



Distr, LIMITED

UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.42/5  
Janvier 2021

Original: ENGLISH

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

**REPORT OF THE STAC PROTECTED AREA WORKING GROUP**

## ACRONYMS

ACP	Africa, Caribbean and the Pacific
COP	Conference of the Parties
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
MPA	Marine Protected Area
NGO	No Governmental Organization
PA	Protected Area
RAC	Regional Activity Center
RAN	Regional Activity Network
SPAW	Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife
STAC	Scientific and Technical
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WG	Working Group

## REPORT OF THE STAC PROTECTED AREA WORKING GROUP

### 1. INTRODUCTION

1. The first Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP) of the SPAW Protocol, Havana (24-25 September 2001), in its Decision I.7, awarded “specific mandates to the STAC for the creation of *ad hoc* Working Groups to deal with those themes that, owing to their complexity or level of specialisation, thereby require [special attention].” Four (4) such *ad hoc* working groups have been created dedicated respectively to Protected Areas, to Species, to Exemptions and the most recent one, to Sargassum. Working Groups are established by the STAC, and recently reendorsed with terms of reference and specific tasks specially designed following the last STAC, in Panama, 2018. They are composed of experts designated for their acknowledged scientific and technical competence, their availability and readiness to be responsive in the group, and to cover as much as possible the geographical and thematic scope of the working group. Experts may be nominated by one or more Parties, the Secretariat including the SPAW-RAC, observers or a RAN. Once designated, they participate *intuitu personae*. The working groups are currently all chaired by the SPAW-RAC. In case consensus cannot be reached on a specific task, the chair guarantees that the diversity of opinions are dutifully reflected in the feedback and reports to the contracting parties and observers and ultimately to the STAC.

#### 1. Mandate and composition

2. Formally established in January 2020, the SPAW STAC *ad hoc* Working group on Species has the following tasks assigned by the Terms of Reference of the SPAW STAC *ad hoc* Working Groups (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.42/INF.12):

##### **Mandatory tasks:**

- *Task 1 - Review and provide the basis for recommendations on proposals from contracting parties to add new protected areas to the SPAW protocol annexes;*

- *Task 2 - Review when needed the procedure through which contracting parties can propose new protected areas to be listed as SPAW sites.*

##### **Additional tasks from the priorities discussed during STAC 8 (not limited to):**

- *Task 3 - The development of a co-operation programme in support of listed protected areas and in keeping with the comments provided by the STAC, with particular attention to the review of gaps and needs, in order to analyse ecological connectivity among sites, and strengthen networking and capacities;*

- *Task 4 - On proposition from the chair and in keeping with Article 19 and the para. 25 of the approved Guidelines and Criteria for listing protected areas, a reporting format on the status of the listed sites to Contracting Parties.*

3. The current PA working group is composed of 14 experts, 12 nominated from 7 countries, and 2 nominated from observers or independently (see Annex 1).

## 2. WORK CONDUCTED DURING THE BIENNIUM 2019-2020

4. ***TASK 1 - Review and provide the basis for recommendations on proposals from contracting parties to add new protected areas to the SPAW protocol annexes***

### ***Methodology***

The request from the Dominican Republic to include the Cotubanama National Park into the SPAW listing sites has followed the same process as previous reviews.

5. The SPAW-RAC proceeds as follow in order to evaluate proposals;
1. Some PA Working Group experts review the proposal;
  2. A provisional report is done; including the points dimed lacking;
  3. It is sent to the country for additional information;
  4. The information received is communicated to experts for final review;
  5. The experts group concludes if they support the proposal or not.
6. The proposal of the Dominican Republic for the inclusion of the Cotubanama National Park in the SPAW listing sites has been submitted to SPAW secretary for review on the 24<sup>th</sup> of May 2019<sup>th</sup>. Acknowledgement of receipt was sent on the same date by UNEP secretary.  
The review of the proposal by the experts of the PA Working Group has been mentionned at the Introductory Sessions meeting of the Working Groups, on the 18<sup>th</sup> of March 2020.
7. As of March 2020, the five (5) experts focus on the proposal's review:
- Ana Maria Gonzalez Delgadillo,
  - Nacor Bolaños-Cubillos,
  - Gonzalo Cid,
  - Samantha Dodwell,
  - Emma Doyle
8. The proposal has been submitted to a series of reviews, carried out by the experts through online collaboration tools such as Google documents and Teamwork platform.  
Final version of the review was translated in Spanish and sent to the Dominican Republic's Government on October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020.  
Comments and explanations from the Dominican Republic were sent on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020<sup>th</sup>, and the consolidated of the proposal has been sent for revisión final on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020.
9. ***Outcomes and highlights***
- Experts recommend giving full support to this proposal.
  - Experts also recommended that all new applications must include a current management plan and performance evaluation report in order to be considered for listing.
  - Experts support that effective management criteria, including (self) evaluation of the management action, i.e., how well the site is achieving its goals and objectives and the process for updating the management plan, should be stressed on as they are key aspects of the protected areas.

- Experts suggest to have further discussions on revising the protected area listing process to have a stronger emphasis on management effectiveness, and less of an "inventory" approach describing the resources. Opportunities to streamline the process must be considered.
- Experts support a strong focus on capacity development for SPAW sites to help address management effectiveness needs, e.g., through CaMPAM.

**Reference of the documents:** UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.42/INF.22 and UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.42/INF.22 Addendum 1

***TASK 2 - Review when needed the procedure through which contracting parties can propose new protected areas to be listed as SPAW sites***

No specific work has been requested on this task but the experts recommend to consider it for the next biennium (see below).

***TASK 3 - The development of a co-operation programme in support of listed protected areas and in keeping with the comments provided by the STAC, with particular attention to the review of gaps and needs, in order to analyse ecological connectivity among sites, and strengthen networking and capacities***

***Methodology***

10. Based on the discussions of the Working Group on this issue that took place on its 1<sup>st</sup> meeting on April, 23<sup>th</sup> 2020, the SPAW-RAC shared on June, 5<sup>th</sup> 2020, a draft rationale that justifies the purpose, scope and objectives of the cooperation programme, by using a dedicated collaborating online platform. This rationale received relatively few comments within the timeframe.
11. In order to coordinate and avoid overlaps with the work carried out within the framework of the project entitled « Capacity building related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEA) in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Countries - Phase III – (ACP- MEAs) », in particular, the evaluation of CAMPAM, and the design of an ecological network of PAs in the Caribbean, the WG has met again on September, 30<sup>th</sup>, October, 10<sup>th</sup> and October, 15<sup>th</sup> 2020. These meetings allowed experts and consultants from the project to oversee each work and provide support by adding recommendations or suggestions to the proposals, and SPAW-Rac emphasized the necessity to coordinate the PA working group task force with the means and the consultants of the ACP project and **to produce together the outcomes that will meet both the expectations of the project funders and of Signatory Parties of the SPAW protocol about the regional human network and the SPAW ecological program** (annex 4). From these discussions, the three documents were shared on the TeamWork platform :

- « Developing an Ecological Network between the SPAW-listed MPAs of the Wider Caribbean » by Bill Kiene on October 15<sup>th</sup> using the online tool Google document;
- « Framework for Cooperation » by Lloyd Gardner on January, 10<sup>th</sup> 2021 on the TeamWork platform;
- « Comprehensive Review of the Effectiveness and Impact of the Caribbean Marine Protected Areas Managers Network and Forum (CaMPAM) » by Nicole A. Brown on October, 23<sup>th</sup> 2020 on the TeamWork platform.

To date, few comments have been made on all of the above documents. If the ACP project documents are presented as official documents to STAC 9, the two notes from the working group dating from June 2020 and January 2021 are annexed to this report, due to the lack of consensus in favor of the one or the other.

***Outcomes and highlights***

12. Neither the “Framework for Cooperation” proposal shared on January 10 2021, nor the proposal dated June 2020, reaches consensus and can therefore not be retained as a basis for the work of the STAC.

As a result, out-of-timeframe discussions took place between the experts and some strong ideas could be retained although not validated by the experts to date. These exchanges are available in the appendix.

14. Group recommendations to STAC:

- STAC 9 could request the Working Group to develop a paper outlining options for a cooperation program in support of listing protected areas and listed protected areas (pursuant to SPAW Protocol Article 7(2) and Annex 1.1.2 in the Working Group Terms of Reference).
  - In doing so, the Working Group should take into account the report on ecological connectivity and review of CaMPAM presented to STAC 9.
  - The options paper should include a brief overview of current cooperation (i.e., how Article 7(2) is being implemented), identify gaps and needs, and explain how the options proposed would modify the status quo.
- STAC 9 could request the Secretariat and SPAW-RAC to consider opportunities for increased collaboration with existing MPA networks and capacity building initiatives in the region.

15. With regard to the Cooperation Program *per se*, the experts specify and recommend that:

- A cooperation program must benefit protected areas and make it possible to enhance regional conservation efforts through networking related to ecological connectivity. They encourage a bottom-up approach based on the needs of site-level managers in consolidating the cooperation program, rather than relying on top-down governance. This governance is crucial to ensure constructive support for PA management in the region. Site-level needs (access to donors, fund management, capacity building, database, management plan, etc.) are not necessary in the same way as network-level needs (climate change, financial and administrative capacities, connectivity ...).
- The cooperation program must imperatively take into consideration the ability of protected area managers to respond to emerging issues and risks, such as pandemics, climate change or financial crises. More widely, in a crisis, strategies for supporting community livelihoods and/or threat reduction must be addressed. This can only be addressed at the national and site levels, and should be reflected in national PA system plans and site management plans.
- The cooperation program should have a tool for monitoring the effectiveness of protected areas as a main component.
- Otherwise, it was proposed that a cooperation program be chaired by a designated individual or a separate office from the RAC, if possible, a RAN.

***TASK 4 - On proposition from the chair and in keeping with Article 19 and the para. 25 of the approved Guidelines and Criteria for listing protected areas, a reporting format on the status of the listed sites to Contracting Parties***

16. A draft was done but not developed with the group yet, initially awaiting for information from the ACP MEAs project in order to avoid overlapping and ensure their complementarity and at the end lacking time to go back on it. This task will be definitively pursued during the next biennium unless the STAC removes it from the on-going tasks..

### 3. SPAW-RAC OVERALL CONCLUSION

First SPAW-RAC wish to thank the group for their dedication, commitment and work all other the period and also the Government of Dominican Republic for their proposal to include the Cotubanama National Park into the SPAW listing sites and interactive and constructive exchanges with the working group.

Considering the experts thoughtful contributions and final assessments, SPAW-RAC recommends the STAC to:

- give full support to the proposal from the Government of Dominican Republic and recommend the COP 11 to approve to include the Cotubanama National Park into the SPAW listing sites.

- request Countries to include a current management plan and performance evaluation report in their upcoming applications and to have further discussions about effective management criteria.
  - request its Working Group to develop those criteria and revise the protected area listing process in the frame of task 2.
  - request its Working Group to go on with its task 4, finish a reporting format on the status of the listed sites to Contracting Parties.
  - encourage its Working Group to continue the development of a cooperation program in support of listing protected areas and listed protected areas, outlining options in support of listing protected areas and listed protected areas as outlines above.
  - request the Secretariat and SPAW-RAC to consider opportunities for increased collaboration with existing MPA networks and capacity building initiatives in the region.
- 
- SPAW-RAC recommend the STAC to convince Parties and in particular Signatory Parties to the SPAW protocol to nominate experts in order to diversify skills and expertise, and ensure the most exhaustive geographical and political representation but also as an efficient way to be involved in the SPAW implementation and better voice their needs and wishes in the SPAW protocol.
  - Improve the RAC and the Working Group involvement in the ACP MEAs project and other (M)PA activities (CamPAM?), for a better integration coordination of the (M)PA actions, possibly support of a small part of the RAC activity, and link with the other sub-programs.
  - If deemed necessary, revise the ToR and in particular the Annex (update the current tasks of the working group).

**ANNEX 1**

**COMPOSITION OF THE PROTECTED AREAS WORKING GROUP**

<b>Expert name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Adriel Castaneda	Belize
Alicia Nunez	Belize
Ana Maria Gonzalez-Delgadillo	Colombia
Nacor Bolaños-Cubillos	Colombia
Juan Luis Gonzalez	Dominican Republic
Ricardo Rodriguez	Dominican Republic
Cyrille Barnerias	France
† Paul Hoetjes	Netherlands
Tadzio Bervoets	Netherlands
Eric F. Salamanca	Turks and Caicos
Gonzalo Cid	USA
Samantha Dodwell	USA
Lloyd Gardner	Ind / present in the previous group
Emma Doyle	GCFI
Sandrine Pivard	SPAW-RAC / chair



## ANNEX 2

### Framework Recommendations for Protected Areas Cooperation Program in Support of SPAW-Listed Sites

**The objective** of this document is to present a framework that sets out the main features of a SPAW listed protected area (PA) cooperation program, to be taken into account by the upcoming Network consortium draft commissioned by UNEP, and to be submitted at the next Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) in early 2021. This framework intends to define more specifically the overall purpose, the scope and the objectives of the cooperation program, and explores strategic approaches to co-operation. This document is based on the minutes of the PA working group (WG) meeting dedicated to this specific task and detailed input provided by WG members. Other elements were taken from the work documents that can be found on the PA WG Teamwork's files (CaMPAM's 2011 management capacity assessment, CaMPAM's 2016 assessment, UNEP-CEP's Network Consortium draft and its Assessment Terms of Reference) and from various contributions from experts.

#### Context

The Wider Caribbean Region is characterized by its exceptional biodiversity, as it is included into two biodiversity hotspots for conservation priorities (Myers N. *et al.*, 2000). It is also a region with a high dependence on natural resources both for the well-being of respective populations and for the economy of the states and territories, as well as for mitigating the impacts of natural disasters compounded by a changing climate. Furthermore, the coastal and insular features of the Caribbean imply a close interdependence between oceanic and terrestrial environments throughout the region.

However, the Caribbean is also characterized by highly complex and diverse social, economical and political considerations. This diversity poses challenges and opportunities for the implementation of regional cooperation programs, the dissemination of funding opportunities and the launching of new initiatives.

More than 1,300 protected areas are registered under their proper legislation in the 37 countries and territories that make up the Wider Caribbean Region, but only a portion of these areas are clearly defined and effectively managed. Created in 1997 under the aegis of United Nations Environment Program - Caribbean Environment Program (UNEP-CEP), the Caribbean Marine Protected Areas Management (CaMPAM) network, which was tasked with strengthening capacities of Caribbean Marine Protected Areas (MPA), has not reached all of the territories as intended. Alternatively, several sub-regional networks exist and are efficient and recognized entities (see Annex 2).

To encourage all the countries and territories of the Caribbean to develop their protected areas, to improve their efficiency and to nominate them for listing under the SPAW Protocol, the 17 Parties of the SPAW Protocol have recommended to develop a cooperation program that can address the difficulties above in order to improve biological and organizational connectivity throughout the Caribbean.

#### Key elements to bear in mind

- PA managers are often consumed by local management issues and it may be challenging for them to work on regional issues. Activities should be facilitated as much as possible by a coordinating body to

relieve the additional burden on PA managers.

- The cooperation program should facilitate access to donors and to funding opportunities independently of the political context in the country.

- Adopting a bottom-up approach based on needs of site level managers in the consolidation of the cooperation program, instead of relying on top-down governance, will be crucial to ensure constructive support to PA management in the region.

## **Purpose**

The cooperation program's purpose is to improve SPAW listed PA management up to global standard of best practice for conservation, aiming to enhance ecological connectivity in the long term throughout the Wider Caribbean Region.

To do this, several components can be detailed below:

- Collaborate with existing networks to optimize success of their activities and initiatives with and for PA managers
  - Fundraise, support and initiate grant programs
  - Improve capacity building through protected area management training, experience and best-practices sharing and personnel exchanges
  - Knowledge sharing: Use the best available science to guide legislation and policy; to increase education, training and outreach; to place emphasis on conservation and advocacy; and to implement and standardize in situ research and monitoring
  - Share tools: GIS, database, standardized methodologies, PA management assessment

The added value of a regional PA cooperation program is that it creates emphasis on the bigger picture in terms of the regional priorities. Regional level solutions to climate change, low administrative capacities, or poor connectivity, do not necessarily respond to site level issues (access to donors, managing funds, capacity building, database, management plan and management assessment...) are not the same as . The cooperation program's purpose is that the sum of the parts adds value to conservation efforts instead of addressing individual issues, while also serving the purposes of the SPAW Protocol.

## **Scope**

While the previously stated purpose offers a long-term vision for this cooperation program, the practical reality is shaped by institutional and financial constraints which require adopting a more narrow scope. For this reason, expert members in the PA Working Group have agreed that the cooperation program must be initiated only within the 35 sites listed under the SPAW Protocol (Article 7(2) of the Protocol), as listed in annex 1.

However, there is room for a possible scope compromise: working from SPAW listed sites as a start, but expanding beyond that scope, within the SPAW Contracting Parties, and encouraging them to request the listing of PAs to extend networks of ecologically representative PAs and thus further the objectives of the SPAW Protocol (Article 7(1) of the Protocol). Through this interaction non-listed PAs could also be strengthened to a level where they could also be nominated for listing as SPAW Pas.

To help ensure that priority capacity needs are supported it is recommended that the various marine conservation programs in the region work together to collectively determine effective ways of providing support to meet these needs through a collective strategic planning process for the region. The proposed

cooperation program should enhance collaboration with and among existing networks (see annex 2) to develop mechanisms of cooperation which will in turn relieve work pressure on MPA managers, one of the key elements. Subsequently, the cooperation program should lean on other regional conservation dedicated networks such as CARIMAM (Caribbean Marine Mammals Preservation Network) or WIDECAST (Wider Caribbean Sea Turtles Network) that are deeply involved in PA issues and can add value in terms of ecological connectivity to a PA network.

### **Contents of the program**

The following questions should set a clear framework for the upcoming work of the PA WG. Experts members are expected to discuss each of these options and questions accordingly, following the discussions that have taken place since March. Experts can also add new matters to further reinforce the cooperation program proposal. Once again, the resulting document will be presented at the next STAC.

#### **1. Coordination and governance**

What would be the appropriate institutional arrangements for operation of the program, and what would be the relationship with SPAW Secretariat (Regional Coordination Unit and Regional Activity Center)?

Should the program be established within the SPAW Secretariat as a formal multi-institutional collaborative initiative like a regional activity network (RAN) or as an independent organization supported or not by the SPAW Secretariat through formal agreements?

The SPAW Secretariat supports the cooperation program that is organized and managed by its members, bringing professionals, PA staff, and observers/civil society organizations/universities/other stakeholders into the SPAW process?

What is the most appropriate program governance arrangement to guarantee efficiency and to ensure that the cooperation program is facilitating PA managers in their day-to-day activities while focusing on regional issues at the same time?

#### **2. Funding**

How to have credibility with potential donors and facilitate access to funding for all Pas?

#### **3. Work program**

The task at hand includes several discrete elements: (a) gaps and needs for PA management; (b) analysis of ecological connectivity between SPAW-listed sites; and (c) network development. To expressly address these elements within the cooperation programme, the working group will have to conduct a needs assessment. For this reason, it will be crucial for the Working Group to use synthetic regional documents like those elaborated under the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME+) project, the Ecosystems Profiles, or the MPACoconnect management capacity assessment for instance. Furthermore, these regional assessments overlap with the reporting format (task 4). In this regard, reviewing and creating a format to request updates of the existing network will shape the properties of the cooperation program.

### **Conclusion and perspectives**

To overcome potential political friction and to enforce SPAW protocol, it is crucial to state that the long-

term objective is to improve biological and ecological connectivity throughout the Wider Caribbean Region through anks to an enlarged SPAW PAs' list.

Due to the variety of political statuses of the Caribbean countries and territories, a regional activity network inspired program that collaborates with existing sub-regional networks could be an option. The program's governance could be ensured by managers and staff of supporting institutions and its operating budget must be such that it should be guided by the management needs of MPAs.

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Annex 1: PA listed under the SPAW protocol:

1. Belize: Glover's reef Marine Reserve
  2. Belize: Hol Chan Marine Reserve
  3. Belize: Port Honduras Marine Reserve
  4. Colombia: Sanctuary Ciénaga Grande de Santa Marta
  5. Colombia: Regional Seaflower Marine Protected Area
  6. Colombia: Regional Natural Park of Wetlands between the rivers León and Suriquí
  7. Cuba: Parque Nacional Guanahacabibes
  8. Cuba: Parque Nacional Cayos de San Felipe
  9. Dominican Republic: National Park Jaragua
  10. Dominican Republic: La Caleta Submarine Park
  11. Dominican Republic: National Park Sierra de Bahoruco
  12. Dominican Republic: National Park Haitises
  13. France: Réserve naturelle nationale de l'Amana
  14. France: Île du Grand Connétable
  15. France: Réserve naturelle nationale de Kaw-Roura
  16. France: Étangs des Salines
  17. France: Versants Nord de la Montagne Pelée
  18. France: Parc National de la Guadeloupe
  19. France: Réserve Naturelle Nationale de Petite Terre
  20. France: Sanctuaire Agoa
  21. France: Étangs Lagunaires de Saint-Martin
  22. France: Réserve Naturelle Nationale de Saint-Martin
  23. Grenada: Molinière-Beauséjour Reserve
  24. Netherlands: Saba National Marine Park
  25. Netherlands: St Eustatius National Marine Park
  26. Netherlands: Man O War Shoal Marine Park in Sint Maarten
  27. Netherlands: Bonaire National Marine Park
  28. Netherlands: The Quill and Boven National Park in St. Eustatius
  29. Netherlands: Saba Bank National Park
  30. Netherlands: Mt. Scenery National Park in Saba
  31. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines: Tobago Cay Marine Park
  32. USA: Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary
  33. USA: Dry Tortugas National Park
  34. USA: Everglades National Park
  35. USA: Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary
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## Annex 2: Major sub regional MPA networks

1. Caribbean Marine Protected Areas Managers Network (CaMPAM)
2. North American Marine Protected Areas Network (NAMPAN)
3. MPA Connect
4. Red Golfo, (Mexico, Cuba and USA)
5. International Union for the Conservation of Nature / Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management (BIOPAMA) project
6. Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance (DCNA)
7. Grenadines Network of Marine Protected Areas (Grenada, St Vincent and the Grenadines championed by SusGren)
8. MAR Fund (Meso-american Reef)

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## Annex 3: References

Bustamante, G., A. Vanzella, R. Glazer and L. Collado-Vides. 2018. The evolution of the Caribbean Marine Protected Area Management Network and Forum (CaMPAM): 20 years of the regional, multidimensional program for strengthening MPA practitioners. *Gulf and Caribbean Research* 29: GCFI1-9

Collado-Vides L. 2016. Evaluation of the Caribbean Marine Protected Area Management Network and Forum (CaMPAM), An analysis of the last 15 years of operation and recommendations to improve its services in the Wider Caribbean region. Florida International University. 25p.

Myers, N., Mittermeier, R., Mittermeier, C. et al. Biodiversity hotspots for conservation priorities. *Nature* 403, 853–858 (2000). <https://doi.org/10.1038/35002501>

### ANNEX 3

#### Framework for Cooperation (L. Gardner - Review Draft\_v.1\_2020 Dec. 17\_unedited)

##### 1. Introduction

The preamble of the SPAW Protocol provides guidance on the scope of the cooperative arrangements to be developed to achieve the objectives of the Protocol. The cooperation programme must address the following primary considerations:

- (a) "... *ill-conceived development options ...*" pose a "... *grave threat ...*" to the "... *integrity of the marine and coastal environment of the Wider Caribbean Region*". SPAW Protocol Parties are expected to act unilaterally to reduce and prevent threats, but can be assisted in their efforts through collective action.
- (b) "... *the Wider Caribbean Region constitutes an interconnected group of ecosystems in which an environmental threat in one part represents a potential threat in other parts*". Sovereign rights and unilateral action can have an impact beyond national borders because the Caribbean is a shared ecological space. As such, collective action results in better protection of shared coastal and marine resources.
- (c) "... *the importance of establishing regional co-operation to protect and, as appropriate, to restore and improve the state of ecosystems, as well as threatened and endangered species and their habitats in the Wider Caribbean Region ...*". The primary purpose of the SPAW Protocol is the restoration and improvement of ecosystems, in furtherance of which protection of endangered species and protected areas is only one strategy.

Periodic recommendations of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) and decisions of the meetings of Contracting Parties (COP) to the SPAW Protocol have focused on establishing cooperative arrangements to support management of protected areas.

However, a cooperation programme focused on management of protected areas and threatened species is unlikely to produce the intended Protocol outcomes, due to the following:

- (a) Conservation strategies narrowly focused on protected areas often result in ecosystem fragmentation, increased intensive use of areas in close proximity to the protected areas, increased vulnerability of mobile species of wildlife, and increased vulnerability of the protected areas.
- (b) In most countries of the wider Caribbean, protected areas management fall within the mandates of multiple public agencies, oftentimes even for a single site. As such, management strategy and capacity has to be understood and addressed within the context of the overall institutional architecture.
- (c) Legal authority to manage threats originating outside protected areas, or authority to give effect to enhancement programmes, often reside in institutions that have no direct responsibility for managing protected areas. This suggests that successful protected areas programming should be designed within the context of the larger institutional framework and enabling environment.
- (d) It is anticipated that climate change will have adverse impacts on ecosystems, including migration of some habitats.

The foregoing considerations suggest that a cooperation programme to achieve SPAW Protocol objectives should be designed to be complementary to, and supportive of, the broader framework of national conservation strategies and associated ecosystem management initiatives.

### **1.1 Purpose of the Framework for Cooperation**

The Tenth Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP) to the Protocol Concerning Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) in the Wider Caribbean Region (held at Roatán, Honduras, on June 3, 2019) called for cooperation initiatives with national, regional, and international institutions to address issues such as management capacity for protected areas, monitoring and research, data management and information systems, and threats (e.g. pollution, sargassum, and invasive species).

COP 10 also adopted, with some amendments, the recommendations of the Eight Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee to the SPAW Protocol (STAC 8).

STAC 8 recommended a wide range of cooperative initiatives that include governments, non-governmental organizations, and multilateral organizations. The initiatives range from national projects to international programmes to inter-governmental governance mechanisms.

Recent reports on the state of the marine habitats in the Caribbean, regional and global ecosystem assessments, and assessment of the progress in the global biodiversity programme, indicate that investments and cooperation programmes do not necessarily achieve the objectives of programmes and treaties.

Therefore, the cooperation programme for the SPAW Protocol should take place within a framework where each cooperative arrangement is designed and implemented to deliver measurable outcomes towards achievement of specific Protocol objectives.

The Framework for Cooperation:

- Recognizes the national, regional, and global context that influences conservation programming;
- Recommends guiding principles for design of cooperative arrangements;
- Suggests programme scope and implementation modalities; and
- Reiterates the need for evaluation of outcomes and impacts.

## **2. Context for the SPAW Cooperation Programme**

The SPAW cooperation programme has to be responsive to current and emerging issues and programmes at the national, regional, and global levels.

At its most basic level, the cooperation programme must meet the needs of SPAW Parties for effective management of protected areas, threatened and endangered species, and associated ecosystems to meet the commitments of the SPAW Protocol. Design and effective deployment of resource mobilization strategies, implementation mechanisms, and learning and data management systems require coordinated, focused, and consistent action that cannot be left solely to the Secretariat and SPAW Regional Activity Centre (RAC).

The continuing degradation and loss of critical ecological resources result from natural forces and the development policies and strategies of governments. The increased frequency of natural disasters and other sources of disruption will further constrain the capability of countries to effectively manage their ecological resources. In addition to the addressing natural stressors, the cooperation programme should support the design and effective delivery of appropriate public policy. In effect, the focus on enabling systems and

capacity proposed by the Regional Strategy and Action Plan for the Valuation, Protection and/or Restoration of Key Marine Habitats in the Wider Caribbean 2021-2030 should be perceived as a minimum first step towards improving the national development decision processes.

SPAW Parties are also parties to other regional and global programmes, compacts, and multilateral environmental agreements. Many of the international programmes and conventions are more recent than the Cartagena Convention and SPAW Protocol, and/or have evolved to establish targets and reporting mechanisms in order to track progress towards agreed objectives. It is likely that Parties will be pressured to be more responsive to those international obligations, driven by the increased urgency in programmes such as the post-2020 biodiversity framework, the Paris Agreement on climate change, and the disaster risk reduction framework. The SPAW cooperation programme has to be responsive to those regional and international programmes, facilitating translation between global and national goals, in the context of achieving SPAW Protocol objectives.

The declarations by the United Nations of 2021-2030 as the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and 2020-2030 as the UN Decade of Action to deliver the sustainable development goals are likely to result in pressure on the Caribbean Environment Programme to support both initiatives. That pressure could be directed by the UN Environment, Parties, or private and non-governmental institutions seeking the benefits of having the imprimatur of the UN Environment and/or the Caribbean Environment Programme. The Regional Governance Framework proposed by the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems (CLME+) Project identifies a Permanent Policy Coordination Mechanism for facilitating integration of the regional programmes of United Nations organizations, the programmes of Caribbean regional and sub-regional inter-governmental organizations, and the interface of the programmes with countries in the Wider Caribbean Region. The complexities of integrating decision making processes defined by state sovereignty, binding legal treaties, and programme mandates of United Nations and Caribbean inter-governmental organizations will no doubt be exacerbated by the plans (announced in January 2020) by United Nations to strengthen the roles of its multi-country offices in the region as part of the repositioning of the United Nations development system. The deployment of a new United Nations regional coordination platform and new coordination officers will no doubt have an impact on the Caribbean Environment Programme and SPAW Parties.

### **3. Guiding Principles for the Cooperation Programme**

The design and implementation of the SPAW cooperation programme should be guided by principles that protect ecological integrity, enhance governance, support learning, and improve programme outcomes and impact.

**Principle I:** Connectivity is a critical aspect of ecological processes, and connectivity conservation is therefore necessary for biodiversity protection and maintenance of ecosystem integrity.

The SPAW Protocol recognises the importance of connectivity in the health of coastal and marine ecosystems in its definition of the geographic boundary of the Protocol area to include:

"i) waters on the landward side of the baseline from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured and extending, in the case of water courses, up to the fresh water limit; and ii) such related terrestrial areas (including watersheds) as may be designated by the Party having sovereignty and jurisdiction over such areas:" (Article 1 (c))

In this definition, the Protocol underscores the importance of watershed management and the role of watercourses in transporting pollutants from terrestrial sources to the marine environment. However,



watercourses also have unique ecosystem roles, including functioning as habitats to rare and endangered species of wildlife and as ecological corridors for catadromous species.

Beyond watercourses, ecological connectivity should be considered as important for maintaining the flow of nutrients and facilitating local movement for spawning, nursery, food, and shelter. As such, it is important to maintain connectivity between similar habitats and between different types of habitats.

The SPAW cooperation programme must therefore maintain connectivity between local, national, sub-regional, and regional ecological networks.

**Principle II:** The cooperation programme should increase the likelihood of producing the desired outcomes and impact:

- At the level of the protected area, landscape/ecosystem, country, sub-region, and region.
- By evaluating performance of projects, programmes, protected areas, and ecological and activity networks.
- By evaluating the impact of national programmes for protected areas and species management, SPAW sub-programmes, and the SPAW programme.

**Principle III:** Public engagement is a necessary strategy for improving outcomes and impact through use of shared governance practices (that involve the civil sector and private sector).

**Principle IV:** The SPAW Cooperation Programme should facilitate mainstreaming of conservation planning at the national level, particularly as:

- Cooperation mechanisms and supported interventions provide context for countries to articulate, design, and implement interventions that achieve multiple national objectives and discharge their international conservation obligations.
- Alignment of national and regional projects reduces programme costs, creates synergies, and enhances outcomes and impacts.

**Principle V:** The Cartagena Convention and its protocols should function as one of the primary mechanisms for translating regional and global environmental goals and targets for national application, while simultaneously translating national needs and conditions to inform regional and global agreements and interventions. In other words, multilateral governance arrangements and programmes for coastal and marine ecosystems management in the Caribbean should be delivered within the framework of the Caribbean Environment Programme where practicable. This approach is appropriate due to the fact that:

- The Caribbean Sea is considered to be a shallow, semi-enclosed sea of high biological diversity. The special oceanographic and ecological characteristics of the Caribbean Sea are recognised in the designation of the Caribbean Sea as a special area by the International Maritime Organization and the UN Environment.
- The Caribbean Sea is a large marine ecosystem, and interventions driven by national, regional, or international programmes and compacts should be sensitive to that ecosystem.
- The Caribbean large marine ecosystem is a common resource for several countries, and the Cartagena Convention as a binding treaty that provides the legal framework for cooperative action in the shared space.

Application of Principle V will require the Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention to update the convention and its protocols to incorporate new concepts, targets (particularly for biodiversity and sustainable development goals), new norms for participation by civil society organizations, and provide for

mechanisms for public access to information.

#### **4. Scope of the SPAW Cooperation Programme**

In order to achieve the objectives of the SPAW Protocol, the cooperation programme should support both national and regional programming.

The cooperation programme can be designed for phased development that focus sequentially on: (i) SPAW-listed PAs and species; (ii) ecological networks; (iii) ecosystems; and (iv) international programmes and multilateral environmental agreements. Alternatively, the programme can be designed to be applied at multiple scales and/or support multiple collaborative arrangements.

Regardless of the programme development process, each collaborative arrangement should have clearly defined objectives, should articulate how the arrangement supports achievement of SPAW Protocol objectives, should define governance mechanisms, must have appropriate resources or resource mobilization plans, and identify reporting and evaluation mechanisms.

Areas of focus for collaborative arrangements are:

- Protected areas and associated/adjacent ecosystems;
- Rare, threatened, and endangered species of wildlife;
- National enabling environments;
- Ecological networks (national, sub-regional, and SPAW);
- Regional programmes (which may include non-SPAW countries);
- SPAW-specific activities for ecosystem protection or in support of other protocols of the Cartagena Convention;
- Capacity development;
- Development of decision support systems; and
- Outcome, performance, and impact evaluation.

Collaborative arrangements that support the national enabling environment will focus on development of harmonised policy and legal frameworks and production of technical guidelines and other supporting materials. This includes:

- (a) Harmonization of national protected areas system plans support long-term strategic guidance for protected areas development.
- (b) Harmonization of policies and strategies regarding targets and plans for interventions to protect shared coastal and marine resources.
- (c) Monitoring and evaluation protocols.
- (d) Guidance for application of impact assessment tools and processes to prevent adverse impact of development activity on protected areas, other special areas, and fragile ecosystems.
- (e) Harmonization of SPAW reporting requirements with the requirements of multilateral environmental agreement where possible in order to facilitate increased reporting by reducing the burden on governments within the wider Caribbean.

#### **5. Modalities for Cooperation**

Collaborative arrangements can be permanent or time-limited, and can be established to support a specific intervention or multiple initiatives. It is anticipated that collaborative arrangements will take the following forms:

- (a) Bilateral collaboration to address national or trans-boundary concerns.

- (b) Multi-country collaborative arrangements, particularly for establishment and management of ecological networks. The scientific basis, mechanisms and resources for collaboration, performance assessments, and other relevant issues should be elaborated in a network development plan.
- (c) Activity networks, involving professionals, institutions, or a mixture of both. The purpose, roles, governance arrangements, operational modalities, evaluation systems, and other network development and management requirements are to be elaborated in the development plan for each network that is established.
- (d) Financing for supporting the cooperation programme and individual collaborative arrangement will be agreed between the participants and the SPAW Secretariat and SPAW Regional Activity Centre.
- (e) Reporting and evaluation for the cooperation programme will be coordinated by the Secretariat, fully recognising that each collaborative arrangement must incorporate reporting and evaluation mechanisms.

## **6. Performance and Impact Evaluation**

- (a) Areas of focus:
- Protected areas management effectiveness and ecological performance.
  - SPAW ecological network.
  - SPAW activity networks.
  - SPAW sub-programmes.
  - SPAW programme.
- (b) Setting baselines, targets, monitoring systems
- (c) Data capture, management, and access

### Appendices

- Current and recommended cooperative arrangements under the SPAW Programme
- Multilateral environmental agreements signed by SPAW Parties or relevant to the SPAW Programme

## ANNEX 4

Invitation to the coordination meetings between SPAW STAC PA WG  
and the consultants of the ACP-MEA III project

From: CAUMETTE Camille - DEAL Guadeloupe/OH/CARSPAW <camille.caumette@developpement-durable.gouv.fr>  
Sent: Wednesday, October 7, 2020 11:40 AM  
To: amgonzalez@minambiente.gov.co <amgonzalez@minambiente.gov.co>; areas.protegidas@coralina.gov.co <areas.protegidas@coralina.gov.co>; cyrille.barnerias@afbiodiversite.fr <cyrille.barnerias@afbiodiversite.fr>; director@dcnanature.org <director@dcnanature.org>; efsalamanca@gov.tc <efsalamanca@gov.tc>; emma.doyle@gcfi.org <emma.doyle@gcfi.org>; eric.tromeur@developpement-durable.gouv.fr <eric.tromeur@developpement-durable.gouv.fr>; GARDNER Lloyd <lsg\_jr@hotmail.com>; gonzalo.cid@noaa.gov <gonzalo.cid@noaa.gov>; juan.gonzalez@ambiente.gob.do <juan.gonzalez@ambiente.gob.do>; manager@naturefoundationsxm.org <manager@naturefoundationsxm.org>; phoetjes@gmail.com <phoetjes@gmail.com>; ricardo.rodriguez@ambiente.gob.do <ricardo.rodriguez@ambiente.gob.do>; Samantha Dowdell - NOAA Federal <samantha.dowdell@noaa.gov>; ileana.lopez@un.org <ileana.lopez@un.org>; ankur.deb@un.org <ankur.deb@un.org>; procambarus2@gmail.com <procambarus2@gmail.com>; nabrown@btinternet.com <nabrown@btinternet.com>  
Cc: PIVARD Sandrine (Cheffe du CAR-SPAW) - DEAL Guadeloupe/OH/CARSPAW <Sandrine.PIVARD@developpement-durable.gouv.fr>; BARTHELAT Fabien (adjoint à la directrice CAR-SPAW) - DEAL Guadeloupe/OH/CARSPAW <fabien.barthelat@developpement-durable.gouv.fr>; jodi.johnson@un.org <jodi.johnson@un.org>  
Subject: Networks meeting schedule

Dear all,

Considering your answers on the Doodle we have selected two dates for the meetings. Find below the schedules and the Zoom links to join the discussion :

## Ecological Network

Date : October 13<sup>th</sup> Time :10am La Paz (UTC+4)

Zoom : <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7564429220?pwd=bkhtRINxL3E3SnZCTU1oSFNHcHJNQOT09>

Meeting ID : 756 442 9220

Password : 1

## Social Network :

Date : October 15<sup>th</sup> Time :10am La Paz (UTC+4)

Zoom : <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7564429220?pwd=bkhtRINxL3E3SnZCTU1oSFNHcHJNQOT09>

Meeting ID : 756 442 9220

Password : 1

Please note that Nicole Brown and Bill Kiene will be invited to introduce their respective project on the social and ecological networks.

We thank you in advance for your collaboration and participation,

Best Regards,

Camille Caumette

----- Message transféré -----

Sujet : Re: Networks meeting schedule

Date : Thu, 8 Oct 2020 17:06:22 -0400

De : PIVARD Sandrine - DEAL Guadeloupe/OH/CARSPAW <Sandrine.PIVARD@developpement-durable.gouv.fr>

Organisation : DEAL Guadeloupe/OH/CARSPAW

Pour : lsg\_jr <lsg\_jr@hotmail.com>, CAUMETTE Camille - DEAL Guadeloupe/OH/CARSPAW <camille.caumette@developpement-durable.gouv.fr>, amgonzalez@minambiente.gov.co <amgonzalez@minambiente.gov.co>, areas.protegidas@coralina.gov.co <areas.protegidas@coralina.gov.co>, cyrille.barnerias@afbiodiversite.fr <cyrille.barnerias@afbiodiversite.fr>, director@dcnature.org <director@dcnature.org>, efsalamanca@gov.tc <efsalamanca@gov.tc>, emma.doyle@gcfi.org <emma.doyle@gcfi.org>, eric.tromeur@developpement-durable.gouv.fr <eric.tromeur@developpement-durable.gouv.fr>, gonzalo.cid@noaa.gov <gonzalo.cid@noaa.gov>, juan.gonzalez@ambiente.gob.do <juan.gonzalez@ambiente.gob.do>, manager@naturefoundationsxm.org <manager@naturefoundationsxm.org>, phoetjes@gmail.com <phoetjes@gmail.com>, ricardo.rodriguez@ambiente.gob.do <ricardo.rodriguez@ambiente.gob.do>, Samantha Dowdell - NOAA Federal <samantha.dowdell@noaa.gov>, ileana.lopez@un.org <ileana.lopez@un.org>, ankur.deb@un.org <ankur.deb@un.org>, procambarus2@gmail.com <procambarus2@gmail.com>, nabrown@btinternet.com <nabrown@btinternet.com>

Copie à : BARTHELAT Fabien (adjoint à la directrice CAR-SPAW) - DEAL Guadeloupe/OH/CARSPAW <fabien.barthelat@developpement-durable.gouv.fr>, jodi.johnson@un.org <jodi.johnson@un.org>

dear Lloyd, dear all,

allow me to clarify: those two meetings are the opportunity to coordinate the MPA working group task force with the means and the consultants of the ACP project.

the purpose is not to listen to something done nor to review something done but to put all our brains together to **produce together the outcomes** that will meet both **the expectations of the project funders AND of Signatory Parties of the SPAW protocol about the regional human network and the SPAW ecological program**;

Of course the ACP consultants are very welcome to share some documents on the platform, and all of us to get acquainted with those documents and them all the work produced within the working group including the one you shared with us recently on it so facilitate discussions. At the end of the meetings we need to have decided what (precised targets), who (consultant + some members) and how (according to which organisation.schedule) the two assigned tasks we have collectively will be produced in the next 2 months.

I thus count on all of you and am looking forward to our meetings next Tuesday and Thursday. and don't hesitate to ask if there is any confusion.

## ANNEX 5

### Last contributions (by emails - L. Gardner, S. Dowdell & T. Bervoets)

**From Lloyd Gardner**

**February 11th 2021**

*Good Day Colleagues,*

*My thoughts on question 1 are well known, so my response below deals with the second question: What are your recommendations for the next STAC? How would you like to see the working group pursue his work and which changes/precision should be added to allow the group to complete its mandate on the Cooperation Program?*

*I propose that the STAC be presented with a report of the process of preparing the cooperation programme, and with the summary report recommending two paths forward:*

*Track 1: Present the draft cooperation framework as a discussion document that introduces the rationale for a comprehensive cooperation framework, and recommend that the preparation of that comprehensive framework take place during the next biennium.*

*Track 2: Identify the most pressing needs of the SPAW-listed sites, and recommend the preparation of a project proposal and detailed workplan to address the priority needs for those sites.*

*I assume that the priority needs will require different operational modalities for implementation, hence the implementation should/could be used to test the utility of the cooperation framework. Based on the progress in meeting the 2020 biodiversity targets, the threats from climate change and development activity, and the increasing pressure for livelihoods support, I suggest the following priority activities for the project:*

- Baseline assessments (including public use and threat assessments).*
- Management effectiveness and performance assessments.*
- Updated management plans based on an agreed template, which are then used to determine capacity needs.*
- Institutional and workforce development activities for site management.*
- National policy and regulatory frameworks.*
- Public engagement and community livelihoods support.*

*Each site will require a different mix of interventions, and those countries who consider their sites to be performing as intended can share knowledge products, practices, and support capacity development activities.*

*Regards.*

*Lloyd.*

***Received from Samantha Dowdell***

***February 11th 2021***

***Key points from each draft:***

*1st Draft submitted in June 2020*

*We appreciate that this document directly corresponded to the task discussed by STAC 8 and included in the Terms of Reference, i.e., it is focused on developing a cooperation program for SPAW-listed protected areas.*

*While experts did not reach consensus on the substantive details of this draft, the major elements one would expect to see (purpose, scope, contents/strategy) were there.*

*The process for how this document was developed, opportunities for expert input, and how it would be presented to the STAC were relatively transparent and straightforward.*

*2nd draft submitted in January 2021*

*We could see value in refining specific sections of this document (e.g., the sections on protected areas, species, ecological networks, capacity development, and evaluation).*

*However, we find a number of elements troubling. For instance, we are concerned by the introduction of a new set of "principles." This document also makes connections to external commitments, programs, and agreements that are not commitments of this Convention or Protocol.*

*We are also concerned that this document goes far beyond what was previously discussed at the STAC, and the idea of expanding the scope of this activity to produce a "framework for cooperation" was not given due consideration by the Working Group.*

*In our view, in order to effectively enhance cooperation and implementation of the Convention and Protocol, we should prioritize and address our greatest needs first. This draft presents a number of "big picture" ideas that we are concerned would not be achievable and/or would not produce tangible benefits.*

*Recommendations for STAC 9:*

*STAC 9 could request the Working Group to develop a paper outlining options for a cooperation program in support of listing protected areas and listed protected areas (pursuant to SPAW Protocol Article 7(2) and Annex I.1.2 in the Working Group Terms of Reference).*

*In doing so, the Working Group should take into account the report on ecological connectivity and review of CaMPAM presented to STAC 9.*

*The options paper should include a brief overview of current cooperation (i.e., how Article 7(2) is being implemented), identify gaps and needs, and explain how the options proposed would modify the status quo.*

*STAC 9 could request the Secretariat and SPAW-RAC to consider opportunities for increased collaboration with existing MPA networks and capacity building initiatives in the region.*

*From Tadzio Bervoets*

*February 11th 2021*

***With regards to point 1:***

*It is well understood and accepted that there is a need for greater cooperation and mutual support through various means for SPAW listed areas*

*MPA Effectiveness tracking should be one of the main components of a cooperation program. This tracking should be unranked and should guide the area managers in their management actions outlined in the respective protected area management plans.*

*There should be serious consideration given to the ability for area managers respond emerging issues and how cooperation can increase this capacity to respond. These include but are not limited to Pandemics, climatic events, global financial crises and the like. The above is applicable on a local and regional scale.*

*I agree with Lloyd in his initial comments on the document that there should be a section on guiding principles*

*The focus with regards to components should indeed be on the promotion of the use of the best available science in order to guide sound policy decisions.*

*I agree with the suggestion that the network could be supported by the RAC but that the governance of said network should be run through a dedicated individual or bureau separate from the RAC and possible taking the form of a RAN.*

***With regards to point 2:***

*If there is one thing I think which should be communicated during the STAC is the need for a more structured supporting role coming from the SPAW-RAC. All members of the working groups are busy professionals and a more structured approach with set dates for meetings, a review process for submitted documentation with end-dates for final review submission and eventual agreement on final documents etc would go a long way in ensuring the efficiency of the work executed by the WGs. As it is now there is not enough structured support coming from the RAC to allow the working group to adequately fulfill its mandate. I do acknowledge that we currently find ourselves in a global crises caused by the pandemic, but this opportunity should be used for the development of a more structured supporting role from the RAC to the various working groups, considering that this is a comment shared by other WGs as well.*

*I hope this suffices from my end and warm regards,*

*Tadzio Bervoets*