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**UPDATE ON THE NEW CARIBBEAN MARINE PROTECTED AREAS MANAGERS
NETWORK AND FORUM (CaMPAM) AND ITS MAJOR ACTIVITIES**

Update on the new Caribbean Marine Protected Areas Managers Network and Forum (CaMPAM) and its major activities

During the 2006-2007 biennium, the Caribbean Marine Protected Areas Managers (CaMPAM) Network and Forum developed and implemented several activities, primarily as follows:

1. The Training of Trainers Programme for MPA Managers of the Wider Caribbean

1.1 *Regional courses.* Two were delivered during the biennium, namely:

- a. The fifth course for English-speaking countries was held on 6-18 February in Long Key, Florida, and was attended by 11 MPA managers from The Bahamas, Belize, Grenada, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, U.S. Virgin Islands, Jamaica, French Guyana and Guadeloupe. It was funded by the MacArthur Foundation, but it also benefited from the support of several local organizations and individuals that provided logistical resources, expertise and lectures. Among them were the following: NOAA, Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, The Nature Conservancy, Environmental Mooring Buoys Inc., and others.
- b. The sixth course for Spanish-speaking countries, was held on 9-22 September 2007 in Tulum, Mexico, and was attended by 14 MPA managers and practitioners from Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Haiti, México, Panama, Nicaragua, and Venezuela, most of them MPA or natural resources agencies staff, but also one college professor and one MPA specialist from an international conservation organization. This course was also funded by the MacArthur Foundation, and had the contribution of Instituto Universitario de Tulum; Fundación Origenes de Quintana Roo; Energías Renovables de Quintana Roo, The Nature Conservancy; Amigos de Sian Ka'an; Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve; Comisión de Areas Naturales Protegidas de Mexico; Región Yucatan; Fishing-tourism Cooperative Vigía Chico; Oceanus A.C, and Instituto Tecnológico de Chetumal.

In both courses, the biophysical setting, the contact with the management tools and problems in mature protected areas, as well as the contribution of local organizations and experts were critical to the success of the training activity. The benefits included not only the knowledge acquired through lectures, and trainees' active discussions, but also the interaction with the local MPA managers, and representatives of the fishing and tourism industry that make use of the area. The Spanish-language course had the formal co-sponsorship of TNC Mesoamerican Reef Program, which provided instructors and funding for the local follow-up courses in the Mesoamerican Region (Guatemala and Mexico). We expect this partnership modality to continue in future courses, as a way to bring additional resources and build synergy with organizations that have similar conservation agendas.

- 1.2 *Local follow-up courses.* As a result of these two courses, and following the principle of the "Training the Trainers" concept, the trainees' institutions committed to implement a local training activity with financial support from UNEP or co-sponsor such as TNC-MAR, sixteen local training activities have been implemented or are underway in 11 countries (The Bahamas, Belize, Grenada, Jamaica, French Guyana and Guadeloupe, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Haiti, México, and Panama. Remaining courses in Nicaragua, St. Vincent

and the Grenadines, and Venezuela, are expected to be implemented by September 2008. These local activities included training for: ecotourism guides in PNN Old Providencia McBean Lagoon, Colombia; mangrove conservation in Caracol Bay, Haiti; park rangers and managers in Belize and development of a co-management model for Sandy Island/Oyster Bay, Grenada. Approximately 250 people were trained in both regional and local courses, with a considerable impact in MPA capacity.

1.3 *Training programme evaluation and improvement.* In order to improve the programme, in 2007 UNEP-CEP commissioned an evaluation of the programme since its inception and an update of the Manual. The evaluation, based on a survey of alumni and experts, also included an analysis of the training needs of the region. The results indicated that the programme had a high impact with regard to strengthening MPA capacity, as well as a great buy-in by the Caribbean MPA community. The evaluation provided a number of recommendations to improve the programme and adapt it to the changing conditions of the Caribbean MPA management community. It can be consulted at (<http://www.cep.unep.org/publications/spaw/TOT-evaluation.pdf>). In addition, the Training Manual English and Spanish versions were revised and updated based on the experience of 5 regional courses and the programme's evaluation. Slide presentations (in PowerPoint) and a virtual library that include bibliographical references (and hyperlinks to download the pdf files) grouped by categories, were added to the Manual package. (<http://www.cep.unep.org/publications/spaw/TOT-manual-en.pdf> and <http://www.cep.unep.org/publications/spaw/TOT-manual-es.pdf>) All these activities, the Manual updating, programme evaluation, and the experience of the regional and follow-up local courses during these two years, allowed UNEP-CEP to explore additional changes in the Training of Trainers programme, which can be summarized as follows:

- a. **Training tools.** This includes other training tools such as job shading, mentorship programmes, managers' exchange visits (applying the old ICRAN-funded model of using the existing expertise in more mature MPAs as "demonstration sites" or "learning centres" where managers from "target sites", with less experience but ready to assimilate such training opportunity, can spend some time tutored by the expert manager). The fact that many MPAs in the Caribbean have achieved a certain level of expertise in important issues such as community-based ecotourism, best practices, natural resources monitoring, etc., allows for taking advantage of this expertise to build the capacity of others at more initial stages of development. These "internships" will be supervised through an expert at the site and under the overall guidance and supervision of the Coordinator of the CaMPAM training programme.
- b. Regional course venue, agenda and teaching methods. Qualification of MPA managers has increased in the last years, and the training needs have changed to a more graduate-type of teaching. The following changes should better address the region's current needs:

Agenda and venue. Include more specialized lectures and hands-on sessions on emerging issues in MPA management, using local expertise and venue resources, for study cases and exercises. Use the Training of Trainers Manual modules as a guide or source of consultation rather than a chart for designing the course agenda.

Pre and post course activities. Add to the regional course some previous tasks to make trainees do some homework prior to traveling and to bring information to be used by the Coordinator and the instructors. Include individual activities other than the follow-up local training course that can allow UNEP-CEP to build a “learning community” with the alumni and contribute to their training in other matters.

- c. ***Trainee selection.*** Select more trainees with teaching experience (MPA managers who have some academic background) so they can better replicate the knowledge acquired at the follow-up local training courses.

1.4 ***Manual updating.*** Marine conservation science has generated in the last years a wealth of publications and methodologies on planning, managing and measuring the success of MPAs. Publications are abundant and it is difficult to keep up by incorporating them to the text of the Manual. The best way to do this is by adding to the Manual “package” a series of information materials and references that can be updated regularly, to make it current with MPA science and practice. These materials (methodologies, study cases, scientific papers, powerpoint presentations and classes, web links maps, reports, etc.) can be posted in the course web portal for instructors, future trainees, and alumni, conveniently labeled and organized so they can be downloaded and used as additional information and for case illustration. The current e-library can be updated continuously and become an e-learning tool for the training programme.

2. CaMPAM MPA Database

The regional MPA database was restructured and is currently available at the website <http://cep.unep.caribbeanmpa>. A consultant was hired to populate it, however, despite the great effort, many MPAs remain outdated. Among the main reasons are the following: lack for information for many fields for most MPAs; poor response from MPA managers and other primary sources of information to data requests; and insufficient technical support for its continuous maintenance. UNEP-CEP presented the status of the CaMPAM MPA database population project at the “GEF-IWCAM and OAS-IABIN Regional Workshop on Indicators”, in March 2008. This workshop was attended by 10 protected area database experts from The Nature Conservancy, academia, UNEP-WCMC, and the InterAmerican Biodiversity Information Network (IABIN of the OAS, as well as 12 MPA managers from Caribbean countries and territories. The CaMPAM database structure received great reviews, and it was clear the needs and opportunity for sharing information with similar efforts such as the World Database of Protected Area (WDPA) managed by WCMC-UNEP (<http://www.unep-wcmc.org/wdpa/>) and the IABN (<http://www.iabin.net/>) database.

It also became apparent that there is now a higher awareness among MPA managers on the needs to create updated database and coordinate efforts among the different relevant initiatives to avoid waste of resources and ensure information quality. In addition, it was also evident that such an endeavor can only be well developed if there is permanent technical staff that can work on the data acquisition, quality control, populating, sharing with the public and with similar initiatives or sites, national and regional ones, as well as the international ones mentioned above. The latter requires the involvement of CaMPAM partners to the project, and the acquisition of additional resources. UNEP-CEP is currently seeking for the engagement of partners that can assist in this regard to ensure the full benefits of this unique database to the entire MPA community.

3. CaMPAM Institutional Partners and Coordination

Partners. In addition to UNEP-CEP, the most active partner of CaMPAM is the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI). GCFI is the most renowned forum in the wider Caribbean for fisheries managers and scientists, as well as conservation scientists and practitioners. The CaMPAM partnership was revamped in 2004 during the White Water to Blue Water conference in 2004 (see <http://www.gcfi.org/campam/CaMPAM.htm> for more information). This long-lasting relationship is a good example on how regional institutions and programmes can contribute to CaMPAM initiatives and activities, while being mutually beneficial. During the 2006-2007 period, GCFI has contributed to CaMPAM as follows:

- Organization of MPA related sessions during each Annual Meeting, as the region-wide annual forum for MPA managers in the Caribbean
- Funding the attendance of several MPA managers and conservation-minded fishers to GCFI meetings and their active participation of MPA related sessions.
- Management since 2007 of the UNEP-CEP & GCFI Small Grants Fund/Exchange Programme for sustainable fisheries and alternative livelihoods for fishers (announcement, proposals review and selection, project fund granting and reporting processing). This grant opportunity provides funding for implementing projects aiming at promoting marine resources management best practices. Four grants are ongoing: “Enhancing marine resources governance through developing capacity for communication in the Eastern Caribbean” (led by the Centre for Resources Management and Environmental Studies, University of West Indies, and implemented in Antigua, Barbados, Grenada and St. Lucia); “Towards a sustainable bonefish recreational fishery at Los Roques Archipelago National Park”, Venezuela; “Exchange between Juanillo-Punta Cana (D.R.) fishers and the Yucatan Peninsula MPA fisheries managers to build capacity on coral reef monitoring and community-based better fishing practices development; and “Strengthening and networking of fisher folk organizations (FFOs) at the community, national and regional levels in the CARICOM region” – a cooperation between the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) Secretariat, CERMES-UWI and Antigua & Barbuda Fisheries Alliance Inc.

Coordination. Due to the lack of staff and resources, CaMPAM activities have been almost fully coordinated and supervised by UNEP-CEP, with an important contribution from GCFI, some isolated support from a few agencies, and the volunteer contribution of some individuals. These contributions have fluctuated over the last years, but have never been sufficient to fulfill the role of a coordinator. The creation of a CaMPAM coordinator is expected to maintain and enhance the activity of the network, and fulfill the goal for which it was created, enhance the capacity of Caribbean MPA managers, using better the resources available and seeking for additional ones.

The activities developed during the last years, suggest the need of having a formal coordinator that can implement the following:

- Assess the current MPA managers training needs;
- Identify opportunities for MPA manager training resources (courses, workshops, exchange visits, mentorships) organized by relevant organizations (eg. UNEP-CEP, TNC, NOAA, WWF, CATIE, and national NGO and GO) and build upon these efforts;

- Assist and promote CaMPAM Training of Trainers and Small Grant Programmes
- Coordinate special partnerships with organizations and programmes, such as US NOAA, TNC's Coral Reef Resilience Enhancement and Climate Change Programme, Area Conservation Planning and Management Plan; Mesoamerican Reef Programme Learning Center, individual MPA web sites, etc.
- Enhance membership by incorporating all MPA managers in the region;
- Enhance information resources and promote discussion within the membership via CaMPAM listserv (grant opportunities, papers, emergent issues, events, lessons learned, best practices, education programs, etc.)
- Liaise with relevant list serves (Coral list, GCFI net, Caribbean Biodiversity etc.)
- Provide assistance to the membership on grant proposal opportunities and development, as well as sources of information for enhancing MPA management effectiveness
- Assist the updating of the Caribbean MPA database and share data with similar efforts (Inter American Biodiversity Information Network; World Database of Protected Areas and individual MPA web sites);
- Manage CaMPAM Steering Committee;
- Mobilize volunteer efforts to expand CaMPAM activities; and
- Seek funding (write and submit proposals to funding agencies) to develop and support CaMPAM and MPA strengthening related activities in the region.

Currently a funding opportunity by NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program is being explored to fund a coordinator for CaMPAM. This will allow the network to develop these activities and enhance CaMPAM impact in MPA capacity building in the Caribbean.

4. List Server

The CaMPAM list-serve continued to operate during the biennium with over 200 participants listed in the electronic mailing list, representing not only MPA managers and personnel but also governmental and non-governmental institutions and organizations involved and/or interested in issues relevant to MPA management in the region. The list-serve has been used as mechanism to disseminate information relevant to MPA management in the Wider Caribbean and to the staff of MPAs in the region. Ideally it should be used also as a platform for discussion but this role has been very minimal to date within the list-serve and needs to be enhanced with the assistance of the CaMPAM Coordinator.