



LME:LEARN  
1ST ANNUAL  
LATIN AMERICA  
&  
THE CARIBBEAN  
REGIONAL NETWORK

MEETING

12-13 October 2017  
Montevideo, Uruguay

## INTRODUCTION





The Strengthening Global Governance of Large Marine Ecosystems and Their Coasts through Enhanced Sharing and Application of LME/ICM/MPA Knowledge and Information Tools (LME:LEARN) project seeks to improve global ecosystem-based governance of Large Marine Ecosystems and their coasts by generating knowledge, building capacity, mobilising public and private partners, and supporting south-to-south learning and north-to-south learning. The project is funded by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and executed by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO.

A key element of this improved governance is mainstreaming cooperation and coordination between LME, MPA, ICM, MSP, and marine and coastal climate change adaptation, fisheries and biodiversity projects with overlapping themes and geographic areas, both for GEF projects and for non-GEF projects.


As part of the activity and the GEF's desire to have enhanced collaboration between the projects it funds, LME:LEARN is arranging annual Regional Network Meetings to bring the projects together. The Regional Network Meetings will provide a forum for GEF funded marine projects to interact as part of a series of meetings being organised by the LME:LEARN project and key regional partners. Through these meetings we want to enhance the development of partnerships in the region's LMEs by engaging stakeholders and project managers involved in marine protected area, coastal management, fisheries, biodiversity, and coastal climate change adaptation activities in the overlapping LMEs.



The first Annual Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) Regional Network Meeting was hosted by the Spanish Cooperation International Agency for Development (Spanish acronym: AECID) and organised by the PCU of the LME:LEARN and the IOC-UNESCO Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (IOCARIBE). The primary objectives of the first Annual LAC Regional Network Meeting were to provide a forum for GEF funded projects, non-GEF funded projects, agencies, academia and other regional stakeholders to network with one another; to enhance their understanding of activities in the region; and to identify partnership building opportunities by engaging projects actively involved in key thematic areas (marine, coastal management, biodiversity and coastal climate change).

More specifically, the meeting aimed to:

-  Establish the LAC Regional Network consisting of project leaders, agencies and other institutions engaged in marine and coastal ecosystem based management by providing a forum for those involved in LME, ICAM, MPA, MSP, and similar themes to establish connections with one another and enhance collaboration opportunities;
-  Introduce the twinning opportunities offered by LME:LEARN and discuss how twinning can or should progress with identified partners;
-  Introduce the Inter-project Collaboration Opportunities (ICO) offered by LME:LEARN to the network;
-  Provide an overview of the contents of the 7 toolkits (Governance, LME Assessment, LME Project; Stakeholder Participation, LME Strategic Approach, Marine Spatial Planning and Environmental Economics, as well as introduce the Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) being developed by our partners and assess the potential for respective training in the region;

Targeted outcomes of the meeting were to:

-  Increase awareness and familiarity among the projects/activities under implementation in LAC;

-  Gain constructive feedback on the contents of the LME:LEARN toolkits and the MOOC that are under development;
-  Identify potential twinning and ICO collaboration opportunities.

## WELCOMING AND OPENING REMARKS

**Mish Hamid**, Project Manager of GEF IW:LEARN and LME:LEARN, welcomed the participants to the meeting and thanked them for taking time out of their schedules to attend. Mr. Hamid stressed the importance of the network, and shared his hope that there would be a good start to its creation and that it would be sustained for many years to come.

**Cesar Toro**, Executive Secretary, IOC-UNESCO Sub-Commission Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (IOCARIBE), welcomed the participants and expressed his appreciation to the LME:LEARN PCU for organising the meeting. Mr. Toro expressed the importance of networking in the region and for experience sharing.

The participants of the meeting then introduced themselves and stated their expectations for the event and the network.

**Christian Susan** expressed that he hoped the network would be a platform where we can support each other, establish synergies, and cooperate on concrete issues.

**Isabelle Vanderbeck** mentioned that she was happy to experience the “salty side of pond”, and familiarise herself with marine side of the equation.

**Bonnie Ponwith** spoke about pursuing ecosystem based management in fisheries, climate change, vulnerabilities, and said the network would assist to better serve environmental stewardship within transboundary environments. Ms. Ponwith hoped to strengthen relationships and to learn from participants.

**Alessandro Lovatelli** thanked organisers for inviting FAO to the meeting. He stressed the importance of collaboration, to exchange lessons, and hoped that an effective network would be established. He also saw this initiative as a strong platform which needed commitment, and could be best used to avoid duplication of work.

**Andrea Salinas** mentioned CLME+ and their work, which sought to establish a global alliance, and she invited everyone to join their partnership.

**Patrick McConney** hoped to connect with folks and to demonstrate benefit of sharing knowledge from multiple audiences.

**Jan Betlam** wanted to learn about the new thematic area and LMEs and meet everyone, also to get a better idea of what is happening in region.

**Olga Perez** mentioned her project on strengthening coastal marine areas, and hoped to learn from anyone where it can be repeated and improved. Ms. Perez said that the ecosystem is delicate, and any info to bring to back to her country is welcome.

**Alejandra Navarrete** stressed that we need to work together towards how we can benefit ocean from knowledge that we have. Learning lessons from projects, stakeholders, governance is all important.

**Jaime Federico Duarte Mora** spoke about his role in projects and programs and that the experience within a network would help them going forward.

**Frederick Pérez Domínguez** thanked everyone for invitation and hoped for fruitful coordination.

**Dalia Salabarría Fernández** thanked the organisers for the opportunity and was sure the meeting will be fruitful.

**Aylem Hernández Avila** mentioned her project on integrated management and the positive results and experience she had. She wanted to exchange experiences to help implement the project.

**Joseph Noel** hoped to learn from other projects that have been implemented before to help deal with issues they were experiencing in their project.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Network Meeting was attended by 18 participants from GEF-funded projects, non-GEF funded projects, regional conventions, national ministries, and academia who are implementing projects in Mexico, Jamaica, Chile, Grenada, Cuba, Venezuela, Barbados, USA and Colombia.

## SETTING THE STAGE

**Cesar Toro**, IOC Sub Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (IOCARIBE), gave a presentation of the role of IOC in the LAC region, its mission, and the specific areas of focus. Mr. Toro also highlighted the importance of the regional network and the benefits of collaborative efforts. **Ivica Trumbic**, Chief Technical Advisor, GEF LME:LEARN, introduced the LME:LEARN project and provided a short progress report. **Natalie Degger**, Regional Network Coordinator, Training Specialist and Deputy Project Manager of GEF IW:LEARN and LME:LEARN projects welcomed the participants to the LAC Regional Network and provided background information on the concept of the network, who should be a member, and what was hoped to be achieved through the establishment of such a network.

## ACTIVITIES IN THE REGION

Short presentations by regional meeting participants were shared and discussed. The presentations served to introduce their project or organisation/institution, the thematic area worked in, what should be achieved through the project or area worked in, what challenges the project/organisation faces, how the LAC Regional Network could be useful to the project/institution, and full contact details and the website link to the project/institution. A short summary of the presentations, as well as any questions and responses asked and answered are provided below:

**Alejandra Navarette**, National Project Coordinator, GEF-UNIDO, spoke about the implementation of the Strategic Action Program of the Gulf of Mexico Large Marine Ecosystem (GoM LME). The baseline for this project was identified as a result of the SAP development, which was negotiated by the governments of the United Mexican States (Mexico) and the United States of America (U.S.) through the coordination of the appointed Technical National Focal Points to the GoM LME, the Secretaria de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales of Mexico (SEMARNAT) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of the United States of America (NOAA), and points out the need to reduce the stress on water pollution and fish stocks. Both countries are fully committed to the implementation of planned activities.

**Alessandro Lovatelli**, Regional Officer for Fisheries and Aquaculture, Oficina Regional de la FAO para América Latina y el Caribe (FAO-RLC), spoke about his national project on small scale fisheries in Chile. The project has several components. Firstly, to strengthen collaboration between institutions in the countries. Mr. Lovatelli stated that there are problems communicating on issues related to climate change, especially between institutions. The project wants to establish a common standard on how to proceed. Secondly, the fisheries component of the project was spoken about, including pilot activities, looking at more effective methods of fishing, effective practices, and alternative livelihoods. Thirdly, communications efforts are included in the project but they have a small budget. Specifically they are looking at climate change- what it is, and why is it important to focus on it.

- *Isabelle*: Most projects have a regional focus, including international waters. To what extent do your projects link to the LME projects and help implement SAP?  
*Alessandro*: There is a strong link. For the GEF project in Chile, one of the partners is GEF Humboldt LME, but we are waiting for phase 2 to start. There are synergies between the two GEF projects. UNDP is developing the Humboldt project and we are present at their meetings, which helps to create these synergies.
- *Alejandra*: How are you approaching the communications problem?  
*Alessandro*: Everything has a cost, we have very little money for communications so sitting across the same table is very important at all levels. When organising stakeholder meetings at the local level, up to Government level, we have to bring people to the table. Government is interested, and have money to attend, but local fishermen can't afford to take time to attend meeting. It takes a lot of effort-who to invite, map stakeholders, create good database, carefully select key people who will have a multiplier effect.

**Joseph Noel**, Project Officer/Coordinator, GEF/UNDP Ridge to Reef Project, spoke about the project which aims to bring multiple global and local benefits to all stakeholders by strengthening land, forest and reef management processes (eco-systems functions) and biodiversity conservation on all terrestrial landscapes and marine seascapes. The Ridge to Reef faces a number of challenges as experienced by projects of similar nature, notably a slow rate of project implementation activities given that the implementers are independent of the R2R; lack of capacity and man power within the implementing partners, timely transfer of funds from UNDP Barbados/OECS Office, timely payment to service providers by the Ministry of Agriculture Accounts Department, lack of adequate supervision by the PSC and local co-chair (meetings too irregular).

- *Bonnie*: Two things, the focus on nitrification is important, also important where gradient is smaller, is the creation of oxygen depletion zones. Farmers and fisherman are close friends, we should help people understand why it's important to get others to work together via incentives.  
*Joseph*: We have communications officers (or education coordinators), one for fishing and one for forestry, who work with schools and the community. We try to approach this from two angles, by sharing good practices and running training programs called good agriculture practices.
- *Alejandra*: Mexico developed a lionfish festival, to catch and eat these fish during the event. We should connect you with the organisers to help create your own event.
- *Alessandro*: Lot of activities in Caribbean because of lionfish -and a good example the creation of this recipe book. It's important that people do the things themselves. Tools can and should be shared.  
*Dalia*: We also deal with Lionfish for our project and can share our experience in Cuba. Found lionfish up to 140m depth, thus the fishing practice is important at the local level. The technique developed is handmade but has great results at local level. We also have festivals, tourists participating and lionfish buffets - yes they are poisonous, fishers know how to remove this without making meat uneatable. Once it is one hour outside of the water it is not venomous. University of Havana has analysed this in depth and found that the effect is lost.

**Dalia Fernandez**, Project Director, National Centre for Protected Areas, Ministry of Science Technology and Environment, spoke about their project on enhancing the prevention, control, and management of Invasive Alien Species in vulnerable ecosystems in Cuba. The objective of the project is to protect vulnerable marine, freshwater and terrestrial ecosystems, species and genetic diversity within Cuba from negative impacts of Invasive Alien Species (IAS). More specifically, the project will safeguard globally-significant biodiversity in vulnerable ecosystems, by building capacity at the systemic level to prevent, detect, and manage the spread of IAS in Cuba. This goal and objective was met by strengthening the institutional policies and technical capacities needed to manage IAS, while stimulating multi-stakeholder, cross sectoral cooperation for effective implementation in the field. Reaching these objectives has required pursuing the following strategies: 1) strengthen policy and legal framework; 2) build sound and effective coordination mechanisms across concerned sectors, between relevant institutions and in partnership with key actors; 3) enhance scientific knowledge on IAS introduction; 4) spread, impacts and management options; 5) build general public awareness on IAS and their impacts and, 6) improve management effectiveness in the field to ensure safeguarding of biodiversity.

- *Alejandra*: Regarding 1st stage of TDA SAP of GoM we had component to look at invasive species, looking at having a TDA for Cuba, could we propose to work together?  
*Dalia*: I think we should definitely talk about this

**Aylem Hernández Avila**, Project Director, National Center of Protected Areas, Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment, Cuba, presented two projects. The first focused on the application of a regional approach to the management of marine and coastal protected areas in Cuba's Southern Archipelago Region and the second on incorporating multiple environmental considerations and their economic implications into the management of landscapes, forest and production sectors in Cuba. The new project focuses on economic valuation of ecosystem services: coral reefs, sea grass, mangroves and agro-ecosystems.

- *Bonnie*: High value species are usually overfished first, how did you balance economic return against sustainable fishing?  
*Aylem*: We see that fish that are commercially interesting have decreasing populations. We see how this affects the reef. We try to incorporate traditional knowledge of fishermen and determine which sizes should be excluded and to inform them of proper methodologies to reach this balance. We need to make them understand.
- *Jaime*: You mentioned biodiversity, are you evaluating mangroves as a species?  
*Aylem*: Have a special program for mangroves to evaluate their production. We are developing a program for reforestation of mangrove areas. In some places better access channels for reforestation.
- *Cesar*: Is this a project that is being developed at a national level? Are there institutes that you are working with outside Cuba to see how they have participated with you?  
*Aylem*: Exchange of experience does exist through these projects. Mexico had agreement for MPAs with Cuba, traditionally we work together. There are 15 institutes working together, allowing us to have different forums to present results as a baseline in the region. Problem is funding. We try to do the most we can with the least amount possible. Talking to Alejandra to work with GoM, would be beneficial.
- *Christian*: Do you know which methodologies you will use? How is this being conveyed to decision makers? We have special interest in that due to our project and what we have developed. Regarding the MoU-was this open ended? Still valid?  
*Aylem*: We won't have one methodology, we will adapt tools to each of the sectors, contingency studies, analysis of goods and services offered by different ecosystem to translate that into money or economy. We will use that to talk to decision makers. If we develop a tool

for tourism, if we don't have figures we won't have an understanding and in a language that we can all understand each other. It's not a price but an economic value it represents. For your second question: Both signed the MoU and the north American side has the money and the principle is that every party has to put funds in for implementation, but we don't have the money to add to this.

- *Alejandra*: Part of Mexico MPA unit of NOAA had meeting to say they were committed. We have an idea that in the new agreement, we wanted to include Cuba. They said they would be willing to implement this.
- *Christian*: GEF would look into possibilities to extend it, should explore this. Let's sit together and see how this can benefit everyone.
- *Bonnie*: Science is a bridge for cooperation and meetings such as this are an opportunity to discuss these issues.

**Frederick Pérez Domínguez**, Unidad Técnica de las Zonas Costeras, Dirección General de Gestión Territorial del Ambiente, gave a presentation on Strengthening of the Coastal Marine Protected Areas System of Venezuela. The project looks at consolidating a system of protected areas in marine coastal ecosystems, to optimize the management, administration and operation of these areas, and contribute to the conservation of biodiversity of global and national importance. He mentioned the advantages of joining the regional network for the project. The network would be a regional window to show Venezuelan advances in integrated management of coastal zones and MPAs, to obtain support for the development and implementation of new project initiatives, to exchange information relevant to the integrated management of coastal zones and MPAs and to promote the participation of Venezuela in training and training workshops on integrated management of coastal zones and MPAs.

- *Dalia*: Not a question, but a remark; yesterday during my presentation I said I worked in a conceptual and development program. For Venezuela it's important to do this, it's not an option it's a need, with so many diverse activities. I am available to help you and I have a book that I can share which might be useful.  
*Frederick*: Thank you for your offer it is important to share info to strengthen the region. It is a good opportunity.
- *Andrea*: Just a comment: in our project we want to go towards mechanisms for coordination at national/regional level. For us in the UN context it is important. Clear concept at a national level fosters the success later.
- *Jan*: How do your Corridor protected areas differ from MPAs?  
*Frederick*: We want something new to compliment efforts; there is a need to create a continuous space to connect all areas. We want to regulate the use of the space through protection but still allowing us to benefit from it.

**Andrea Salinas**, CLME+ Environmental Mapping & Reporting Specialist, Cartagena, Colombia, presented the project on catalyzing implementation of the Strategic Action Programme for the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf LME's. The project consists of five complementary and inter-linked components that are designed to collectively deliver the objective: Facilitating EBM/EAF in the CLME+ for the sustainable and climate resilient provision of goods and services from shared living marine resources. Andrea also mentioned the CLME+ Hub and the various wealth of information that could be found in the library. Another highlight of her talk was the CLME+ Partnership Forum being launched in 2018 and Andrea invited everyone to join.

**Patrick McConney**, Senior Lecturer, Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES), The University of the West Indies, Barbados, spoke about the purpose of CERMES which is to promote and facilitate sustainable development in the Caribbean and beyond through graduate

education (coastal and marine, climate change, water resources), applied research and innovative consultancies, as well as training and outreach. Within the region, CERMES is involved with the CLME+ project, REBYC II LAC (Sustainable management of bycatch in Latin America and Caribbean trawl fisheries), CC4FISH (Climate Change Adaptation in the Eastern Caribbean Fisheries Sector) and StewardFish (Developing Organizational Capacity for Ecosystem Stewardship and Livelihoods in Caribbean Small-Scale Fisheries).

- *Jan*: Just a comment, I feel that this type of involvement from academia is very important.
- *Cesar*: Major challenges to know the approaches in LMEs, CERMES is one of the leading institutions looking at ecosystem based management. They are a major regional resource that you should all consider and remember.
- *Natalie*: How do you arrange/organise your training activities?  
*Patrick*: Training is demand driven, and covers EIAs to SocMon. For example in the past we assisted FAO in developing their toolkit.

**Christian Susan**, Industrial Development Officer, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), gave a presentation on the Systematic Inclusion of the Economic Valuation of “Wet” Ecosystem Services into TDA/SAP process. Under their project, they are creating a repository of EV documents with a focus to establish a sound basis for Benefit Transfers, developing methodologies for EV in ecosystems and for including EV into TDA/SAP Processes, and producing training materials and participation of trainers back-to-back with International Waters meetings. Christian mentioned the first training activity, which will take place at in Cape Town in November 2017.

## **TWINNING AND INTER-PROJECT COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES**

**Natalie Degger**, LME:LEARN, led an Information session on the Twinning offered by the LME:LEARN project: how it works, what are the guideline and proposal form, who should be involved, and how to submit the proposal. Information on the Twinning Portal will also be shared. She also provided information on the Inter-project Collaboration Opportunities (ICO). It will also be shared with the network, namely: who may apply, what does the ICO fund, and the deadline for the first call of submissions.

Twinning opportunities were identified between GoM and the Ridge to Reef project, secondly between Ridge to Reef and the Cuba invasive species project, and lastly between GoM and the Cuba economic evaluation project.

## **TOOLKITS AND TRAINING**

**Natalie Degger**, LME:LEARN, presented an overview of the contents of the toolkits and the MOOC, which are being developed by Working Groups, and requested meeting participants to provide their general comments and express their interest in each toolkit as well as training on the specific topic.

### **1. Governance toolkit**

Andrea mentioned that this toolkit would be very helpful for their project.

*Eight participants expressed interest on behalf of their projects in receiving training based on the Governance toolkit.*

### **2. LME project toolkit**



*Eleven participants expressed interest on behalf of their projects in receiving training based on the toolkit.*

### 3. Stakeholder participation toolkit

*Nine participants expressed interest on behalf of their projects in receiving training based on the toolkit.*

### 4. LME strategic approach toolkit

*Six participants expressed interest on behalf of their projects in receiving training based on the toolkit.*

### 5. Marine Spatial Planning toolkit

*Eight participants expressed interest on behalf of their projects in receiving training based on the toolkit*

### 6. Environmental Economic toolkit

*Eleven participants expressed interest on behalf of their projects in receiving training based on the toolkit*

### 7. Massive online open course outline: Large Marine Ecosystems: Assessment and Management

*Four participants want to sign up and take the course.*

It was mentioned by Dalia and Aylem that Cuba would not be able to access the online course.

## **GENERAL FEEDBACK ON THE 2018 TRAINING YEAR**

Meeting participants were interested to know if the training modules could have a Training of Trainers component as a way of ensuring sustainability of the information in the region. It was also brought to the attention of the PCU that for the material to be effective, they should be converted into the two or three most widely used languages of the region.

## **MOVING FORWARD**

Facilitated by Natalie Degger, LME:LEARN, members of the Network were asked to provide input on how to sustain and grow the network.

### **ToR**

Participants were happy with the proposed ToR and formalising the network.

### **Communication**

The network was happy to use the Slack platform introduced. It was suggested by participants that they develop a short newsletter of maximum two pages with key messages. Bonnie asked the network how this could be facilitated and made to become organic so that there was a sense of ownership of the network. Patrick requested that the network start with an easy commitment and see how it goes.

The network requested that a Newsletter channel be placed on Slack and that the platform tries to incorporate a shared calendar.

### **Growing the Network**

Alessandro asked how it would be possible to encourage others to join the network and it was decided that it should have its own branding plus a one-page brochure that could be easily distributed and shared.

### **Second Annual meeting**

Cuba was suggested as the destination of the next face-to-face meeting, but the network agreed that opportunities should be sought out where a regional network meeting could be tagged onto another event. The IW9 Conference was also suggested as a potential option. It was also agreed that the next meeting of the network should take place only in case advances will be made in implementation of the network activities that were discussed at this meeting.

### **MEETING CLOSING**

**Cesar Toro** mentioned that the challenges are big and that there is a clear need for this regional network. The importance lies in what happens between meetings and keeping it alive. Cesar reminded participants to take advantage of the twinning and ICO opportunities provided by LME:LEARN and to use the platform that has been provided. Cesar mentioned that the success depends on the use of other opportunities and that network members should all try to keep sharing their knowledge and experience with one another. **Ivica Trumbic** said that there was a lot of enthusiasm and the network needs to be expanded. The network is not just GEF funded projects but should include many other stakeholders and that participants should use their links to grow this. What is important to focus on now is to show progress before the next meeting. **Mish Hamid** thanked the participants for their commitment and for making the time to attend the meeting and for their willingness to establish and sustain the network in the region.

### **FOLLOW UP ACTIONS**

Follow up actions for the PCU included:

- Creating a “Newsletter” channel on Slack
- Creating or finding a template for a two page newsletter for the network
- Following up with the twinning and ICO opportunities identified
- Creating a LAC Regional Network Brochure for easy distribution