



Distr. LIMITED

UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.43/INF.37  
5 January 2023

Original: FRENCH

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

Virtual, 30 January – 1 February 2023

## **PROPOSAL BY THE FRENCH REPUBLIC ON SARGASSUM**

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



## PROPOSAL BY THE FRENCH REPUBLIC ON SARGASSUM

The Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention,

Considering the massive and recurrent strandings of pelagic *Sargassum algae* (*Sargassum fluitans* and *S. natans*) experienced since 2011 by several States in the Caribbean region;

Recognizing that the accumulation of algae on coastlines and their putrefaction constitute major health, economic and environmental challenges, leading to crisis situations and that, although the nuisances caused are poorly known scientifically or poorly quantified, they are certain and lead all the States of the Caribbean region affected to adopt, to the extent of their means, actions to combat them;

Considering the recommendations of COP 10 and the eighth meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC 8) of the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPA) in the wider Caribbean region;

Building in particular on the work carried out by the secretariat of the Convention and the Sargasses working group facilitated by RAC SPAW and presented at the ninth meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC 9) of the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPA) in the wider Caribbean region, and on the 2021 Sargassum White Paper: "Turning the crisis into an opportunity", as well as on the strategies implemented by several contracting parties

Decide to:

1. Adopt the Sargassum Action Plan **as an annex** (essentially derived from the Sargassum Action Plan drawn up by the Secretariat and endorsed by the Sargassum WG which proposed it to STAC 9).
2. Mandate the Sargassum Working Group of the Cartagena Convention to carry out the following tasks:
  - Within six months of COP 12 scheduled for March 2023, have identified governance, within the Cartagena Convention, for the implementation of the future Sargassum action plan of the Convention;
  - Within six months of COP 12, have identified in this Sargassum action plan the actions to be carried out as a priority during the next biennium and those to be carried out later.
3. The Sargassum Working Group of the Cartagena Convention facilitated by RAC SPAW should include, as far as possible, representatives of the LBS Protocol and, where appropriate, the Secretariat.
- 3bis. Ask the Secretariat to send the relevant documents (action plan amended if necessary, governance proposals, prioritisation of actions, etc.) to the Contracting Parties for consultation and adoption. In the absence of opposition from the parties, these documents will be considered adopted. This consultation must be closed within nine months of COP12;
4. The actions identified in priority 1 must have been carried out or the necessary steps to achieve them (in the case of longer-term actions) must have been carried out within four months prior to STAC 11 of 2025.

**ANNEX: SARGASSUM ACTION PLAN OF THE CARTAGENA CONVENTION**

**General objective:**

Facilitate greater involvement of the Cartagena Convention (Secretariat, SPAW CAR...) in supporting Contracting Parties in responding to the challenges posed by Sargassum influxes and improving the management of their impacts in the Greater Caribbean Region.

Component	Objectives	Actions	Results
<p><b>1. Governance</b></p>	<p><b>Objective 1</b> <b>Mobilising the Cartagena Convention on Sargassum</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen cooperation between the sub-programmes of the SPAW and LBS Protocol and regional agencies, relevant regional plans and initiatives concerning Sargassum including the Sarg'Coop programme</li> <li>• Identification of key Sargassum stakeholders and partners at regional level</li> <li>• Identification of coordinated Sargassum strategies, plans and policies at the regional level</li> <li>• Reach out to regional (or even national) groups and initiatives working on this issue to create synergies with</li> <li>• Examine the desirability of concluding MOU or Declarations of Cooperation between the SPAW CAR and LBS on the one hand and the key agencies in the field on the other hand and start negotiating them if interest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sargassum regional coordination mechanism supported or created if relevant and approved by the Contracting Parties</li> <li>• Increase in the number of countries involved in the fight against Sargassum influxes on the one hand and in the coordination process on the other hand</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Research and knowledge</b></p>	<p><b>Objective 2.</b> <b>Fostering research coordination at regional level</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify completed and ongoing research, needs and gaps in partnership with GEO Blue Planet who is working to describe research efforts for the Sargassum Information Hub</li> <li>• Identify good practices to combat Sargassum</li> <li>• Monitoring the regional proliferation of Sargassum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research areas identified and prioritized to find the main causes of Sargassum proliferation</li> <li>• Generation of knowledge and expertise on Sargassum in the Caribbean to fill gaps and assist in decision-making to manage these situations</li> </ul>

Component	Objectives	Actions	Results
3. Management	<p><b>Objective 3</b></p> <p>Promote best management practices and capacity building based on scientific evidence and traditional knowledge</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve science-based decision-making and the use of local/traditional knowledge in Sargassum management</li> <li>• Regional and national capacity-building activities to mitigate and use Sargassum</li> <li>• Study the possibility of coordinating existing early warning systems in the field of Sargassum influx and make proposals to this effect</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased number and quality of national responses to Sargassum incorporating models of good practice across the region</li> <li>• Proposal for STAC 11 of 2025 Regional Sargassum Response Guidelines Presenting Best Management Practices and Lessons Learned</li> <li>• At least one pilot project at national level in each of the working languages (English, French, Spanish)</li> <li>• at least one webinar presenting best practices in each working language</li> <li>• An online regional workshop with communication and awareness-raising experts</li> </ul>
4. Communication and Outreach	<p><b>Objective 4</b></p> <p>Increase awareness, knowledge and understanding of the challenge of Sargassum influxes in the region</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the development of a website or dedicated pages within cep.org pages, which may include:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sargassum Early Warning System in collaboration with partners</li> <li>2. Online discussion list in coordination with other existing forums</li> <li>3. Best Management Practices Framework</li> <li>4. Regional calendar of relevant activities</li> <li>5. Virtual Library of Research and Action Papers</li> <li>6. Distribution Card</li> <li>7. Fact Sheets</li> </ol> </li> <li>• Quarterly newsletter</li> <li>• Webinaire, panels</li> <li>• Online reports</li> <li>• Database</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A regional website or dedicated pages in the cep.org pages</li> <li>• Partnership with universities or research institutes if possible in the three language areas</li> <li>• Online exchanges and coordination between experts at regional level</li> <li>• At least 2 webinars prior to STAC 11 if relevant (in addition to those already identified in objective 3)</li> <li>• finalized data sheets</li> <li>• Review of newsletters on the subject, sharing of these letters with members of the network and setting up a Sargassum section in the newsletter of the Cartagena Convention</li> </ul>

Component	Objectives	Actions	Results
5. Resources	<p><b>Objective 5</b></p> <p><b>To improve access to resources for Sargassum research and the response to the problems caused by their influx for Contracting Parties and the Cartagena Convention.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of sustainable and ad hoc resources for use by Contracting Parties, other stakeholders and the Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP or CEP)</li> <li>• Identification of regional funding gaps</li> <li>• Promote coordination between potential donors, project leaders and financial managers</li> <li>• Development of a plan, a financial strategy for the commitment of the Sargassum Convention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A guide to the resources available to Contracting Parties and other stakeholders</li> <li>• A workshop to promote coordination/exchanges between potential donors, project leaders (including researchers) and financial managers</li> <li>• A general strategy</li> </ul>

*For the record*

*SPAW STAC 10: 30 and 31 January 2023*

*SPAW COP 12: 27-31 March 2023*

*IGM20/COP17 Cartagena Convention: 27-31 March 2023*

Next major events:

*SPAW STAC 11 : 2025*

*SPAW COP 13 : 2025*

*IGM21/COP18 Cartagena Convention: 2025*