5) MPAs listed under the SPAW Protocol.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 approach to pollution reduction and habitat restoration will be implemented in two (2) countries which are parties to the LBS and SPAW Protocols. 						
<p>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” and 3.4. “Support effectiveness of Marine Protected Areas by linking them into networks”</p>						
<p>3.3.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Institutions mapped and opportunities for integration identified - Proposals in support of the enhancement of governance 	<p>Endorsement and Approval</p>	<p>SPAW PO, Guidance of Project Steering Committee including SPAW RAC, partners</p>	<p>USD \$ 690,000 for entire project duration.</p>	<p>UNEP, UNIDO, FAO, NOAA, SEMARNAT, CONAPESCA, CONANP, NCPC-TU, CONAGUA, IMTA, INAPESCA, UADY, CINVESTAV,</p>	<p><u>Secretariat</u> This project includes the SPAW Sub-Programme and CETA</p>	<p>2023-2027</p>

	<p>capabilities and transformational opportunities implemented</p> <p>3.4.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transformational opportunities to capitalize on existing strengths in MPA networks verified and selected - Actions in support of selected MPAs implemented 		and consultant as appropriate.		<p>CONABIO, CONAFOR, SEMAR, INECOL</p> <p>In addition: MPA Connect, SPAW RAC</p>	<p>in collaboration with SPAW-RAC and the PA WG</p>	
Protecting and Restoring the Ocean's natural Capital, building Resilience and supporting region-wide Investments for sustainable Blue socio-Economic development (PROCARIBE+)							
	<p>Subject to formal approval of the PROCARIBE+ project by the GEF, the Secretariat will discuss possible areas of support to implementation including on specific outputs and outcomes.</p>	<p>Endorsement and Approval</p>	<p>SPAW PO, Guidance of Project Steering Committee including SPAW RAC, partners and consultant as appropriate.</p>	<p>TBD</p>	<p>UNEP, UNOPS, ACS, CARICOM, CCAD, OECS, IOC-UNESCO, UNDP, UNCLAC, including 26 countries and 18 overseas territories.</p> <p>Others TBD</p>	<p><u>Secretariat</u></p> <p>This project includes the SPAW Sub-Programme and CETA in collaboration with SPAW-RAC and the PA WG</p>	<p>2023-2027</p>