



Distr. LIMITED

UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.43/INF.13
12 December 2022

Original: ENGLISH

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

Virtual, 30 January – 1 February 2023

REVIEW OF THE PROPOSAL FOR LISTING PARKE MARINO ARUBA UNDER THE SPA W PROTOCOL

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

ACRONYMS

CEP	Caribbean Environment Programme
DNM	Directie Natuur en Milieu
FPNA	Fundacion Parke Nacional Aruba
MPA	Marine Protected Area
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PA	Protected Area
PMA	Parke Marino Aruba
RAC	Regional Activity Center
SPAW	Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife
STAC	Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme

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**REVIEW OF THE PROPOSAL OF PARKE MARINO ARUBA
FOR LISTING UNDER THE SPAW PROTOCOL**

CORE GROUP OF EXPERTS

Ana Maria Gonzalez Delgadillo, *Colombia, Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development*

Emma Doyle, *Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute*

Lloyd Gardner, *Foundation for Development Planning, Inc.*

INTRODUCTION

1. The proposal of Aruba, Kingdom of Netherlands for the inclusion of the Parke Marino Aruba (PMA) in the SPAW listing sites was submitted to the SPAW Secretariat for review on the 30th of January 2021 (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.42/INF.11). Acknowledgement of receipt was sent on the 1st of February 2021 by the Secretariat.
2. Based on previous reviews, the SPAW-RACs proceeds as follow in order to evaluate proposals:
 - i) Some Protected Areas (PA) Working Group experts review the proposal;
 - ii) A report is done including the points deemed lacking;
 - iii) It is sent to the country for additional information;
 - iv) The information received is communicated to experts for final review;
 - v) The experts group makes recommendations on the proposal.
3. The review of the proposal by the experts of the PA Working Group has been mentioned at the first Working Group meeting, on the 31st of May 2022.
4. As of 31st of May 2022, a core group of three (3) experts chose to focus on the proposal's review.
5. The proposal was submitted to a series of reviews, carried out by the experts, including a meeting of the core group on 8th of July 2022 and an intermediate meeting on 25th of August. This evaluation was supported by the completion of an evaluation table (see Annex).
6. Comments and justifications from Aruba, Kingdom of Netherlands, were sent on 5th of August 2022 and 12th of August 2022.

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS

- The proposal does not include an approved management plan developed through a full stakeholder consultation process. The PMA - preliminary management plan (2019-2021) wrote by the Fundacion Parke Nacional Aruba (FPNA) mainly serves to provide guidance during a two-year transition phase for establishing a practical and concise management framework
- General knowledge gap in environmental, ecological and anthropogenic data for the PMA
- Lack of details on the monitoring and evaluation of the site;
- Lack of details on cultural and socio-economical aspects;
- Missing rules and regulations to enforce legal framework within PMA
- Insufficient resources in terms of human capacity and funds to manage the PMA

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I. REVIEW BY THE EXPERTS

September 2022

Review of the proposal Parke Marino Aruba for listing under the SPAW Protocol

SPAW STAC Protected Areas Ad Hoc Working Group

Reviewers

Ana Maria Gonzalez Delgadillo, *Colombia, Ministry of the Environment and sustainable development*;
Emma Doyle, *Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute*
Lloyd Gardner, *Foundation for Development Planning, Inc.*

INTRODUCTION

7. First and foremost, we would like to thank the Government of the Aruba, Kingdom of Netherland for submitting the Parke Marino Aruba for inclusion in the SPAW list and for its renewed efforts to comply with the Cartagena Convention - SPAW Protocol.
8. We would also like to thank the experts who were involved in the evaluation of the proposal
9. The PMA is a network of marine protected areas (MPAs) composed of 4 zones of the island that are not connected and extend up to 2 km seaward. The 4 MPAs (Arikok, Sero Colorado, Mangel Halto and Oranjestad Reef Islands) overall represent an area of approximately 60km² across Aruba. The PMA was officially established by law AB 2018 no. 77 on December 21st 2018 with support from the EU-funded BEST 2.0 Program grant for establishment of MPAs.
10. The PMA is currently managed by the local not-for-profit organization, FPNA. Their Supervisory Board is represented by local stakeholders and the members can be brought forward by local nature non-governmental organisations (NGO) or the Government and are approved by the existing Supervisory Board members. The daily operations are managed under the supervision of the Executive Board consisting of the Chief Executive Officer and Chief Conservation Officer
11. The PMA brings together marine and coastal valuable ecosystems, such as coral reefs, mangroves, seagrass beds, rocky and sandy bottoms, and some coral islets, which are home to threatened species annexed to the SPAW Protocol, including marine plants, corals, sea turtles, marine mammals, fish and migratory birds. In addition, this MPA provides crucial ecosystem services for this island, and contributes to regional ecological connectivity.
12. In principle, the proposed area fulfils the general protected area criteria of both Article 4 of the SPAW Protocol and the United Nations's Caribbean Environment Programme (UNEP-CEP) General Guidelines for SPAW-listed sites. The ecological aspects of the PMA described in the proposal along

with additional sources of information align with almost all the characteristics of SPAW listed sites described in the guidelines.

13. Cultural/Socio-economical aspects and planning and management aspects represent the biggest gaps of the proposal, certainly because the PMA was recently declared and still has a lot of work to do to be able to access this information

CRITICAL REVIEW

14. The Aruba's application to list the PMA as SPAW Area is valuable and a lot of work and effort was done to write the proposal but it is very general and there is a lack of crucial information and precision to fulfill all criteria.
15. Following initial comments from the PA WG, FPNA and Directie Natuur en Milieu (DNM) provided useful complementary information which allowed to cover certain gaps and weaknesses of the initial proposal (insufficient baseline data, no estimate of population size for fauna and flora species and general marine environment data), mainly on the ecological criteria with regard to research related to species or ecosystems. More work is needed to address rules and regulations in place to mitigate impacts of identified the threats inside the four MPAs
16. The cultural and socio-economical criteria as well as protection, planning and management measures criteria were the ones presenting the biggest gaps which were not covered enough in the proposal. It is expected that more elements will be made available once the Marine Park Management Plan (2022-2026) is published and more monitoring programs are in place
17. Despite the access to supplementary papers allowing to address certain identified gaps, the additional source of information did not relate perfectly to the SPAW Protected Areas Listing Format, which should meet all the mandatory criteria to be validated. Experts felt it was very difficult to understand a proposal with fragmented information provided after the official submission and would have preferred a more complete proposal making reference to the supporting documents (e.g. summaries of studies).
18. The main objectives of the PMA are stated but the proposal still lacks details on how to implement and evaluate them with indicators in order to measure management effectiveness and conservation success.
19. The evaluation process of the current proposal highlights a crucial limitation or absence when it comes to having in place a framework for the management, protection and recovery of habitats and species, including missing protocol and policies to enforce legal framework, clear zonation of human activities.
20. The experts also questioned whether the ongoing discussions between the government entity and the designated park management regarding the organisation of the FPNA could have an impact on the management of the marine protected area.
21. The gaps also include institutional relationships between the stakeholders involved in the management of the park. The limited management and enforcement capacity as well as sources of funding (mainly government funds available) seem to restrain FPNA to access sufficient resources (trained staff, equipment, infrastructure, etc.) to manage the four different sites of the PMA.
22. The zoning and regulation of the 4 protected areas of the PMA has not yet been agreed upon or ratified by FNPA, the stakeholders and the government authorities. Precision on this element is necessary for planning and management purposes and to better understand possible effectiveness of the protection and conservation measures in place.

23. The PA WG acknowledges the on-going stakeholders engagement work done by FPNA to develop a management framework and formalise the policy and institutional arrangements needed for an effective management planning. This continuous work is expected to be concluded the first quarter of 2023 with the publication of an approved management plan.

KEY ACTION ITEMS

24. The proposed addition of PMA to the SPAW listed protected areas overall has merit. However, the application does not fully meet all the criteria.
25. Experts gathered elements listed below to help Aruba improve the current application:
- a. The dossier should be consolidated by including references to publications, documents and all relevant sources of information directly in the application in order to support information provided on ecological and cultural/socio-economic aspects. In order to facilitate the revision of the application, it is recommended to include links to these references in the application itself rather than submitting various documents separately.
 - b. A Management Plan should be elaborated and validated in consultation with a broad range of stakeholders then implemented prior to submitting the application
 - c. It is recommended to have an evaluation framework in place with detailed indicators of management success as well as implementation mechanisms to demonstrate the effectiveness of the Management Plan

CONCLUSION

26. The proposed area does not entirely fulfil the general protected area criteria of both Article 4 of the SPAW Protocol and the UNEP-CEP General Guidelines for SPAW-listed sites.
27. Therefore, Aruba can further work on the missing points highlighted above to reinforce its proposal before submitting its Protected Area proposal.

II. FEEDBACKS FROM ARUBA, KINGDOM OF NETHERLANDS

We identified certain information that may be worth gathering, especially the annexes, based on the guidelines and criteria for the evaluation of protected areas. This particularly the case of mpas, existing inventories of flora and fauna species, list of main publications and copies concerning the site, as copies of photos, slides, videos or nay other visual materials :

28. The most up-to-date and interactive map of the marine protected areas, including zoning of land use, experts can refer to Aruba's spatial planning department and website ([Ruimtelijk Ontwikkelings Plan](#)).
29. Parke Marine Aruba GIS Shapefiles were shared to display marine park boundaries
30. Capacity building of local volunteers in GCRMN – protocol: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=880816295842683>

31. Marine Park Video: <https://www.facebook.com/arubanationalpark/videos/569150444065458/>

32. Tracking sea turtles that nest in Aruba:

- <https://www.facebook.com/Turtugaruba/videos/164336659208869>
- <https://www.facebook.com/Turtugaruba/videos/248589527235697>
- <https://www.facebook.com/Turtugaruba/videos/545392900080971>
- <https://www.facebook.com/Turtugaruba/videos/1152786118603521>

33. It is also important to be aware that the current Minister of Nature has committed to implementing an island-round marine park in the very near future. This would further enhance the ecosystems, habitats and biodiversity protected by the marine park of Aruba (including crucial seagrass meadows). It will also strengthen the effectivity, efficiency, and financial sustainability of the marine park for marine conservation.

34. An existing inventory of flora and fauna species including protection status classifications can be found in the preliminary management plan 2019-2021 (p. 82-86). Main publications:

- Aruba Coral Baseline Study 2019 by Carmabi - [Aruba Report Final.pdf - Google Drive](#)
- [Preliminary Management Plan 2019-2021](#)

35. Fundacion Parke Nacional Aruba (FPNA) has conducted further GCRMN monitoring (12 sites) and seagrass monitoring (student projects) of which the results are being processed at this moment.

the Chapter 3, point g) "Expected or measured trends of the impacts and threats" is missing (p17 of the proposal)

36. Regarding the Chapter 3 of the proposal, point g) "Expected or measured trends of the impacts and threats" is missing. Below some descriptive elements:

- We can foresee that tourism related impacts will increase if not mitigated appropriately as there are more hotels in development.
- The current government is taking several steps to reduce land-based pollution sources such as sewage plant and landfill affluent by investing in new policies, processes, and facilities. This should help reduce some of these impacts.

The evaluation process requires additional existing publications on ecological aspects (e.g. connectivity with other protected areas in the region (see point 12.g))

37. The documents below address connectivity aspects:

- BEST Caribbean Ecosystem Profile 2016,
 - p. 18-20 general description Dutch Caribbean including Aruba and biophysical connectivity.
 - p. 61-63 identifies proposed MPAs as KBAs (ABW-2), and connectivity to key mangrove areas (ABW-3), and IBAs (ABW-5 & ABW-7). All these KBAs have recently

been added to the protected nature areas managed by FPNA (see map of the Parke Marino Aruba for overview of all protected nature areas managed by FPNA).

- p 125, 176, 247 for KBA's, IBA's, corridors and other ecological values
- 2013- Conservation Record, Billfish Foundation see page 27 for tag-recapture data Aruba; See 2020 -Conservation-Record, Billfish Foundation for aggregated data. - Billfish tagged in Aruba were recaptured in Guaira, Venezuela, near the Morrocoy National Park
- Del Nevo, 2008, Important Bird Areas in the Caribbean, see page 47 for Aruba information on Aruba
- Carmabi Report 2020. Coral reefs baseline study for Aruba 2019

The evaluation process requires additional existing publications on ecological aspects (e.g. resilience with other protected areas in the region (see point 12.h))

38. The documents below address resilience aspects:

- Grol et al., 2014, Growth potential and predation risk drive ontogenetic shifts among nursery habitats in a coral reef fish. See page 234 -242 for condition, growth, habitat of French Grunt in Aruba
- Carmabi Report 2020. Coral reefs baseline study for Aruba 2019;

The evaluation process requires additional existing publications on ecological aspects with regards to species monitoring and monitoring of the ecosystem health of mangrove, seagrass beds, etc.).

39. The documents below address monitoring aspects

- Wouters, 2018, Biodiversity Preliminary Study: Aruba Marine Park. See page 15-31 for Reef Check and Seagrass Net/Seagrass watch survey results;
- Dorenbosch et al., 2006, Influence of habitat configuration on connectivity between fish assemblages of Caribbean seagrass beds, mangroves and coral reefs, page 105, 108;
- Igulu et al., 2014, Mangrove Habitat Use by Juvenile Reef Fish: Meta-Analysis Reveals that Tidal Regime Matters More than Biogeographic Region, see page 5 and 10 for relationship of seagrass/ mangrove habitats and juvenile fish. Data included in the meta-analyses was taken from Aruba. The existent significant mangrove habitats in Aruba are in the Parke Marino and Arikok National Park
- SPE paper including information on Aruba's nesting female sea turtle ranges and hotspots (incl. Venezuelan & Colombian waters)
- Dutch Caribbean paper on reef-associated shark diversity, abundance and distribution [C105.18 Report SOS Shark Telemetry BRUV .TB-ih.pdf \(dcbd.nl\)](#) . Aruba noted as highest species richness of the Dutch Caribbean

“In Chapter 5 of your application (p18-19) dealing with Cultural and Socio-Economical Criteria, there is little information provided to cover the sub-criteria Productivity, Cultural and traditional use as well as socio-economic benefits. Would you be able to provide further information, publications to support these Criteria and Sub-criterion?”

40. Socio-economic value in The TEEB -Aruba Main report: Polaszek et al. 2018. You will find tourism, fisheries, recreational and aesthetic with maps highlighting hot spots, of which the parke marino areas are highlighted
41. Productivity – in the form of extensive seagrass habitats documented (Wouters, 2018, Biodiversity Preliminary Study: Aruba Marine Park) and coral habitats (BEST Caribbean Ecosystem Profile 2016).
42. Traditional use – undocumented – presence of “Rancho’s” or driftwood houses on reef islets for camping, traditional fishing practices by fishers associations situated in or near Parke Marino. These include Rancho Clemente and Rancho Zeewijk, Stichting Rancho and Hadicurari. Methods include: trolling (hydraulic reel), hand seining, spearfishing, gleaning. The main fisher community is found adjacent to the marine park <https://www.fao.org/fishery/en/facp/abw?lang=en>

The evaluation process requires updated information on the status of new management framework (see points 14.d and 14.e) and stakeholder engagement process and implementation mechanism (point 17).

43. The stakeholder engagement process is underway. However, the COVID pandemic has had its influence on the timeline by limiting both internal and external capacities.
44. While FPNA is in continuous dialogue with stakeholders (tourism, recreation, fishing, academia, NGOs, and government) for specific urgent matters (p.e. SCTLD, *Diadema* die-off, dredging, potential legalizing of spearfishing, expansion of MPAs to island round model, mooring placements, amenity projects), FPNA is also organizing structured sessions to build towards an inclusive and integrated management framework. FPNA communicates to the public at large and key stakeholders through a variety of media for inclusivity.
45. FPNA hosted informative sessions (in person and online) and a stakeholder survey. FPNA also hosted a SWOT and TOWS analysis workshop where the different stakeholders together identified per MPA: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats as well as actions and solutions to utilize strengths and opportunities to mitigate weaknesses and threats (often in the form of regulations and conservation actions).
46. All information from these sessions is being processed and will be used in a final collaborative session this October 2022, where suitable zoning will be determined for the proposed regulations and conservation actions. The Open Standards for Conservation will be applied to determine the best strategies for the marine park and its conservation practice. The format of this session is inspired by the MSP Challenge game. Once this zoning session is processed and validated, FPNA will have the new management framework ready by January 2023.

III. CONCLUSION

47. Experts recommend the current application be considered premature due to the missing elements outlined above.
48. Experts recommend that Aruba be invited to strengthen the proposal and resubmit once the gaps identified have been addressed.
49. Experts are willing to provide their technical support to Aruba by making suggestions to improve the proposal for future resubmission (see above).

Annex:

Evaluation table of the Aruba’s proposal completed by the Protected Areas Working Group experts and SPAW-RAC

Evaluation of criteria for the protected area: Parke Marino Aruba, Aruba, Kingdom of the Netherlands							
		<p>Focal Point / Manager: Gisbert Boekhoudt, Director, Directie Natuur en Milieu (DNM) Siestke Van Der Wal, Interim Marine Park Manager, Fundacion Parke Nacional Aruba (FPNA)</p> <p>Submission Date: 30/01/2021</p>					
SPAW Articles	Criteria Articles	Criteria	Criteria description	Presence of the information in the proposal	Information details	Expert opinions	Validation of the criteria
B. Ecological, Cultural and Socio-Economic Criteria							
Articles - 10-12 Ecological Criteria				Yes, with the complementary information: Aruba Coral Baseline Study 2019 by Carmabi - Aruba Report Final.pdf - Google Drive		<p>Important information for assessment of the ecological status of the four (4) sites are missing from the application dossier and management plan</p> <p>the information presented does not provide any compelling reason why any of the four sites should be listed under the SPAW Protocol.</p> <p>With the complementary information: Aruba Coral Baseline Study 2019 by Carmabi - Aruba Report Final.pdf - Google Drive: mentions a very good evaluation of the current situation of the coral reefs of Aruba.</p> <p>This information can help to expand B. Ecological, Cultural and Socio-Economic Criteria in its Articles - 10-12 Ecological Criteria and Articles 10-12 - Cultural and Socio-Economic Criteria and D. Listing procedure in Documentation (includes Annexes listed below) and Requested annexes.</p> <p>o Data associated with pollution issues can contribute to highlighting more than negative issues, it is effectively highlighting the importance of marine ecosystems, because coral reefs are undoubtedly interconnected with seagrass beds and mangrove ecosystems.</p>	

SPAW Articles	Criteria Articles	Criteria	Criteria description	Presence of the information in the proposal	Information details	Expert opinions	Validation of the criteria
17 – 18	(a)	Representativeness	Physiographic features	Yes	The application contains very general information for all marine protected areas (Coastal zone, rocky shore, bays, estuaries, islet) but, no detail	It is important that there is a description of Physiographic features	criteria generally satisfied but with basic information, no much detail available ¹
			Populations of species	Yes	The application contains very general information on ecosystems but no information on species.	There is no estimate of population size for any of the listed species of fauna It is important that there is a description of species	
			Habitats and ecosystem types	Yes	The application mentions habitats and ecosystems (Coral reefs, mangroves, sea grass) but in a general way, no detail available	It is important that there is the clearest description	
			Ecological processes	Yes	Coastal processes	It is important that there is the clearest description	
	(b)	Conservation value	Species / Sub-species / Populations of flora and fauna ; permanent residents ; preventing from becoming threatened or endangered	Yes	Sea turtle nesting and foraging, shark and marine mammal nursery areas, IBAs and KBAs for sea birds including terns	Aruba is a long-standing member of WIDECAS network, reference could be made to past sea turtle monitoring and conservation relevant to marine park There is no estimate of population size for any of the listed species of fauna Important that there is more description	idem above

¹ Comment from FPNA : “Aruba in general (like many Caribbean islands) has limited data available. Long-term structured data collection is often missing. FPNA (managing organization) is moving towards more structured and consistent data collection as well as resurfacing previously collected data and reports, and traditional ecological knowledge (TEK). However, this will take some time.”

SPAW Articles	Criteria Articles	Criteria	Criteria description	Presence of the information in the proposal	Information details	Expert opinions	Validation of the criteria
	(c)	Rarity (Conserves unique or rare species)	Species (rare, endemic, threatened or endangered species that are geographically restricted in their distribution)	Yes but criteria not fully satisfied	The information on species is very general for the network of MPAs (MPA Mangel Halto, MPA Sero Colorado, MPA Oranjestad Reef) : Sea turtle nesting and foraging, shark and marine mammal nursery areas, seabirds	Important that there is more description	criteria showing local importance but the importance for the regional level is not well articulated ² no particular recommendation to designate this area as rare based on habitats and ecosystems (no rarity)
Habitats (existing in a limited area)			Yes but criteria not fully satisfied	The information on habitats is very general for the network of MPAs (MPA Mangel Halto, MPA Sero Colorado, MPA Oranjestad Reef) : Coral reefs, seagrass, mangroves	Important that there is more description		
Ecosystems (unique or rare)			Yes but criteria not fully satisfied	The information on habitats is very general for the network of MPAs (MPA Mangel Halto, MPA Sero Colorado, MPA Oranjestad Reef) : Coral reefs and associated ecosystems	Important that there is more description		

² Comment from FPNA : “Aruba identified as highest richness of reef-associated shark species in the Dutch Caribbean
<https://www.dcbd.nl/sites/default/files/documents/C105.18%20Report%20SOS%20Shark%20Telemetry%20BRUV%20.TB-ih.pdf>

While it is not published nor documented in relation to its ecological significance, Aruba's Southwestern coast has a 'slow slope' where the waters stay relatively shallow far out from the coastline due to its geographic location on the Venezuelan shelf. This 'slow slope' is relatively rare for a Caribbean island and could be important to (migratory) species that require this rare geological characteristic.”

SPAW Articles	Criteria Articles	Criteria	Criteria description	Presence of the information in the proposal	Information details	Expert opinions	Validation of the criteria
	(d)	Naturalness (Level of disturbance)	The area has to a high degree been protected from or has not been subjected to, human-induced change. Relatively free from biophysical disturbance caused by human influence	Yes, some information is available	Like many Caribbean islands, Aruba's marine park is threatened by development, pollution, climate change. One area is more natural. Moderate to high level of threats in 3 of 4 areas of the the MPA The information is very general for MPA Arikok	Aruba has much in common with other highly developed islands seeking to implement MPAs eg. Barbados. Although the marine park is not large, it demonstrates incorporation of conservation into land-use planning Important that there is more description	the level of disturbance is ranging from low to medium (e.g. drainage) no particular recommendation to designate the area based on naturalness ³
	(e)	Critical Habitats (Contains populations, habitats or ecosystems that are critical to the survival and/or recovery of endangered, threatened or endemic species, or to species listed in SPAW Protocol)	Critical Species Populations	Yes	Mention only for MPA Mangel Halto, MPA Sero Colorado, for sea turtles, fish, crustaceans, marine mammals, sea birds and sharks	Important that there is more description	General information on existing critical habitats (mangrove, reef, seagrass) suggesting that this criteria is met
	Critical Habitats		Yes	Mention only for MPA Mangel Halto, MPA Sero Colorado Coral reefs, seagrass, mangroves	there is no estimate of the coverage by the different sub-ecosystems, or statement regarding their current status Important that there is more description		
	Critical Ecosystems		Yes	Mention only for MPA Mangel Halto, MPA Sero Colorado : Coral reefs and associated ecosystems	Protection of mangroves and seagrass beds in context of development pressure is notable there is no estimate of the coverage by the different sub-ecosystems, or statement regarding their current status		

³ Comment from FPNA : “MPA Arikok is located along the coastline of the terrestrial national park. This provides for only controlled access to occur in these waters. Furthermore, this coast has onshore wind, rough seas, and mainly high cliffs (only a few isolated beaches) and is therefore not easily accessible for people in general (including research & monitoring). Negative impact does occur in the form of sediment (erosion) run-off from land, but for Aruba as a highly developed island (tourism), this costa area is the most natural/undisturbed.”

SPAW Articles	Criteria Articles	Criteria	Criteria description	Presence of the information in the proposal	Information details	Expert opinions	Validation of the criteria
						Important that there is more description	
	(f)	Diversity (Biological, genetic..., with a focus on endangered, threatened, endemic and/or migratory species, and species listed in the Annexes to the Protocol)	Variety of species, communities	Yes but criteria not fully satisfied	There is very general information for all marine protected areas	Important that there is more description	criteria satisfied even with general information provided
			Variety of ecosystems, landscapes	Yes but criteria not fully satisfied	There is very general information for all marine protected areas	Important that there is more description	
	(g)	Connectivity (Coherence)	The area is adjacent to or ecologically connected to another protected area or is within an ecological or biological corridor	Yes but criteria not fully satisfied	There is very general information for all marine protected areas Connection to a RAMSAR site is mentioned	Connectivity of marine park to RAMSAR site is important information presented suggests that the criteria either are not fully understood or are liberally interpreted Important that there is more description	proposal only showcases the link to local terrestrial and marine areas (only connectivity with local sites RAMSAR site) no supporting information/documentation available to justify sub-regional and regional connectivity ⁴
			Ability to contribute to maintaining the ecological integrity of the Wider Caribbean Region	Yes but criteria not fully satisfied	There is very general information for all marine protected areas : Reefs of southern Caribbean - ABC islands, proximal to Venezuela (mainland of Falcon and Los Roques/Las Aves)	information presented suggests that the criteria either are not fully understood or are liberally interpreted Important that there is more description	
	(h)	Resilience (biological components : habitats, species populations)	Ability to recover from disturbances in a reasonable timeframe, or are naturally resistant to threats	criteria not fully satisfied	There is very general information for Arikok marine protected areas Threats are	information presented suggests that the criteria either are not fully understood or are liberally interpreted Threat types are identified, but there is no information on the extent of the threats, severity of impact, engagement with threat sources, or	Conclusions are not drawn about resilience using any available data to allow for judgement of this criteria

⁴ Suggestion from FPNA to consider the following publication to support this criteria : https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/best/pdf/best-ecosystem_profile_caribbean_2016.pdf

SPAW Articles	Criteria Articles	Criteria	Criteria description	Presence of the information in the proposal	Information details	Expert opinions	Validation of the criteria
					identified	<p>proposals for threat reduction. Additionally, the absence of baseline information will make it difficult to determine the degree to which the ecological conditions of the sites are changing.</p> <p>No source is cited to substantiate the information and the statement that “The species in this area contain vast genetic information” could be hyperbole</p> <p>Important that there is more description</p>	
Articles 10-12 - Cultural and Socio-Economic Criteria							
	(a)	Productivity	Conserves / maintains / restaures natural processes that contribute to increasing the abundance of natural resources used by humans, and consequently contribute to regional sustainable development	No or little information found	No or little information found		<p>little information to make a recommendation on this criteria</p> <p>would require more monitoring to make a statement</p>
	(b)	Cultural and traditional use	Conserves / maintains / restores the productivity and biological integrity of natural resources that provide for sustainable traditional or cultural activities (e.g indigenous communities)	Yes but criteria not fully satisfied	There is very general information for all marine protected areas : Recreational use, artisanal fisheries	Important that there is more description	idem above
	(c)	Socio-economic benefits	Conserves / maintains / restores the productivity and biological integrity of natural resources that provide for economic or social benefits for user	No information found	No or little information found (Commercially important reef species)		idem above

SPAW Articles	Criteria Articles	Criteria	Criteria description	Presence of the information in the proposal	Information details	Expert opinions	Validation of the criteria
			groups (e.g. fishermen, local communities) or economic sectors (e.g tourism)				
C. Protection, Planning and Management Measures							
3 – 4 – 5 – 6	13	Legal framework,	Guaranteeing its effective long-term protection, in conformity with the Party's national legislation and international law, and consistent with the SPAW Protocol	Yes Complete information	In the annexes are the texts	It is complemented by the Legal protection and enforcement chapter of the Management Plan	criteria satisfied
6	14 (a)	Management framework	Presence of a management framework adopted by the Party	Yes complete	There is an adopted legal framework and a preliminary 2019-2021 management plan, which will be updated as indicated on page 5 of the Plan.	It is important to expand the way of working between the NGO and the Government	Management framework criteria partly satisfied (14 a, b, c) but more and updated information needed on 14.d and 14.e as this is work in progress ⁵
	14 (b)		Presence of a management body with authority and means to implement the framework	Yes, information on the management body is available	Presence of manager and team presents good opportunity for networking with other sites and with experts, also scope for contribution by Aruba to other sites Information mainly available based on latest		

⁵ Comment from FPNA : “It is indeed a work in progress, especially with delays due to Covid-pandemic. The pandemic reduced the managing organization capacity and made it impossible to hold inclusive stakeholder engagement sessions as not all stakeholders can be reached digitally”

SPAW Articles	Criteria Articles	Criteria	Criteria description	Presence of the information in the proposal	Information details	Expert opinions	Validation of the criteria
					<p>knowledge of park management which post-dates proposal documents</p> <p>Aruba National Park Foundation, San Fuego 70, St. Cruz, Aruba</p> <p>Focal Point address: Directie Natuur en Milieu, B. v/d Veen Zeppenfeldtstraat 7, San Nicolaas, Aruba</p>		
5.2	14 (c)		Clearly identified : Conservation Objectives / Documentation / Management Guidelines + Management Framework implemented through Compliant Actions	Yes, there are clear goals	<p>The five objectives and goals are very general and would need to be completed by an update</p> <p>Conservation strategies are mentioned in the Preliminary Management Plan (page 25)</p>	Important that there is more description	
	14 (d)		Integrated management framework within a broader planning framework of the Party	Yes	The information provided on financing strategies in development is not clear	<p>Financing for management deserves attention</p> <p>Important that there is more description</p>	
	14 (e)		Planning, management and enforcement based on scientific, traditional, technical	Not really, under development	<p>The information is not clear</p> <p>Good progress on designing</p>	The park is very new, the activities are yet to be carried out as well as the establishment of the indicators.	

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			and management-oriented knowledge + Implementation of knowledge improvement programs		enforcement, monitoring based on data, staff training is ongoing		
6.2(c)	15	Evaluation	Framework including indicators of management success	Yes but not limited	The information is not clear 2019 coral reef study provides basis for long-term monitoring sites in MPAs to measure key indicators	Important information for assessment of the ecological status of the four (4) sites are missing from the application dossier and management plan The park is very new, the activities are yet to be carried out as well as the establishment of the indicators	more information and more up-to-date information is needed to evaluate this criteria
7	16	Stakeholders	Cooperation promotion by demonstrating that the Party concurs with participation of the listed area in cooperation programme	Yes	The information is not clear MPA staff are enthusiastic and capable partners in cooperation programmes	The park is very new, the activities are yet to be carried out as well as the establishment of the indicators	Intent and capacity for external cooperation has been demonstrated subsequent to the submission of the proposal; no recommendation on local stakeholders pending further information on the Stakeholders engagement process (planned for 2022)
	17		Involvement of stakeholders and local communities: inclusive / participatory procedures + Institutional measures strengthening the participation of local parties and communities	Yes, there is an overview	The information is not clear Engagement of fishers, private sector, youth	Important that there is more description	
5.2	(a)	Implementation Mechanisms	Management Framework provides the measures referred to in SPAW Article 5.2	Yes, there is an overview		the park is very new the activities are about to be carried out	the park is very new and activities have been carried out since the proposal but further

SPAW Articles	Criteria Articles	Criteria	Criteria description	Presence of the information in the proposal	Information details	Expert opinions	Validation of the criteria
	(b)		Management Framework provides awareness / education programmes for the general public / users / decision makers + integrate their participation in planning and management where appropriate	Yes, there is an overview	Information mainly available based on latest knowledge of park management which post-dates proposal documents	the park is very new the activities are about to be carried out	information (feedback) is needed to validate this criteria
	(c)		Research / Monitoring programme for assessment of effectiveness in conservation goals. Use of appropriate indicators to evaluate impact of conservation measures for species / habitats / Ecological processes within PA and with local communities	Yes, there is an overview	Based on latest knowledge of park management which post-dates proposal documents	the park is very new the activities are about to be carried out	
	18	Effectiveness of management	Demonstration of appropriate Management framework to the bio-physical and socio-economic objectives that the Party has established for this area	Yes	The information is not clear Also good guidance/support on management effectiveness from DCNA	the park is very new the activities are about to be carried out	idem above
D. Listing procedure							
7.3	19	Inventory	Inventory of protected areas under the jurisdiction of the Party that may be	Yes, general overview	There is a general description of the Parks with their four Marine Protected Areas		submission identifies some other protected sites adjacent to Parke Marino Aruba

SPAW Articles	Criteria Articles	Criteria	Criteria description	Presence of the information in the proposal	Information details	Expert opinions	Validation of the criteria
			included in the list of SPAW PA				
19.2	20	Documentation (includes Annexes listed below)	Information from the SPAW Article 19(2) specifying boundaries with supporting maps	Yes	There are maps and coordinates		criteria satisfied
			"Annotated Format for the Presentation Reports for the Areas Proposed for Inclusion in the SPAW List "(UNEP(DEC)/CAR WG.29/4Rev,1) completed	Yes, but with an overview		The park is very new the activities are about to be carried out	
			Detailed presentation of the criteria for which the site is presented referring to Section B	Yes, there is an overview		The park is very new the activities are about to be carried out	
			File summary of the proposal provided by the Party for the evaluation of the documents	Yes, there is a summary			
	21						
	23	Agreement	Agreement of the Party concerned	Yes			criteria satisfied
	3.7 (from Annotated Format)	Requested annexes	Copies of legal texts	Yes	Yes		criteria mainly satisfied but need links to existing publications on ecological aspects (e.g. connectivity , species monitoring, ecosystem health status like mangrove, seagrasses, etc.) and any updated information on
			Copies of planning and management documents	Yes	Preliminary Management Plan 2019-2021. In the supplementary information the Website (Ruimtelijk Ontwikkelings Plan) helps on this point.		

SPAW Articles	Criteria Articles	Criteria	Criteria description	Presence of the information in the proposal	Information details	Expert opinions	Validation of the criteria
			Maps as appropriate: administrative boundaries, zoning, land tenure, land use, and distribution of habitats and species, GIS shape files, etc.	Yes	Some maps as part of administrative acts. in the supplementary information the Website (Ruimtelijk Ontwikkelings Plan) helps on this point.		resilience
			Existing inventories of flora and fauna species (with Latin names)	Yes	They are not as annexes. But in the format lists of species are presented.		
			List of the main publications and copies of the main ones concerning the site, and any relevant information available	Not available as part of the application	publications and additional information provided after request to Aruba to complete the application		
			Copies of photos, slides, videos or other visual materials.	Not available as part of the application	visual material provided after request to Aruba to complete the application		
Overall evaluation of the proposal by experts <i>(complete one of the following options)</i>			The proposal is approved without any comment <i>(explain the reasons)</i>				
			Some elements still need to be addressed in order to meet the criteria and approve the proposal <i>(list your comments and missing elements)</i>				
			The proposal is rejected	The experts acknowledge the work done for this application and involvement of the Fundacion Parke Nacional Aruba and			

SPAW Articles	Criteria Articles	Criteria	Criteria description	Presence of the information in the proposal	Information details	Expert opinions	Validation of the criteria
			<i>(explain the reasons)</i>	Directie Natuur Milieu to provide additional information upon request of the Protected Areas Working Group. However, the experts recommend Aruba to complete the application with the above-mentioned elements / recommendations and invite Aruba to resubmit their application for listing the Parke Marino Aruba under the SPAW Protocol.			
				The new application should be done once more precision is provided concerning key aspects of the planning and managing of the area, especially when the management plan is validated and implemented with sufficient human resources (management staff, training), infrastructure, equipment, as well as a sustainable financing strategy. Further research/monitoring programs should be in place to implement an evaluation framework and assess the management effectiveness with associated indicators.			
				The application would be strengthened with further information on ecological and socio-economic aspects as mentioned above			