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The evolution of the Caribbean Marine Protected Area Management Network and Forum (CaMPAM): 20 years of the Regional Multidimensional Program for Strengthening MPA Practitioners

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## GULF AND CARIBBEAN FISHERIES INSTITUTE PARTNERSHIP

# THE EVOLUTION OF THE CARIBBEAN MARINE PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT NETWORK AND FORUM (CaMPAM): 20 YEARS OF THE REGIONAL MULTIDIMENSIONAL PROGRAM FOR STRENGTHENING MPA PRACTITIONERS<sup>†</sup>

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**ABSTRACT:** The Caribbean Marine Protected Area Management Network and Forum (CaMPAM) was formed in 1997 when the United Nations Environment's Caribbean Environment Program (UNEP–CEP) convened a meeting of 50 Marine Protected Area (MPA) managers. Since then, CaMPAM has adaptively evolved into a comprehensive regional program that aims at strengthening Caribbean MPAs at the site and national levels through a variety of mechanisms. CaMPAM's original focus was to provide training, information sharing, and communications. Shortly after the initial formation, grants for learning exchanges and for implementing small projects were awarded. Partnerships were established with interested organizations, and some collaborators became mentors and served as instructors and activity coordinators. These tools allowed the capacity building program to address the changing needs of the MPA. These needs have been captured through site visits, consultations with scientists and managers, surveys, evaluations of courses and the entire program, CaMPAM project reports, specific requests of donors, the intergovernmental meetings of UNEP–CEP's Cartagena Convention's Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPA) Protocol, and have shaped the program. In the spirit of having a balance between the region's needs and the role of CaMPAM as the SPAW MPA capacity building tool, in 2016 the UNEP–CEP commissioned the review of the CaMPAM program in order to make it more relevant and useful. This paper describes the activities implemented between 1997–2017 and the latest assessment of the program.

**KEY WORDS:** Caribbean, marine managed areas, training, networking, program assessment

## INTRODUCTION

In the Caribbean region, marine protected areas (MPAs) have been created to conserve biodiversity, reduce conflicts from multiple uses, preserve cultural values, and ensure robust fisheries management and enforcement (Vanzella–Khouri and Bustamante 2006; Bustamante and Vanzella–Kouri 2011). In 1997, a meeting of over 50 MPA managers was convened by the U.S. National Park Service and the UN Environment (UNEP) Caribbean Environment Programme (UNEP–CEP, <http://www.cep.unep.org/>) to develop a regional network and forum, formally known as the Caribbean Marine Protected Area Management Network and Forum (CaMPAM). Over its earlier period, CaMPAM implemented a few activities that defined its role while demonstrating the need to develop partnerships with other institutions.

At the March 2004 White Waters to Blue Water Conference held in Miami, Florida (USA), the UNEP–CEP partnered with the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI, [www.gcfi.org](http://www.gcfi.org)) and a few other regional governmental and non–governmental organizations to enhance

CaMPAM. Subsequently, with the use of the internet, CaMPAM implemented the Training of Trainers (ToT) program (<http://campam.gcfi.org/campam.php#ToT>), the Small Grant program (<http://campam.gcfi.org/SGF/SGFEng.php>), the CaMPAM website (<http://campam.gcfi.org/campam.php>), the MPA forum at annual GCFI conferences, and the Regional MPA Database (<http://campam.gcfi.org/CaribbeanMPA/CaribbeanMPA.php>). These resources provide managers with the tools to effectively manage their MPAs and the attendant biological and cultural resources, as well as to effectively communicate with academic colleagues, other managers, and MPA stakeholders. As the CaMPAM's regional role broadened, so did the need to periodically evaluate the effectiveness and value of its various tools. This paper reviews the development of CaMPAM, describes the institution's activities, and presents an overview of the 2016 evaluation of the CaMPAM Network and Forum. As CaMPAM moves into its third decade, the goal is to improve its platform and strengthen partnerships with relevant institu-

<sup>†</sup>This article is based on a presentation given in November 2016 at the 69<sup>th</sup> annual Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute conference in Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands.

tions in the Caribbean and other parts of the world. Thus, it is important to share the experience and lessons learned over the first 20 years of existence of the world's oldest and most active regional network of marine area practitioners.

### THE NEED FOR AND CREATION OF CaMPAM

By the end of the 20th century, very few programs and organizations focused on building the capacity of individual Caribbean MPAs, and even fewer focused at the regional scale. Among those programs that did take such a focus was The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) Florida Caribbean Marine Conservation Science Center. In the mid 1990s, the center conducted marine conservation assessments with two very different spatial scales: the US Florida Keys (Chiappone, 1996) and the Latin American and the Caribbean biogeographic provinces (Sullivan Sealey and Bustamante, 1999). Over the same period, TNC also carried out research projects in several Caribbean MPAs and trained professionals from governmental and non-governmental institutions. These programs were supported mostly by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and TNC's donor base. A notable example is the characterization of the conservation issues of Parque Nacional del Este, in Dominican Republic (Chiappone 2001). Other efforts were led by regional organizations such as the Caribbean Conservation Association (CCA) and Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI). For those involved in these efforts, it was clear that there remained an outstanding need to strengthen MPA manager capacity due to under-qualifications at the managerial levels, as well as understaffing and lack of funding issues at most MPAs.

To address the capacity limitation in Caribbean MPAs, the UNEP-CEP in 1997 created the CaMPAM, under the auspices of the Specially Protected Area and Wildlife (SPAW) Protocol of the 1983 Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment in the Wider Caribbean Region (Cartagena Convention). An inquiry conducted at the 2002 CaMPAM ToT Regional Course on MPA Management (Gardner 2003) determined that only 5 of 11 Caribbean MPAs assessed over a training course had approved management plans and that all of the management plans suffered from poor implementation (Table S1). The findings reinforced the need for MPA staff training on the basics of MPA strategic and tactical planning, management, research and monitoring, and regional policy coordination.

### CAMPAM SERVICES

#### The Training of Trainers (ToT)

The initiative of a ToT program commenced in 1997 at the International Workshop on Framework for Future Training in Marine and Coastal Protected Area Management, organized by The Netherlands Coastal Zone Management Centre (CZMC) (McManus et al. 1998). At the workshop,

participants strongly endorsed the development of a ToT program that could build over time in the region and refine a series of training modules. The program concept included a follow-up phase, during which trainees would organize training activities within their countries using the acquired knowledge and the manual with support by a small grant from UNEP-CEP and their institutions. On the basis of these recommendations, the CZMC supported UNEP-CEP with the development of the "Training of Trainers Course on Marine Protected Areas Management." This effort not only directly supported the SPAW Protocol but also the implementation of the Action Program of the Jakarta Mandate of the Convention on Biological Diversity (<https://www.cbd.int/doc/publications/jm-brochure-en.pdf>).

Written in modular format by 8 experts from the region, the "Training of Trainers on Marine Protected Areas Management in the Caribbean" manual (<http://www.cep.unep.org/publications-and-resources/promotional-material/publications/spaw/tot-manual-english>) was completed in 1998. It was used for the first time to design the curriculum and to guide instructors for the first edition of the ToT regional course held in Saba, Caribbean Netherlands. The manual, originally written in English, was translated into Spanish (<http://www.cep.unep.org/publications-and-resources/promotional-material/publications/spaw/tot-manual-es.pdf/view>) later in 1999 and French (<http://www.car-spaw-rac.org/?Manuel-de-formation-CaMPAM-sur-les,289>) in 2012; contents in the manual were updated in 2000 and 2010.

Since 1999, the ToT Program implemented a series of 13-day courses, alternating between English and Spanish, in different Caribbean MPA locations. The courses were held every 1–3 years, depending on available funding, and course participants included coordinators, trainees, and lecturers selected by UNEP-CEP/SPAW. The courses were rated by course evaluations and included local follow-up phases encompassing proposal development by trainees for local training activities facilitated by technical and financial assistance provided by the UNEP-CEP/SPAW CaMPAM Program.

As of the end of 2016, the program completed 12 regional courses (Table 1), of which 10 were followed by local training activities in each country, supported by UNEP-CEP grants ranging between US\$4,000–5,000, and organized by trainees and their institutions (visit <http://campam.gcfi.org/campam.php#> for all course reports). One of the main program designs was to ensure that the knowledge acquired by trainees at the regional courses could be disseminated within their respective countries. In all cases, training activities addressed local needs. The program coordinator supervised the entire process, which included technical assistance for proposal development.

From 1999 to 2016, 191 MPA practitioners (site and national MPA managers and private conservation groups' staff

**TABLE 1.** Summary of the main information of the regional courses and follow up activities of CaMPAM Training of Trainers program (for all course reports, visit <http://campam.gcfi.org/campam.php>). BIOPAMA, Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management Programme; CONANP-SEMARNAT, Comisión Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas, Secretario de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales de México; FKNMS, NOAA Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary; FWC, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission; GCFI, Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute; IUCN-ORMACC, International Union for Conservation of Nature Regional Office for Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean; OECS, Organization of Eastern Caribbean States; SPAW-RAC, Specially Protected Area and Wildlife Regional Activity Center; TEMEUM, Terres et Mers Ultramarines; UNEP-CEP, UN Environment Caribbean Environmental Programme; UNFIP, UN Foundation Fund for International Partnerships.

Year	Regional course venue	Number of participants (number of countries)	Number of follow-up training activities organized by trainees to share knowledge (partially funded by UNEP–CEP)	Local coordinating partners	Funding agencies	Other institutional contributions
1999	Saba Marine Park, Netherland Antilles	9 (7)	7	Saba Conservation Trust	Coastal Zone Management Center in the Netherlands, UNFIP, and the US Government	US Government and The Nature Conservancy.
2000	Parque Nacional del Este, Dominican Republic	15 (8)	7	The Nature Conservancy	UNFIP	Parque Nacional del Este.
2002	Soufriere Marine Management Area, St. Lucia	12 (8)	8	Soufriere Marine Management Association	UNFIP	St. Lucia Fisheries Departments, The Nature Conservancy
2004	Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary	17 (12)	12	The Nature Conservancy	UNFIP	FKNMS, FWC, Environmental Defense Fund, 6 local extracurricular lecturers.
2006	Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary	11 (7)	7	UNEP-CEP	MacArthur Foundation	FKNMS, FWC, 6 local extracurricular lectures.
2007	Sian Ka'an Marine Reserve, Mexico	14 (9)	8	Fundación Orígenes de Quintana Roo	MacArthur Foundation	Instituto Universitario de Tulum, The Nature Conservancy, CONANP-SEMARNAT Yucatán Region, Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve, Hotel Nueva Vida de Ramiro, Amigos de Sian Ka'an, and 7 local extracurricular lecturers.
2009	Buccoo Reef Marine Park, Trinidad and Tobago	12 (9)	8	Buccoo Reef Trust	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), Buccoo Reef Trust, OECS (OPAAL project)	GCFI, 4 local extracurricular lecturers.
2010	Parque Nacional del Este, Dominican Republic	22 (7)	7	Reef Check Dominican Republic	General Directorate on Natural Environment and Forestry Policy of the Ministry of Marine and Rural Environment of Spain	Dominican Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, and local extracurricular lecturers
2011	Hol Chan Marine Reserve, Belize	19 (8)	8	Seatone Consulting	General Directorate on Cooperation for International Development of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy	The Hol Chan Marine Reserve, the Belize Fisheries Dept., and 12 local lecturers.
2011	Guadeloupe Natl. Park, French Caribbean	18 (3)	0	SPAW–RAC and Guadeloupe National Park	SPAW–RAC, the French MPA Agency and TEMEUM	Guadeloupe National Park

TABLE 1. Continued

Year	Regional course venue	Number of participants (number of countries)	Number of follow-up training activities organized by trainees to share knowledge (partially funded by UNEP–CEP)	Local coordinating partners	Funding agencies	Other institutional contributions
2015	Moliniere-Beausejour MPA, Grenada	24 (10)	0	Grenada Fisheries Dept.	IUCN-ORMACC, as part of the BIOPAMA program funded by the 10th European Development Fund of the European Union	The Nature Conservancy (ECMMAN project); UNEP-CEP.
2016	Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic	24 (8)	6	Reef Check Dominican Republic	General Directorate on Cooperation for International Development of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy	Local lecturers, PROGES Consulting

associated with the MPAs) from all Caribbean countries and overseas territories participated in ToT Program regional courses. Some of these courses were held in MPAs that already were well-developed, in terms of planning and management. Three of the regional courses for Spanish-speaking participants were conducted in the Dominican Republic (2000, 2010, and 2016), an excellent venue because of the ease of logistics, relatively low cost, well-equipped hotels adjacent to an MPA, proximity to local and international transportation, strong local coordination, and collaboration with NGOs and government agencies. For the training courses held in the Florida Keys in 2004 and 2006, the NOAA Office of Marine Sanctuaries and the US Fish and Wildlife Service collaborated by supporting field trips using their research and enforcement vessels, as well as by providing lecturers with extensive management experience. A number of marine conservation scientists with international expertise from The Nature Conservancy, Environmental Defense Fund, and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission gave lectures and enriched the course content. In 2011, the French MPA Agency, Terres et Mers Ultramarines (TEMEUM) and the UNEP–CEP/SPAW–RAC, in collaboration with the Guadeloupe National Park, organized a shorter version of the course for French, Dutch, and Haitian managers. It is estimated that more than 2000 MPA practitioners (staff and other local stakeholders) have benefitted from the 78 local follow-up training activities, mostly funded by UNEP–CEP small grants awarded to the trainees. About 10 institutions have partnered with CaMPAM to coordinate the regional courses locally, while dozens have assisted in the local follow-up training activities. In addition, the program has benefitted from the participation of many local and regional experts as instructors. For additional information on each of the program editions, go to <http://campam.gcfi.org/campam.php#ToT>.

Since 2007 and despite efforts of CaMPAM coordination to find alternative sources of UNEP–CEP funding, support for participants from countries that were not signatories of the SPAW Protocol of the Cartagena Convention (<http://www.cep.unep.org/content/about-cep/spaw/spaw/#spawcountries>) grew limited. Representatives from Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Mexico (non-signatory parties) no longer received support for participation. However, support from institutions other than UNEP–CEP allowed for a greater diversity in participation. Examples include the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and the Buccoo Reef Trust funds efforts to fund support for participants from English-speaking, non-SPAW Parties in 2009, the 2011 Italian government initiative to fund UNEP–CEP to support participants from Caribbean Challenge Initiatives (CCI) associated states, and 2015 International Union for Conservation of Nature Regional Office for Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean (IUCN–ORMACC) funding from the Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management Programme (BIOPAMA) and The Nature Conservancy’s Eastern Caribbean Marine Management Area Network (ECMMAN) project for participants from non-SPAW parties.

Several factors have contributed to attract both funding and the collaboration of institutions and individual experts to CaMPAM ToT on MPA Management. These include flexibility in respect to the changing needs of MPA practitioners (both during the design of the regional courses and the support to the local follow-up training activities organized by the graduates), continuity, increasing experience in providing the programs, international visibility, and the collaborative approach of the UN Environment Caribbean Environment Programme. During the last 20 years a network of MPA practitioners and associated scientists have enriched the program with their collective experience and resources.

## COMMUNICATION AND NETWORKING

Communication and information dissemination has been a core part of the CaMPAM program since its inception. Following the creation of CaMPAM in 1997, a CaMPAM e–group was created by UNEP–CEP and moderated by Mr. Lloyd Gardner. This e–group was also related to the IUCN World Commission of Protected Area in the Caribbean. A few years later, GCFI became the e–group and network host and manager with the CaMPAM coordinator as moderator.

The main communication tools for CaMPAM are:

1. the CaMPAM website (<http://campam.gcfi.org/campam.php>), where information on resources, projects, and reports are permanently posted;
2. the CaMPAM–L, an email distribution list for sharing information among members of the network;
3. the CaMPAM MPA Database (<http://campam.gcfi.org/CaribbeanMPA/CaribbeanMPA.php>), which contains regional MPA profiles; and
4. the MPA Science and Management session at annual GCFI conferences.

The CaMPAM–L disseminates relevant information to MPA scientists and practitioners such as grant and job opportunities, requests for information, conference and webinar announcements, new reports, forthcoming volumes, requests for proposals, research information, press releases, emerging issues, and newsletters issued from different institutions. The messages are archived and accessible to subscribers. Every month, 20–30 messages are posted and between 5 to 10 members join the network (there were about 1,020 members as of December 2017).

The CaMPAM Regional MPA Database is a standardized repository of detailed information for Caribbean MPAs and is a resource for producing regional analyses. As of December 2017, the database entailed 320 protected areas (marine or terrestrial with coastal jurisdiction) from 33 Caribbean countries, and US and European territories, organized in 57 fields grouped into 4 main topics: identification, legal aspects, physical description, and management. Maps and a template for outlining management plans are part of its functionality. The MPA management authorities or authorized person provide the data and update it upon request. Some MPAs with very limited data (name, location, area) were included with the data from the World Database of Protected Area (WDPA).

The MPA Science and Management session at the annual GCFI meetings was created in 2005 and has been coordinated by the UNEP–CEP SPAW program since then. The selected participants present papers related to MPA science and management, establish useful contacts, and learn about the latest research and experiences in marine conservation science and fisheries in the wider Caribbean. The SPAW

Program also sponsors participants to this session every year (MPA managers, researchers and fishers).

These resources (i.e., the CaMPAM–L, the website, the database, and the conference session) have been developed thanks to a collaborative relationship established by the UN Environment Caribbean Environment Programme and its SPAW subprogram (UNEP–CEP SPAW) with the GCFI that began in 2004. Since 2009 GCFI has hosted the CaMPAM website and communication tools, and coordinated certain activities, which makes it the longest serving and most effective partner institution of the network. The website and all its information resources will be migrated to the UN Environment portal on 2018.

## TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The CaMPAM Small Grant Program started in 2000 with the implementation of exchange visits for managers from “demonstration sites” to “target sites” in order to disseminate better management practices and impart lessons learned. This initial edition of the grant program comprised grants funded by the UN Foundation to improve coral reef management. Since then, the UNEP–CEP SPAW program has awarded grants ranging from US\$5,000 to US\$220,000 for projects lasting from 3 months to 3 years to all countries of the Caribbean for an estimated total of US\$2.1 million. The grants have supported projects to develop the capacity of marine managers, as well as alternative livelihoods and sustainable fishing practices for fishers, and best conservation practices for other stakeholders. Taken together, they represent a large investment towards developing and implementing marine area management best practices.

The CaMPAM Small Grant Program allows governmental and non–governmental institutions to implement projects that respond to local MPA needs. The projects include a variety of topics such as learning exchanges, management plan development, training, stakeholder consultation meetings, equipment (e.g., mooring buoys, supplies), facilities, and sustainable fishing and aquaculture practices. Additionally, the UNEP–CEP SPAW program has also funded projects for preparing the nomination of protected areas to be listed under the SPAW Protocol (<http://www.car-spaw-rac.org/?lang=en>). The sources of funding vary among agencies and the process is as follows: 1) UNEP–CEP actively fundraises and secures resources; 2) a call for proposals is announced on the CaMPAM–L; 3) applications are reviewed by the UNEP–CEP SPAW team (with external consultation as needed), and 4) grants are awarded and managed by the SPAW Regional Activity Center (SPAW–RAC) or collaborating institutions (e.g., GCFI and TNC). CaMPAM coordination also provides technical assistance for proposal development and project implementation. Grant awardees are required to submit press releases and information notes on project activities and outcomes, and disseminate this information through the CaMPAM–L.

The most recent targets of the Small Grants program focused mostly on strengthening MPAs on islands dedicated to the Caribbean Challenge (2011–2012, <http://www.caribbeanchallengeinitiative.org/>) and within the OECS countries (2014–2017). The Directorate General for Development Cooperation of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs funded the former initiative, whereas the SPAW–RAC, in part due to an agreement with The Nature Conservancy (as part of TNC’s Eastern Caribbean Marine Managed Area Network (ECMMAN)) coordinated the latter. Information on all projects are available on the CaMPAM and SPAW–RAC websites.

### COLLABORATION

The UNEP–CEP has collaborated with numerous institutions in the region. In many cases, organizations with a mandate to strengthen MPAs in the Caribbean have approached UNEP–CEP to develop collaborative activities. The institution prioritizes the geographic focus of the activities, including target countries and tools used (exchanges, technical and financial assistance, and/or training). Many activities involve more than 2 collaborating organizations. For example, the 2009 ToT was implemented in partnership with Buccoo Reef Trust and the OECS.

In all cases, the objectives and principles of the UNEP–CEP SPAW program and SPAW Parties’ decisions are prioritized. The ToT provides the best opportunity to collaborate with other organizations since many MPA capacity–building regional programs aim at training MPA managers. In the last few years, the small grants have become more popular as local and national institutions have increased their commitment to develop effective national MPA systems but lack the financial resources to properly staff MPAs and design and implement management tools. The tools supported include environmental campaigns, ranger training, business plan development, buoy installation, and purchasing patrol boats and other enforcement equipment. In many cases the funding allowed hiring of MPA staff.

UNEP–CEP collaborative arrangements with institutions such as GCFI have facilitated communication and information dissemination within the CaMPAM network. The collaboration with individuals with high levels of expertise remains a great resource for CaMPAM. A number of experts have served as lecturers in regional courses, and many have assisted in providing and reviewing data. In 2013, CaMPAM created a team of mentors to serve as a tool for peer–to–peer, one–on–one mentorship. Eight MPA managers (some of whom were former trainees of the ToT) and scientists working with MPAs were invited to discuss a potential mentorship program and receive training on the basics of person–to–person mentorship. After a process of application and proposal review, a mentoring pilot project conducted in 2014 included 3 mentee–mentor exchanges: managers from Barbados and Belize visited the Bonaire Marine Park, and

a mentor from the Dominican Republic visited the Guana-hacabibes National Park in western Cuba. The pilot project showed good results, albeit at a high cost. The mentors nevertheless provided additional value by serving as lecturers in the ToT and as local coordinators of projects and activities such as exchanges. This group was recently expanded to form the CaMPAM Expert Team.

Since 2010, the SPAW Program, through CaMPAM, has sustained a collaborative dialogue with the Mediterranean Protected Area Network (MedPAN). This dialogue compares experiences in the 2 regional semi–enclosed seas, the Mediterranean and the Caribbean, and facilitates exchanges among regional networks of MPA managers. Similarly, CaMPAM has participated in the preparation of several workshops and sessions to highlight the regional networks of MPA managers across sister regions, including the aforementioned MedPAN, RAMPAN (Western Africa Network of Marine Protected Areas,) and NAMPAN (North America Marine Protected Area Network) in the design of a trans–Atlantic initiative that assists in coordinating joint activities and exchanges.

### THE 2016 CaMPAM ASSESSMENT

The CaMPAM coordination team is sensitive to the existing and emerging needs and demands in the Caribbean MPA community. The team relies on a variety of sources for such information, ranging from site managers, scientists, program leaders, donors, and meeting participants (e.g., the MPA session at the GCFI annual meeting, UNEP–CEP’s Cartagena Convention’s SPAW Protocol, etc.), feedback from ToT course surveys and project reports, and from the active exchange of information disseminated in the CaMPAM–L.

The constant attention to the region’s needs, longstanding association with diverse collaborators, and the almost 2 decades of experience have made CaMPAM a model to be emulated by similar regional networks. As an example of the institution’s impact, the IUCN World Commission of Protected Areas awarded to Dr. Georgina Bustamante (CaMPAM coordinator since 2008) and Alessandra Vanzella (UNEP–CEP’s SPAW program officer and CaMPAM founder) the Fred M. Packard International Parks Merit Award at the IUCN World Parks Congress held in Hawaii in September 2016. This prestigious award was given “in recognition of their work to advancing MPA management in the Caribbean region for over 20 years, including through the Caribbean Marine Protected Area Management Network and other initiatives.”

Also, with its higher profile, CaMPAM has had to take on increased responsibility and make itself subject to external review. As part of its most recent evaluation, an external audit completed an overall assessment of the last 15 years of CaMPAM activities (Collado–Vides 2016). The auditor conducted a series of interviews with the SPAW Secretariat,

**TABLE 2.** Source of information for the assessment of CaMPAM activities in 2000–2016.

	<b>Internet network/ forum and the regional MPA database</b>	<b>Small Grant Program</b>	<b>Trainers of Trainers program (alumni)</b>	<b>Trainers of Trainers program (instructors)</b>
Number of respondents for each activity	15	8	29	7
Number of countries of respondents	11	7	17	4

CaMPAM coordinator, and main project partners, as well as a survey of network members and training and grants beneficiaries from 24 Caribbean countries and European territories. The audit also assessed information from CaMPAM and other relevant programs. The surveys were carried out via online questionnaires, and in-depth interviews were conducted via phone.

A total of 59 respondents (15 CaMPAM–L users, 29 ToT users, 7 instructors and 8 grant beneficiaries) completed online questionnaires (Table 2). In relation to CaMPAM–L use, 13% of those who participated identified themselves as MPA managers, 27% worked in academia, and the remaining 60% represented other industries. A third of the respondents indicated they hold decision-making authority, suggesting that the internet list may impact decisions. Almost three quarters, or 73%, of CaMPAM–L members surveyed stated that they regularly visit the website, and a third of those considered it an important source of information for their everyday work. Also, a third of the sample reported accessing CaMPAM–L archives for information concerning MPA news and events in the Caribbean. Only 27% of those surveyed did not find the listserve useful, arguing that the email format is not user friendly or helpful in promoting debates. This finding is consistent with the fact that 40% of respondents do not use the CaMPAM–L to send information or debate topics. These results indicate that the CaMPAM–L is a good source of information but must be reformatted and made more user-friendly to promote debate and conversation among users. New communication approaches could improve CaMPAM’s networking and communication resources.

For questionnaires related to the ToT program, 50% of contacted alumni (n = 29), from a total of 17 countries responded. A majority of these respondents expressed clear benefits from the program: 98% reported an increase in their understanding about how MPAs work, 97% stated acquiring strong skills that improved their communication with staff and stakeholders, and 99% of respondents expressed that the ToT positively impacted their ability to utilize and disseminate best practices to solve local problems.

There were only 8 responses from 7 countries who were

participants in the Small Grants program, a very low participation rate considering the importance of the support received. Three of the respondents used the funds for ToT follow-up activities, half to attend learning exchange visits, and 2 to support research projects. Most respondents found that the support provided helped them to improve communication with stakeholders and funded necessary needs in the research and management of their MPAs.

Overall, the 2016 assessment highlighted several strengths of the CaMPAM network and its capacity building program. In particular, the network:

- Represents a mature, permanent program with continuity of its activities;
- Has a region-wide impact;
- Fills a gap for addressing important needs for improving MPA effectiveness and networking;
- Is managed by a “small, dynamic and flexible team” (i.e. low-cost, action oriented, and adaptive);
- Conducts a series of diverse activities, including ToT regional courses with follow up actions, information tool development, and financial support with small to mid-size grants to implement regional projects, including exchange visits;
- Operates an informative website;
- Maintains the CaMPAM–L, a forum that provides information for members on diverse subjects; and
- Organizes a session at the annual GCFI conference to promote the exchange of experiences across regional MPA practitioners.

Nevertheless, the assessment also identified a few opportunities for improvement, including the need to:

- Ensure and increase permanent and stronger funding for the SPAW program at UNEP–CEP (from more donors committed to SPAW mission and goals);
- Improve partnerships and government participation;
- Increase coordination among staff;
- Reassess the executive and advisory teams (to include

participation from active and committed mentors and collaborators) in agreement with SPAW directions;

- Improve the CaMPAM–L email–list format to promote easier discussion among forum members;
- Continue the ToT as a field and in–person course, with improvements following the changing needs related to MPA management;
- Promote the use of technological tools for training exercises (e.g. during the 2016 ToT, some classes were given remotely using Skype); and
- Promote short term workshops/webinars addressing specific topics, either organized by CaMPAM or in collaboration with institutions that already have adequate technology.

The results of this assessment were presented at the meeting of SPAW Parties during the Seventh Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) of the Parties to the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife in the Wider Caribbean Region, held in Miami on 2–4 November 2016. The recommendations suggested by the 2016 assessment will be considered for improving CaMPAM from 2017 onwards.

Finally, the assessment demonstrates the advantage of having a regional agreement (the SPAW Protocol) and its program in attracting resources and coordinate activities. However, the funding limitations and administrative restrictions of the UNEP–CEP often make it difficult for effective project coordination. Therefore, the identification of sustained funding sources, for at least the core activities, and investment to improve information tools that would result in a more agile institutional coordination are of utmost importance. In addition, CaMPAM needs to have an executive team and an active and strong group of advisors that will support its activities.

#### **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

CaMPAM and its capacity building program have undergone a notable development since its inception in 1997 and over its first 2 decades in existence. The progress was made

possible by the resources provided by the UNEP–CEP and via collaboration of governmental and conservation institutions that identified CaMPAM as a sound platform in which to invest resources to increase MPA management capacity. Since 2004, with the establishment of an important partnership with the GCFI, tools such as ToT, the CaMPAM–L and website, the MPA session at the GCFI annual conference, and the small grant program for exchanges and small projects have been strengthened significantly. In 2010, the program underwent another significant boost thanks to the support of the Italian and German governments in assisting the countries associated with the Caribbean Challenge to meet their international commitments to improve their MPA systems. Additionally, the SPAW Regional Activity funded by the government of France increased its capacity, which allowed the UNEP–CEP to expand the SPAW program, including CaMPAM activities.

The UNEP–CEP SPAW acknowledges the increasing role of other national and regional institutions towards the common goal of developing MPA capacity at the site and country level. CaMPAM will improve its activities but keep its focus in its core tools. In that context, the capacity building program will also align its activities to support the MPAs listed under the SPAW Protocol (<http://www.cep.unep.org/content/about-cep/spaw/spaw/#spawcountries>). The list initiated in 2012 responds to provisions of the Protocol calling for the development of a cooperation program for areas listed under the Protocol. The Parties are invited to propose important areas for listing which are assessed based on approved criteria and guidelines for selection and listing.

The assessment conducted in 2016 and other considerations stressed the need for the UN Environment in the Caribbean to host and further develop CaMPAM communication tools and information resources. These changes, together with a new focus on the development of decision support systems and tools to apply an ecosystem–based approach to marine area management, will take CaMPAM to new endeavors and challenges as the program enters its third decade.

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