International Waters: Learning Exchange and Resource Network (IW:LEARN)

Large Marine Ecosystem: Learning Exchange and Resource Network (LME:LEARN)

TWINNING EXCHANGE
EVALUATION REPORT

1.0 Participant Name, GEF Project or Organizational Affiliation and Contact Information

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GEF Project: Implementation of the Strategic Action Program of the Gulf of Mexico Large Marine Ecosystem (GoMLME)
https://iwlearn.net/iw-projects/6952

2.0 Host Institution(s)/Projects

2nd Gulf of Mexico Marine Protected Area Workshop. April 25th, 2018. Merida, Yucatán, Mexico

- The Ocean Foundation's Cuba Marine Research and Conservation Project
- Trinational Initiative for Marine Science and Conservation in the Gulf of Mexico and Western Caribbean (www.trinationalinitiative.org)
- Commission for Protected Areas (CONANP)
- *US NOAA Marine Sanctuaries*
- *Centro Nacional de Áreas Protegidas de Cuba*

Please mention the key people met

Date	Location	Activity	Institution	Persons Met
April 25th	Mérida	Discussion of GoMLME project collaboration	NOAA Marine Sanctuaries	William Kiene
April 25th	Mérida	Discussion of GoMLME project collaboration	Centro Nacional de Áreas Protegidas de Cuba	Carlos Diaz
April 25th	Mérida	Discussion of funding efforts	The Ocean Foundation	Fernando Bretos
April 25th	Mérida	Discussion of Emerging Cross Cutting Issues	ICIMAR	Roberto Nuñez

1. Katie Thompson, CubaMar, The Ocean Foundation
2. Fernando Bretos, CubaMar, The Ocean Foundation
3. Gonzalo Cid, Administración Nacional Oceánica y Atmosférica (NOAA)
4. William Kiene, Administración Nacional Oceánica y Atmosférica (NOAA)
5. Donald Baur, Perkins Coie in the Environment, Energy and Resources
6. Xiao Recio Blanco, Environmental Law Institute (ELI)

7. Carlos Díaz, Sistema Nacional de Áreas Protegidas de Cuba (SNAP)
8. Lázaro Márquez, Sistema Nacional de Áreas Protegidas de Cuba (SNAP)
9. Maritza García García, Ministerio de Ciencia, Tecnología y Medio Ambiente (CITMA)
10. Ulises Fernández, Ministerio de Ciencia, Tecnología y Medio Ambiente (CITMA)
11. Jim Gibeaut, Harte Research Institute, (HRI)
12. Mark Besonen, Harte Research Institute, (HRI)
13. Talia Cruz Castañeda, Comisión Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas (CONANP)
14. Marisol Hernández, Comisión Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas (CONANP)
15. Ricardo Gomez, Comisión Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas (CONANP)
16. Alfredo Cisneros Pineda, Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (SEMARNAT)
17. Salomon Diaz, Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (SEMARNAT)
18. Sarah Connor, Mesoamerican Reef Tourism Initiative (MARTI)
19. Jaime González Cano, Instituto Nacional de Pesca y Acuacultura (INAPESCA)
20. Pedro Ulloa, Instituto Nacional de Pesca y Acuacultura (INAPESCA)
21. Ramon Chavez Anparan (INAPESCA)
22. Jill Hamilton, Duke University
23. Fey Crevoshay, WILDCOAST- COSTASALVAJE
24. Alejandra Navarrete, Consultora externa GoM LME
    Nuno Simoes, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM-Sisal)

3.0 Purpose of the Exchange

A collaborative workshop to share information and improve research and management in the Gulf of Mexico and Western Caribbean to enhance the Gulf of Mexico Marine Protected Areas Network (GOMMPAN).

4.0 Lessons Learned

4.1 Briefly, how did this mission benefit you, your GEF IW project and/or home institution? Considering the purposes of the mission (Section 3.0), what are the 3-5 most valuable lessons you learned through this exchange?

The results of the workshop were directly related with the GEF GoM LME project Output 3.4: "Support effectiveness of Marine Protected Areas by linking them into networks".

Some valuable lessons were:

1. *It is very important to establish a common agenda of shared threats or interests and to establish priorities in key issues such as: climate change, invasive species (e.g. lion fish),*

extreme weather events, loss of biodiversity of migratory species, overfishing, mass tourism and oil spills.

2. *Some proposals of the workshop will contribute to the GoMLME output 3.4, such: an atlas for the six GOMMPAN MPAs including value for blue carbon; standardized monitoring for a select number of species; bilingual communication products; a mechanism for sharing data and a fellowship program for six MPAs to promote learning exchanges.*
3. *Formal agreements of international collaboration are key to address common interests as was demonstrated with the Signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Mexican institutions (SEMARNAT and CONANP) and Cuban´s (CNAP). See below photo.*
4. *Common understanding of threats, interest, priorities and actions is needed between all the involved persons and organizations.*
5. *Collaboration through networks are key for the management and policies in the GoM.*

4.2 What new issues or questions emerged that remain unanswered from your exchange?

1. *GOMMPAN Network is recently new and there is a lot of interest. There are several ideas, proposals, initiatives and approaches but priorities are still pending.*
2. *There is no direct budget for the financial sustainability of the Network.*
3. *Monitoring and evaluation tools are needed to evaluate health of the MPAs of the three countries.*
4. *Formal mechanisms are needed to implement and follow up the agreements (example: MoU).*

5.0 Results (Follow-up Activities and Schedule)

5.1 What actions will you take or what will you do differently as a result of this exchange? And when?

Some of the results of this exchange can be considered in the GoM LME project (in 2019), as this is now in process of restructuration. For example, include GOMMPAN and Trinational Initiative as a key networks; to support this kind of experience exchanges. Ensure the participation of all the involved persons and organizations.

Next GOMMPAN meeting would take place in October 2018 in Cuba in the Cuban Marine Science Conference (http://www.congresomarcuba.com/).

By the end of May 2018, CubaMar and Environmental Law Institute will draft a proposal of GOMMPAN in order to circulate to funders, facilitate the legal processes for the development of projects in each country, and present success stories collaboration in GOM.

5.2 How will you disseminate lessons learned from this exchange to your stakeholders (and the rest of the GEF IW portfolio)?

The IW LEARN website is a good tool for share the learned lessons of this exchange; GoMLME web page can be used also for this purpose; produce bilingual communication products (e.g. social media, brochures, press materials) with a common message.