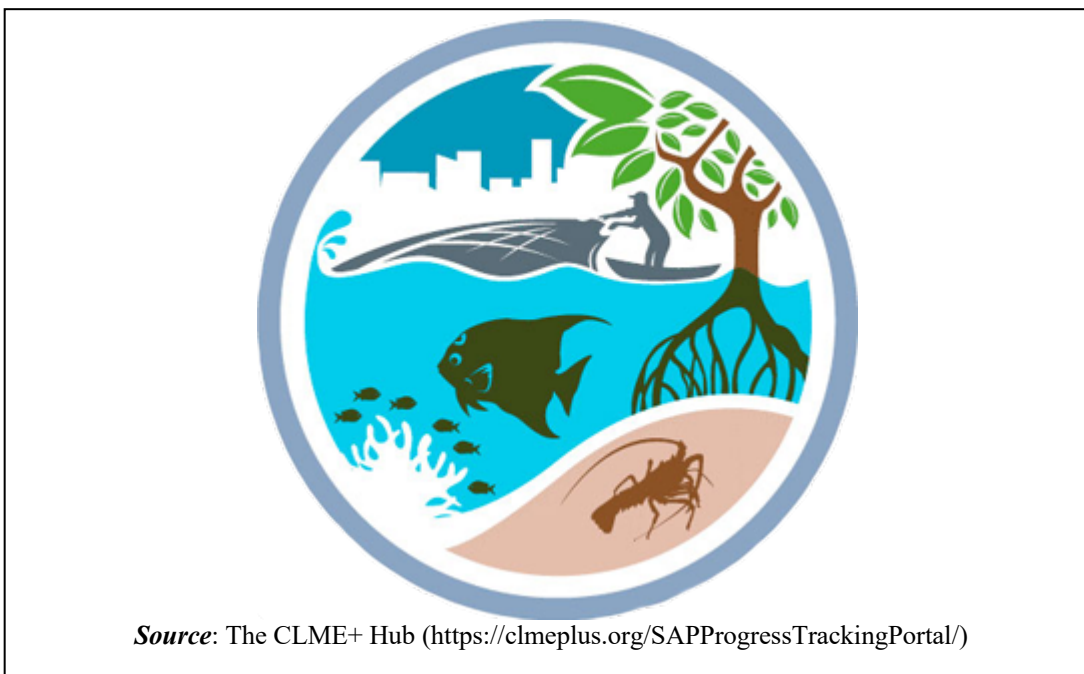


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CLME+ Strategic Action Programme (SAP) Experience Note

Coordinating Mechanisms for Strengthening Integrated Ocean Governance in the Caribbean Region



Abstract: Ocean governance in the Caribbean is comprised of a diversity of networks of actors serving various purposes and have competing and conflicting interests. The CLME+ SAP explicitly identifies weak governance as one of the main root causes of ongoing degradation of the marine environment. The first three strategies of the SAP focus on strengthening regional mechanisms for governance. Under the CLME+ Project two interim Coordination Mechanisms were created with a third long-term coordinating mechanism being negotiated at the time of writing. There have also been discussions on formalising a wide-ranging partnership for integrated governance. This experience note highlights the different regional coordination mechanisms created and proposed under the CLME+ SAP that can be viewed as best practices for strengthening ocean governance in the CLME+ region .

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Learning from best practices in CLME+ SAP implementation

**Coordinating Mechanisms for Strengthening Integrated Ocean
Governance in the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine
Ecosystems**

Experience of the GEF - sponsored

*GEF/UNDP: Catalysing Implementation of the Strategic Action Programme for the Sustainable Management of
shared Living Marine Resources in the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems
GEFID: 5542; 2015-2020*

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The *Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the Sustainable Management of the shared Living Marine Resources in the Caribbean and the North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems* (CLME+ SAP: 2015-2025) was developed under the CLME Project (2009-2014). Co-funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the CLME+ SAP provides priority actions required for improving the transboundary governance of shared living marine resources across the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR).

Endorsed by 25 countries and 8 overseas territories, the CLME+ SAP aims to assist these and other countries and agencies within the WCR in achieving national and regional goals for the successful implementation of ecosystem-based management (EBM) and an ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF). The SAP also supports delivery on international developmental goals and targets such as the Aichi Targets and the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – in particular SDG14 (Life Below Water).

In tackling the key transboundary issues (i.e. unsustainable fisheries, habitat degradation and marine pollution, as identified by Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) studies) the SAP is geared towards bringing about structural change through:

1. Improved governance;
2. Increased capacities (e.g. human, institutional, supporting and developing legal frameworks); and
3. On-the-ground action.

The first three strategies of the SAP focus on strengthening regional mechanisms for governance. Strategy 3, in particular, specifically speaks to having in place, integrated ocean governance, through inter-sectoral policy coordination. This experience note highlights the different regional coordination mechanisms created and proposed under the CLME+ SAP that can be viewed as best practices for strengthening ocean governance in the CLME+ region.

THE EXPERIENCE

Issue

Many countries in the CLME+ region lack capacity. Rarely are there clear mandates by national, sub-regional, or regional level institutions for management policies that address sectoral integration at levels up to the ecosystem scale. Effective governance hinges on having effective arrangements or mechanisms in

place at the appropriate geographical scale. These mechanisms must be coordinated and involve actors at multiple organisational levels: local, national, sub-regional and regional.

Ocean governance in the CLME+ region is comprised of a diversity of networks of actors serving various purposes, and these actors have competing and conflicting interests. The CLME+ SAP explicitly identifies weak governance as one of the main root causes of ongoing degradation of the marine environment.

Considering the high levels of fragmentation of ocean-related efforts in the CLME+ region by the large number of countries, territories and organisations in the region, plus external entities, development of effective formal regional integration and coordination mechanisms is both critical and urgent.

Addressing the Issue

The CLME+ SAP includes a substantial focus on strengthening and expanding the regional, sub-regional and national-level collaborative governance and living marine resources management efforts. Actions defined under the different Strategies allows for improving coordination and cooperation among countries and sub-regions, as well as among thematic sub-areas, facilitating the implementation of ecosystem-based management and an ecosystem approach to fisheries.

The countries and partners involved in the implementation of the SAP have committed to pursuing coordinated strategies and actions. As such, inter-linked, integrated and complementary mechanisms have been developed that can address key issues.

Continued support from the UNDP/GEF CLME+ Project, has resulted in:

1. The creation of two (2) Interim Coordination Mechanisms (ICMs);
2. Consultations towards creating a long-term ocean governance Coordination Mechanism; and
3. A prospective wide-ranging Partnership in support of SAP implementation.

The following sections summarise each of these created and proposed mechanisms with specific focus being placed on how they were (or will be) established, their role(s)/purpose and achievements or expected outcomes.

RESULTS AND LEARNING

Regional Coordination Mechanisms

Under the CLME+ Project the two coordination mechanisms created were the Interim Coordination Mechanism (ICM) and the Interim Fisheries Coordination Mechanism (IFCM). Consultations and decisions for finalising a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) are underway for creating a long-term ocean governance Coordination Mechanism. There have also been discussions on formalising a broader partnership for integrated governance. Tables 1-4 provide further details on each of these mechanisms.

Interim Coordination Mechanism (ICM)

The objective of the ICM is to enhance regional coordination and collaboration, and support oversight and integration of actions for sustainable fisheries and for the protection and sustainable use of the marine environment. Further to this the ICM promotes the up-scaling of actions by all sectors of society, to achieve the long-term vision of the CLME+ SAP - *“Healthy Marine Ecosystems that Provide Benefits and Livelihoods for the Peoples of the region”*.

The ICM provides the framework for Inter-Governmental Organisations (IGOs) to periodically meet, regularly interact, share information on technical matters and collaborate in the delivery of the objectives under the CLME+ SAP. The formalised framework provided by the ICM made it possible to bring together these organisations in a regular manner and foster a level of trust among IGOs. See Table 1 for details.

Table 1. A summary of the functions (i.e. establishment, role and achievements/outcomes) of the CLME+ SAP Interim Coordination Mechanism (ICM).

Establishment	Role	Achievements/Outcomes
<p>The ICM was formally established in 2017, through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) by the 8 Inter-Governmental Organizations (IGO's)¹ with an Oceans-related Mandate in the wider Caribbean.</p> <p>The creation of the ICM was a response to a call for action under the CLME+ SAP- Strategy 3. The decision for developing the ICM was made at the 1st Meeting of the UNDP/GEF CLME+ Project Steering Committee, held in 2016.</p> <p><i>In addition to CLME+ SAP priorities, new and emerging issues affecting the marine environment may be put on the agenda of the ICM.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes to the coordinated implementation of the CLME+ SAP; • Monitors and evaluates, and reports on SAP implementation, with specific focus on (a) habitat degradation; (b) pollution; and (c) unsustainable fisheries while giving due attention to climate change. • Supports the countries of the CLME+ region in their efforts to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 14 (“to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources”), and other relevant international commitments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributed to the consolidation of RGF in the CLME+ region; • Lead the reporting on the “State of the Marine Ecosystems and associated Economies” (SOMEE); • Initiated process towards the creation of an expanded CLME+ Partnership; • Promote coordinated communication, data and information sharing; and • Develop, review, revise and report back to their constituencies on the implementation of functions under the MoU. <p>The Rapid Review of Achievements of The CLME+ Interim Coordination Mechanisms a technical report by Peter Whalley provides more specific details on achievements.</p>

Interim Fisheries Coordination Mechanism (IFCM)

The objective of the IFCM is to enhance the regional governance for sustainable fisheries and facilitate, support, and strengthen the coordination of actions among the organizations for sustainable fisheries in the Western Central Atlantic Region.

Through information sharing, coordination, collaboration and the facilitation of activities of the key fisheries working groups, the IFCM was able to engage various regional fisheries bodies (RFB), which contributed to a timelier delivery of a number of EAF based regional fisheries management plans.

The IFCM strengthens the partnerships at the ICM, regional fisheries bodies and related working groups level. See Table 2 for details.

¹The United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment) represented by its Caribbean Regional Coordinating Unit (UN Environment CAR/RCU); the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) on behalf of the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC); the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO-IOC); the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS); the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM); the Central American Fisheries and Aquaculture Organisation (OSPESCA); the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD); and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) represented by its Secretariat.

Table 2. A summary of the functions (i.e. establishment, role and achievements/outcomes) of the CLME+ SAP Interim Fisheries Coordination Mechanism (IFCM).

Establishment	Role	Achievements/Outcomes
<p>The IFCM was established in 2016 in recognition of a call from the CLME+ SAP Strategy 2, Action 2.1(A) - the creation of an interim fisheries coordination arrangement for sustainable fisheries development.</p> <p>A MoU was signed by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) on behalf of the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC), the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) and the Central American Fisheries and Aquaculture Organisation (OSPESCA) for securing the commitment to CLME+ SAP Vision².</p> <p>An amendment of the MoU was recently signed by participating subregional and regional fisheries organisations to extend the IFCM until 2026.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promotes coordination and cooperation in identified priorities in the CRFM OSPESCA Joint Action Plan, including the technical Working Groups; ● Collaborates to ensure a free flow of mutually useful information and data concerning fish stocks, fisheries activities in the CLME+ ecosystems; ● Facilitates work among the members of the Parties towards harmonization; ● Cooperates with relevant scientific and fisheries management projects; ● Establishes reciprocal observer arrangements; and ● Shares reports of their sessions and meetings of their subsidiary bodies and projects that are relevant for each other's work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regional Fisheries Management Plans for Queen Conch, spiny lobster and flying fish developed and approved by the regional fisheries organisations. ● Development and approval of regional plan for action to combat illegal unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in the Caribbean. ● Coordinated and joint meetings of CRFM-OSPESCA fisheries Ministerial Councils ● Data policy and data portal developed and approved by ministers in June 2019. ● Reorientation of WECAFC. For example, the IFCM provided the IGOs with a forum where they could have open discussions that provided opportunities to clarify issues of regional importance to fisheries management. <p>The Rapid Review of Achievements of The CLME+ Interim Coordination Mechanisms a technical report by Peter Whalley provides more specific details on achievements.</p>

Coordination Mechanism

The development of the initial two CMs and the proposal for the long-term Coordinating Mechanism (CM) has involved many national experts and IGOs with the support of the UNDP/GEF CLME projects. The draft proposed functions for a long-term CM are closely linked to the main achievements of the ICM and are in-line with the SAP strategy. The proposed CM seeks to enhance collaboration and coordination for the conservation and sustainable use of the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems.

² "Healthy marine ecosystems in the CLME+ Region that are adequately valued and protected through robust, integrative and inclusive governance arrangements at regional, subregional, national and local levels, which in turn effectively enable adaptive management that maximizes, in a sustainable manner, the provision of goods and services in support of enhanced livelihoods and human well-being"

It is proposed that the CM will operate through three main elements:

1. *Steering Group* – composed of country representatives and the Chair of the Executive Group as a non-voting Member;
2. *Executive Group* – composed of IGO representatives (the Chair of the Steering Group may attend and participate in the discussions of the Executive Group without decision-making capacity)
3. *Secretariat* – composed of the Director, technical and administrative staff.

Working Groups including experts and representatives from countries, IGOs, non-state actors, academia etc. will be considered if and when necessary and appropriate. An MoU is also being used to create the CM and that this is what is required for commencement: This MoU is expected to commence upon signature by a minimum of twenty-three (23) Signatories, including no fewer than seventeen (17) States or Territories and six (6) IGOs. See Table 3 below for more details.

Table 3. Designing the ocean governance Coordinating Mechanism (CM) for the CLME+ region.

Establishment	Role	Achievements/Outcomes
<p>1. <i>During the UNDP/GEF CLME+ Project Steering Committee (PSC) Meeting in June 2020, more than 20 countries along with 14 organizations from the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR) convened to lay out the foundations for a regional "Ocean Governance" Coordination Mechanism.</i></p> <p>- <i>In connection to this decision, members of the Steering Committee decided on key aspects of this Coordination Mechanism, which was requested under <u>Action 3.2 of SAP CLME+</u></i></p> <p>- <i>At the June meeting, a set of <u>decisions and recommendations were declared and core aspects of the proposed CM were endorsed for developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).</u></i></p> <p>- <i>An <u>initial timeline was developed for the operationalisation of the CM</u></i></p> <p>2. <i>During the subsequent, Special Session of the</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Facilitate programmatic coordination of ocean governance and support the monitoring of progress with ocean sustainability instruments, goals and commitments; ● Support the sustainable financing and coordinated resource mobilization for ocean governance; ● Facilitate the coordination of institutional and policy frameworks for ocean governance across multiple levels; ● Support, as requested, national ocean governance including national level coordination for oceans; and ● Carry out such additional activities as are necessary to support the achievement of the objectives of the Coordination Mechanism, as determined by the Signatories. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regional collaboration towards a coordinated approach to the conservation and sustainable use of the marine and coastal ecosystems and their goods and services; ● Coordinated and interactive ocean governance in support of attaining ocean-based sustainable development; ● Actions towards the achievement of the long-term vision of the CLME+ SAP, and other ocean-related international and regional goals and commitments of the Signatories; ● Partnerships with stakeholders from civil society and the private sector to facilitate and enhance efforts for the ecosystem based conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal resources and to support intersectoral coordination and collaboration.

Establishment	Role	Achievements/Outcomes
<p><i>CLME+ PSC held in October, 2020, countries and regional organizations made substantial progress towards delivering the full text for the MoU through which the CM will be created.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>A <u>new timeline</u> was developed.</i> - <i>Further negotiations are now being planned, with the aim of achieving formal technical endorsement of the full MoU text by March 2021.</i> 		

Partnership

An early proposal has been developed for what can be considered as a “*Partnership for the Sustainable Management, Use and Protection of the living marine resources of the CLME+/wider Caribbean region*” (the “Partnership”). However, further discussions are needed. This proposed partnership is expected to be an interactive, responsive, dynamic and evolving, voluntary non-legally binding long-term partnership arrangement for the stakeholders of the marine environment of the region. See Table 4 for more details.

Table 4. A summary of the proposed Partnership for the CLME+ region, highlighting its mission, goals and objectives.

<i>Missions and Goals</i>	<i>Objectives</i>
<p>Mission: To improve interactive and cooperative ocean governance, inter alia through integrated management of the shared living marine resources of the CLME+ region.</p> <p>Goal: To facilitate the realization of the long-term vision of “healthy marine ecosystems that are adequately valued and protected through robust, integrative and inclusive governance arrangements at regional, sub-regional, national and local levels, effectively enabling adaptive management which maximizes, in a sustainable manner, the provision of goods and services in support of enhanced livelihoods and human well-being” in the CLME+ region, within a horizon of 15 to 20 years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Facilitate the engagement of non-State actors in CLME+ SAP implementation; ● Encourage non-State actors to design and implement programmes and projects that contribute to SAP implementation; ● Make the human, technical and financial resources of non-State actors available to strengthen and broaden the work of the CM and its members; ● Provide a platform for the engagement of non-State actors; ● Strengthen consensus among partners on approaches and strategies for addressing the threats to the marine environment; and ● Reduce regional disparities in capacities for the sustainable ocean and marine resources governance and management.

Best practices and lessons learned

The interim Coordination Mechanisms (i.e. the ICM and IFCM) should be seen as examples of best practices for:

1. Successfully achieving actions set under the CLME+ SAP strategies and sub-strategies, especially those specific to strategies 1-3 for integrated and coordinated regional ocean governance.
2. Undertaking coordinated actions and building trust among regional IGOs and other CLME+ stakeholders.
3. Enabling the creation of long-term coordination mechanisms for continued support of integrated ocean governance and the successful implementation of an EBM and EAF of shared living marine resources in the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems
4. Coordinated support for achieving regional and international goals and targets such as the Aichi Targets, SDG14 and objectives under the blue economy initiatives across the region.
5. Improved collaboration and coordinated communication between ICM members to ensure clear messages to key stakeholders.
6. Enhancing capacities for addressing challenges and finding solutions and being innovative in times of limited resources.
7. Shared workloads and plan for enhancing effectiveness and reducing duplication.
8. Supporting and strengthening nation-level coordination (e.g. national Intersectoral coordination mechanisms - NICs).

Additionally, overall consideration must be given to the benefits that have been established from a Project Coordinating Unit (PCU) over the last 10 years, that facilitated the development of the SAP through collaborating with countries and IGOs, co-ordinating the development of regional reports (e.g. SOME) and providing regional secretariat coordination support to the ICMs was noted by the IGOs as important.

These experiences as lessons have been incorporated in the proposed functions identified for the CM.

REPLICATION

Understanding how these regional coordinating mechanisms operate, how well they function and are able to meet their objectives, is critical to governance processes and the overall regional governance framework. The ICM and IFCM are examples of best practices for informing the development of other regional coordination mechanisms such as the in-progress ocean governance Coordination Mechanism. The CM progress should be monitored to determine its success as an instrument developed with much guidance from its predecessors (i.e. the ICM and IFCM).

Responding to management and policy needs within the CLME+ requires good coordination among all the actors. This could improve capacities within existing policy frameworks. A one-size fit all approach for the governance of transboundary resources is not practical. Therefore, learning from mechanisms that are better understood (in terms of features, functions and outcomes) supports effective management of the marine resources and delivers social, cultural, economic, and environmental benefits.

The WCR is the most geo-politically diverse region in the world, therefore, as in all such regions, integrative, collaborative and well-coordinated approaches will be especially needed to address issues and achieve effective governance for the successful management of shared/transboundary living marine resources.

SIGNIFICANCE

In the CLME+ region the ICM and CM can be viewed as a response to the United Nations resolution towards greater cooperation between regional seas and regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs).

It is impossible to measure and understand every aspect of each of the strategies and priorities set out in the CLME+ SAP. However, having coordination mechanisms in place greatly assists in: 1) acquiring the

scientific and traditional knowledge needed for providing sound advice and informing decision-making; 2) fostering and strengthening collaborations at all levels (local, national, regional, sub-regional and international) for improved coordination and governance; and 3) having a dedicated system in place for the planning, implementation, monitoring and review of actions. Focus can be placed on activities that will inform and improve the understanding of the most essential components and functions of the ecosystems in the CLME+ region.

In a resource-limited region, promoting collaboration and engagement across countries and agencies helps to devise strategies for addressing existing gaps and challenges as well as developing innovative solutions. Achieving national, regional and international goals and targets such as SDG14 and the blue economy objectives, relies on successful engagement across the wide cross-section stakeholders in the CLME+ region, and beyond.

REFERENCES

More information can be accessed from the following websites:

1. <https://clmeplus.org/>
2. <https://www.clmeproject.org/sap-overview/>
3. <https://clmeplus.org/regional-coordination-mechanisms/#ICM>
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