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

Virtual, 30 January – 1 February 2023

POTENTIAL COSTS, BENEFITS, AND OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MARINE MAMMAL REGIONAL ACTIVITY NETWORK (RAN)

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Summary

This document was prepared by SPAW RAC, with input from a group constituted of SPAW focal points and country representatives, in response to STAC 9 recommendation N°8 (endorsed by COP 11): "The Secretariat and SPAW-RAC, in close consultation with SPAW Contracting Parties, and other relevant stakeholders, consider the potential costs, benefits, and operational framework of a Marine Mammal Regional Activity Network (RAN), taking into account the good results of the CARI'MAM project and network, and draft a proposal for discussion at SPAW STAC10 regarding how such a RAN could operate".

The document presents some background information (institutional framework, how the project has emerged, examples of networks working in close collaboration with SPAW RAC), some recommendations for the constitution of a marine mammal RAN Institution, and a proposed architecture for the RAN.

The main recommendations of the contributors regarding the RAN architecture were: to establish a RAN with a broad mission and a broad geographic scope of activities, as well as a well-framed programming and a strong governance, in order to have a high impact on regional cooperation, capacity building, and species conservation. Regarding the RAN status, the contributors stressed that the RAN needed to be officially recognized as such by Contracting Parties, and a MoU should be established with the SPAW Sub-Programme of the Cartagena Convention. Furthermore, it was recommended that the RAN be hosted by a SPAW Party or be a new independent organization specifically and solely dedicated to the RAN. Regarding the executive team and the budget, contributors recommended to hire only one project officer in the first years and to focus on core missions and on fundraising to develop the RAN. Finally, the contributors stressed that core funding is needed to ensure the RAN sustainability, at least for its core missions.

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ACRONYMS

CaMPAM	Caribbean Marine Protected Area Management Network and Forum
CEP	(UNEP) Caribbean Environment Programme
COP	Conference of the Parties
GCFI	Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of nature
MMAP	SPAW Marine Mammal Action Plan
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPA	Marine Protected Area
RAC	Regional Activity Center
RAN	Regional Activity network
SPAW	Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife protocol
STAC	Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee of the SPAW protocol
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WCR	Wider Caribbean Region
WIDECAST	Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle network

Potential costs, benefits, and operational framework for the establishment of a Marine Mammal Regional Activity Network (RAN)

This document was prepared in response to STAC 9 recommendation N°8 (endorsed by COP 11): "The Secretariat and SPAW-RAC, in close consultation with SPAW Contracting Parties, and other relevant stakeholders, consider the potential costs, benefits, and operational framework of a Marine Mammal Regional Activity Network (RAN), taking into account the good results of the CARI'MAM project and network, and draft a proposal for discussion at SPAW STAC10 regarding how such a RAN could operate."

This document was drafted with input from a group constituted of SPAW focal points and country representatives:

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SPAW RAC (Sandrine Pivard, Géraldine Conruyt, Claire Pusineri) facilitated the group of contributors.

1 BACKGROUND FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SPAW MARINE MAMMAL RAN

1.1 Institutional framework for RACs and RANs of the Cartagena Convention

1. UNEP CEP has produced in 2008 guidelines for the establishment and operations of Regional Activity Centers (RACs) and Regional Activity Networks (RANs) for the Cartagena Convention[1]. This document provides the following definition: RACs and RANs represent an institutional framework of Wider Caribbean regional and technical cooperation for the purpose to respectively coordinate and implement activities (RACs) or provide expertise (RANs), in support of the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols.

2. A RAC is a financially autonomous, international or regional organization, or regional or national institution with regional focus, which has been designated by the Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention to coordinate or carry out specific technical functions and activities in support of the Convention and its Protocols or any future protocols[1].

3. In the framework of the Specially Protected Area and Wildlife (SPAW) Protocol, the relevant RAC is the SPAW RAC. The mission of the SPAW RAC is to contribute to the improvement of the management of SPAW protected areas and species and to support cooperation between countries for the protection of marine and coastal biodiversity[2]. The services provided by the SPAW RAC include, among others:
    ● compile and inventory relevant scientific and technical information as well as useful experiences and facilitate their dissemination to Caribbean stakeholders;
    ● develop capacity building activities;
    ● provide scientific and technical assistance to SPAW Parties;
    ● contribute to the development of regional cooperation with respect to the objectives of SPAW;
    ● contribute to the development of common projects between countries and facilitation of regular exchanges between Caribbean stakeholders;
    ● promote standardized approaches and methods;

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[1] UNEP CEP (2008) Guidelines for Establishment and Operation of Regional Activity Centers and Regional Activity Networks for The Cartagena Convention UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.28/INF.5

[2] Agreement between the Government of the French Republic and the United Nations Environment Programme for the Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention regarding the establishment in the French Department of Guadeloupe of a Regional Activities Center for the Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife in the Wider Caribbean Region.

- support the development of guidelines and criteria for identification, selection, establishment, management and protection of areas and species targeted by SPAW.

4. A RAN is a network of technical institutions and individuals (including governmental, intergovernmental, non-governmental and academic and scientific organizations) that provide input, peer review, and expertise through the relevant RAC, in a specific scientific or technical area of expertise to increase the level and depth of cooperation and sharing of expertise in the Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP) region[1]. However, a RAN's mission may be broader. For example, the WIDECAST (Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle network) RAN mission also includes communication and networking, capacity building, technical and financial assistance for research, monitoring and assessment programmes.

5. Institutions and individuals within the RAN, must be well known in their area of expertise and be willing to provide advice and input to the RAC free of charge, unless arranged otherwise. When under a contractual arrangement with UNEP-CAR/RCU, any institution within a RAN would provide services on an "at-cost" basis.

6. RANs are coordinated by the RAC in their respective technical area, in accordance with the UNEP/CEP guidelines (2008) and with the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the UNEP Caribbean Regional Coordinating Unit (CAR/RCU) and the SPAW RAC. A RAN may be constituted in the Wider Caribbean Region when the circumstances necessitate the creation of a RAN[1].

7. Any RAC may form a RAN with the approval of the Contracting Parties. The RAC should invite relevant institutions to form the RAN[1]. RANs may also be formed by Partner NGO´s.

8. It should be noted that the UNEP CEP guidelines are currently being reviewed, so additional recommendations regarding RANs establishment and operation should be taken into account in the near future.

1.2 The establishment of a Marine Mammal RAN: a growing issue of the SPAW protocol

1.2.1 Marine mammal conservation is a major issue in the WCR

9. The Wider Caribbean Region (WCR) hosts a highly diversified community of marine mammals, with more than 35 species identified so far, among which two are endemic (the Guiana dolphin, *Sotalia guianensis*, and the West Indian manatee, *Trichechus manatus*). Currently, seven of these species have been classified as Critically Endangered, Endangered or Vulnerable, in the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) global red list; two are designated as Nearly Threatened, and at least eight are considered Data Deficient. Marine mammals also hold a unique place in the collective

psyche and economies of the WCR. Indeed, as a breeding and calving ground for some marine mammal species, the warm waters of the Caribbean see the perennial return or residency of several marine mammal species and populations that drive tourism or are a natural resource to be consumed or utilized by others. In addition, most marine mammal species are highly mobile and are therefore a shared natural resource among all SPAW Contracting Parties. Finally, all marine mammal species are protected under the Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) Protocol (*i.e.*, all are currently listed in the Annex II of the Protocol).

1.2.2 Assessment of the SPAW Marine Mammal Action Plan (MMAP)

10. In 2008, a Marine Mammal Action Plan (MMAP) was adopted at SPAW COP5[3]. The envisioned purpose of this Plan was to guide the development and implementation of marine mammal focused initiatives by SPAW Contracting Parties, and to assist in the prioritization of marine mammal protection and the development of national recovery plans. In 2021, the SPAW with two consultants led an assessment of the progress made by SPAW Contracting Parties and other countries in the region towards achieving implementation of the MMAP since its adoption. This assessment was submitted to SPAW Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) 9[4,5]. One of the foremost recommendations of their work was to create a Marine Mammal RAN to strengthen existing regional institutional frameworks and partnerships and to facilitate collaborative data sharing, building on the foundations of the CARI'MAM project.

1.2.3 STAC 9 recommendation N°8

11. During STAC 9, the Netherlands presented an Information Paper on Establishing a Marine Mammal RAN in the Wider Caribbean Region[6]. The purpose of this information paper was to present the rationale for the establishment of a Marine Mammal RAN and to explore the steps to create such a network for the conservation and management of marine mammals in the Wider Caribbean Region.

12. After discussion, the Contracting Parties recommended that: "The Secretariat and SPAW-RAC, in close consultation with SPAW Contracting Parties, and other relevant stakeholders, consider the potential costs, benefits, and operational framework of a

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[3] UNEP (2008) Action Plan for the conservation of marine mammals in the Wider Caribbean Region.

[4] SPAW-RAC. (2020). Implementation of the Action Plan for Marine Mammals in the Wider Caribbean Region: A Technical and programmatic overview. UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG 42/INF.29.

[5] SPAW-RAC. (2020). Implementation of the Action Plan for Marine Mammals in the Wider Caribbean Region: A Scientific and Technical Analysis. Authored by Vail, C. and Borobia, M. UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG 42/INF.29-Appendix 1.

[6] Information Paper on Establishing a Marine Mammal Regional Activity Network in the Wider Caribbean Region. UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.42/INF.23

Marine Mammal Regional Activity Network (RAN), taking into account the good results of the CARI'MAM project and network, and draft a proposal for discussion at SPAW STAC10 regarding how such a RAN could operate." The recommendation was endorsed by Conference of Parties (COP) 11.

1.3 Examples of Wider Caribbean Region (WCR) networks working in close collaboration with SPAW RAC

13. This chapter is intended to provide some examples and assessments of the architecture of some Caribbean regional networks the SPAW RAC is working in close collaboration with. Currently, the Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle network (WIDECAST), is the only SPAW RAN (decision of the Parties at COP 3). In order to provide a greater diversity of examples of how regional networks of stakeholders involved in the conservation of Caribbean biodiversity and working in close collaboration with the SPAW RAC are organized, two other networks are presented in this chapter: the Caribbean Marine Protected Area Management Network and Forum (CaMPAM) and the Caribbean Marine Mammals Preservation Network (CARI'MAM). These examples also have the advantage of displaying very different characteristics, and assessments and recommendations were available for both of them.

1.3.1 WIDECAST RAN

14. The Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle network (WIDECAST) is, to date, the only SPAW RAN (decision of the Parties at COP 3), although this has never been formalized by a MoU. The WIDECAST network was created in 1981 following an IUCN and Caribbean Conservation Association (CCA)[7] meeting recommendation to prepare a Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Recovery Action Plan consistent with the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme. WIDECAST is a non-governmental organization registered in the United States of America (USA). Since the adoption of the SPAW protocol in 1990, WIDECAST has been a successful, proactive, and inclusive mechanism for developing and disseminating science-based tools on behalf of the SPAW Protocol, with affiliated programs in every country of the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR).

15. The characteristics of the network are presented in Table 1. The main strengths of this network are the following: it involves stakeholders at all levels; it has a bottom-up

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[7] IUCN/CCA Meeting of Non-Governmental Caribbean Organizations on Living Resources Conservation for Sustainable Development in the Wider Caribbean convenes in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. August 1981.

approach; it is highly collaborative; it is long-standing, well established, and recognized throughout the WCR. Its main weaknesses are: funding is insufficient and not consistent from year to year, even for operational tasks, and it is insufficient for projects[7]. In addition, connection with SPAW is not formalized through an MOU, which leads to a certain lack of coordination regarding the implementation of the SPAW work plan and the regional long-term strategy for sea turtle conservation.

1.3.2 Examples of regional non-RAN networks SPAW RAC is working in close collaboration with

16. The Caribbean Marine Protected Area Management Network and Forum (CaMPAM) was created in 1997 under the auspices of the Specially Protected Area and Wildlife (SPAW) Protocol to address the capacity limitation in Caribbean MPAs. The network characteristics are described in Table 1. CaMPAM assessment surveys[8,9] showed the main strengths of the network are the following: it has strong name recognition within the Caribbean MPA community thanks to its longevity and continuity of programming; it is managed by a very small, dynamic and flexible team; and it provides diverse and valuable activities for improving marine protected areas (MPA) effectiveness and networking. The main weaknesses of this network are: funding is insufficient and unsustainable; activities are not sufficiently responsive and aligned with on-the-ground MPA management needs; community and peer exchanges are limited; there is no long-term framework and strategy; connection with SPAW is not formalized, which leads to some lack of efficiency and complementarity with regards to the SPAW workplan.

17. The Caribbean Marine Mammals Preservation Network (CARI'MAM) project was endorsed during SPAW STAC8 and by COP10 (2018-2019) and aimed at strengthening marine mammal conservation in the Wider Caribbean Region through an enhanced cooperation among countries, territories, and MPAs. This 4-year project was led by the Agoa Sanctuary and SPAW RAC (2018-2022). One of the major outputs of the project was the creation of the CARI'MAM network that currently brings together more than 200 persons, from 70 organizations and 20 countries and territories of the WCR involved in the study and conservation of marine mammals in the WCR. In addition, its other outputs include the SPAW 2008 MMAP assessment; the development of networking tools; capacity building for monitoring, research, and whale-watching impact mitigation; and knowledge enhancement. Although the project ended in 2022, the network is currently still active, with frequent email and WhatsApp exchanges, as well as projects, and could be something the RAN could build upon as recommended by STAC 9 recommendation N°8.

18. During the last project meeting, the network participants highlighted that CARIMAM had greatly enhanced networking among stakeholders involved in marine mammal issues in

the WCR, and that its inclusive approach (any stakeholders involved in marine mammal conservation in the WCR could participate) had been much appreciated. One of the major recommendations CARI'MAM participants made during the last workshop was to sustain the network beyond the end of the project. Some weaknesses were also highlighted: funding and programming were project-limited; activities were not always sufficiently aligned with on-the-ground stakeholder needs; EU funding limited direct funding of non-EU partners.

Table 1: *Architecture of the Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle network (WIDECAST) RAN and other regional non-RAN regional networks SPAW RAC is working in close collaboration with: the Caribbean Marine Protected Area Management Network and Forum (CaMPAM) and the Caribbean Marine Mammals Preservation Network (CARI'MAM).*

Network characteristics	WIDECAST[8]	CaMPAM[9,10]	CARI'MAM project[11]
Mission	Reverse the declining trend in Caribbean Sea turtle populations, bringing the best available science to bear on decision-making.	Strengthening Caribbean MPAs	Strengthen the network of stakeholders involved in Marine Mammal conservation in the Caribbean.
Geographic scope	Wider Caribbean Region + Brazil	Wider Caribbean Region	Wider Caribbean Region
Services	Communication and networking Support countries in the drafting of their Sea Turtle Recovery Action Plans (STRAPs) Capacity Building Technical and financial assistance for research, monitoring and assessment programmes Promote standardized methodology for species study and monitoring Raise public awareness Promote alternative livelihoods to communities	Communication and networking Capacity building Technical and financial assistance, through Small Grant Programs	Communication and networking Capacity building Implementation of knowledge enhancement programmes Promote standardized methodology and tools for species study and monitoring Raise public awareness
Structure	Non-governmental organization registered in the USA SPAW RAN (COP 3 decision) but no MOU formalized the relationship to SPAW and SPAW-RAC Works in close collaboration with SPAW RAC for some activities.	Established through the SPAW Sub-Programme of the Cartagena Convention and Decisions of Contracting Parties under the auspices of the SPAW Sub-programme and Protocol.	No formal legal status No MoU formalized the relationship with SPAW. 4-year project led by Agoa Sanctuary and SPAW RAC

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8 Eckert, K.L. (2005) WIDECATS & SPAW - Bridging science and policy for the benefit of Caribbean Communities. Prepared for the 3rd meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) of the Contracting Parties to the SPAW Protocol, Caracas, Venezuela, 4-8 October 2005.

9 UNEP-CEP-SPAW (2021) Strategic Directions and Network Development Plan for the Caribbean Marine Protected Area Network and Forum (CaMPAM). UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.42/INF.8 Rev.1

10 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:GCF 1-9

11 AGOA, SPAW RAC (2021) Report of the 4th CARI'MAM online meeting

Network characteristics	WIDECAST[8]	CaMPAM[9,10]	CARI'MAM project[11]
		No formal legal status. No MoU formalized the relationship with SPAW. Currently operates as a managed sub-programme of SPAW.	
Programming	Project-based approach. Programming is set up annually during the Country Coordinators meeting.	Project-based approach, with activities integrated into the SPAW Programmes biennial work plans.	Programming was based on the SPAW workplan and MMAP and was designed when the project was set up, by the project co-leaders and beneficiaries, for the duration of the project.
Governance	The network is made of 65 Country Coordinators in 45 Caribbean countries. They meet annually to evaluate successes and failures and agree on shared tasks and priorities. In the absence of a document arrangement that lays out the relationship between WIDECAST and the SPAW Sub-Programme of the Cartagena Convention, the WIDECAST Executive Director and Country Coordinators share information within the network, which includes the SPAW RAC. As requested, WIDECAST's activities were presented by SPAW-RAC at last SPAW STAC. The network is led by an international Board of Directors consisting of 5 persons who are elected to three-year terms and which controls and provides overarching guidance regarding the network operations. The SPAW Sub-programme of the Cartagena Convention is not involved in the Board of Directors.	A CaMPAM expert group was established in 2017 to provide programmatic advice and support under the coordinator's direction, but its role has been narrowly conceptualized and it has not played a significant role so far. The Expert Group comprises highly skilled and experienced Wider Caribbean MPA professionals with a long association with CaMPAM	The project was co-Led by the Agoa Sanctuary and the SPAW RAC. Numerous regional stakeholders were involved during the implementation phase of the planned actions.
Composition of the executive team	A director/programme officer is in charge of coordinating the implementation of the tasks, communication, networking & fundraising. She works in partnership with SPAW RAC for some activities	A programme officer in charge of coordinating the implementation of the tasks, communication, networking & fundraising. She was assisted by GCFI, notably for fundraising and project management. The CaMPAM Coordinator resigned in 2019 due, in part, to	A programme officer and 5 project officers, in different organizations.

Network characteristics	WIDECAST[8]	CaMPAM[9,10]	CARI'MAM project[11]
		lack of funds to cover her time.	
Contributors/members	Incoming Country Coordinators (CCs) are nominated by outgoing senior WIDECAST CCs. They are stakeholders working on sea turtle conservation in the Caribbean (from scientists to communities)	Inclusive approach, no criteria, anyone can contribute to the network.	Inclusive approach, no criteria, anyone can contribute to the network. Contributors are MPA managers, NGOs, whale-watchers and researchers working on marine mammal conservation in the Caribbean.
Funding and budget	Entirely project-funded (including director/programme officer salary), no unrestricted funds. The Project Officer is in charge of fundraising. Funding is varied, including other NGOs, private foundations, government agencies, SPAW RAC. About half of funding comes from governmental and intergovernmental entities. The mean annual budget (for the last 20 years or so) is about USD $800,000 - $900,000.	Seed funding from the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program and GCFI, which also provided support by hosting the CaMPAM database, website and listserv. Entirely project-funded (including director/programme officer salary), no unrestricted funds. The Project Officer is in charge of fundraising. Funding is varied. Sources include the SPAW Sub-Programme of the Cartagena Convention, NGOs, private foundations, and government agencies.	4-year programme (2018-2022) co-funded by EU Interreg Caribbean program and beneficiary partners. The mean annual budget has been 733 000 $/year (Staff: 340 000 $/year; Operating costs: 8 000 $/year; Travel and accommodation: 45 000 $/year; Equipment: 44 000 $/year; External services: 296 000 $/year)

2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE CONSTITUTION OF A SPAW MARINE MAMMAL RAN INSTITUTION

19. In several SPAW documents, recommendations are available regarding the mission and services, geographic scope, institutional design, programming, and governance, executive team, membership and funding of SPAW related networks. These recommendations may be valuable information to take into account for the potential establishment of a marine mammal SPAW RAN and have been synthesized in the paragraphs below.

2.1 UNEP CEP Guidelines

20. The UNEP CEP Guidelines[1] for Establishment and Operation of RACs and RANs state that the <u>mission</u> of RANs is to increase the level and depth of cooperation and sharing of expertise in the Wider Caribbean region. Their <u>services</u> should be to provide input, peer review, and expertise through the relevant RAC, in a specific scientific or technical area.

21. As for <u>structure and governance</u>, the Guidelines state that RANs should be coordinated by the RAC in their respective technical area[1]. A RAC may form RANs with the approval of the Contracting Parties. The RAC should invite relevant institutions to form the RAN.

22. The Guidelines outline how institutions and individuals <u>contribute to </u>the RANs:

   ● the institution must demonstrate a high level of interest to achieving Cartagena Convention, Protocol, and RAC objectives;

   ● the institutions and individuals must have recognized scientific, technical, or academic expertise consistent with that of the Cartagena Convention, and its Protocols, enabling it to offer specialized assistance;

   ● institutions should have cooperative linkages with other institutions;

   ● it is beneficial if RAN institutions are representative of the geographic and language distribution of the region.

23. Finally, the Guidelines describe <u>funding arrangements</u>: institutions and individuals within the RAN must be willing to provide advice and input to the RAC free of charge, unless arranged otherwise. The RAC can provide financial and technical support to a member of the RAN for the implementation of an activity. When under a contractual arrangement with UNEP-CAR/RCU, any institution within a RAN would provide services on an "at cost" basis.

2.2 Recommendations from the Cartagena Convention RACs assessment survey

24. At COP 11, the Parties to the Cartagena Convention, requested 'the Secretariat in collaboration with the four Regional Activity Centers (RACs), UNEP Headquarters, and members of the Regional Activity Networks (RANs) to conduct a detailed review and analysis including reviewing the Current Guidelines and associated Decisions and Host Agreements for the RACs' (Decision III.4, COP 11, 2021).

25. Based on the bibliography, feedback from other Regional Sea Conventions and current organization of the Cartagena convention RANs and RACs, the preliminary findings of CEP's RACs and RANs Review regarding the establishment of RANs highlighted that RACs and RANs are not structures that overburden Parties. Rather, they add value, strengthening synergies for programme delivery and for enhancement of national capacities. Based on the lessons learned from the successful model of the Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network (WIDECAST), which has operated as a RAN since 2004, an efficient operating RAN requires solid long-term coordination, and works closely with RACs. Although not mandatory, the establishment of official arrangements, such as MoUs, between the RAN and SPAW Sub-Programme of the Cartagena Convention, is highly recommended. Another recommendation is that the RAN should be flexible to accommodate different modalities of operations. Finally, it is recommended to work on a sustainable means of financing, notably via the diversification of financing sources.

2.3 Recommendations from the MMAP reviews

26. The SPAW 2008 marine mammal action plan (MMAP) assessment[3,4] made some recommendations regarding the possible development of a marine mammal SPAW RAN. As for the general mission, it is proposed that the marine mammal RAN focus on strengthening existing regional institutional frameworks, partnerships, and collaborative data sharing, as well as on coordinating the implementation of MMAP activities, and notably the following priority actions:

    – support the Parties in the development of national marine mammal action plans;

    – promote knowledge enhancement and monitoring of marine mammal populations in the WCR;

    – assess and mitigate main threats: fisheries bycatch, directed hunts and captivity, habitat degradation from coastal and watershed development, pollution and marine mammal health, marine mammal watching in the wild and associated activities, acoustic disturbance and underwater noise, vessel strikes, and climate change.

27. The priority <u>services</u> the marine mammal RAN should be able to deliver are the following: capacity building for data collection, population/threats monitoring and mitigation, drafting of national action plans, and developing national legislation; networking between regional stakeholders, and with regional and global organizations working on marine mammals (e.g., the International Whaling Commission, IUCN) and related issues (e.g., fisheries, vessel traffic); and finally, dissemination of regional data/information on marine mammals.

28. Regarding the RAN <u>governance</u>, it was recommended to set up a steering committee, with country coordinators, and an advisory board, building upon the existing marine mammal experts in the SPAW species working group.

29. As for <u>programming</u>, it was recommended to develop a strategy and workplan document.

2.4 Recommendations from CARIMAM final meeting

30. Prior to CARIMAM online workshop 4, a survey was sent to the network members to identify their recommendations regarding the continuation of the CARIMAM network.

31. Regarding its general <u>mission</u>, the survey respondents highlighted that the network should focus on the implementation of the Marine Mammal Action Plan, on strengthening the conservation of marine mammals in the WCR, and on knowledge enhancement on marine mammal populations and threats.

32. As for <u>services</u>, CARIMAM members emphasized: the great networking work should be maintained; the implementation of standardized regional protocols and methods for species monitoring, as well as training, should be strengthened; and that activities should be more aligned with on-the-ground stakeholder needs.

33. In terms of <u>governance</u>, it was recommended to work more collaboratively, including for programming.

34. Regarding <u>membership</u>, the survey respondents asked that the network remains as inclusive as possible.

35. Finally, it was stressed that there should be a network dedicated and sustainable <u>funding and an executive team</u> to ensure network stability in the long term.

2.5 Recommendations from CaMPAM assessments

36. The CaMPAM assessment documents include recommendations to strengthen the network that may be worth considering in the context of the establishment of a marine mammal RAN.

37. The first recommendation is to keep mission and scope as they are: strengthening Caribbean MPAs and work at the Wider Caribbean Region scale.

38. Regarding services, it was recommended that CaMPAM carries on its current diverse and valuable activities (capacity building, communication and networking, technical and financial assistance through small grants), but strengthen and expand them so that they better meet the stakeholder needs and are more efficient.

39. As for institutional design, it was suggested to provide the network with a legal status to be determined by members.

40. Programming should be established by drafting a multi-year strategic plan that reflects a collective vision and long-term strategy, which lists goals and objectives of the network, and includes a core operating budget.

41. It was also recommended that the members determine an official and sustainable governance that ensures the network is driven from the bottom up and responds to the needs of Marine Protected Area (MPA) professionals and sites.

42. A dedicated and sustainable executive team should be established to oversee the day-to-day functioning of the network.

43. An official membership arrangement for individuals and institutions should be designed and adopted to facilitate member-driven governance and stakeholder engagement.

44. Finally, regarding funding, it was asked to develop a proactive and coordinated approach to fundraising and that this task is integrated into the terms of reference of the executive team.

3 PROPOSALS FOR THE RAN OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 The various options, with their main advantages and disadvantages

45. Following the process of the last CaMPAM assessment[7], we have listed in the table below (Table 2) some options regarding RAN potential mission and services, geographic scope, institutional design, programming, governance, executive team, contributors and membership, and funding. For each of them, their main advantages and disadvantages are given. In order to estimate the cost, strengths, and weaknesses of a RAN, potential architectures (including a no RAN scenario) have also been built as examples (Appendix 1), from the options presented in Table 2.

46. Note that, in response to the needs of RACs, the missions of some of the RANs of the Cartagena Convention have been enhanced compared to the initial definition of RANs provided in the UNEP CEP guidelines (2008). This has been the case for WIDECAST, as explained in chapter 1, but also for other RANs of the other Protocols of the Convention (see RACs assessment survey). As a consequence, the other characteristics of the RANs have also changed; notably, their financial needs have increased along with the scope of their mission. Hence, in the below table, we have purposely not limited the list of options to the ones one can find in the definition of RANs (UNEP CEP guidelines, 2008), in order to be more in line with the real current needs of SPAW.

Table 2: *options that may be considered for the architecture of the marine mammal RAN*

Characteristics	Options	Advantages & disadvantages
Mission and services	a) Provide input, peer review, and expertise on marine mammals to SPAW Sub-Programme of the Cartagena Convention (centralize and disseminate data and information)	More missions may result in: + higher impact on cooperation, capacity building, and species conservation; − a RAN more difficult to frame, operate, fund and sustain.
	b) Provide expertise to SPAW Enhance networking between stakeholders involved in marine mammal conservation in the region (mailing list and forum, social network, website, online and face to face meetings ….) Enhance capacity	
	c) Provide expertise to SPAW Enhance regional networking and capacity Support and facilitate the implementation of the SPAW MMAP (identify priorities, fundraising, small grants…)	
Geographic scope of activities	a) SPAW Contracting Parties (CPs) only	A wider scope means: + An opportunity to engage countries in the Wider Caribbean Region who are not yet Party to the SPAW Protocol; + a larger network; + a greater impact on species conservation, at least in the long-term; + more coherent with species distribution and movements; + more opportunity to create synergies with other regional programmes; − a RAN with more missions and staff, which will be more difficult to frame, operate, fund, and sustain.
	b) Wider Caribbean Region (as defined in the Cartagena Convention)	
Structure	a) The RAN is integrated into the SPAW RAC	If the RAN is integrated into the SPAW RAC, advantages and disadvantages could include: + complementarity with other SPAW entities; + missions aligned with SPAW's; + high recognition and legitimacy/credibility; + funding sustainability, at least for basic missions; − more expense and logistic for SPAW.

Characteristics	Options	Advantages & disadvantages
	b) The RAN is hosted by a Contracting Party, it is officially recognized as a SPAW RAN by Parties, and its partnership with SPAW RAC is described (method and topics) and formalized in an arrangement such as an MoU.	If the RAN is hosted by a Party, the main advantages and disadvantages could include: + an entity less expensive for SPAW; + enhance the engagement of the Party in the Convention and its national capacity/expertise; + funding sustainability, at least for basic missions; − perception of undue influence of the hosting Party; − complementarity with other SPAW entities may not be always met; − missions may not be always aligned with SPAW's, with a lower direct impact on SPAW targets and goals, at least in the short-term; − lower recognition and legitimacy/credibility.
	c) The RAN is created as an NGO (or other similar status) specifically and only dedicated to the RAN, that supports/works in close collaboration with SPAW RAC and other regional initiatives. It is officially recognized as a SPAW RAN by Parties, its collaboration with SPAW is described and formalized in an arrangement such as an MoU.	If the RAN is hosted by a new NGO, advantages and disadvantages could include: + an entity more flexible and adaptable; − funding uncertainty; − complementarity with other SPAW entities may not be always met; − missions may not be always aligned with SPAW's, with a lower direct; impact on SPAW targets and goals, at least in the short-term; − lower recognition and legitimacy/credibility.
Programming	a) Project-based programming b) Biennale programming (same as SPAW) c) Long-term strategic plan (several years) and biennial programming	Stronger programming means: + more vision > fundraising and planning facilitated; + aligned/synergy with other regional initiatives; − less flexibility and adaptability.
Governance	a) No formal governance. b) Programming designed and supervised by SPAW c) A steering committee made up of regional stakeholders, which designs and supervises the programming, subsequently submitted to SPAW STAC/COP for information.	A stronger connection with SPAW means: + complementarity with other SPAW entities; + missions aligned with SPAW's, with a higher direct impact on SPAW targets and goals; + higher recognition and legitimacy/credibility.

Characteristics	Options	Advantages & disadvantages
	d) A steering committee made up of regional stakeholders including the SPAW RAC, which designs the programming, for validation by SPAW STAC/COP and integration into SPAW biennial work plan.	Stronger governance means: + more sustainability; + aligned with on-the-ground stakeholder needs; + aligned/synergy with other regional initiatives; + more efficiency; + more accountability; + more clarity; − less flexibility and adaptability.
	e) A steering committee made up of an existing SPAW body (such as the species WG), which designs the programming, for validation by SPAW STAC/COP and integration into SPAW biennial work plan.	A Steering committee made up of SPAW existing body means: − steering committee may lack on the ground understanding of the priority issues and how to best deal with them taking into account the local context; − easier to manage; − no addition to the complexity of the SPAW mechanisms and network of bodies.
Contributors/members	a) No criteria for someone to contribute to the RAN (anyone can contribute); *versus* b) anyone can contribute to the RAN but only members can take part in decisions. Certain criteria must be met to become a member.	Restricted membership means: + a network with fewer members with similar profiles will be easier to animate and coordinate, and decisions will be easier to make; + more dedicated network; − less inclusive network; − dissemination of information in the region may be limited; − could be less diversity among members; − some stakeholder needs may be overlooked.
	c) Members are individuals; *versus* d) Members can be both individuals and organizations.	Both individuals and organizations can become members means the network may: + have more impact and legitimacy; + have more funding opportunities; − be subject to politicization; − be less flexible and adaptable; − be less equitable between members.

Characteristics	Options	Advantages & disadvantages
	e) All members have the same status and role in the network; *versus* f) members have different status and roles (e.g., regular member, steering committee…).	Members may have different status means: + having a group of responsive and engaged members; − facilitation and coordination may be more complex and time-consuming.
Funding	a) A core funding from the SPAW Sub-Programme of the Cartagena Convention (with external donor resources) for basic missions and additional independent fundings for projects.	+ Strong bond with SPAW, that ensures complementarity with other SPAW entities, and missions are aligned with SPAW's; + less time spend in fundraising; + more vision for planning; + higher sustainability and continuity of actions; − More expensive for SPAW; − less flexible and adaptable.
	b) A core funding from the host Party for basic missions and additional independent fundings for projects.	+ Less expensive for SPAW; + less time spend in fundraising; + more vision for planning; + higher sustainability and continuity of actions; − may not always be aligned with SPAW mission and objectives; − les flexible and adaptable.
	c) The RAR is entirely project funded via independent fundings	+ Less expensive for SPAW; + more flexible and adaptable; − may not always be aligned with SPAW mission and objectives; − less sustainable; − less continuity of actions; − a lot of fundraising to do.

3.2 Proposed RAN architecture

47. The group of contributors (SPAW Country Focal Points and representatives and SPAW RAC) collectively worked on a proposed architecture for the potential future SPAW marine mammal Regional Activity Network. The proposed scenario is an amalgamation of the examples outlined in Appendix I and reflects the discussions of the contributors. In this scenario, the RAN has an extended mission and is either hosted by a country or a new independent organization. The details are provided in the table below, followed by some additional recommendations given by the contributors.

Table 3: *Characteristics of the proposed RAN architecture*

Characteristics	Description
Mission and services	Provide input, peer review, and expertise on marine mammals to SPAW Sub-Programme of the Cartagena Convention. Strengthen networking. Enhance capacity of stakeholders working on marine mammal conservation in the region. Support and facilitate the implementation of the reviewed SPAW MMAP.
Geographic scope of activities	Wider Caribbean Region with a priority for SPAW Contracting Parties
Structure, programming, and governance	Hosted by a SPAW Party or new independent organization specifically and only dedicated to the RAN Official RAN (COP decision) MoUs with SPAW Sub-Programme of the Cartagena Convention A steering committee, in which SPAW RAC is represented, designs the strategic plan, as well as a biennial work plan and budget for validation by SPAW STAC/COP and integration into SPAW biennial work plan.
Executive team	At least 1 project officer, depending on tasks
Contributors/members	Anyone can contribute to the RAN but only members can take part in decisions. Members must meet the following criteria (as per UNEP CEP guidelines, 2008, and subsequent STAC and COP recommendations on RANs): the institutions and individuals must demonstrate a high level of interest in implementing the Cartagena Convention; have recognized expertise; have cooperative linkages with other institutions; be representative of the geographic and language distribution of the region. Members can be institutions or individuals and may have different status and

	roles (e.g., regular member or steering committee).
Estimated cost per year	Minimum 200 000 $, depending on tasks (see Annex 1)
Funding	The RAN will need sustainable core funding and in addition seek funding from a diverse funding stream that includes: governmental entities, intergovernmental organizations, private foundations, corporations, non-profit organizations, SPAW Sub-Programme of the Cartagena Convention (with external donors' resources).

48. The contributors recommended establishing a RAN with a broad mission and broad geographic scope of activities, as well as a well framed programming and strong governance. Such an organization would have a high impact on regional cooperation, capacity building, and species conservation. In addition, the medium and long-term vision (via programming) will facilitate fundraising and planning and enhance efficiency and clarity. The establishment of a steering committee will provide a sustainable governance and objectives aligned with on-the-ground stakeholder needs. The main weakness of such a well framed and ambitious organization is that it may have low flexibility and adaptability and may be difficult to operate and fund (the annual budget will be high).

49. The contributors suggested that the RAN should have a mission broader than what is found in the UNEP/CEP definition (*i.e.,* provide expertise to the RAC; § 1). An issue with a broad mission might be that it could overlap with SPAW RAC and SPAW working groups' missions. To prevent this, the contributors recommended that an MoU be established between the RAN and SPAW Sub-Programme of the Cartagena Convention, in which the RAN missions are clearly listed.

50. Regarding the RAN status, the contributors highlighted that the RAN would have to be officially recognized as such by Contracting Parties. In addition, it was recommended that the RAN be hosted by a SPAW Party or be a new independent organization specifically and only dedicated to the RAN. As highlighted in § 2.1, the main strengths of a RAN hosted by a Party would be the following: it would strengthen the engagement of the country in the convention, enhance its national capacity/expertise, and funding would be sustainable, at least for basic missions. On the contrary, if the RAN is an independent organization, it would be more flexible and adaptable. In both cases, one of the main weaknesses is that the RAN's priorities may differ from SPAW's, and that complementarity with other SPAW entities and missions may not always be met. However, this issue should be overcome via the establishment of a detailed MoU that clearly sets the role of the RAN, the way it should be working with

SPAW Sub-Programme of the Cartagena Convention, and its position in the SPAW protocol organization.

51. Regarding the governance, a recommendation was that whatever the Steering Committee composition, it should include on-the-ground Caribbean stakeholders, who, because of their good knowledge of the regional context, are best able to prioritize the actions to be implemented and to identify the most appropriate means.

52. Regarding the executive team and the budget, the contributors recommended that only one project officer be hired in the first years. The Project Officer will focus on basic missions (missions 1 and 2; Appendix 2) and on fundraising to develop the RAN, so that after several years of operation, the RAN will be able to conduct all expected missions (1 to 4, Appendix 2), with a budget similar to WIDECAST mean annual budget (about 750 000 $, Appendix 2). This strategy would allow the RAN to be launched with a low and more accessible budget (about 200 000 $; Appendix 2). Besides, it was pointed out that the RAN could also benefit from in-kind contributions of Parties and that some resources may be accessed building synergies with other regional initiatives.

53. Finally, the contributors highlighted that a core funding is needed to ensure the RAN sustainability, at least for its basic missions. The Parties should be encouraged to contribute to it.

APPENDIX 1: EXAMPLES OF RAN ARCHITECTURES AND THEIR ESTIMATED COST

Characteristics	Architectures proposed as examples			
	Scenario 1 (No formal RAN=current situation)	Scenario 2 (RAN with basic mission and objectives)	Scenario 3 (RAN with extended mission and objectives, hosted by a Party)	Scenario 4 (RAN with extended mission, objectives, with the status of an independent organization)
Mission and services	1) Provide input, peer review, and expertise on marine mammals to SPAW Sub-Programme of the Cartagena Convention, within available funds.	1) Provide input, peer review, and expertise on marine mammals to SPAW Sub-Programme of the Cartagena Convention; 2) networking with regional stakeholders working on MM, and provide input, peer review, and expertise on marine mammals to SPAW (as per UNEP CEP guidelines, 2008).	1) Provide input, peer review, and expertise on marine mammals to SPAW Sub-Programme of the Cartagena Convention; 2) networking with regional stakeholders working on MM and provide expertise on marine mammals to the SPAW Sub-Programme of the Cartagena Convention; 3) enhance capacity of stakeholders working on marine mammal conservation in the region; 4) support and facilitate the implementation of the reviewed SPAW MMAP.	1) Provide input, peer review, and expertise on marine mammals to SPAW Sub-Programme of the Cartagena Convention; 2) network and provide expertise on marine mammals to the SPAW Sub-Programme of the Cartagena Convention; 3) enhance networking between and capacity of stakeholders working on marine mammal conservation in the region; 4) support and facilitate the implementation of the reviewed SPAW MMAP.
Geographic scope of activities	SPAW Contracting Parties	SPAW Contracting Parties	WCR	WCR

Characteristics	Architectures proposed as examples			
	Scenario 1 (No formal RAN=current situation)	**Scenario 2 (RAN with basic mission and objectives)**	**Scenario 3 (RAN with extended mission and objectives, hosted by a Party)**	**Scenario 4 (RAN with extended mission, objectives, with the status of an independent organization)**
Structure, programming, and governance	RAN Work plan designed and endorsed by SPAW STAC and approved by SPAW COP, and supervised by SPAW RAC, depending on funding.	Hosted by SPAW RAC Official RAN (COP decision) Work plan designed by SPAW STAC and supervised by SPAW RAC.	Hosted by a country (e.g., by a national organization) Official RAN (COP decision) MoUs with SPAW Sub-Programme of the Cartagena Convention and/or SPAW RAC A steering committee, in which the Cartagena Convention SPAW Sub-Programme is represented, that designs the strategy and biennial work plan for endorsement by SPAW STAC/COP and integration into SPAW Programme work plan.	Creation of a new independent organization (e.g., NGO status) Official RAN (COP decision) MoUs with SPAW Sub-Programme of the Cartagena Convention and/or SPAW RAC A steering committee, in which the Cartagena Convention SPAW Sub-Programme is represented, that designs the strategy and biennial work plan for endorsement by SPAW STAC/COP and integration into SPAW Programme work plan.
Executive team	No permanent dedicated staff (funding dependent)	1 officer	3 full time officers	3 full time officers
Contributors/members	no network	Anyone can contribute to the RAN	Anyone can contribute to the RAN but only members can take part in decisions. Members must meet the following criteria (as per UNEP CEP guidelines, 2008): the institutions and individuals must demonstrate a high level of interest in implementing the Cartagena Convention; have recognized expertise; have cooperative linkages with other institutions; be representative of the geographic and language distribution	Same as option N°3

Characteristics	Architectures proposed as examples			
	Scenario 1 (No formal RAN=current situation)	Scenario 2 (RAN with basic mission and objectives)	Scenario 3 (RAN with extended mission and objectives, hosted by a Party)	Scenario 4 (RAN with extended mission, objectives, with the status of an independent organization)
			of the region. Members may have different status and roles (e.g., regular member or steering committee).	
Estimated cost per year[12]	25 000 $	200 000 $	750 000 $	750 000 $
funding	Part of SPAW RAC operational budget	SPAW RAC (via operational budget) and SPAW Sub-Programme of the Cartagena Convention Secretariat (via external donor resources)	Host Party SPAW Sub-Programme of the Cartagena Convention Secretariat (with external donor resources for SPAW Sub-Programme) Other financial tools for regional projects (variable)	SPAW Sub-Programme of the Cartagena Convention Secretariat (with external donor resources for SPAW Sub-Programme) Other financial tools for regional projects (variable)
Main strengths	Strong complementarity with other SPAW entities and missions aligned with SPAW targets and goals Legitimacy Low cost Easy to manage	Strong complementarity with other SPAW entities and missions aligned with SPAW targets and goals Legitimacy Low cost Easy to manage Formal and long-term involvement of regional stakeholders. Continuity of actions. Funding should be	Aligned with on-the-ground stakeholder needs (steering committee) Large scope (WCR): high impact on regional cooperation, capacity building, and species conservation. Enhance the engagement of a Party in the convention and its national capacity/expertise Formal and long-term involvement of regional stakeholders. Continuity of actions.	Aligned with on-the-ground stakeholder needs Large scope (WCR): high impact on regional cooperation, capacity building, and species conservation. Formal and long-term involvement of regional stakeholders. Continuity of actions. NGO: flexible and adaptable

12 Estimated from current SPAW RAC and WIDECAST budgets

Characteristics	Architectures proposed as examples			
	Scenario 1 **(No formal RAN=current situation)**	**Scenario 2** **(RAN with basic mission and objectives)**	**Scenario 3** **(RAN with extended mission and objectives, hosted by a Party)**	**Scenario 4** **(RAN with extended mission, objectives, with the status of an independent organization)**
		sustainable	Funding is sustainable at least for basic actions	
Main weaknesses	Low impact on species conservation. No formal and long-term involvement of regional stakeholders. Little continuity of actions. Variable funding	Low impact on species conservation (limited services and scope).	Many missions: RAN difficult to frame, operate, fund (High costs) and sustain The RAN priorities may differ from SPAW's. Complementarity with other SPAW entities and missions may not always be met. Complex multilateral institutional design and governance.	Many missions: RAN difficult to frame, operate, fund (High costs) and sustain The RAN priorities may differ from SPAW's. Complementarity with other SPAW entities and missions may not always be met. Fundings may not be sustainable, even for basic actions

APPENDIX 2: ESTIMATED BUDGET FOR THE VARIOUS MISSIONS

Mission	Tasks	Resources needed per year						Total cumulated budget	Total cumulated personnel time (months/year)
		Personnel time (months)	Personnel cost (7 000 $/months)	Travel	Equipment	Grants	External work and services		
1. Provide expertise on marine mammals to SPAW	Provide expertise on a particular topic	3	$ 21 000	$ 2 000	$ 2 000			$ 25 000 (Mission 1)	3 (Mission 1)
2.Networking	Routine: animate a forum, disseminate relevant information/tools/best practices, between/to members	2	$ 14 000					$ 200 000 (Missions 1+2)	12 (1 full time employee; missions 1+2)
	Organize an annual meeting	1	$ 7 000				$ 40 000		
	Communication (update website, post information in social medias)	2,5	$ 17 500		$ 2 000		$ 24 000		
	Designs the strategic plan, as well as a biennial work plan and budget	2,5	$ 17 500				$ 40 000		
	Representation in meetings	1	$ 7 000	$ 6 000					
3.Enhance capacity of Caribbean stakeholders working on marine mammal conservation	Standardize protocols for species monitoring/Draft best practices	3	$ 21 000				$ 22 000	$ 500 000 (Missions 1+2+3)	24 (2 full time employees, missions 1+2+3)
	Enhance data sharing	3	$ 21 000				$ 30 000		
	Trainings	2	$ 14 000	$ 4 000			$ 40 000		
	Small grants programme	4	$ 28 000	$ 20 000		$ 100			

Mission	Tasks	Resources needed per year						Total cumulated budget	Total cumulated personnel time (months/year)
		Personnel time (months)	Personnel cost (7 000 $/months)	Travel	Equipment	Grants	External work and services		
						000			
4.Support and facilitate the implementation of the reviewed SPAW MMAP	Support the parties in the development of national marine mammal action plans	2	$ 14 000	$ 2 000			$ 38 000	$ 750 000 (Missions 1+2+3+4)	36 (3 full time employees; missions 1+2+3+4)
	Contribute to the development of regional knowledge enhancement and monitoring programmes	2	$ 14 000	$ 2 000					
	Contribute to the development of programmes to assess and mitigate main threats (fisheries bycatch, directed hunts and captivity, habitat degradation from coastal and watershed development, pollution and marine mammal health, marine mammal watching in the wild and associated activities, acoustic disturbance and underwater noise, vessel strikes, and climate change).	2	$ 14 000	$ 2 000					
	Strengthen collaboration with regional and global organizations working on marine mammals (IWC, IUCN…) and conservation related fields such MPAs, climate change…	1	$ 7 000	$ 2 000			$ 39 000		
	Provide guidance to/raise awareness of regional organizations working on activities with a potential impact on MM (fisheries, marine traffic, oil companies…)	2	$ 14 000	$ 2 000			$ 38 000		

Mission	Tasks	Resources needed per year						Total cumulated budget	Total cumulated personnel time (months/year)
		Personnel time (months)	Personnel cost (7 000 $/months)	Travel	Equipment	Grants	External work and services		
	Encourage parties to enact legislation and enforce measures to implement the prohibitions in Article 11.1(b) (taking, possession, killing, commercial trade, disturbance) and that requires the reporting of marine mammal direct take and bycatch in fisheries operations: trainings and awareness raising	3	$ 21 000	$ 2 000			$ 39 000		