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Report on operationalisation of the CLME+ Small Grant Coordination Mechanism to support implementation of People Managing Oceans – the Civil Society Action Programme for Sustainable Management of the Shared Living Marine Resources of the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems (CLME+ C-SAP)



Catalyzing implementation of the Strategic Action Programme for the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf LME's (2015-2020)



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(CLME+ Project, 2015-2020)

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1. Introduction

The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) is working on supporting civil society's participation in implementing the politically endorsed 10-year "Strategic Action Programme for the Sustainable Management of the Shared Living Marine Resources of the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems" ([CLME+ SAP](#)). This work is being supported under the "Catalyzing Implementation of the Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the Sustainable Management of shared Living Marine Resources in the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems" (CLME+ Project) which seeks to initiate implementation of the CLME+ SAP, where CANARI is an executing partner.

CANARI was tasked with delivering the following key outputs of the CLME+ Project:

- CLME+ Output 2.2. - Element #1: Civil Society Action Programme (C-SAP), that is sensitive to gender concerns and which complements and supports the implementation of the CLME+ SAP
- CLME+ Output 2.2. - Element #3: Establishment of a Small Grants Coordination Mechanism
- CLME+ Output 3.5.- Modest small grant support for the implementation of actions under the C-SAP and/or P-SAP (developed under Output 2.2), with special attention to enhanced livelihoods.

The steps required to achieve CLME+ Output 2.2- Element #1 and Element #3 included the preparation of three separate Access databases as follows:

- Database of existing civil society organisations (formal and informal) and small and micro enterprises (SMEs) which are playing, have a role to play and/or are likely beneficiaries in the achievement of the long-term vision for the marine environment in the CLME+ region
- Database of existing civil society awareness raising and capacity building programmes, projects and initiatives (PPIs) and mechanisms currently operational within the CLME+ region, particularly those initiatives having significant relevance to the achievement of the objectives of the CLME+ SAP and CLME+ Project, and those with the potential for replication and up-scaling
- Database of existing small grant programmes that are operational within the CLME+ region and that can contribute to the objectives of the CLME+ SAP and CLME+ Project

Under Output 2.2- Element #1, CANARI supported Caribbean civil society to develop a programme which outlines the role they can play in contributing to implementation of the CLME+ SAP. This is outlined in the publication entitled "People Managing Oceans: Civil Society Action Programme for Sustainable Management of the Shared Living Marine Resources of the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems (CLME+ C-SAP)". See the summary factsheet ([English](#), [Spanish](#)) and full booklet ([English](#), [Spanish](#)). These documents were developed to raise the profile of civil society and guide civil society capacity building for strengthening the role, participation and ownership of civil society in implementation of the CLME+ SAP (see Box 1).

Box 1: People Managing Oceans C-SAP summary

The target civil society actors in the C-SAP are:

- Formal and informal civil society organisations (CSOs) at the regional, national and local/community levels (including environmental, fisherfolk, women and youth groups); and
- Community-based small and micro enterprises (SMEs) which have a role to play and/or are likely beneficiaries in the achievement of the long-term vision for the marine environment in the CLME+ region.

The People Managing Oceans C-SAP directly parallels the CLME+ SAP strategies, each having specific actions relevant to civil society's role as an implementation partner:

Strategy 1: Implement ecosystem-based management of reef and associated ecosystems (e.g. seagrass beds, mangroves, reef slopes and coastal lagoons)

Strategy 2: Implement an ecosystem-based approach for pelagic fisheries

Strategy 3: Implement ecosystem-based management of the Guianas-Brazil continental shelf with special reference to the shrimp and groundfish fishery

Strategy 4: Strengthen civil society's role to conduct and participate in research and monitoring for management of the coastal and marine environment

Strategy 5: Strengthen civil society's participation in governance of the coastal and marine environment

Strategy 6: Develop and enhance livelihoods based on the sustainable use of coastal and marine resources

Strategy 7: Enhance communication to raise awareness and advocate for issues impacting the coastal and marine environment

Strategy 8: Facilitate C-SAP implementation, monitoring, evaluation and learning

The CLME+ Project recognised that mobilisation of financial support for civil society to implement the People Managing Oceans C-SAP will be critical. There are currently many initiatives¹ funding civil society's work to contribute to conservation, management and sustainable use of the coastal and marine resources in the CLME+ region. These include large global funds, bi-lateral arrangements, private foundations, corporate social responsibility programmes, national government funds and small grant programmes operating under specific regional or national projects. The investment priorities of each are determined separately, but often refer to identified national, regional and international priorities. However, despite the significant investment and effort, in many cases the scale of these actions, coupled with inadequate coordination among initiatives, have limited the overall scope, impact and sustainability of individual and cumulative efforts.

At present, there is no known mechanism to facilitate coordination among funding programmes to optimise synergies and promote knowledge sharing to ensure that national, regional and international priorities for the CLME+ region are met and the important roles to be played by civil society are effectively supported.

Recognising the multiplicity of small grants initiatives funding civil society action on marine resources management, under the CLME+ Project Output 2.2. - Element #3 CANARI was tasked with exploring the development of a CLME+ Small Grant Coordination Mechanism (SGCM) to encourage mobilisation of these resources to support Caribbean CSOs and SMEs with implementation of the strategies and actions identified in the People Managing Oceans C-SAP and allow for better coordination amongst the different small grant programmes, projects and initiatives in the region. This would address the specific needs and opportunities identified by civil society under the People Managing Oceans C-SAP while enhancing the effectiveness of funding.

This work is described in Section 2 and involved:

- developing a database of existing small grant programmes that are operational within the CLME+ region and that can contribute to the objectives of the CLME+ SAP and CLME+ Project;
- identifying a subset of donors who were already supporting civil society action on ocean issues in the CLME+ region and who could be targeted to explore development of a SGCM;
- raising donors' awareness about the CLME+ SAP, the CLME+ Project and the People Managing Oceans C-SAP;
- mapping to what extent the current small grant programmes aligned with priorities and actions in the People Managing Oceans C-SAP;
- exploring donors' interest in engaging in a coordination mechanism;
- securing commitment under the Caribbean Sea Innovation Fund (CarSIF), which is a mechanism run by CANARI to facilitate small grants from multiple donors, to support implementation of the People Managing Oceans C-SAP.

Under Output 3.5 of the CLME+ Project, CANARI was tasked with providing modest small grant support for the implementation of actions under the C-SAP, with special attention to enhanced livelihoods. This took the form of a US\$70,000 small grant facility which was used to support five small grant initiatives. Two initiatives were aimed at building the capacity of stakeholders in St. Kitts and Nevis in sea moss farming, as a demonstration of alternative livelihoods initiatives within the concept of Ecosystem Based Management. These projects were aligned with Action 6.7 "Promote and build capacity of SMEs in core business competencies, including marketing and quality control" under the People Managing Oceans C-SAP. Three additional small grant initiatives were supported for outreach promoting endorsement and implementation of the People Managing Oceans C-SAP by civil society aligned with Action 8.1 "Communicate to raise awareness about the C-SAP to key target audiences in civil society and their partners". See Section 3 for more information.

Lessons learnt and recommendations are outlined in Section 4.

¹ CANARI identified over 25 initiatives in a rapid review to develop the database of existing small grant programmes noted in Element #1 of Output 2.2. and the situation is constantly changing.

2. Exploring development of a coordination mechanism

2.1 Engagement of donors

The CLME+ SGCM is envisioned to be a voluntary initiative that engages donors and intermediaries supporting civil society's contribution to governance and management of the living marine resources in the CLME+ region. It is important to note that in the context of the CLME+ SGCM, the term "small grants" is not used to define a particular size of grant issued. The SGCM can therefore include all grants of any size issued to CSOs or SMEs.

Based on the database developed of programmes that are operational within the CLME+ region and that can contribute to the objectives of the CLME+ SAP and CLME+ Project, CANARI identified donors and intermediaries to be involved in the initial development of the SGCM.

As the first step in this effort, a Donor Roundtable entitled "Effective support for civil society and the Caribbean Sea and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems", was held in Barbados during March 20-21, 2018 to raise awareness, build commitment and develop agreement on the design of a SGCM (see report at Appendix 1). In attendance were 14 representatives from multilateral and bilateral donors and their intermediaries/small grant operators implementing civil society small grant programmes, projects and initiatives in the CLME+ region, with these entities being: Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (CBF), Caribbean Marine Protected Area Management Network and Forum (CaMPAM), CLME+ Project - Project Coordinating Unit, Environmental Foundation of Jamaica (EFJ), European Union (EU), Global Affairs Canada - Canada Caribbean Disaster Risk Management Fund (CCDRMF), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) - The Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management (BIOPAMA) Programme, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) - Barbados and Eastern Caribbean, and UNDP Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme (SGP). The meeting was facilitated by CANARI, which itself is an intermediary managing several small grant programmes. Participants at the roundtable agreed to promote the establishment of the CLME+ SGCM, which will increase visibility, effectiveness (impact and synergies), efficiency and transparency of grant programmes in the CLME+ region. They identified the overall objective and a strategy for its development, which were used in development of the SGCM concept (see Section 2.2).

Further discussions were held by CANARI with additional donors, who also expressed interest in being involved in the SGCM.

In total, CANARI engaged 16 donors and intermediaries implementing small grant programmes relevant to the People Managing Oceans C-SAP in a "coalition of the willing" (see Box 2). The People Managing Oceans C-SAP documents and the SGCM Terms of Reference and Workplan were disseminated to these donors.

In general, there was positive interest from the donors in engaging in a process to enhance coordination. Their motivations were being able to identify what were the gaps/needs that were not receiving funding, identification of potential synergies and avoiding duplication, and sharing of best practices on grant

Box 2: List of donors engaged

1. International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) - The Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management (BIOPAMA) Small Grants programme
2. UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) GEF-funded StewardFish project small grant programme (CANARI managed)
3. EU-funded PISCES project Caribbean Sea Innovation Fund (CarSIF) (CANARI managed)
4. Mesoamerican Reef Fund (MAR) Fund
5. MAR Fund Belize Marine Fund (BMF)
6. MAR Fund - Reef Rescue
7. Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (CBF)
8. CBF- Saint Lucia National Conservation Fund (SLUNCF)
9. CBF- Bahamas Protected Areas Fund (BPAF)
10. CBF- St. Vincent and the Grenadines Conservation Fund (SVGCF)
11. CBF- National Conservation Trust Fund of Jamaica (NCTFJ)
12. CBF- Grenada Sustainable Development Trust Fund (GSDTF)
13. CBF- Fondo Marena (Dominican Republic)
14. CBF- Antigua and Barbuda Marine Ecosystems Protected Area Trust Fund (MEPA Trust)
15. CBF- St. Christopher and Nevis Conservation Foundation (SCNCF)
16. Sandals Foundation

making. These 16 donors can be engaged if the SGCM is taken forward, and additional donors (e.g. UNDP Blue Lab and GEF UNDP Small Grant Programme) can also be engaged.

2.2 Development of concept

Based on input from the Donor Roundtable, a Concept and Workplan was developed which set out the overall purpose, objectives and a three-phase strategy for implementation of the SGCM (see Appendix 2).

The overall **purpose** of the CLME+ SGCM is to enhance the overall scope, outcomes and sustainability of support for civil society action on marine resources governance and management in the CLME+ region, through improving coordination among the different small grant programmes, projects and initiatives and alignment with the strategies and priority actions in the People Managing Oceans C-SAP.

This will be achieved initially through the following **objectives**:

- a) mapping alignment of small grant programmes, projects and initiatives against priority needs identified in the People Managing Oceans C-SAP to inform identification of gaps and opportunities for synergies;
- b) supporting knowledge sharing and enhanced coordination among donors and intermediaries providing support for civil society action on marine resources governance and management in the CLME+ region;
- c) enhancing visibility of donors and access to information by serving as a one-stop-facility for use by civil society seeking support for implementation of the People Managing Oceans C-SAP.

The donors engaged noted that in the **longer term**, participating donors and intermediaries in the SGCM may wish to consider broadening the scope and ambition towards joint programming and resource mobilisation.

Four phases of work we identified in the Concept and Workplan:

1. Testing
2. Assessment and formalisation
3. Roll out
4. Institutionalising the SGCM

Under the CLME+ Project, phase 1 on testing was completed.

Under phase 2, CANARI formally committed to align grants under its Caribbean Sea Innovation Fund (CarSIF) (see section 3.2 and Appendix 6), which will have funding windows for small grants by various donors and so fulfils the task of securing commitment by at least two donors. As donors proceed over time to review and revise their grant programmes (based on their programmatic cycles, which are beyond the timeframe of the CLME+ Project), assessment will be continue to be undertaken of if and how they consider the People Managing Oceans C-SAP priorities.

However, further progress was not made on phases 2, 3 and 4 towards formalisation, roll out and institutionalisation of the SGCM. A formal evaluation was not conducted, and a formal Terms of Reference was not developed as it was uncertain what could be the potential sources of support for this mechanism beyond the CLME+ Project. This was a question asked by several donors which CANARI was unable to answer. This would need clarification before the process can move forward. Lessons and recommendations for how the SGCM could be taken forward are reflected in section 5.

Based on lessons learnt and these recommendations, a roadmap towards continued roll out and institutionalisation of the SGCM over a three-year test period will be developed in consultation with donors and submitted to the Project Steering Committee for approval.

2.3 Development of the SGCM database

A first step in development of the SGCM was development of a database on small grant programmes operating in the CLME+ region with objectives aligned to support implementation of the People Managing Oceans C-SAP.

A database of the targeted small grant programmes was established in April 2019. This database captures information that can be used to support coordination and synergies across small grant programmes and will assist with targeting funding support to priorities that have been identified in the People Managing Oceans C-SAP. To populate this database, the target donors engaged were invited to submit information on their organisation's small grants using the fund form developed by CANARI (see Box 3).

Box 3: SGCM database content

- 1. About the focus**
 - Alignment with priorities in the CLME+ C-SAP
 - Key themes addressed (e.g. climate change, poverty alleviation, coral reefs, governance, organisational strengthening of civil society, sustainable livelihoods and SMEs)
- 2. About the funding**
 - Total investment and implementation period
 - Grant allocation size/range
 - Funding cycles and key steps in application process
 - Provision for covering administrative costs of grantee
- 3. Eligibility for funding**
 - Geographic focus
 - Type of beneficiary (civil society only or others eligible)
- 4. Requirements**
 - Co-financing requirements (just a yes/no indication)
 - Reporting cycles for grantees
- 5. About the donor**
 - All donors involved (if a multi-donor initiative)
 - Type of donor (bilateral, multilateral, private foundation, etc.)
 - Intermediary for accessing resources (where relevant)
 - Donor or intermediary contact information

Information on 16 small grant programmes were received, including information on alignment to the People Managing Oceans C-SAP's eight Strategies.

The database with information from these 16 small grant programmes was presented at a SGCM Donor Webinar on April 26, 2019. Twelve representatives² of donors/managers of small grant programmes attended, and the eight Strategies of the People Managing Oceans C-SAP were discussed in detail. At the Strategy level, donors all reported that they were supporting CSO and SME initiatives. However, it was agreed that the alignment analysis performed needed an additional level of detail to identify the specific priority C-SAP Actions to which their funds were aligned to be more useful.

Based on this recommendation, donors/managers were then invited to submit information on their fund's alignment to the 90 priority Actions identified in the People Managing Oceans C-SAP and a form was sent out to facilitate this. Detailed information on seven small grants was submitted (see Section 2.4).

The SGCM database can be shared with donors and intermediaries as the primary users, as well as CSOs and SMEs as the targeted beneficiaries of funding. Information captured in the database can be used to support coordination and synergies across small grant programmes and can assist with targeting funding support to priorities that have been identified by Caribbean governments as well as CSOs and SMEs themselves.

2.4 Current alignment of small grant programmes to C-SAP priorities

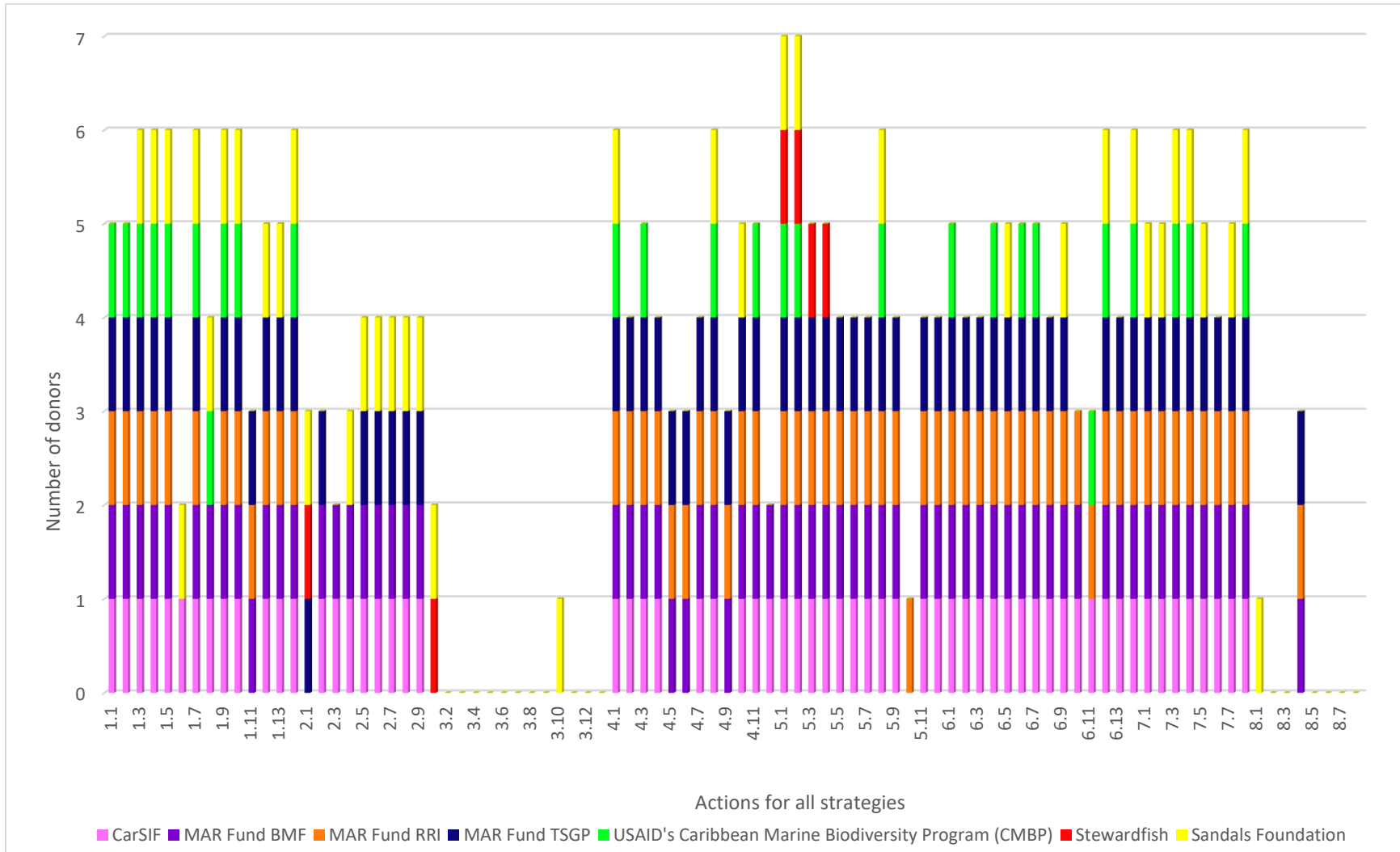
At the Strategy level, all 16 small grant programmes self-identified that they were contributing to all eight Strategies. Seven of these submitted more detailed information on their funding priorities mapped against the 90 Actions under the People Managing Oceans C-SAP. A bar graph was produced (Figure 1), which illustrates the mapping of each donor's alignment to the 90 priority Actions and reveals areas of emphasis as well as gaps in small grant funding relative to the C-SAP strategies. This shows that:

² Representatives attended from: Sandals Foundation; Guy Harvey Foundation; FAO StewardFish; IUCN BIOPAMA; MAR Fund; High Commission of Canada; Environmental Foundation of Jamaica; Caribbean Biodiversity Fund; CANARI CarSIF

- There was high alignment to the actions set out under strategies 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7. This suggests that there is room for sharing of best practices and coordination among these donors. Existing and potential synergies can be identified and taken advantage of to ensure that small grants are more effective and efficient in delivering results. Possible duplication can be identified and avoided.
- There are major gaps in coverage of the priority actions set out in Strategies 3 and 8. However, this is not unsurprising as Strategy 3 is focused on implementation of EBM/EAF in the Guianas-Brazil continental shelf area (with special reference to the shrimp and groundfish fishery) and the targeted donors mainly operate in the Caribbean Sea. Further, Strategy 8 speaks to the facilitation of People Managing Oceans C-SAP implementation, monitoring, evaluation and learning and this is a new programme that has not yet been considered by donors.

This exercise demonstrated that mapping of donor priorities against the Strategies and priority Actions under the People Managing Oceans C-SAP in a SGCM can help to reveal: (1) areas of alignment which are opportunities for coordination and collaboration; and (2) gaps which are needs/opportunities that may be considered in future funding priorities of donors.

Figure 1: Mapping of small grant priorities against People Managing Oceans C-SAP Strategies and Actions



3. Small grant initiatives

3.1 Small grants financed under the CLME+ Project

With funding provided under the CLME+ Project, CANARI implemented a US\$70,000 small grant facility to support two initiatives aimed at building the capacity of stakeholders in St. Kitts and Nevis in sea moss farming, as a demonstration of alternative livelihoods initiatives within the concept of Ecosystem Based Management. Two projects were supported, which are aligned with Action 6.7 “Promote and build capacity of SMEs in core business competencies, including marketing and quality control” under the People Managing Oceans C-SAP.

The two small grant projects to demonstrate sea moss farming as a viable, alternative livelihood in fishing communities in St. Kitts and Nevis were implemented by the Indian Castle Fisherfolk Association (ICFFA) and the Liamuiga Seamoss Group (LSG) between April and October 2019. Final reports were submitted in January 2020 (see Appendix 3 and 4).

Between December 3 and 7, 2019, CANARI facilitated focus group evaluations in St. Kitts and Nevis with the members of the ICFFA and LSG to get feedback on their experience with developing and implementing their small grant projects including key lessons learned (see Appendix 5 for the evaluation report). The time in-country was also used to conduct site visits to the sea moss plots set up by the grantees and the facilities used and proposed to dry their sea moss and process their sea moss related products.

Out of the US\$70,000 facility, two small grants totalling US\$52,820³ were issued to ICFFA and LSG. The project applications were developed through an extended six-month period (September 2018-March 2019) of technical assistance provided by the in-country mentors and CANARI. Based on the capacity of the two grantees, it was agreed that they would be unable to successfully execute projects of US\$35,000 each which was the amount originally provided for, so the scope and budgets of both projects were reduced to what was felt to be more feasible for the grantees to implement during the time available. However, even with this reduced scope, the grantees were only able to utilise 80% (US\$40,636⁴) of the full amount of funds provided. The underuse of funds was largely attributed to the limited capacity of the groups to fully implement their projects within their respective project periods. The challenges faced by the grantees are outlined in their reports.

Based on the narrative reports submitted and the findings of the focus group evaluations, the small grant projects were successful in supporting capacity building of stakeholders in St. Kitts and Nevis in sea moss farming, as a demonstration of sustainable livelihoods. Through the small grant projects, grantees were able to:

- Expand their sea moss plots
- Upgrade processing facilities for their sea moss enterprises
- Improve their skills and knowledge in small and micro enterprise development
- Improve their skills and knowledge in value-added processing for sea moss products
- Improve their skills and knowledge in cultivating and processing (drying) sea moss
- Improve marketing for their sea moss products

Also out of the US\$70,000 facility, three small grants of \$2,000 were issued in 2019 to support the promotion and endorsement of the C-SAP by CSOs in the CLME+ Region, which is aligned with Action 8.1 “Communicate to raise awareness about the C-SAP to key target audiences in civil society and their partners”. Contract agreements were signed between CANARI and the Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organisations (CNFO), CoopeSoliDar R.L. (in Costa Rica) and Nature Caribé to implement small grant projects aimed at:

³ The balance of funds was reallocated to other activities under the CLME+ Project, including for three additional small grants to support outreach on People Managing Oceans

⁴ This figure is tentative pending submission of all outstanding invoices and receipts from grantees to complete their financial reports.

- sharing information with other national and local level CSOs about the C-SAP's purpose and importance and the benefits of its implementation;
- sharing information with national and local level CSOs on how they can align their work with the strategies and actions set out in the C-SAP, including highlighting possible ideas for practical on-the-ground actions; and
- promoting endorsement of the C-SAP by national and local levels CSOs.

Results from these small grant projects were:

- CNFO conducted three virtual learning circles in June 2019 with 16 of the 17 leaders of national fisherfolk organisations in each of the CNFO member countries. The learning circles were aimed at sharing information on the C-SAP, highlighting actions from the C-SAP that support priority issues to be addressed by fisherfolk in their respective countries and promoting endorsement of the C-SAP by fisherfolk organisations.
- CoopeSoliDar R.L. conducted two one-day workshops in May 2019 in Cahuita, Costa Rica with a total of 48 participants from 15 organisations, including CSOs and SMEs, to share information on the C-SAP and promote its endorsement.
- Nature Caribe hosted one one-day workshop with fisherfolk organisations and SMEs in the Samana Peninsula in the Dominican Republic; promoted the C-SAP on its official website (<http://naturecaribe.org/what-we-are-doing/>); and developed and promoted profiles of coastal projects carried out by CSOs that are aligned with the strategies and priority actions established in CLME+ C-SAP on its Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/naturecaribe/>.

This demonstrated the feasibility and importance of providing small grant funding support to CSOs and SMEs, including those operating at the community level, to implement the Strategies and Actions under the People Managing Oceans C-SAP, in order to contribute to implementation of the CLME+ SAP. This includes the provision of resources to support implementation of the People Managing Oceans C-SAP.

3.2 Small grants co-financed by other donors

Over the past 12 years, CANARI has managed and administered a number of small grant programmes for CSOs in 18 Caribbean islands on behalf of various donors working in the Caribbean in the areas of biodiversity conservation, climate change adaptation and resilience, sustainable livelihoods, participatory governance and organisational capacity building. Donors have included the Darwin Initiative, Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF), EU and the UN FAO amongst others. CANARI uses small grants as one of its capacity building strategies to increase CSO capacity for participatory natural resource governance and management in the Caribbean. In 2019, CANARI established the Caribbean Sea Innovation Fund (CarSIF) to serve as a framework to design and implement small grants programmes related to coastal and marine governance and management in the Caribbean. This is aligned to support implementation of the People Managing Oceans C-SAP.

CANARI is implementing the EU-funded Powering Innovations in Civil Society and Enterprises for Sustainability in the Caribbean (PISCES) project (2017-2020)⁵, which aims to support innovative actions and civil society and coastal community SMEs for conserving marine and coastal biodiversity and developing sustainable and resilient livelihoods in the Caribbean. The CarSIF PISCES window (see call document in Appendix 6) was launched in 2019 with a total funding amount of US\$86,500. The 20 fisherfolk organisations, community-based organisations and non-governmental organisations targeted under PISCES were eligible to apply for small grants of between US\$5,500 to US\$11,000 to support projects which address priority needs and actions on marine and coastal governance and management in the Caribbean, which in turn also address one or more of the following strategies of the CLME+ C-SAP:

- Implement ecosystem-based management of reef and associated ecosystems (e.g. seagrass beds, mangroves, reef slopes and coastal lagoons) (Strategy 1)
- Implement an ecosystem-based approach for pelagic fisheries (Strategy 2)

⁵ CANARI is coordinating implementation of this project funded by the European Union (ENV/2016/380-530) *Civil society and small and micro enterprise innovation for marine and coastal conservation in the Caribbean*. <https://canari.org/pisces/>

- Strengthen civil society's role to conduct and participate in research and monitoring for management of the coastal and marine environment (Strategy 4)
- Strengthen civil society's participation in governance of the coastal and marine environment (Strategy 5)
- Develop and enhance livelihoods based on the sustainable use of coastal and marine resources (Strategy 6)
- Enhance communication to raise awareness and advocate for issues impacting the coastal and marine environment (Strategy 7)

Small grants totalling US\$78,438 were issued to 9 CSOs from eight countries, addressing actions under Strategies 1, 4, 5, 6 and 7 (see Appendix 7). The small grant projects will be completed by December 2020.

A second window was opened under CarSIF to support a microgrants scheme for the 13 SMEs being supported under the PISCES project, with a total fund amount of US\$22,000. Awards will be made in early 2020 to support SME initiatives under Action 6.7 "Promote and build capacity of SMEs in core business competencies, including marketing and quality control" under the People Managing Oceans C-SAP.

In 2020, additional windows will be opened to support fisherfolk organisations with organisational strengthening and stewardship actions under the GEF-funded FAO project Developing Organisational Capacity for Ecosystem Stewardship and Livelihoods in Caribbean Small-Scale Fisheries (StewardFish).

This demonstrates the feasibility and potential for encouraging donors to align their small grant funding support to CSOs and SMEs to implement the Strategies and Actions under the People Managing Oceans C-SAP, in order to contribute to implementation of the CLME+ SAP.

4. Results, best practices, lessons and recommendations

The intention under CLME+ Output 2.2 Element #3 of the CLME+ Project was that:

- The SGCM would better coordinate and tailor the different small grants initiatives⁶ and projects in the region towards the specific needs and opportunities under the CLME+ SAP and C-SAP.
- The small grants initiatives themselves would contribute to increased stakeholder capacity and participation under the CLME+ SAP.
- The coordination mechanism would make it possible to better evaluate overall impacts of the different programmes, and as such, help in improving the policies, implementation modalities and complementarity of the different initiatives.

CANARI distilled the following reflections on the SGCM and the small grant initiatives results, best practices, lessons and recommendations. These will be utilised in development of a roadmap towards formalisation, roll out and operationalisation of the SGCM over a three-year test period as a follow up.

1. **The SGCM is a relevant initiative in the CLME+ region**, given the absence of any coordination mechanism among the multiplicity of small grant programmes providing support to CSOs and SMEs for governance, management, conservation and sustainable use of coastal and marine resources. Donors were not fully aware of the work of other donors. Mechanisms do not currently exist to systematically reduce duplication, maximise synergies and coordination, and share knowledge and best practices across small grant programmes to enhance effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. Donors are particularly interested in finding out what are the gaps where funding is needed. Donors are willing to share information, learn from each other and work together on this.
2. **Small grant programmes in the CLME+ region are already supporting many but not all of the Actions in the People Managing Oceans C-SAP**, as reflected by a mapping of the alignment of the work of seven donors against the 90 Actions. This reveals opportunities for synergies and coordination as well as filling gaps that require funding.
3. **There is potential to enhance awareness of opportunities provided by small grant programmes, including via an online portal such as the CLME+ Hub**. This can enhance awareness of CSOs and SMEs about funding for initiatives that contribute to implementation of the People Managing Oceans C-SAP, and therefore the CLME+ SAP. Currently, donors promote their programmes completely independently and there is no online portal supporting access to these.
4. **The People Managing Oceans C-SAP can be used to inform development of investment priorities under small grant programmes**, as it reflects priority needs and opportunities identified by CSOs and SMEs themselves which are aligned with a politically endorsed regional strategy in the CLME+ SAP. Targeted outreach to donors will be needed to build awareness of the Strategies and Actions that align with the priorities of individual donors. Some donors deliberately align their investment priorities to support national, regional and global policies and plans and attempt to identify the priorities of civil society through consultation processes. Other donors (including private sector foundations) seem to have a more responsive and flexible approach. Written documentation of civil society priorities in the People Managing Oceans C-SAP provides accessible content that donors can utilise in shaping their investment strategies. Recognising that donors develop their investment strategies only every few years, it will likely take several years before People Managing Oceans C-SAP can be considered by most donors.
5. **A SGCM can also facilitate tracking of civil society action that contributes to implementation of the CLME+ SAP**. CSOs and SMEs depend largely on grant funding to support their activities so tracking implementation of small grant programmes and projects

⁶ Including the additional, modest small grants contribution from the CLME+ Project itself

delivered against the People Managing Oceans C-SAP would provide information on implementation of the CLME+ SAP.

6. **Coordination among small grant programmes will require resources, and a suitable body to facilitate the SGCM will need to be identified.** The amount that CANARI could do under the CLME+ Project to initiate the SGCM was limited. Donors were pleased that CANARI was facilitating a process to explore coordination of small grant programmes but asked what would be happening beyond the CLME+ Project. Although donors were interested in participating, it did not seem that any of them could/would be willing/able to take responsibility for coordination. Given the broad geographic scope of the CLME+ region, many donors do not operate across the entire area. Decisions on next steps are needed, including how the SGCM can be resourced.
7. **The small grant initiatives validated best practices and lessons learnt on operation of small grant programmes for community SMEs.** In particular:
 - a) Micro and small grants and mentorship can play a critical role in supporting startup of community enterprises and livelihood development.
 - b) Significant handholding, especially via in-country support, is required to support community organisations to design, develop and implement projects.
 - c) Strengthening capacity for leadership, communication, and business development are key needs in many community SMEs.
 - d) Tangible increase in earned income can be achieved even in small projects, which motivates interest in continued growth and development in community SMEs.
 - e) The potential for expanding the value chain of community enterprises and developing value-added products is immense and yet to be tapped; community SMEs are interested in this.
 - f) Community SMEs can benefit local communities through income generation, social awareness and programmes (for example, with youth).
8. **Civil society can contribute to implementation of regional strategies and plans.** Under CarSIF, CSOs were able to align their projects to specific Strategies and Actions in People Managing Oceans C-SAP, and therefore recognise their work as contributing to implementation of CLME+ SAP as a key regional strategy endorsed by governments.

Although formalisation, roll out and operationalisation of the SGCM was impossible within the timeframe and resources of the CLME+ Project, a foundation was built, and proof of concept demonstrated. This will be used to develop a roadmap to guide further development and operationalisation of the SGCM for a test period of three years. This will include integration of the SGCM within the wider-ranging, multi-stakeholder partnership (involving the donor community, private sector and civil society), in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 17.6, as part of the overall Coordination Mechanism for Integrated Ocean Governance in the Wider Caribbean Region. At the end of the three-year test period, an evaluation will be conducted including consideration of mechanisms for sustainability of the SGCM.