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**PACIFIC CENTRAL AMERICAN EXPERT WORKSHOP
FOR MARINE CONSERVATION AND
SUSTAINABILITY**
Guatemala City, 27-28 May 2015

REPORT ON THE PACIFIC CENTRAL AMERICAN EXPERT WORKSHOP FOR MARINE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

INTRODUCTION

1. At its ninth meeting, held in Bonn, Germany, in 2008, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, welcomed the efforts of the LifeWeb Initiative promoted by the Government of Germany and other countries¹ to speed the implementation of the programme of work on protected areas² through the development of a platform for cooperation among donors, developing countries and countries with economies in transition.
2. At its tenth meeting, held in Nagoya, Japan, in 2010, the Conference of the Parties adopted the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, with its Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The mission of the Strategic Plan is to take effective and urgent action to halt the loss of biodiversity in order to ensure that by 2020 ecosystems are resilient and continue to provide essential services, thereby securing the planet's variety of life, and contributing to human well-being and poverty eradication.
3. Recognizing that achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets requires a comprehensive approach to resource management and the use of many tools, including protected areas, indigenous and community conserved areas, ecological corridors, restoration and other means, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity developed a set of options for the future of LifeWeb (UNEP/CBD/COP/11/INF/48) that widened its scope beyond protected areas to all area-based conservation activities, such as restoration, invasive alien species management, ecological corridors and fisheries regulations. Consequently, LifeWeb now supports developing countries and countries with economies in transition in the development of projects for the achievement of the area-based Aichi Biodiversity Targets and facilitates financial and technical partnerships for LifeWeb Expressions of Interest.
4. At its twelfth meeting, held in Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea, in 2014, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with Parties, other Governments, relevant organizations, including regional seas conventions and action plans, and, where appropriate, regional fisheries management organizations with regard to fisheries management, to facilitate technical training, including the organization of regional and/or subregional capacity-building workshops, where Parties wish workshops to be held, on scientific methodologies and approaches of applying the criteria for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs) as well as the compilation and use of scientific and technical information contained in the EBSA repository and information-sharing

¹ See decision IX/18.

² See decision VII/28.

mechanism, and other relevant information, with a view to contributing to the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and to report on progress to a meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice prior to the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.³

5. The Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary, and invited Parties, other Governments, and funding organizations, as appropriate, to provide adequate, timely and sustainable support to address capacity-building and financial needs regarding the description of areas meeting the EBSA criteria in developing country Parties, in particular the least developed countries and small island developing States as well as countries with economies in transition.⁴ Seven additional regional workshops were convened, between them the Eastern Tropical and Temperate Pacific, held in the Galapagos Islands, Ecuador, from 28 to 31 August 2012, where 21 new ecologically or biologically significant marine areas were identified and subsequently added to the list of EBSAs by the Conference of the Parties at its twelfth meeting. Table 2 of decision XII/22 enumerates the 21 EBSAs.

6. It is in this context that the Executive Secretary convened, with financial support from the Government of Germany (through the International Climate Initiative), the Pacific Central American Expert Workshop for Marine Conservation and Sustainability, which was hosted by the Government of Guatemala in Guatemala City on 27 and 28 May 2015, and co-chaired with the Central American Commission on Environment and Development (known by its Spanish acronym, CCAD), an official body of the Central American Integration System (known by its Spanish acronym, SICA). CCAD is a regional intergovernmental platform responsible for the regional environmental agenda. Its main objective is to “contribute to sustainable development in Central America, strengthening cooperation and integration arrangements for environmental management”. CCAD is represented by the environmental authorities of the region, specifically the Ministers of Environment of the Central American countries. CCAD has a regional environmental strategy that is aligned with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. The workshop was also conducted with participation of the Central American Commission on Marine Transportation (known by its Spanish acronym, COCATRAM) and the Organization of Fishing and Aquaculture in Central America (known by its Spanish acronym, OSPESCA), which are official bodies of SICA. Other relevant regional organizations and initiatives were represented at the workshop.

7. Participants in the workshop were mainly marine conservation experts nominated by CBD and CCAD focal points from each of the countries and relevant organizations in the region responsible for addressing the Aichi Biodiversity Targets concerning marine and coastal biodiversity, in particular within the context of national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) as well as policies/plans on integrated marine and coastal area management at the national and/or regional levels. The full list of participants is contained in annex I.

8. The purpose of the workshop was to facilitate the development of a coherent framework for integrated marine conservation action in line with the CCAD Regional Environmental Strategy 2015-2020 and CBD Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. It focused on integrated ecosystem-based management efforts towards achieving Aichi Biodiversity Targets 6, 10, 11, 12, 14 and 15. Specifically, it was aimed at the following:

(a) Bringing together scientists, experts and members of other international organizations to discuss initiatives to increase the effectiveness of the system of marine conservation and management within the exclusive economic zones of Central American countries having a coastline on the Pacific Ocean, utilizing a consensus-based approach for priority setting;

(b) Exploring gaps in implementation at the national level in order to find regional solutions and frameworks to help with national level operations;

³ See decision XII/22, para. 12.

⁴ See *ibid.*, para. 14.

(c) Achieving consensus and agreement on specific regional marine and coastal conservation priorities in the region on the basis of science, information and best practices;

(d) Achieving agreement on specific regional marine and coastal conservation activities in the region that directly address the priorities discussed;

(e) Developing these regional activity ideas to the point at which they could easily be turned into proposals to partners, such as donors, technical organizations and NGOs, to assist in implementation.

9. The emphasis of the workshop was therefore on exchange of information and experiences, and facilitated discussion and brainstorming for regional priorities and project ideas. Likewise, the workshop format featured a mix of presentations with question-and-answer sessions, interactive group exercises to further explore project ideas, discussions in break-out groups, and presentations from individuals and groups.

10. Details of the organization of the workshop are provided in annex III.

ITEM 1. OPENING OF THE WORKSHOP

11. Ms. Christa Varela, Executive Secretary of CCAD, chaired the opening ceremony. She welcomed all participants from the region and relevant international and regional organizations.

12. Mr. Manuel Benedicto Lucas, Director of the Guatemalan National Commission on Protected Areas (CONAP), serving as the CBD Focal Point for Guatemala, welcomed all participants. He indicated that Guatemala was a megadiverse country, currently heading the Group of 19 megadiverse countries and contains more than 70% of known biodiversity. He further noted that Guatemala was advancing in the fulfilment of its obligations under Aichi Targets 6, 10, 11 and 14, especially target 11, as shown by the increasing number of marine protected areas. Guatemala had 328 protected areas, representing 32% of the national territory. In the Pacific area, Guatemala had 6,000 protected hectares of marine ecosystem and was working to increase that number to 56,000 hectares for a total of 108,000 hectares. He indicated that the Government of Germany, through KfW was the most important donor in the Central American region and a good example was the project to strengthen the Mesoamerican Reef System, with the help of MarFund. He noted the importance of regional cooperation and the building of capacities in governments as an important aspect of that cooperation. Finally, he described the two LifeWeb projects in Guatemala, one for 10 million euros and another for a projected 10 million euros. He then introduced Mr. Oscar Medinilla, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources of Guatemala, and noted that the workshop was the first official act of his tenure as Minister.

13. Mr. Medinilla welcomed the participants and highlighted the close relationship that Guatemala had with CBD and with CCAD. While indicating the importance of national issues, he clarified that, for the purposes of the workshop and the work of CCAD, the urgency was to strengthen regional integration. He indicated that the workshop was very important for compiling relevant information related to biodiversity. He noted that there had already been some advancement on biodiversity issues and the achievement of the Aichi Targets, as well as in the National Objectives 2020 of SICA, which had required strong teamwork and effort from all Central American countries. He stressed the importance of the great ecological wealth in the Pacific for livelihoods in communities located in the coastal zone. Finally, he noted the large gaps in monitoring of marine and coastal areas and the potential impact on efforts to develop a sustainable regional economy.

14. Mr. Charles Besancon, Coordinator of the CBD LifeWeb Initiative, welcomed the participants and provided an overview of the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity. He explained the modus operandi of CBD, highlighting the consensus-driven approach of CBD Parties. He briefly reviewed the EBSA process and the recent decision XII/22 through which the Conference of the Parties had taken note of the results of regional workshops where EBSA delineations were described, including those in the Eastern Tropical Pacific, a region included in the scope of the workshop. He then indicated that the workshop had been organized to ensure further alignment between the CCAD Regional Environmental Strategy and the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan for Biodiversity in the context of marine

conservation in exclusive economic zones; any discussion about the high seas was at the discretion of the Governments present. He described the three desired outcomes of the workshop: (a) to achieve consensus and agreement on specific regional marine and coastal conservation priorities in the region, on the basis of science, information and best practices; (b) to achieve agreement on specific regional marine and coastal conservation activities in the region that directly address the priorities discussed; and (c) to develop these regional activity ideas to the point at which they could easily be turned into proposals to partners, such as donors, technical organizations and NGOs, to assist in implementation. Lastly, he informed participants that the CBD Secretariat and the CCAD Secretariat would co-chair the workshop and would remain focused on issues that offered the possibility of consensus and concrete solutions.

ITEM 2. REVIEW OF THE CCAD REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY 2015-2020

15. Under this item, Ms. Christa Varela, Executive Secretary of the CCAD, described the CCAD Regional Environmental Strategy developed under SICA. The Regional Environmental Strategy had been developed alongside additional regional strategies for climate change and risk management, environmental quality, integrated water resource management, trade and environment and a financial mechanism. The Regional Environmental Strategy had been developed through a participatory and inclusive process involving several different sectors and actors, including international cooperation, ministries of environment, civil society organizations, the private sector and international NGOs, who participate in the Advisory Council of SICA. CCAD took a comprehensive view of environment in the context of sustainable development and considered stakeholder engagement critical for successful implementation. Furthermore, the Strategy was aligned with the global Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, which had been adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity at its tenth meeting.⁵ Subsequently the United Nations General Assembly noted with appreciation the adoption of the Strategic Plan and made it applicable to all relevant United Nations agencies and processes.⁶

16. For marine conservation, the CCAD Regional Environmental Strategy promoted sustainable fishing, marine spatial planning, strengthening systems of connectivity and the development of marine biological corridors, restoration of vulnerable species and ecosystems and the promotion of marine spatial planning. Indicators relevant to that strategy included the expanse of area under protection, the number of protected areas with sustainable management and the promotion of alternative livelihoods.

ITEM 3. REVIEW OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR BIODIVERSITY 2011-2020 AND THE AICHI BIODIVERSITY TARGETS

17. Government representatives from Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica, El Salvador and Panama presented the progress made by their countries in achieving marine-related Aichi Biodiversity Targets and provided an update on the current status of national plans related to biodiversity (including NBSAPs). Governments were also asked to highlight the aspects of those plans most relevant to the current workshop, to list relevant actions and to provide an assessment of their priority.

18. Two regional bodies developed under SICA — OSPESCA and COCATRAM — presented their work programmes and opportunities for alignment with CBD, CCAD in the context of Pacific Central American marine conservation.

19. Mr. Reinaldo Morales Rodriguez, Principal Expert, Regional Directorate of OSPESCA, noted the work of the organization in strengthening regional institutions and the promotion of responsible fishing practices. Opportunities for further collaboration between OSPESCA with CCAD and CBD in the context of promoting Pacific Central American marine conservation include marine spatial planning, the

⁵ See decision X/2.

⁶ See General Assembly resolution 65/161 of 20 December 2010, paras. 4 and 19.

strengthening of local capacity for marine management, conservation and management of migratory species, financial sustainability and collaboration and coordination with the Eastern Tropical Pacific Marine Corridor (CMAR).

20. Mr. Otto Noack described the focus of COCATRAM relating to maritime and port development in Central America and its main function to advise Governments to adopt policies and decisions in order to achieve harmonious development of the sector, to meet the needs of foreign trade countries in terms of quality, economy and efficiency of maritime and port transport and to protect and represent the interests of the region.

21. Mr. Jorge Jiménez, Executive Director of Fundación MarViva, explained that the organization had field projects in Colombia, Panama and Costa Rica and on the high seas. Their technical support and capacity development work extended across Central and South America and the Caribbean. MarViva had three complimentary lines of work: (a) marine spatial planning, (b) responsible markets and (c) institutional strengthening. He indicated that there were opportunities for further support in the region through existing joint work with COCATRAM on mapping socioeconomic and environmental vulnerability to oil spills, with the Institute of Central American Public Administration (ICAP) on capacity-building for coastal marine management in local governments and working with Guatemala on the promotion of international governance on the high seas. He also indicated that there were opportunities for further collaboration through potential projects with OSPESCA on training fisheries inspectors to fight illegal fishing in the region, conservation of migratory species and raising awareness for the conservation of sharks. Finally, he noted the interest of the organization in supporting the region through the development of local governance schemes, strengthening international and inter-agency coordination, planning networks of marine protected areas and capacity-building for marine spatial planning.

22. Mr. Ian Drysdale, Honduras country director for the Healthy Reefs for Healthy People Initiative, explained that they were tracking the health of the Meso-American Reef ecosystem using standardized monitoring protocols and a participatory approach for data collection and reporting that involved 65 local, regional and international partner organizations. The opportunity existed to adapt that approach for reef health monitoring, training and capacity-building that had been pioneered in the Caribbean for reefs in Pacific Central America.

23. Ms. María José Gonzalez, Executive Director, MesoAmerican Reef Fund (MAR Fund), explained the support that the MAR Fund provided to the region through ecoregional planning and coordination and fund management. In addition, the MAR Fund provided administrative functions for the Healthy Reefs for Healthy People Initiative. The MAR Fund was the recipient of funding from the Government of Germany through KfW, the German Development Bank, as a contribution to its endowment.

ITEM 4. OVERVIEW OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY LIFEWEB INITIATIVE

24. Mr. Charles Besancon of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity presented the history of the LifeWeb Initiative and the framework for cooperation that it offered developing countries and countries with economies in transition. For the purposes of the workshop, LifeWeb offered Parties to the Convention the opportunity to develop project ideas into cohesive regional LifeWeb Expressions of Interest, suitable for investors and donors to receive. Future opportunities that LifeWeb could assist with included profiling Expressions of Interest to donors and investors through events at meetings under the Convention or potentially donor round-table events where there was donor interest and the need for multi-donor collaboration.

ITEM 5. REVIEW OF RELEVANT SCIENTIFIC DATA/INFORMATION/MAPS COMPILED FOR THE WORKSHOP

25. A representative of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) of the United States of America, Mr. Paul Fiedler, made a presentation about the oceanography and ecosystems of the Central American Pacific, with a focus on the open ocean and the thermal dome offshore from Costa Rica and Nicaragua, called the Costa Rican or Central American Dome. He described the historical and current interest of NOAA in the region. He indicated that, from his own personal perspective as a scientist, sea turtle conservation was a particularly important issue for future regional collaboration in the Central American Pacific.

ITEM 6. PRIORITY-SETTING ROUND-TABLE DISCUSSIONS

26. In plenary session, participants were asked to brainstorm on regional priorities for marine and coastal conservation projects. There was a lively discussion that led to a list of 32 priorities. In the evening and the following morning, the project ideas were organized by theme into a list of four main issues and one cross-cutting issue.

ITEM 7. DISCUSSION ON NATIONAL AND REGIONAL PROJECTS CONSISTENT WITH NATIONAL AND REGIONAL STRATEGIES

27. Participants separated into five groups dedicated to further development of project ideas identified under the previous agenda item. The five groups spent several hours developing additional content for each of the five issues. Specifically, each group was tasked with further elaborating on elements and sub-elements for each issue, listing appropriate institutional partnerships and the arrangements necessary to achieve success on each project, and developing timelines and, if possible, draft budget figures. The project ideas on which the groups decided were as follows: (a) resilience and adaptation to climate change in the Central American Pacific; (b) strengthening the resilience of coral reefs in the Central American Pacific; (c) strengthening marine protected areas in the Central American Pacific; and (d) priority conservation actions for the Pacific Central American ecologically or biologically significant areas (EBSAs). The cross-cutting issue that was further developed was on capacity-building. Further elaboration on the project concepts is available in annex III.

28. Each group presented project concepts to the entire workshop in plenary to elicit feedback, which led to further refinement of the concepts (see annex III).

ITEM 8. CONCLUSION

29. The co-chairs summarized the activities of the workshop and detailed the steps necessary to finalize the project concepts so that they could be made suitable for donor presentation. In particular, the chairs noted the need for additional time and effort to develop the project concept sub-activities and budgets. It was noted that the chairs would seek additional financial resources to outsource the finalization of the project concepts.

ITEM 9. CLOSURE OF THE WORKSHOP

68. In their closing statements, the CBD Secretariat and the CCAD Secretariat expressed their appreciation to the host Government, Guatemala, for their hospitality as well as to the staff and interns of their institutions, who had provided great support for logistics and document preparation. MarViva was thanked specifically for their logistical support as well as for reviewing documents and their general input to the flow of the workshop. Additional thanks were given to the interpreters and audio support staff for their excellent support, which aided the smooth running of the workshop.

69. The workshop closed at 3 p.m. on Thursday, 28 May 2015.

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*Annex II***PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE LIFEWEB WORKSHOP****PROGRAMA ANOTADO**

HORA	DESCRIPCION	RESPONSABLE
27 de mayo 2015		
8:00	Inscripción de participantes	
8:15	Mensaje de bienvenida de parte de la República de Guatemala	Ing. Manuel Benedicto Lucas López, Secretario Ejecutivo, CONAP
8:30	Inauguración del Taller	Presidencia Pro Tempore CCAD
8:45	Apertura del Taller <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antecedentes del taller, objetivos, alcance y resultados esperados 	CBD
9:30	Estrategia Regional Ambiental Marco, 2015-2020	SE-CCAD
10:00	Refrigerio	
10:15	Revisión del Plan Estratégico de Biodiversidad, 2011-2020 y los objetivos de la Biodiversidad de Aichi	TODOS
11:30	Resumen de la Iniciativa Lifeweb de la CBD	CBD
12:30	Almuerzo	
14:00	Presentación del National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)	Dr. Paul Fiedler
14:30	Presentación SICA-OSPESCA	Reinaldo Morales
15:00	Presentación COCATRAM	Otto Noack
15:30	Refrigerio	
15:45	Presentación Marviva	Jorge Jiménez
16:10	Presentación Healthy Reefs Initiative	Ian Drysdale
16:25	Presentación GIZ Blue Solutions	A confirmar
16:45	Discusión y preparación Jornada 2	
17:30	Cierre de la jornada	
28 de mayo 2015		
8:00	Establecimiento de mesas de trabajo	CBD
8:15	Debate sobre propuestas regionales coherentes con las estrategias nacionales y regionales	TODOS
10:15	Refrigerio	
10:30	Continuación... Debate sobre propuestas regionales coherentes con las estrategias nacionales y regionales	TODOS
12:30	Almuerzo	
14:00	Conclusiones	TODOS

*Annex III***OUTLINE OF PROJECT CONCEPTS DEVELOPED AT THE PACIFIC CENTRAL AMERICAN
MARINE LIFEWEB REGIONAL WORKSHOP****1. Resilience and adaptation to climate change in the Central American Pacific**

- a) Evaluación de vulnerabilidad y línea base
- b) Definición de especies y ecosistemas de interés
- c) Modelación climática (datos oceanográficos y climáticos) – escenarios de cambio climático
- d) Estrategias de manejo para adaptación
- e) Aplicar las estrategias y medir resultados

2. Strengthening the resilience of coral reefs in the Central American Pacific

- a) Mapeo de los arrecifes y los actores relacionados
- b) Definir el sistema de indicadores para el monitoreo con base en las metodologías existentes (HRI, AGRRRA, Reef Check, etc.)
- c) Vulnerability assessment for climate change impacts to coral reefs and associated marine ecosystems
- d) Implementación de actividades de manejo de corales
- e) Informe de avances (ECO-AUDIT)

3. Strengthening Marine Protected Areas in the Central American Pacific

- a) Conservación y Uso Sostenible de los Ecosistemas de Manglar en el Pacífico Centroamericano
 1. Línea base (cobertura, amenazas, etc.)
 2. Impacto del cambio climático en los manglares (erosión, aumento del nivel del mar, acidificación, aumento de temperatura) y en las especies comerciales que dependen de este ecosistema (e.g., “concha negra”, “casco de burro”, otras)
 3. Rol de los manglares en la reducción de riesgos a desastres
 4. Valoración económica de manglares
 5. Restauración de áreas críticas en la región
- b) Conservación de las ballenas jorobadas
 1. Identificar las rutas de migración de las ballenas jorobadas en la región
 2. Establecer los Dispositivos Separadores de Tráfico (DST) para todos los países en el Pacífico centroamericano y su respectivo registro en las cartas náuticas
 3. Unificar los protocolos de avistamiento responsable de cetáceos e intercambio entre las comunidades que dan este servicio en la región
- c) Conservación de las tortugas marinas
 1. Línea base de las playas de anidación para todas las especies de tortugas marinas en la costa Pacífica de Centroamérica y la relación con las AMP (NOAA)
 2. Unificar protocolo de manejo y monitoreo de playas de anidación (nidos, viveros, etc.) – incluye capacitación
 3. Adopción a nivel regional, del protocolo de liberación de tortugas marinas (OSPESCA)
- d) Especies Invasoras administración
 1. Estudios que identifiquen el impacto de la Tilapia en las especies nativas en esteros y manglares
 2. Normas de controles portuarios unificados para el agua de lastre

e) Tiburones

1. Identificación de las áreas de reproducción y su relación con las AMP
2. Monitoreo de especies migratorias en la región

4. Priority conservation actions for Pacific Central American Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs)

a) Diagnóstico y Plan de Acción con énfasis EBSAs y Zonas Costeras

b) Capacidades Humanas y Financieras

1. Establecer Iniciativa Dentro de SICA-Secretaria General-Gerente de Proyectos- Ejecutor: CCAD

c) Sistematizar información de EBSAs y Zona Costera

1. Mapa de Actores en las EBSAS
2. Compilar y Sintetizar Información
3. Identificar Valores Ecológicos
4. Hacer un Depositorio de Información Regional (clearing-house)
5. Incluir Conocimiento Tradicional

d) Ordenamiento Espacial de las EBSAS

1. Mapas de Sensibilidad Ambiental
 - i. Tráfico y Derrames
 - ii. Rutas Especies de Migratorias
2. Mapas de Usos
 - i. Minera
 - ii. Pesquera
 - iii. Contaminación por Aporte de Cuencas
 - iv. Mapas de Conflictos
3. Monitoreo
4. Escenarios

e) Gobernanza Ambiental

1. Empoderamiento de gobiernos locales (Propuesta ICAP)
2. Plataforma Multi-usuarios
3. Trabajar de Convenciones Internacionales

f) Uso sostenible de Recursos

1. Fortalecimiento de Control y Vigilancia (VMS, MERP)
2. Capacitaciones a Funcionarios de Control
3. Concientización

Note: In addition to the above projects, ideas were discussed for a cross-cutting project on capacity-building.
