



Objectives & Missions Statement

SPAW RAC

**Regional Activity Centre
for Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife
in the Wider Caribbean Region**



*RAC : Regional Activity Centre
SPAW : Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife*

Framework : The Cartagena Convention

The Convention *for the Protection and development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region*. (Cartagena Convention), was adopted by the Wider Caribbean States and territories in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, in March 1983. This agreement is part of a global programme for the protection of regional seas worldwide : the Regional Seas Conventions of the United Nations Environment Programme. The Cartagena Convention is the only regional environmental treaty that protects the marine and coastal ecosystems of the Wider Caribbean while also promoting regional cooperation.

UNEP Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP) is the operational supporting programme for this Convention.

The Regional Coordination Unit of UNEP (UNEP-RAC/RCU) based in Kingston, Jamaica is the Secretariat of the Convention. Its role is to coordinate the CEP and the activities to be implemented for the protection of marine environment in the Wider Caribbean Region.



Geographic scope



The scope of the Convention encompasses the entire Wider Caribbean Region, not only the islands of the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico, but also near-by continental areas which watersheds connecting with those marine spaces. **A total of 37 States and Territories (including 28 independent countries) is encompassed**, from the Florida peninsula to the Guyanas shield and from Cuba to Trinidad and Tobago.

What is the SPAW Protocol ?

Signed in January 1990, the SPAW Protocol is one of the three Protocols developed to further implement the Cartagena Convention. Its objectives are:

- The protection, preservation and sustainable management of areas of particular ecological interest and;
- The protection and preservation of threatened species of wildlife or those on the verge of extinction.

The SPAW Protocol became an international law on 18 June 2000.

At the beginning of 2012, 16 States of the Wider Caribbean Region have ratified the SPAW Protocol: the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize,

Colombia, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, France (Guadeloupe, Guyane, Martinique, Saint-Barthelemy, Saint-Martin), Grenada, Guyana, the Netherlands (Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao, Saba, Sint-Eustatius, Sint Maarten), Panama, Saint-Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, the United States (States along the Gulf of Mexico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto-Rico), Venezuela.



Why do we need Regional Activity Centres ?

In order to assist with the implementation of each protocol of the Cartagena Convention, the Contracting Parties decided to create the Regional Activity Centres (RAC).

One of them, dedicated to assist in cases of emergency with oil spills, is based in Curacao, Caribbean Netherlands. Two RACs devoted to the Protocol on land-based pollutions have been created in Trinidad and Tobago and Cuba.

In an effort to facilitate the implementation of the SPAW Protocol, France has agreed to host a RAC dedicated to SPAW in Guadeloupe. The SPAW RAC has been hosted by the National Park of Guadeloupe since July 2009.



What are the missions of the SPAW-RAC ?

The SPAW-RAC's main role is to contribute to the improvement of the management of protected areas and species and to support cooperation between countries for the protection of the marine and coastal biodiversity.

The missions of the SPAW-RAC are decided in close collaboration with the United Nation Environment Programme. They include :

- Compilation and inventory of relevant scientific and technical information as well as useful experiments and dissemination to Caribbean stakeholders,
- Development of training activities and information,
- Providing scientific and technical assistance to SPAW Parties,
- Contribution to the development of regional cooperation with respect to the objectives of SPAW and development of common projects between countries,
- Facilitation of regular exchanges between Caribbean stakeholders,
- Promotion of standardized approaches and methods,
- Development of guidelines and criteria for the identification, selection, establishment, management and protection of areas and species targeted by SPAW.



Workplans

The framework for implementing actions developed within the SPAW Protocol is the biennial workplans elaborated jointly with the signatory countries, that are reviewed by the SPAW Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee, and are formally approved during the meetings of the Conference of the Parties to SPAW that take place every two years. The purpose of the workplans is to determine, step by step, priorities for action that SPAW Parties want to focus on both at the level of each country and from the perspective of cooperation and regional coordination, in order to reach gradually the objectives pursued by the Protocol and to ensure the sound

enforcement of its measures.

Four major themes structure the successive workplans:

- establishment and strengthening of protected areas,
- development of guidelines for the management of protected areas and species,
- preservation of threatened and endangered species,
- preservation and sustainable use of coastal and marine ecosystems.

Why cooperate with the Spaw-rac ?

More than 70% of the 80 million inhabitants of the Wider Caribbean Region live in coastal areas, and a large part of their economy depends on coastal resources, in particular for tourism and the fishing industry. However, studies show that the natural resources of the Caribbean are severely affected by intensive fishing and destructive practices. The total quantity of takes are strongly decreased in coastal waters.

In 2011, more than 75% of the coral reefs of the Caribbean was considered threatened, of which 30% severely threatened. There have been a little more than 300 protected areas establish over the last 20 years, and less than 30% of them are correctly managed.

A technical tool, the SPAW-RAC has the major part of its activities focused on the community of countries interested in the environment of the Wider Caribbean. The Regional Activity Centre aims to be a facilitator for disseminating information and knowledge on biodiversity for the region. It is thus an instrument for regional cooperation which objective is to support exchanges in order to better value and share skills for the sustainable development of Caribbean territories.



Project funding

A large number of funds and sources of funding exist to support projects that can contribute to the implementation of the various components of the SPAW protocol and its workplan. These sources of funding differ in particular according to:

- nature of eligible projects,
- scale of these projects,
- eligible project leaders,
- target areas where the projects can be implemented,
- matching funds requested.

Some examples of funds: the European Development Fund; the Global Environment Facility; the French Fund for the Global Environment (aka French GEF); the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Funds; the Funds for Regional Cooperation of Guadeloupe, French Guyana and Martinique; the Small Grant Programme of UNEP/CEP-CAMPAM-GCFI; the Darwin Initiative; foundations as for example the MacArthur Foundation, the Nicolas Hulot Foundation; etc.

You will find more information about available sources of funding on our web site, section «Funds and financing» : www.car-spaw-rac.org.



Contact us :



CAR-SPAW

Cité Guillard, rue des Bougainvilliers

97100 Basse-Terre – Guadeloupe (FWI)

Tel : +33 (0) 5 90 80 14 99

Internet Address : www.car-spaw-rac.org

Courriel : contact@car-spaw-rac.fr



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