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REVISED DRAFT

**GUIDELINES AND CRITERIA FOR THE EVALUATION OF PROTECTED AREAS
TO BE LISTED UNDER THE SPAW PROTOCOL**

REVISED DRAFT**GUIDELINES AND CRITERIA FOR THE EVALUATION OF PROTECTED AREAS
TO BE LISTED UNDER THE SPAW PROTOCOL****I. INTRODUCTION**

1. The SPAW Protocol creates an integrated framework for national obligations to establish and manage protected areas and for regional cooperation on protected areas.
2. Under Article 21, the Parties agree to adopt common guidelines and criteria to assist with the identification, selection, establishment, and management of protected areas.
3. According to Article 7 of the Protocol SPAW, the Parties shall establish a List of protected areas to create a regional network of protected areas and develop a cooperation programme. The purpose of this List is therefore to contribute to the conservation of the Caribbean natural heritage by selecting those protected areas that will be part of a representative network of protected areas and participate in a regional cooperation program.
4. Nominations to the List must provide supporting documentation to demonstrate that the nomination fulfils the common guidelines and criteria on matters adopted by the Parties and established pursuant to Article 21.
5. The First Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the SPAW Protocol (24-25 September 2001, Havana, Cuba) agreed to develop guidelines and criteria for the evaluation of protected areas to be listed under the SPAW Protocol.
6. The procedures for the establishment of the List of protected areas are outlined in Article 7(3).
7. For the purposes of these listing guidelines, the SPAW Protocol defines “protected areas” in Articles 1 and 4. “Protected Area” refers to an area that has been established pursuant to Article 4.
8. The regional network of protected areas will contribute to achieving the targets of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD, 26 August- 4 September, 2002) to establish representative networks of protected areas under multilateral agreements and programmes including but not limited to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and its *Program of Work on Protected Areas*, Millennium Development Goals, World Parks Congress’ Durban Accord, World Heritage Convention, Ramsar Convention, relevant UNESCO programmes including Man and the Biosphere Programme, Convention on Migratory Species, International Whaling Commission, and other international treaty frameworks.

A. General Principles

In establishing the SPAW List of Protected Areas, the Contracting Parties will be guided by the following general principles:

- I. The List of Protected Areas shall be comprised of sites that sustain the natural resources of the Wider Caribbean Region, and encourage ecologically sound and appropriate use, understanding and enjoyment of these areas, pursuant to SPAW Article 4.
- II. Such sites shall contribute to
 - Protecting and preserving areas with special values;
 - Protecting and preserving habitats and species with special ecological and economic values;
 - Preventing species from becoming endangered or threatened, according to SPAW Article 4(d), and
 - Providing for the special needs of threatened, endangered, endemic or migratory species in particular those species on Annexes I, II, III.
- III. The Protected Areas will contribute to create a network aiming at the effective conservation of the Caribbean natural heritage.
- IV. The Parties shall develop co-operative agreements on bilateral and multilateral bases in the field of conservation and management of natural sites to promote the effectiveness of the network.

[To use the SPAW site network as tool to promote regional and international cooperation in relation to complementary environmental treaties, consistent with the SPAW criteria and listing process]
- V. No limit is imposed on the total number of areas included in the List nor on the number of areas any individual Party can propose for inscription.
- VI. The sites will be selected on a scientific and technical basis and included in the list based on the criteria below. *Delete the rest of the sentence*
- VII. Legal, institutional and management frameworks are prerequisites for being listed.
- VIII. The network should facilitate the creation of a comprehensive, and representative system of protected areas in the wider Caribbean region, across all bioregions and across a range of ecosystems within bioregions.
- IX. The network should contribute to the adaptation and mitigation of the impact of global climate change to the extent possible.
- X. Provide opportunities for recreation, sustainable livelihoods, and conservation of the aesthetic and cultural values considering the needs of all users.

Any area to be included in the list of protected areas recognized by the SPAW Protocol must fulfill the requirements of the SPAW protocol, and conform to the following guidelines and criteria:

B. Ecological, Cultural and Socio-Economic Criteria

Only protected areas established consistent with Article 4 are to be considered for inclusion on the List. Article 4 states that protected areas shall be established with a view to sustaining the natural resources of the Wider Caribbean Region and encouraging ecologically sound and appropriate use, understanding and enjoyment of these areas, in accordance with the objectives and characteristics of each of them, within a framework of sustainable development.

Consequently, a Protected Area must conform to the mandatory Ecological Criteria b and c and, where applicable to, at least one of the Cultural and Socio-Economic Criteria.

The same Protected Area can in addition fulfil several of the desirable criteria, and such a circumstance cannot but strengthen the case for the inclusion of the area in the List.

Ecological Criteria

The area is of key importance for conserving the components of biological diversity in the Wider Caribbean Region:

- a) Representativeness – the protected areas **should** be representative of the region or ecoregion's characteristic physiographic features, species, populations, habitats and ecosystems types or ecological processes.
- b) Size – The protected area **must** have an adequate size to ensure the conservation of the elements for which it is listed.
- c) Species - The area **must** help prevent species from becoming endangered or threatened.
- d) Uniqueness – The area **should** contain unique or rare species, habitats, or ecosystems. An area or ecosystem is unique if it is among the few of its kind in the country or Wider Caribbean Region or has been seriously depleted across its range. The area may contain habitats that occur in a limited area, or rare, endemic, threatened or endangered species that are geographically restricted.
- e) Naturalness – The area **should** have a high degree of naturalness as a result of the lack of or low level of human-induced disturbance and degradation.
- f) Critical habitats – The protected areas **should** contain habitats and ecosystems that are critical to the survival and have recovery of endangered, threatened, endemic species, or to species listed in Annex I, II and III of the Protocol.
- g) Diversity – The area **should** contain the variety or richness of species, communities, ecosystems, landscape, seascape and genetic diversity that allow for the conservation of their long term viability and integrity, especially where there are endangered, threatened, endemic and/or migratory species, and those listed under the SPAW Protocol.
- h) Connectivity/coherence – Protected areas that are adjacent, transboundary or ecologically connected and thus contribute to the regional network are valued components of the regional network and **should** be considered if nominated by the Parties which have jurisdiction over these areas.

- i) Resilience – The area **may** contain biological components (habitats, species or populations) that have the ability to recover to from disturbances in a reasonable timeframe, or are naturally resistant to threats such as climate change. For example, the protection of these areas may be able to enhance the recovery of damaged ecosystem elsewhere in the ecoregion by providing a source of larvae and juveniles.

Cultural and Socio-Economic Criteria

- a) Productivity – The protected area should conserve, maintain and restore natural processes that contribute to increase the abundance of natural resources used by humans, as a contribution to regional sustainable development.
- b) Cultural and traditional use – The protected area should have a special value in the regional context in order to conserve, maintain and restore the productivity and biological integrity of natural resources that provide for sustainable traditional or cultural activities such as those of indigenous communities
- c) Socio-economic benefits – The protected area should have a special value in the regional context in order to conserve, maintain and restore the productivity and biological integrity of natural resources that provide for economic or social benefits of user groups such as subsistence fishermen and rural communities, or economic sectors such as tourism.

C. Legal Criteria Framework

- I. The protected area **must** have a legal status, guaranteeing its effective long-term protection, in conformity with the Party’s national legislation and international law and consistent with the SPAW Protocol, including Articles 3, 4, 5 and 6.
- II. [In the case of areas situated, partly or wholly, on the high sea or in a zone where the limits of national sovereignty or jurisdiction have not yet been defined, the legal status, the management plan, the applicable measures and the other elements provided for in Article 9(?) of the Protocol will be provided in accordance with UNCLOS??? by the neighbouring Parties concerned in the proposal for inclusion in the SPAW List.]

D. Protection, Planning and Management Measures

Any protected area to be listed **must** have a management plan and a mechanism for implementation that conforms to the following:

I. Management Plan

- a) *The protected area **must** have a management plan that has been adopted by the Party and specifies the legal and institutional framework and protection measures applicable to the area consistent with Article 6 of the Protocol.
- b) *The protected area **must** have a functional management body with the authority and means to implement the plan.
- c) *Conservation and management objectives for an area **must** be clearly defined in nomination documentation, management guidelines and management plan and be implemented by the measures consistent with Article 5.2. The protected area management plan **should** be integrated within the larger planning framework of the Party where possible.

- d) The planning, management and enforcement measures identified **should** be based on available traditional, scientific, technical and management-oriented knowledge and information. The management plan **should** address programmes to fill shortcomings in knowledge and information.

II. Evaluation

The plan **should** include appropriate indicators to measure the management success, pursuant to Article 6.2(c).

NOTE: For the reporting procedure, in order to promote cooperation, documentation should demonstrate that the Party concurs in the participation of the listed site in the cooperation programme pursuant to Article 7.

III. Stakeholders

The relevant stakeholders and local communities **should** be involved through inclusive and participatory processes in the planning and management of the protected area as appropriate. Such participatory process **should** include institutional arrangements for the effective participation and empowerment of stakeholders and local communities.

IV. Implementation Mechanism

- a) With regard to the characteristics specific to each site, the management plan **should** address those measures cited in Article 5.2 which are relevant to both the goals and objectives and specific threats at that particular site and that are within the scope of the management plan.
- b) The management plan **should** address public awareness and education programmes for users, decision-makers and the public to enhance their appreciation and understanding of protected areas and of the objectives for which they were established, and empower their participation in planning and management as appropriate.
- c) The protected area **must** have a research and monitoring programme that allows for assessing the effectiveness of the management scheme to achieve the conservation goals. The programme should use appropriate indicators to evaluate the impact of conservation measures on the status of species populations, habitats and ecological processes within the protected area and its surroundings, as well as the impact of the management scheme over the local human communities.

V. Management Effectiveness:

The protected area **must** demonstrate that the management scheme is adequate to achieve its biophysical and socioeconomic objectives.

E. **Annotated Format for the Presentation Reports for the Areas Proposed for inclusion in the SPAW Protected Areas List**

The STAC did not explicitly ask for the preparation of such a document. The group chose to draft a form to be filled in that would be of use to the Parties in making nominations for protected areas to be included in the SPAW list pursuant to

Articles 7(3) and 19(2) and the criteria set out. [see Draft Annotated Format: UNEP(DEC)/CAR WG.26/3]

F. Preliminary Procedure Proposal (Procedures for Listing and DeListing)

The STAC did not explicitly ask the group address to the procedures, but the group chose to clarify the procedures described in Article 7(3) of the SPAW Protocol:

- Each Party making a nomination shall provide the STAC with the necessary supporting documentation, including in particular, the information noted in Article 19(2).
- The presentation report shall include the nomination-completed form.
- A grid will be used by the SPAW/RAC and the STAC for SPAW to perform the due-diligence regarding the nomination for inclusion of sites in the SPAW Protected Areas List. [Draft Grid for the Objective Evaluation of Proposals for inclusion in the SPAW Protected Areas List: UNEP(DEC)/CAR WG.26/4].

Listed protected areas shall report periodically to the STAC through the Organization regarding changes in the status of protected areas pursuant to Articles 15, 19 and 20. Protected areas may be removed from the list by the same procedures by which they were incorporated, pursuant to Article 15.