



Meeting Report

Regional Implementation and Adaptation Workshop NWA Leatherback Regional Action Plan

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Zoom Platform

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Acronyms

AM	ante meridiem
ARRIBA	Alerte aux Risques Relatifs aux Interactions Bloquant les Arribadas
BRD	Bycatch Reduction Devices
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CBO	Community-based organization
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
COASTS	Costa Rican Alliance for Sea Turtles Conservation
COP	Conference of Parties
COVID	Corona Virus Disease
CRFM	Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism
DGTM	Direction Générale des Territoires et de la Mer de la Guyane (EN: Directorate-General Territory and Sea)
EMA	Environmental Management Authority
EN	English
ETP	Endangered, Threatened and Protected
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FR	French
GHFS	Green Heritage Fund Suriname
GMT	Greenwich Mean Time
GPS	Global Positioning System
GWCMC	Guyana Wildlife Conservation and Management Commission
IAC	Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles
IFREMER	Institut Français de Recherche pour l' Exploitation (EN: French Research Institute for Exploitation of the Sea)
IMA	Institute of Marine Affairs
IT	Information Technology
IUU	Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated
KAP	Knowledge, Attitude and Practice
LBB	Dienst 's Lands Bosbeheer (EN: Suriname Forest Service (SFS))
LCDS	Low Carbon Development Strategy
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAREI	National Agricultural Research and Extension Institute
NCD	Nature Conservation Division
NFWF	National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSTTF	National Sea Turtle Task Force
NWA	Northwest Atlantic
ODyC	Observatory of Coastal Dynamics of French Guiana
OFB	Office français de la biodiversité (EN: The French Office of the Biodiversity)
PAC	Protected Areas Committee
PALICA	Pêcheries Actives pour la Limitation des Interactions et des Captures Accidentelles
PIT	Passive Integrated Responders

PM	post meridiem
PSMA	Port State Measures Agreement
Q&A	Questions and Answers
RAC	Regional Activity Centre
RAP	Regional Action Plan
ROM	Ministerie van Ruimtelijke Ordening en Milieu (EN: Ministry of Spatial Planning and Environment)
SK	Surinaamse Kust (EN: Surinamese Coast/ Suriname Coastal)
SMART	Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool
SOS	Save Our Sea Turtles
SPAW	Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife
STIDUNAL	Stichting Duurzame Natuurbehoud Alusiaka (EN: The Foundation for Sustainable Nature Management in Alusiaka)
STRAP	Sea Turtle Recovery Action Plan
TBD	To Be Discussed
TED	Turtle Exclusion Device
TTD	Trinidad and Tobago Dollars
USA	United States of America
USD	United States Dollar
USVI	United States Virgin Islands
UTT	University of Trinidad and Tobago
UWI	University of the West Indies
VMS	Vessel Monitoring System
WIDECAST	Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

Introduction

As part of the implementation and adaptation process of the Regional Action Plan (RAP) for the Northwest Atlantic (NWA) Leatherback (Barragan et al. 2022¹), WWF-Guianas and its partners, the French Office of Biodiversity (OFB), Environmental Management Authority (EMA) in Trinidad and Tobago, WWF-Canada, WWF-France, WWF-Netherlands, and the Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network (WIDECAST) organized a regional online workshop on 16 June 2023. The workshop was attended virtually via Zoom by stakeholders from 12 nations and territories, interacting and collaborating with each other on the strategic lines and actions of the RAP and the current status and future prospects of the Guianas, Trinidad and Tobago, and other countries within the Wider Caribbean, aligned with the RAP. The attendees were from Anguilla (UK), Canada, Costa Rica, French Guiana (FR), Guyana, Grenada, Guadeloupe (FR), Suriname, St. Kitts and Nevis, The Netherlands, Trinidad and Tobago, and the USA.

Objective

The objective of this workshop was to engage regional stakeholders particularly those from French Guiana, Suriname, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago in providing input to the strategic lines and actions of the NWA Leatherback RAP, indicating how these are regionally aligned, and the way forward for regional implementation of the RAP.

Opening

The workshop was officially opened at 11:00 AM (GMT -3:00) by Ms. Farah Mukhida, followed by opening remarks from Ms. Soraya Wijntuin, Oceans Coordinator WWF-Guianas, and Dr. Karen Eckert, Executive Director WIDECAST. The meeting agenda is included as Annex I. The moderators, Ms. Farah Mukhida and Ms. Louise Soanes briefly introduced themselves and gave a short presentation on the RAP and their work with the country teams in terms of further developing the work plan, supporting budgets, and supporting documents for the implementation of the RAP.

To facilitate the conversation, attendees were asked to rename themselves on the Zoom Platform, mentioning their name, organization, and country. The list of participants is included as Annex II.

Opening Remarks Soraya Wijntuin

Ms. Soraya Wijntuin welcomed the attendees on behalf of the regional workgroup for the RAP. She was very pleased that the Wider Caribbean Region was well represented during the workshop. She briefly discussed the purpose of the workshop stating that it is of great importance to update the region on the current initiatives and future prospects of the Guianas and Trinidad and Tobago, aligned to the RAP. She expressed hope for fruitful discussions and congratulated the attendees on World Sea Turtle Day, anticipating a prosperous future for the NWA leatherback subpopulation. She concluded by thanking the participants for their attendance.

Opening Remarks Dr. Karen Eckert

Dr. Karen Eckert thanked Ms. Wijntuin for her overall leadership role throughout the RAP development and implementation process. She briefly touched upon the NWA Leatherback subpopulation's migration routes, noting that they range throughout the North Atlantic Ocean and

¹ Barragan, A.B., J.A. Espín and R. Barragan. 2022. Northwest Atlantic Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) Regional Action Plan for the Wider Caribbean Region (K.L. Eckert, Editor). Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network (WIDECAST) Technical Report No. 22. Godfrey, Illinois. 71 pp. <https://www.widecast.org/conservation/nwa-leatherbacks/>

extend into the temporal latitudes of the USA and Canada. She noted as well that nesting occurs throughout the Caribbean, of which the most important sites occur in the Guianas and Trinidad and Tobago.

She addressed the critical state in which this species currently finds itself and the necessary approach to prevent further disastrous developments. In this, the RAP is intended as a regional approach to the crisis. Key stakeholders have provided input into defining priority areas and specific activities to address causal factors in the recorded decline of the NWA leatherback.

She stated that in the past two years, there have been several discussions that have led to the development and approval of the RAP. There are currently discussions underway regarding the four strategic areas and the governance framework. Dr. Eckert concluded her part by expressing her hope for collaborative and productive sessions during the workshop and wishing the attendees a happy World Sea Turtle Day.

Methodology

For each strategic line, the country coordinators (representatives) of Suriname, Guyana, French Guiana, and Trinidad and Tobago informed the participants about their countries' current activities and plans in line with the RAP. Each presentation was followed by a Q&A session, giving participants the opportunity to ask questions regarding the specific strategic line.

This was followed by country updates from outside the Guianas and Trinidad and Tobago; specifically, from Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, and Costa Rica and followed by a Q&A session. Then followed the breakout discussions, with accompanying presentations. Participants were split into four different breakout rooms, each themed around one of the four strategic lines. Finally, there was a presentation on the RAP Governance Mechanism, followed by a Q&A and closing remarks.

Introductory Presentation

Presenter: Ms. Farah Mukhida (Moderator/ WWF-Guianas Consultant)

Ms. Farah Mukhida did a short presentation on the RAP and the work done with the country teams in support of the RAP implementation process. The presentation is included as Annex III.

The RAP for the NWA Leatherback

The RAP is a five-year plan that runs from 2022 to 2027. It was developed and finalized in 2022 by action planning partners in Suriname, Guyana, French Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago, in partnership with WWF-Guianas and WIDECASST and after extensive in-country stakeholder consultations and cross-country workshops. The RAP adopts a regional approach to the conservation and protection of the NWA leatherback sea turtles. It also recognizes the importance of national action plans in the sub-region and seeks to complement and strengthen the national action plans rather than substitute or supersede them.

The Vision of the RAP

The vision of the RAP is “to create conditions to address the declining leatherback sea turtle population in the Northwest Atlantic region, with a focus on Suriname, Guyana, French Guiana and Trinidad & Tobago” (Barragan et al. 2022). It provides specific guidelines for increasing community engagement and improving legislation at local levels, which combined with access to better scientific knowledge, will support and enhance the positive impact of improved practices for the protection and management of critical habitats. The RAP also drafts the required structure for governance and funding.

The Goal of the RAP

The goal of the RAP is “to define the priority actions and activities to be taken at the distribution range of the NWA leatherback sea turtle, promoting coordination, communication, and collaboration among individuals, projects, organizations, and agencies to implement a regionally applicable strategy which will strengthen the conservation of this species across the region” (Barragan et al. 2022).

The Strategic Lines of the RAP

The RAP covers four main strategic lines, namely:

1. Legislation and Enforcement
2. Protection and Management of Critical Habitats
3. Community Engagement
4. Scientific Data Needs

Within the RAP each of these strategic themes is broken into components, actions, and activities with the RAP work plan going into further detail, outlining activities and tasks with timeframes for implementation and completion. The work plan also prioritizes each identified activity on a scale of high, medium, or low for each participatory country and all countries combined, based on comments and feedback provided by individual country teams and stakeholders.

Strategic Line 1: Legislation and Enforcement

The first strategic line themed around legislation and enforcement highlights the need for adequate legislation and the application of that legislation to protect leatherback sea turtle populations. The actions within this strategic line focus on the identification of existing national legislative frameworks, gaps within those frameworks, and opportunities to fill the identified gaps, creating mechanisms to support cross-border collaboration including cross-country Memoranda of Understanding MOUs, joint workshops, and regular meetings to provide updates on conservation progress and setbacks. In addition, it focuses on creating and strengthening an environment conducive to enforcement of legislation, applying tools to support enforcement including vessel monitoring systems (VMS), capacity building and training, sharing information and exchanging experiences, as well as addressing issues related to bycatch and illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing. The total budget allocated to all 27 activities that fall within this strategic line and to support their implementation is over USD 1.03 million. This does not include cross-strategic line expenses such as staffing and some capital equipment such as tablets and laptops.

Strategic Line 2: Protection and Management of Critical Habitats

The second strategic line is themed around the protection and management of critical habitats. It focuses on developing guidelines and management plans for critical nesting habitats, enhancing coastal resilience to climate change to help protect nesting habitats, and expanding and effectively managing national nearshore protected area networks, recognizing, and accounting for stakeholders' livelihood needs and priorities. In addition, this strategic line also considers the impact of legal and illegal fishing on leatherback sea turtle populations, and alternative gear to reduce bycatch, both in the nearshore and high seas, especially within migratory routes. It also seeks to build management capacity and enhance stakeholder participation within the management frameworks. The total budget allocated to all 36 activities required to implement this strategic line is just over USD 2.10 million with the exception of cross-strategic line costs.

Strategic Line 3: Community Engagement

The third strategic line focuses on promoting partnerships with communities, involving stakeholders in conservation action and implementation, including fishers within data collection and research activities, and creating safe spaces for stakeholders, especially fishers to express their issues and concerns. This theme also focuses on creating and implementing evidence-based outreach strategies that use diverse and inclusive media, building alliances with educators, creating opportunities for experimental learning, and providing opportunities for cross-border learning exchanges. There are 28 activities that follow within this strategic line. The implementation budget is just under USD 500,000.

Strategic Line 4: Scientific Data Needs

This strategic line focuses on identifying and filling data gaps, analyzing the fine data to inform management decisions, increasing knowledge and understanding of habitats used by leatherbacks within the context of climate change and beach dynamics (especially when it comes to nesting habitats), identifying population indicators to help establish population recovery goals and to understand the impacts of life history traits and the requirement on conservation needs. The total budget allocated to the 44 activities that fall within this strategic line comes in at just under USD

5.4 million, without the inclusion of cross-strategic line costs. About USD 3 million of the total budget is to support the use of cameras on fishing vessels to support fishery evaluations.

Additional Work

In addition to creating the work plan and the supporting budget, Ms. Mukhida and Ms. Soanes also worked on a number of other documents, including the creation of law frames and narratives to help support the fundraising activities and to raise the necessary funds to implement the RAP. Their work also included the creation of a public (less technical) summary document to be used to help support fundraising efforts. Ms. Mukhida also mentioned that the work on these documents started last year and that the documents were just recently approved by the country teams.

Questions and Answers

David Singh (WWF-Guianas): To what extent do we need government endorsement before we can move forward and if we do need government endorsement to move forward with the entire RAP, are there components that we can move forward with without having that sort of support from across the governments? It will be good to know so we can sort of run in parallel, the endorsement of the government alongside the work that might be able to fund that.

Karen Eckert (WIDECAST): We are looking for formal endorsement from governments, just so that we have confidence that the RAP has been endorsed at the highest levels. That said, it is not necessary for it to go forward. There will be a governing structure that Olga will present at the end of the meeting because we thought it would be more logical to do that when you have heard all of the information in regard to the implementation and how it is going to be done. The governing structure will be managed by sea turtle professionals and an overall project coordinator, as well as a focal point for each of the four strategic lines. The large amount of work that has already gone into the development of the RAP is based a great deal on WWF sponsorship and support. The strategic lines have been developed and potential actions have been defined, so it will definitely hit the ground running. We do not want to tie it up with a lot of bureaucracy, needing MOUs with governments, and things like that. That is likely not the way to go forward. I guess what I'm trying to say is that implementation will happen either way. We would just love it if governments would say "Yeah, this is awesome. We are on board. What can we do to help?" Does that help to answer your question?

David Singh (WWF-Guianas): Thank you, Karen. I think it is important for us to keep sight of that as we move forward because otherwise, we could get caught in a bit of a loop. I do not think that the sea turtles would be saved if we depend on getting government support all the time. We want it, we need it, but what we can do in parallel and remain aligned with government policy as well?

Karen Eckert (WIDECAST): Agreed, thank you. I think we are saying the same thing. It is like a giant funded project; it is not a government initiative of some kind. It is a conservation-driven project, which we will collectively fundraise for and move forward with very quickly. The need is urgent, as we all know. We are in a kind of crisis situation here.

Farah Mukhida (Moderator/ WWF-Guianas Consultant): There are quite a few government agencies also involved at the national level, within those steering groups and country teams, so that could help as well.

Veronica Caceres (IAC): Thank you for the invitation. I am Secretary for the Inter-American Sea Turtle Convention and I am very happy to be in this meeting. I am very supportive of this initiative. The IAC has been a partner from the beginning, and just following up on the question and Karen's response. We are open to support trying to reach out to governments and our partners to learn about the work that this group is doing. I think a way we could help is once the process or the document is finalized, we can invite a speaker from the group to present at the IAC Scientific Community meeting. This has happened in the past that we reviewed WIDECAST reports as starting notes and really good results have come from that. WIDECAST reports have been pretty much translated into IAC resolutions. One of them is the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Resolution. It would be a very nice follow-up with that resolution to present the work that you are doing. And then from the IAC to also get more of this government support and involvement that we are talking about. So, thank you very much.

Farah Mukhida (Moderator/ WWF-Guianas Consultant): Thank you, Veronica. I don't know Soraya if you want to speak to that, but it sounds like an excellent opportunity to be further engaged and to share all of the amazing work that everyone has been doing.

Soraya Wijntuin (WWF-Guianas): I really want to thank Veronica for indicating this. I am really glad that Veronica and the IAC have also been a partner and a very major stakeholder since the start of the development of the RAP. I will get in touch with you Veronica. Thank you so much.

Country Update: Strategic Line 1 – Legislation and Enforcement

Facilitator: Ms. Louise Soanes (Moderator/ WWF-Guianas Consultant)

Ms. Louise Soanes gave a brief introduction to the first strategic line that focuses on legislation and enforcement. It involves the review of legal frameworks and tries to increase the enforcement of policies and regulations, promoting actions to encourage governments to join relevant international conventions and to legislate in ways that support the recovery of depleted sea turtle populations.

Suriname

Ms. Soraya Wijntuin presented on behalf of Suriname. She indicated that the national workshop for the adaptation and implementation of the RAP was held on 24 May 2023. Based on the input of the stakeholders, a summary was made of the current activities and future plans aligned with the RAP.

What is your country already doing within this strategic line?

Based on the question above, she indicated the following:

- Suriname has enforcement mechanisms such as roadblocks designed to preclude (or manage) beach visitation.
- There are ongoing enforcement actions within communities and markets.
- Monitoring is taking place on both nesting beaches (Braamspunt and Galibi).
- It is about two years that Suriname has prison sentences and fines in place for poaching sea turtle eggs. People who get caught with sea turtle eggs or attempt the poaching of sea turtle eggs are prosecuted. The jail sentence varies from a couple of months to almost two years.
- There is bycatch reporting done on sea turtles.
- For the past two years tour guides who facilitate tours to the two main nesting beaches have been trained in sustainable sea turtle tourism.
- In regard to fisheries, there is the use of Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs), mostly in the shrimp trawlers.
- Currently flexible TEDs are being tested for fish trawlers.

What does your country plan to do within this strategic line within the duration of the RAP?

Based on the question above, Ms. Wijntuin indicated the following:

- Intensify cooperation with the Police Corps of Suriname.
- Involve more local communities in enforcement by training park rangers.
- A stronger approach to IUU control in collaboration with the Fishery Department and the fisheries organizations for the Marowijne River. This effort will be in collaboration with French Guiana.
- Clarification of the division of rules between LBB (Dienst s' Lands Bosbeheer) and the Ministry of Spatial Planning and Environment (ROM), both of which are currently working on wildlife and the environment.
- Inclusion of the leatherback as a protected species, since the law does not recognize them as being such yet. There is a closed season, however, which forbids the harvest and poaching of eggs.

- Development of new policy based on scientific factors, research, and development of the new Fisheries Law and the Coastal Protection Law.

Guyana

Ms. Sarah Henry (WWF-Guianas) provided updates for Guyana, which had its workshop on 13 June 2023. She described the workshop as being rich and informative.

What is your country already doing within this strategic line?

Based on the question above, she indicated the following:

- Guyana has just recently (2022) established its Marine Mammals Protection Regulation that focuses on greater regulation of gear change.
- Recently the Fisheries Act 2000 was revised to include Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) which addresses IUU fishing from foreign vessels.
- A Wildlife Crime Strategy was developed, and training was conducted to inform stakeholder agencies such as the Police and Customs Officers how to respond to incidents of wildlife crime.
- Ongoing beach patrols are being done to monitor sea turtles, within protected areas (Shell Beach Protected Area) and on beaches outside of the protected areas along the coast.
- VMS is used by trawlers.
- The No Netting Zone is implemented annually along the nesting beaches of the Shell Beach Protected Area, which is enforced by the Protected Areas Commission and the Coast Guard.

What does your country plan to do within this strategic line within the duration of the RAP?

Based on the question above, Ms. Henry indicated the following:

- There are plans within the Protected Areas Commission to strengthen MOUs with NGOs such as WWF to improve sea turtle conservation.
- Continuation of ongoing monitoring work that is being done outside of the protected areas by another agency, using the KOBO application to collect data and share it with NGOs such as WWF and other agencies for greater collaboration and improved decision-making.
- There are regional meetings planned between WWF and the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) to discuss areas for collaboration.
- There are ongoing plans to implement the Wildlife Crime Strategy, which includes additional training for more agencies and making the Task Force operational.
- There are plans to use drones in the Shell Beach Protected Area to monitor nesting beaches.
- There are also plans to have an additional joint patrol to monitor nesting beaches. This would include the Coastguard which has a mandate for law enforcement.

French Guiana

The country updates for French Guiana were delivered by Ms. Mathilde Lasfargue (OFB).

What is your country already doing within this strategic line?

Based on the question above, she indicated the following:

- In French Guiana, leatherbacks are protected by national law. Intentional destruction, mutilation, capture, disturbance induced by light pollution, pursuits, or harassment are prohibited. Prison sentences can go up to three years and the fine can go up to €150,000.
- TEDs are mandatory in all shrimp trawlers in French Guiana.
- There is a national work plan for fisheries control, both legal and IUU fishing.
- There is daily monitoring and surveillance during the nesting season on the two main nesting sites in Awala Yalimapo (Amana Nature Reserve) and in Cayenne/Rémire-Montjoly.
- Bycatch must be recorded in the fishing logbook. Strandings are also recorded.
- In terms of national endorsement: the RAP has been integrated into the French Guiana National Action Plan for Sea Turtles because a specific objective is linked to cross-border cooperation. The RAP was officially presented to the State Secretary for the Sea during his visit to French Guiana in May 2023.
- The legislative requirements for France to join the IAC are being finalized. A letter of intent to become a member of the convention was officially presented to the Secretariat in February 2023.

What does your country plan to do within this strategic line within the duration of the RAP?

Based on the question above, Ms. Lasfargue indicated the following:

- Within the duration of the RAP, French Guiana would like to sign an MOU with the other countries to enable cross-border collaboration and to participate in the RAP governing body.
- Regarding IAC accession, it is anticipated to promote active participation of IAC parties in developing resolutions and reporting requirements designed to reduce leatherback mortality and IUU fishing.
- French Guiana will continue its participation in the development of the Regional Anti-IUU Plan of Action.
- The organization of regional meetings to exchange experiences and best practices with other stakeholders, set up joint patrols, and provide training is also anticipated within the duration of the RAP.

Trinidad and Tobago

Ms. Justine Dolabaille (EMA) presented the country updates on behalf of Trinidad and Tobago.

What is your country already doing within this strategic line?

Based on the question above, she indicated the following:

- Monitoring and patrolling on nesting beaches is overseen every turtle season by Trinidad and Tobago's Forestry Division.
- The analysis of the national legal and regulatory framework, with regard to leatherback protection and conservation was done in 2022.
- Literature review is ongoing related to risks and activities with regard to enforcement of the revised Sea Turtle Recovery Action Plan, originally developed by national stakeholders in partnership with WIDECAS and published in 2010.
- The EMA and the Forestry Division are in communication with the IAC Secretariat and participated in the 10th Conference of Parties (COP) and other committee meetings.

- Representation has been made to the government to join the IAC and discussions are ongoing.
- A science project, Turtle Spotter Challenge, which seeks to gather data on all sea turtles in Trinidad and Tobago is currently in progress. This is done by the NGO, SpeSeas, through the iNaturalist platform and TURT application.
- In Trinidad and Tobago, sea turtles are protected under national legislation. Fines for infringement of the law are set at TTD \$100,000 and imprisonment of two years.

What does your country plan to do within this strategic line within the duration of the RAP?

Based on the question above, Ms. Dolabaille indicated the following:

- Trinidad and Tobago plans to continue its monitoring and patrolling on nesting beaches.
- There are also plans to coordinate with SPAW (Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife) focal points for the formation of a leatherback sub-working group.
- Trinidad and Tobago plans to join the IAC, which is currently pending Ministerial and Cabinet approval.
- The country's endorsement of the RAP is pending, and additional activities will be planned and executed once the endorsement is finalized.

Note: After the presentation by Trinidad and Tobago, group pictures, shared over multiple screens, were taken.

Country Update: Strategic Line 2 – Protection and Management of Critical Habitats

Facilitator: Ms. Louise Soanes (Moderator/ WWF-Guianas Consultant)

Ms. Soanes gave a short introduction to Strategic Line 2 – Protection and Management of Critical Habitats. The main actions of this line include marine spatial planning and the development of best practice protocols in leatherback high-use areas. It also focuses on enhancing efforts to mitigate leatherback bycatch and illegal fisheries, and capacity building for enforcement agencies and strengthening enforcement programs.

Suriname

Ms. Soraya Wijntuin presented on behalf of Suriname.

What is your country already doing within this strategic line?

Within this strategic line, Suriname is doing the following:

- The management of zones by type of fisheries with enforcement.
- There is a no-fishing zone in Galibi, marked with buoys.
- There is a local monitoring team at Galibi.
- For the past two years, education sessions for sea turtles have been provided in mostly elementary schools.
- Bycatch Reduction Devices (BRDs) are being tested for different types of nets.

What does your country plan to do within this strategic line within the duration of the RAP?

Within this strategic line, Suriname plans to:

- Improve enforcement and intensification of control and surveillance on water (IUU approach).
- Create a multi-institutional checkpoint at Galibi, in which the Army, the Police, and Nature Conservation Division operate in one team.
- Install permanent surveillance of the areas.
- Include new marine areas in the new Nature Protection Law.
- Do more bycatch reporting, including in the early stages of the turtles.
- Propose to extend the no-fishing zone in front of the Galibi nesting beach.
- Clean up silted-up creeks for fisheries.
- Use TEDs in all trawlers, including the flexible TED that is now being piloted.
- Reduce bycatch within the Suriname Coastal (SK) fisheries.

Guyana

Ms. Sara Henry updated the participants on the part of Guyana.

What is your country already doing within this strategic line?

Within this strategic line, Guyana is doing as follows:

- The Coast Guard is conducting informal mapping of fishing zones which can be used to help identify areas of bycatch and IUU.

- There is some enforcement of time/area restrictions such as the No-Netting Zone that is implemented every year in the Shell Beach Protected Area during the nesting season.
- There is ongoing conservation work on mangroves adjacent to the Shell Beach Protected Area, which is seen as a contributor to habitat stability, because of the area being severely eroded.
- There is ongoing work to support cooperation among fishers and with the government. This is led by the Fisheries Department, Guyana National Fisherfolk Organisation, and Trawler Association.
- Resource use and sea turtle conservation activities are ongoing and captured in the Shell Beach Protected Areas management plan and a specific monitoring plan.
- Coastal surveys are currently being done collaboratively in the Shell Beach Protected Area.
- Coastal monitoring of biodiversity, including the leatherbacks is done outside of the protected area.

Ms. Henry emphasized the importance of obtaining a clear picture of the gathered feedback from the workshop. There are activities taking place in (the main nesting areas) and outside of the protected areas. However, not all stakeholders were aware of the work outside of the protected areas.

What does your country plan to do within this strategic line within the duration of the RAP?

Within this strategic line:

- The Guyana Wildlife Conservation and Management Commission (GWCMC) plans to establish MOUs with other government agencies and NGOs, which will benefit leatherback conservation.
- There are plans to continue the collaboration between the Fisheries Department, the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), and the Guyana National Fisherfolk Organisation for example, which will promote a multistakeholder approach within the country and regionally to promote leatherback conservation.
- WWF, the Fisheries Department, and the Guyana National Fisherfolk Organisation will continue to work on reducing IUU.
- The Coast Guard will continue monitoring and enforcement along nesting beaches. This specifically relates to the No-Netting Zone.
- The Guyana National Fisherfolk Organisation plans to reach out to fishermen on the high seas to gauge threats to the marine and the fisher ecosystem.
- Guyana also plans to develop a Marine Spatial Plan by 2030 under the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS).

During the workshop, the agencies, the Fishermen Co-op, and the NGOs all expressed their willingness to collaborate with agencies to share best practices for improved leatherback conservation.

French Guiana

Ms. Mathilde Lasfargue presented the Strategic Line 2 updates on behalf of French Guiana.

What is your country already doing within this strategic line?

Within this strategic line:

- French Guiana is making use of satellite tracking to identify marine areas used by leatherbacks within and between reproductive seasons.
- There is a management plan for the Amana Nature Reserve that includes sea turtle conservation activities.
- In the framework of a project called ARRIBA that started three years ago, there is a voluntary no-fishing zone in front of the Cayenne/ Rémire Montjoly nesting site during part of the nesting season. WWF and the Fisheries Committee are working together so that fishermen voluntarily choose not to fish in this area, which has a high risk of interaction between sea turtles and fishers. This project mainly focuses on olive ridley but also benefits leatherbacks.
- Another research project involving fishermen (PALICA 2) testing for alternatives relating to drift net fishing – such as a change of float color, reduction of the vertical profile of nets, elimination of float lines, and use of acoustic transmitters – suggests that the elimination of float lines seems to reduce bycatch and can be commercially interesting for fishermen.
- Aerial surveys are carried out on a regular basis to identify remote nesting sites and evaluate fishing efforts (both IUU and legal), particularly on the West part of French Guiana.

What does your country plan to do within this strategic line within the duration of the RAP?

Within this strategic line:

- French Guiana will continue to involve fishermen to test alternative fishing gears that will reduce leatherback bycatch while maintaining economic returns.
- French Guiana plans to create new voluntary no-fishing zones in agreement with fishers.
- It is planned to improve control and surveillance on the water during nesting season near the border with Suriname and the Maroni Estuary.
- French Guiana plans to prevent the abandonment of fishing nets and the removal of ghost nets.
- Given the decline of the leatherback in French Guiana, particularly at Yalimapo Beach, a natural hatchery was opened in March 2023. The aim is to counter three terrestrial threats, that are erosion, dog predation, and poaching. This project is led by the NGO “KWATA” in partnership with Amana Nature Reserve, WWF, OFB, the government, and the Territorial Collectivity.

Trinidad and Tobago

Ms. Justine Dolabaille presented the country updates on Strategic Line 2 for Trinidad and Tobago.

What is your country already doing within this strategic line?

Within this strategic line:

- Trinidad and Tobago is monitoring and patrolling on nesting beaches every turtle season.
- They are currently in the process of revising their Sea Turtle Recovery Action Plan (STRAP), crafted in partnership with WIDECAS and published in 2010.
- Several projects are being initiated, one of which is related to the renewed efforts to support sustainable fishing in Trinidad and Tobago. This is being done by Arizona State University and Ecolibrium.
- Recently the National Sea Turtle Task Force (NSTTF) developed beachfront and street lighting guidelines.

- A recent pilot project was initiated to install turtle-friendly lights in the vicinity of key nesting sites.
- There was the installation of signage on nesting sites.
- There is a continued collaboration with stakeholders when it comes to decision-making for events at or near nesting beaches.
- There is continued advocacy by the NSTTF across a range of issues.
- A draft of the National Sea Turtle Ecotourism Plan is being prepared.
- There has been funding approval for a project that determines and addresses causes for leatherback decline in the Northwest Atlantic.
- Several organizations in Trinidad and Tobago carry out satellite tracking and turtle tagging activities.
- There are drone surveys on some nesting sites.
- The Marine Mammal Stranding Network assists with strandings, rescue, and rehabilitation.
- There are beach management plans for specific nesting sites within Trinidad and Tobago.

What does your country plan to do within this strategic line within the duration of the RAP?

Within this strategic line:

- Trinidad and Tobago plans to continue annual monitoring and patrolling of nesting beaches.
- Trinidad and Tobago plans to complete the revision of the STRAP.
- There will be a continuation of the project with Arizona State University and Ecolibrium.
- The installation of signage on the nesting sites will be completed.
- A new project that determines and addresses the causes of leatherback decline in the Northwest Atlantic will be implemented.

Questions and Answers

Henk Bhagwandin (WWF-Guianas): I have a question for Mathilde. I was interested in the voluntary no-fishing zone in front of the nesting beaches. You have also mentioned that you will create new voluntary no-fishing zones in agreement with fishermen. How is this going so far and is it only for the artisanal or does it also apply to the industrial/ trawling fisheries?

Mathilde Lasfargue (OFB): Thank you for your question. At the moment it is only for artisanal fishermen. It has been three years now since there has been a voluntary no-fishing zone. During the nesting season, satellite tracking is used to know where the turtles are going. We identify specific hotspots where they are hanging around between two clutches. There is a WhatsApp group with WWF, the Fisheries Committee, and the fishers. So, they know when the turtles are arriving and where they are. The objective is to inform them, and not to use the law to forbid access to the sea. That would not work. It is just a voluntary process and that's why it is working. I think that last year, 95% of the fishermen voluntarily did not go to this area. There are some that do not agree with this action, but most of them are very happy to help us and just fish elsewhere. So, it works. At this moment we have one voluntary zone. We are going to try in another area, and hopefully, it is going to work too. But it is very important for us to include fishermen in the process because if not, they will not participate.

Henk Bhagwandin (WWF-Guianas): Thank you, Mathilde. This is very interesting since Suriname and French Guiana are neighbors and the nesting beaches border to each other. I think

that for Suriname it is interesting to create some kind of awareness to the fishermen and to inform them on the reproductive season. They already know this, of course, but to create this idea of the voluntary no-fishing zone. In agreement with the fishers, I think we can also implement this here in Suriname.

Mathilde Lasfargue (OFB): We will be happy to share our experience with Suriname if you are interested to do the same.

Louise Soanes (Moderator): Thank you for that. That was going to be my question as well. How many fishers volunteered? We know from experience that fishers do not often concur, even if it is a law or it is being enforced. But that is your point, to encourage them to volunteer, and not force things on them. That might be a better approach. It is good to consider.

I have a question for Trinidad and Tobago about satellite tracking that you have undertaken. I am not sure how much you have done, but I assume you are starting to realize that they might use other areas outside of Trinidad and Tobago, the Wider Caribbean, and other migration routes. I am wondering if there has been any work to try to share these results with other countries, it would be important to other agencies that might be interested in these results. What is the plan with this data once it is collected?

Justine Dolabaille (EMA): I am not sure if they have gotten data from other countries. I am not sure what the organizations plan to do with it, but it is something that I can find out.

Louise Soanes (Moderator): That would be interesting. That is the kind of data that is really useful to share and examine between two different countries.

Heini Langaman (STIDUNAL) via Soraya Wijntuin (WWF-Guianas): If he could understand it correctly there is full-year monitoring of sea turtles in Trinidad and Tobago. So, he is asking why this is not the case in Suriname.

David Mahabir (Forestry Division Trinidad and Tobago): Annually we collaborate with NGO groups that do turtle monitoring. The data is analyzed by the Wildlife Section and presented in our annual report, which could be shared with the other countries. So, there is no problem for us to share the data.

Mike James (Fisheries and Oceans Canada): I was just going to comment on the satellite tracking activities for Trinidad. Our group in Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada has been involved in satellite efforts to track animals of the north and east coast of Trinidad, in collaboration with local NGOs, the Grande Riviere Nature Tour Guide Association and the Nature Seekers, and the sample size is now at a point where we think that the results are hopefully robust enough for peer review. So, we are actually in our process within government to review that with the intention to, once it has gone through review here, making that available hopefully through publication. It is something really important to us, because as a government agency here tasked with recovery of these animals within our waters, we recognize that Trinidad and Tobago is the most important contributing stock to Canada, so we are able to do some of this work through the international piece of our own recovery action plans in Canada in respect to the leatherbacks. So, I have been really grateful for the NGOs on the ground here and for the various management agencies for

permitting the work that we have been doing. We fully intend to make that data available through publication to everyone.

Louise Soanes (Moderator): Thank you, Mike. That is really interesting. We all look forward to reading that. And that point will actually come up later in Strategic Line 4 about data sharing and making sure that we all know what everyone is doing because that can really help with it. Everyone's individual efforts as well as the regional efforts.

Heini Langaman (STIDUNAL) via Soraya Wijntuin (WWF-Guianas): It is actually a very supportive message towards Mathilde from French Guiana. They are really supporting the initiative of French Guiana and they also want to look at how French Guiana will implement this and put the actions to work.

Soraya Wijntuin (WWF-Guianas): I also want to respond to his first question. He was actually asking why we are not monitoring sea turtles year-round in Suriname. One of the major challenges that we have is funding. So, that is also one of the reasons that we are only focusing on the high nesting season, because we know where all the turtles will be nesting, and we are sure that we have the funding to do this, together with the government and the Indigenous community which Heini is from, Galibi. But it has always been our wish to monitor year-round, but we just do not have the financial resources to do so.

Karen Eckert (WIDECAST): I just want to give a short shout-out to Trinidad. Their satellite tracking has been in the peer-reviewed literature as early as 2006 and for almost 20 years they have tried to be really transparent about where those turtles are going and it has contributed a great deal to our knowledge that of course, is shared by all of us. But just the point of how important it is to get this data out, whether it is satellite tracking or just general trends into the peer-reviewed literature. It is just such a strong encouragement, even if it is a project report. Being somehow publicly available on a website or something, this data sharing just becomes increasingly important. And many of you are doing a great job with that.

Country Updates: Strategic Line 3 – Community Engagement

Facilitator: Ms. Louise Soanes (Moderator/ WWF-Guianas Consultant)

Strategic Line 3 focuses on community engagement. Ms. Soanes briefly introduced this line, indicating its numerous individual tasks and actions. Its main focus is to develop long-term commitment and long-term strategies for community outreach, collaboratively as well as in-country. In addition, it also focuses on developing targeted awareness programs for a range of audiences, considering different stakeholder groups and audiences, and trying to maintain community engagement in all different kinds, for different aspects of the world. She also indicated the importance to measure community engagement and outreach, learning from it, and improving it as it goes along.

Suriname

Ms. Wijntuin presented the country updates for Strategic Line 3 for Suriname.

What is your country already doing within this strategic line?

Within this strategic line:

- Suriname is generating awareness in society with the help of NGOs in the form of posters, brochures, animation movies, and documentaries.
- Billboards and social media are mostly used by NGOs. A famous billboard in regards to sea turtles is located across Suriname's biggest bridge, stating "Don't eat sea turtle eggs!" with a hatchling coming out of its egg.
- For the past two years, tour guides and boat owners have been trained for sustainable sea turtle tourism on the beaches. This sort of engagement is being applauded because the tour guides communicate the information/best practices to tourists and other tour guides.
- Different types of beach clean-up campaigns are being initiated by individuals, organizations, and companies on both Braampunt and Galibi.
- Education sessions are held mostly at elementary schools and the three education centers, located in Galibi, Braampunt, and the Paramaribo Zoo. The education centers, which are also self-educating centers, have their focus on sea turtles.

What does your country plan to do within this strategic line within the duration of the RAP?

Suriname plans to:

- Research knowledge about these populations (indigenous and outside knowledge).
- Make sea turtle awareness part of the educational curriculum. The School Inspection and educators of inspection of the Ministry of Education have been involved in school sessions.
- Tackle pollution by means of partnerships with, for example, Fernandes Bottling Company (regarding waste management on the beaches).
- Continue the renovation of the education center in the Paramaribo Zoo by adding more games for children that can create more engagement.
- Continue with the Annual Ocean Expedition. So far, two were organized by Green Heritage Fund Suriname (GHFS) and WWF. Its objectives are to help prevent and reduce marine

litter in the waters (rivers and oceans) and to educate people on the kind of mammals/ sea turtles that are present in Surinamese waters.

- Have more seasonal workers in Galibi and better housing on-site. Currently, there are eight people doing the monitoring at the nesting beach.
- Increase awareness among fishers. The approach is currently being discussed with the Fisheries Department and NCD.
- Improve data collection targeting sea turtles and other ETPs.
- Resolve communication (language) barriers in Galibi by engaging with the community and taking on their recommendations and suggestions, for example, the visitor (education) center in Galibi has its own traditional name, Kadaru', which means turtle in the local language Kaliña. Renovate the women's center to provide information and education, facilitate school exchanges, and promote involvement of women in sea turtle protection.

Guyana

Ms. Henry presented the country updates for Strategic Line 3 for Guyana.

What is your country already doing within this strategic line?

Within this strategic line:

- The Guyana Wildlife Commission and Protected Area Commission post messages about their work on social media, which includes leatherback and sea turtle conservation.
- Fishers are encouraged by the Guyana National Fisherfolk Organisation to keep checking their nets for sea turtles and to ensure that they are released before harm is done.
- The Fisheries Department holds workshops with fishers and fisher co-ops to discuss issues with awareness of new regulations and general conservation messages.
- Education, awareness, and engagements are done with communities adjacent to the Shell Beach Protected Area, where the main sea turtle habitats are located within the protected area.
- There is existing funding from WWF for community engagements in the Shell Beach Protected Area communities. These awareness sessions cover a number of topics, including sea turtle conservation, threats, and advice for best practices.
- Communities are currently engaged in the Shell Beach Protected Area management planning process, reviewing and developing a new plan of which sea turtle conservation is an important aspect.
- There are on-site awareness sessions in communities and primary schools related to coastal biodiversity and sea turtles. These are done in communities close to the beaches outside of the protected area.
- Knowledge, Attitude and Practice surveys (KAP) are conducted in the Shell Beach Protected Area communities, to establish baseline scores for a number of different topics, such as sea turtle conservation, threats, and how much people know for example about its legal status.

What does your country plan to do within this strategic line within the duration of the RAP?

Guyana plans to:

- Promote the importance of sea turtles in the ecosystem, particular during events such as World Wildlife Day, agriculture month, and Fishermen’s Day. This will be done by multiple agencies as part of the standard work plan.
- Continue outreaches by the Fisheries Department to fisherfolk in all administrative regions of Guyana.
- Produce a newsletter, replicate experiences, and use social media as much as possible to improve awareness about sea turtles and other conservation messages related to sea turtles and fisheries as well. This will be done by the Guyana National Fisherfolk Organisation.

French Guiana

Ms. Lasfargue presented the country updates for Strategic Line 3 for French Guiana.

What is your country already doing within this strategic line?

Within this strategic line:

- A collaborative body, called the French Guiana Sea Turtle Network, brings together 40 stakeholders directly or indirectly involved in sea turtle conservation. The network consists of NGOs, social professionals, fishers, scientists, communities, and governments and is led by OFB, who also manages the website, Facebook, Instagram, and the YouTube Channel. Twice a year a newsletter is produced and communication materials (t-shirts, posters, stickers, games, videos) are regularly developed.
- In the framework of the National Action Plan there is a big awareness and education plan that includes sessions at schools, visits with classes to nesting beaches, organization of special events, cleaning campaigns on beaches, and summer activities.
- Every year training courses are offered for social professionals, such as boat owners, fishers, teachers, and policemen.
- Community members are also included in the projects as much as possible. Currently, four community members have been recruited to run the natural hatchery in Yalimapo Beach.

What does your country plan to do within this strategic line within the duration of the RAP?

French Guiana plans to:

- Maintain a presence on social media and continue organizing school activities and training.
- Adapt certain communication tools to maintain outreach to different communities and age groups.
- Organize school exchanges and promote participatory science.
- Continue to raise awareness among fishers, knowing that they are already involved in sea turtle conservation through bycatch reduction projects.

Trinidad and Tobago

Ms. Dolabaille presented the country updates for Strategic Line 3 for Trinidad and Tobago.

What is your country already doing within this strategic line?

Within this strategic line:

- Social media is used to post information, such as “do and don’t” during nesting season.
- Signage is used to assist with education and awareness.
- There are annual beach clean-ups at some of the turtle nesting sites.

- The EMA does public education presentations in various schools regarding environmentally sensitive species, including sea turtles.
- Tour guide training is conducted within different organizations.

What does your country plan to do within this strategic line within the duration of the RAP?

Trinidad and Tobago plans to:

- Continue social media posts, especially for nesting season awareness.
- Continue education and awareness activities.
- Continue engagement of fishers regarding bycatch.

Questions and Answers

Louise Soanes (Moderator): Marleen has posted in the chat that WWF has posted about World Sea Turtle Day. There is an aspect to doing things on a more regional scale as well as a local scale. Are there any other examples where there is kind of a collaborative public awareness aspect to the campaign where you can all join in and do something together and share resources? It is something that has been mentioned in the RAP. I don't know if it has been implemented very much as yet.

Henk Bhagwandin (WWF-Guianas): In addition to the presentation of Soraya, I also wanted to add that WWF is working very closely with the District Commissioner of Commewijne. There is a nesting beach in Commewijne and a new policy, that does not allow people to enter the nesting beach without permission of the District Commissioner, especially during the reproduction period. They also have their own awareness sessions for the community and they are working very well.

Karen Eckert (WIDECAST): I love that there is a mix of social media and direct awareness in local languages, in partnerships with CBOs (Community-based Organizations) and communities. I am curious to know if anybody has a good sense of the effect of the social media presence. I love that it gives us all greater visibility. We certainly reach people that we would not have reached before, but we might also be talking to ourselves, not like those in this room, but people who are just generally interested in sea turtle biology and conservation. So, perhaps during the communication breakout group, if someone has a sense because I know that WIDECAST has dozens of Facebook pages for all our partners in 45 countries. But what are we actually accomplishing with the social media presence? Google Analytics can help us with that. Maybe there are comments like "Because we saw this post, we took a certain kind of action". I'm curious to hear from those who are really savvy in this medium. If we can document or quantify in some way what the effect of these postings is, and to the end we can improve that in performance over time, perhaps taking the example of social media streams that have been really successful in certain ways. So, I will just throw that out there, perhaps something for the Working Group to chew on.

Farah Mukhida (Moderator): And maybe just to add on to what you said, Karen. Something that we have also struggled with as a sea turtle conservation agency in Anguilla is how you measure the impact on the ground. And it is both, we have to send this data to the funders, but also in terms of how we adapt our approaches to it. We do have a really hard time in terms of measuring communications impact, so if anyone has any ideas or things that have worked for them, that would be very helpful for a lot of people to hear.

Louise Soanes (Moderator): Yes, and most of us are biologists and ecologists, and not trained communicators. There are very specific things that I am just learning about, for example, Farah and I have recently been trying to create a Facebook post, giving a message to carry on so people could be inspired to do something themselves. So, that is a change that we have been making as well, trying to give something where they are not just seeing a pretty picture but where they are reading a statement where they can go back and do something like picking up plastic or stop buying plastic bags. That is another skill that we have been learning. And I think many of us probably don't have these skills because we are not trained in that area. So, it might be worthwhile for future RAP projects to do some specific communication training for the group, so everyone can get the best out of what they are doing and maybe make the most impact.

Marleen Stoffelen (WWF-Guianas): It really depends on who you want to target. I agree that most social media posts that I see in conservation work are indeed showing "Oh, we did this". Usually, there is also no budget to target, but luckily on social media, you have the opportunity to target if you know how to and if you have the funds. Luckily, we all live in quite small countries, and therefore targeting the audience in our countries is not that expensive. So, when we fundraise, I would love to help as well to build regional communication plans, define our target audiences, and also do a cost proposal on how to reach those and what we want out of that communication so that we can have the impact that we want. But it is not there yet, indeed.

Karen Eckert (WIDECAST): I love that, Marleen. Thank you for your offer. It's awesome.

Country Update: Strategic Line 4 – Scientific Data Needs

Facilitator: Ms. Louise Soanes (Moderator/ WWF-Guianas Consultant)

Ms. Soanes gave a brief introduction to Strategic Line 4, which focuses on scientific data needs, indicating it as a very comprehensive line with a lot of different and wide-ranging aspects. Within this strategic line, there are plans to develop a regional/central data hub to have data shared. It was identified as an important aspect to drive forward sea turtle conservation. This line also includes the establishment of working groups, ensuring that in-country partners follow a standard methodology to implement their STRAPs and that the different local community groups are aware of that and trained. A big aspect is also the work that is currently being done on the ground in relation to this line, the additional parameters/data that need to be gathered, the gaps that need to be identified, the emerging threats that need to be considered and what is needed to inform conservation management.

Suriname

Ms. Soraya Wijntuin presented the country updates for Strategic Line 4 on behalf of Suriname.

What is your country already doing within this strategic line?

Within this strategic line, Suriname is:

- Monitoring the sea turtles and investigating the causes of death, such as bycatch, entrapment (in nets), and jaguar predation. The location (nesting beaches) where the death took place is also recorded.
- Making use of the Green Growth Wildlife Application, designed for community-based wildlife data collection. However, it is not used for sea turtles as yet.
- In the month of June (2023) new research was initiated that focuses on short and long-term solutions to address sea turtle nesting at Braamspunt, including the flooding and erosion of the nesting beaches, as well as the impact on other beaches in the Guianas. It has been recorded that there is an increase in erosion on the nesting beaches, so this study can provide insight into what can be expected in the near future and possible solutions. Within two weeks of the regional workshop, the results of the study will be discussed during a national workshop.

What does your country plan to do within this strategic line within the duration of the RAP?

Suriname plans to:

- Collect more data on bycatch and IUU, which will be done in collaboration with French Guiana (mostly the IUU part).
- Work with SMART (Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool) monitoring for standardized data collection. Training has already been provided and currently, the database is being developed with the pilot for the SMART monitoring is planned in the upcoming nesting season. The tool itself is digitalized and geo-referenced.
- Monitor year-round on the nesting beaches to get to know the impact of climate change and find out if the nesting season has shifted. Funding is the problem factor here.
- Improve data sharing in a more standardized way and solve data sharing problems on an international level. There is already a partnership in which data sharing is one of the agreements between the three partners. However, opportunities to broaden it further between multiple partners are being looked at.

- There is more need for validated data, validated by the Wildlife Authority, the national institute in Suriname that is in charge of doing this.
- There is also a need to fill data gaps, and to tackle illegal and incorrect data that create misconceptions of the real situation.
- Conduct research into leatherback migration routes, due to fewer numbers of leatherbacks visiting the nesting beaches. It is also being conducted to find out if the leatherbacks are migrating to other nesting beaches.
- Conduct research into the marine food web and share the knowledge with French Guiana, which has the same population on the Awala-Yalimapo Beach as in Galibi.

Guyana

Ms. Sara Henry presented the country updates for Strategic Line 4 on behalf of Guyana.

What is your country already doing within this strategic line?

Within this strategic line:

- Sea turtle, and more specifically leatherback data needs are identified on the Shell Beach Protected Area research priority list. This list is shared with national and international universities, researchers, and other institutions to create awareness and encourage people to conduct different kinds of studies in that area.
- Data on the condition of the nesting sites is being collected, such as GPS coordinates, accretion and erosion, threats, and much more. The Protected Areas Commission (PAC) collects data in the protected areas, and another organization by the name of NAREI collects data with the KOBO App outside of the protected areas, in the administrative regions 2,3,4,5, and 6.
- There are ongoing collaborations to collect data on fish catch and bycatch between the Fisheries Department, the Upper Corentyne Fishermen Co-op Society, and the Trawler Association.

What does your country plan to do within this strategic line within the duration of the RAP?

Guyana plans to:

- Establish a central database for environmental data under the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2023. This will provide a major opportunity for the collection of sea turtle data.
- The Protected Areas Commission has the means to start Passive Integrated Transponders (PIT) tagging of sea turtles and expand its GIS department to improve the monitoring of nesting beaches.
- The Guyana Marine Conservation Society has available its Girls Drone Unit to contribute to monitoring.
- There are plans to continue collecting fishery and sea turtle bycatch data at landing sites. This is an ongoing collaboration between the Guyana National Fisherfolk Organisation, the Fisheries Department, and other co-op societies.

French Guiana

Ms. Mathilde Lasfargue presented the country updates for Strategic Line 4 on behalf of French Guiana.

What is your country already doing within this strategic line?

Within this strategic line:

- French Guiana has a unique database for egg-laying activity. There is a data sharing agreement, a standardized protocol, indicating that everyone shares their data at the end of the year. Since the start of 2023 **around 1,000 leatherback nests** have been counted in French Guiana. That is considerable good news compared to the year before.
- There is a national strandings database.
- There has been leatherback tagging since the '80s.
- Satellite tracking and bio loggers are currently used to study leatherback behavior.
- There is a huge database available and over the past 40 years numerous scientific publications have been made on the leatherbacks.
- There is an observatory of the coastal dynamic (OdyC) that studies mudbanks movements, erosion, and flooding, particularly at Yalimapo Beach.
- Onboard cameras and observers are used during tests to modify fishing gears (PALICA 2 Project).

What does your country plan to do within this strategic line within the duration of the RAP?

French Guiana plans to:

- Continue to monitor the nesting activity annually.
- Clean up, validate, and store their database in a secure platform.
- Continue analyzing data at both a national and international scale.
- Continue PIT tagging and satellite tracking with a focus on the Maroni Estuary, a key marine area during nesting season. Therefore, knowledge exchanges between Suriname and French Guiana will take place.
- Start working on bioacoustics by using hydrophones to study leatherback vocalizations.
- Continue assessing the impact of foreign IUU fishing in French Guiana. This is a collaboration between WWF, IFREMER, and the Fisheries Committee.

Trinidad and Tobago

Ms. Justine Dolabaille presented the country updates for Strategic Line 4 on behalf of Trinidad and Tobago.

What is your country already doing within this strategic line?

Within this strategic line, Trinidad and Tobago:

- Ongoing research on temperature and sediment factors for hatchling production.
- Identified priority sites and populations for hatchling production.
- Completed research and analysis on patterns and drivers of hatchling production and publishing is currently underway.
- Conducted evaluation of hatch success.
- Collected and analyzed data on grain size/sediment vertical profile for nesting beaches.
- Assessed beach erosion and accretion at one nesting site using drone technology.
- Has done beach profiling.
- Conducted gender studies on hatchlings.
- Completed a population genetics report.
- Collected data and performed necropsies on dead sea turtles (ongoing action).

- Ongoing theoretical data collection for the impact of water temperature on nesting.
- Ongoing project to assess how nest density affects hatching success at a key nesting site.
- Performed the act of turtle tagging for over 20+ years. This is done by community groups.
- Initiated a project on renewed efforts to support sustainable fishing.

What does your country plan to do within this strategic line within the duration of the RAP?

Trinidad and Tobago plans to:

- Continue turtle tagging.
- Continue evaluation of hatch success.
- Continue data collection and necropsy of dead sea turtles.
- Continue projects on nest density affecting hatching success at a key nesting site.
- Continue projects on renewed efforts to support sustainable fishing.

Questions and Answers

Henk Bhagwandin (WWF-Guianas): I have a question for Sara from Guyana. You mentioned the collection of bycatch data at landing sites. Can you inform us more about this? How does it work?

Sara Henry (WWF-Guianas): This point came from the Fisheries Department. I am not sure if the representative of the Fisheries Department has talked to fishers when they come to the landing site. They used to collect information on both the pounds of fish caught and bycatch. So, if there are any turtles caught, I will try to get more information on specific details. If you want to know more, I can connect you with that person or get the information for you, because I will not be able to get down into finer details about it.

Henk Bhagwandin (WWF-Guianas): Okay, Sara. Thank you. You know that the bycatch story is a little bit different. To collect that information at the landing site, it would be useful to create data collection forms and to train the crew and the captains in collecting data on bycatch, especially for endangered, threatened, and protected species (ETPs). So, when they are at sea and they notice the bycatch of these species, they can easily fill in this form, and that will give us reliable information on bycatch and the composition of the bycatch. So, in this way, you can have full-scale data on bycatch and that will be more interesting. While collecting data on bycatch at the landing site will be a little difficult. That is my point of view.

Sara Henry (WWF-Guianas): So, what I can do is confirm the manner and the way in which they apply their data sheets and get that information back to you, Henk. As I said, this came from the Fisheries Officer.

Louise Soanes (Moderator): I have a question for Mathilde about the onboard cameras. I think you are the only one that mentioned onboard cameras, but has it been identified as an action for everybody? I am just wondering about the data. So, if they collect a lot of data, I am assuming, I do not know how many you got out on different boats. Are you analyzing the data yourself or have you had to engage a university partner or a student? How do you look at that data and how much time will it take to analyze the data?

Mathilde Lasfargue (OFB): I do not have all the information, so if you need more detail, it is WWF that is leading this project. Both onboard cameras and onboard observers are used during our bycatch reduction project. I talked about it in Strategic Line 2. When testing different types of gear likely to modify the productivity of fishers, they use onboard observers. When they think that the test is not going to impact productivity, they use cameras. I know that they have a lot of data, and it takes time to look at everything. So, they currently have a student that analyzes the data for them.

Louise Soanes (Moderator): That is good to know. So, establishing some partners, university partners, or students looking for projects. I think that it is a really good project for students to do. It is something that they can really concentrate on whereas people here would probably not have the time to sit down for days and watch the videos.

I also have a question for Soraya. I know that you said that you have a workshop coming up next week and that you were trying to identify short-term and long-term solutions to flooding and nesting beach erosion. I wondered if you had identified any solutions as yet that you could share? So, I think we are all going to be faced with sea level rise. Maybe trying to promote planting behind the beaches, encouraging the beaches to retrieve, and things like that. But sometimes we have villas and hotels right there. So, what is going to happen? Have you identified anything as yet?

Soraya Wijntuin (WWF-Guianas): We are doing this in collaboration with WWF-Netherlands and Deltares. We already had some short-term solutions that they could discuss with us. One was actually the possibility of hatcheries. A longer-term solution was looking into zoning and talking with the government, for example, when they want to do more activities such as sand mining and building harbors, just also to take that into consideration. We have river dredging in Suriname and the problem is that we have to go all the way to our hydropower dam to see how it impacts the shifting of our nesting beach. This is because the beach is actually being hit hard by erosion and flooding now. One of the beaches is our shifting beach, and what we have is that we cannot just shift the hatchlings or the nests. That is also because we have a huge mudflat that is coming with this shift as well. So, that is a little more difficult in our situation now. We are still running some tests, as well as green and grey solutions, that we want to discuss with the government first to get an idea of what they think of it, as part of general parties, and what is actually feasible for Suriname. I can also share that so everybody knows what we will be doing, and what solutions we have in mind, and maybe it can work for the other countries as well. But in depth we are really still figuring out what will work best, looking at all the criteria we have, and taking into consideration the mudflats in front of our coast.

Louise Soanes (Moderator): That is interesting. So, in Anguilla, as an example, an agency created flood risk maps or sea level rise maps. So, it is not as if the whole coastline of Anguilla will be equally affected by sea level rise. It depends on a lot of factors, elevation, symmetry, and all of those kinds of things. So, I do not think that we have looked at it in relation to our turtle nesting beaches and I know that not all beaches are suitable for turtles to nest, but it might be that in some situations we look at which beaches might be most affected by sea level rise and then look at those that might not. And if you had to prioritize activities or protection, then bearing in mind, climate change risks such as sea level rise are going to be important because you can protect the whole

area, but if you cannot protect it from sea level rising, then it is really not going to be very worthwhile. But if you have another site that you can protect and it will be less impacted, the results will be better. So, we started to do that a bit, trying to think about what impact climate change will have on management going forward.

Farah Mukhida (Moderator): I have a question, that is not related to climate change, but more to bycatch and working with fishers. I am just wondering; do you find that fishers are quite open to sharing data or is it legislated or voluntary? How do you make sure that you get the data you need from the fishers there, and is it accurate? And then also, that is for fishers that are landing their catches, I suppose, but what about high seas bycatch? And how is that addressed, how is that information shared, or how do you hope for that information to be shared? It is kind of an open question to anyone.

Mathilde Lasfargue (OFB): In French Guiana, I know that fishers do not like to share bycatch data, so it is complicated to get access to it. At the moment, this type of data is mainly shared within a restricted circle of people (fishers, fisheries committee, WWF) and there is no official communication on the subject. We try to take things slowly and encourage dialogue to build trust between fishermen and scientists. We know that there is bycatch, but the exact numbers are not shared, because once this type of data is communicated to the public, the fishing industry is immediately criticized, even though fishers are making great efforts to reduce bycatch. More communication will be made on bycatch numbers once concrete solutions have been found.

Karen Eckert (WIDECAST): I think this is one of those areas where our relationships really matter. So, if we kind of swoop in and ask fishers to communicate with us, we are not going to get nearly as good a result as if we were a good partner in the various other issues that are important to fishers. Building those bridges is really crucial – as is being authentic and collaborative – because without trust we are not going to get much out of our important partners in the fishing community.

Farah Mukhida (Moderator): Do you find it as sort of a follow-up? Do you find it easier to sort of separate it? The Fisheries Department might be more responsible for enforcement of legislation, and making sure things are done. Do you find it easier to have a different branch or a different organization collecting certain information so there is more of that trust and willingness to share? I just know that sometimes, if you are trying to enforce legislation, they might not be as open to sharing data, whereas if you are an NGO, you could have a better relationship because it is not about enforcement, it is just about information.

Imran Khan (Future Fishers, Trinidad & Tobago): I would like to share some information. We are a NGO and we work closely with the communities in which our sphere of influence operates. There are probably about six or seven active fish landing sites in the northeast of Trinidad. Contrary to good practice, we actually incentivize our fishers in exchange for fisheries and bycatch information. Bycatch is one of the areas where we are already collecting fisheries information. It would not be too hard to just ask them how many turtles were encountered in the net on a specific day and of which kind. How many were dead and how many were released alive? We do pay a small incentive. I believe it is TT\$ 150 a trip. But this money also involves us getting access to

the weight and the measurements of fish that are brought onto the market and to ask questions about the economics, such as gas, how much is spent, how much ice, how much money was paid to make the trip happen because of some other objectives of ours. When the data comes back in, and you have to look at it, you have to ask yourself “how truthful is this?”. I found myself individually chatting with each of those seven persons on the landing sites. And I am like “I need you to level with me and let me know, is the information that you have been getting from the fishers in your community, on a scale of 1 to 5, how real do you think it is?”. And there were only two instances where people said that they thought it was a four, meaning very close to the truth, and all the rest of them, because of the position that they hold and the respect that they command, said that it is a 5. A little longer and shortly, those results would be revealed. That is the experience that we have.

Farah Mukhida (Moderator): And do you find that they are a bit more open with you than they might be with someone else?

Imran Khan (Future Fishers): They are open with us, because, like I said, we incentivize. But we are not only incentivizing the exchange of information, we also try to uplift the communities, and the fishing efforts. We not only give incentives, but we also help with the cleanups, we try to restore electricity, we help with bulletins, etc. We help, it is not just a one-street, we help in any simple, small way that we can.

Heini Langaman (STIDUNAL) via Soraya Wijntuin (WWF-Guianas): Nevertheless, I would like to share information that we observed a phenomenon south of Galibi last season. About 30 minutes upstream, many sea turtles were spotted. And speaking of drone technology, to introduce it next year in the community of Galibi, so that the seasonal workers become familiar with it. Last year we saw the sea turtles too, but this year it has been spotted a lot. And also, a small beach south of Galibi, 15 minutes by boat. And there you have the islands in the Maroni River. So, I still want to share this information with the workshop attendees, so it can be taken along next year or in the coming period.

Soraya Wijntuin (WWF-Guianas): Thank you so much Heini for indicating this. We do not have the plans yet, but we know that we have already discussed this Nature Conservation Division together with STIDUNAL, that it could be one of the solutions or possible things that we want to do when it comes to monitoring. But we will discuss this further.

Updates from Outside of the Guianas and Trinidad and Tobago

Facilitator: Ms. Louise Soanes (Moderator/ WWF-Guianas Consultant)

During this part of the workshop, country representatives from countries outside of the Guianas and Trinidad and Tobago briefly informed the attendees about activities undertaken in relation to leatherbacks and/or in alignment with the RAP and their priorities over the next five years. Updates were given by Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, and Costa Rica.

Grenada

Dr. Marina Fastigi (KIDO Foundation) gave some updates from Grenada, more specifically Carriacou, a small island of 15 square miles. Grenada is affiliated with WIDECAST since 2002. At that time, almost all the sea turtle eggs and mothers were poached and only about 30 nests were recorded. In the years after there was progress made in the protection and conservation of sea turtles, peaking in 2017 with around 500 cases of nest activity being recorded. Their strategy to prevent poaching is to put together trained, paid local guides and volunteers that patrol the beach at night and erase turtle tracks as an anti-poaching activity. It is considered a non-conflict strategy because the poachers actually visit the beach in the morning when there is no patrolling. According to Dr. Fastigi, the covering of the turtle tracks appears to be working as up to now there was zero poaching activity recorded. During the three years of COVID, however, the team was only able to patrol in the morning because of lack of funding and volunteers. They hope to resume nighttime monitoring next year.

During their 22+ years of monitoring, they also had surprises, one being that two of their leatherbacks were located in Canada by Dr. Mike James. One of those leatherbacks returned several times to nest in Carriacou.

Other activities that were done during this year, other than beach monitoring, protection of mother sea turtles, and relocation of nests laid in critical areas, is habitat restoration, which consists of planting mangroves to protect the beach. KIDO Foundation also provides education, targeting children between nine and twelve years old. For kids, they have done puppet movies specifically about sea turtles. They had a project, called Kids with Cameras, where children were able to take pictures of the environment and sea turtles, promoting awareness. She emphasized the importance of training guides to patrol the beach since their presence at night was identified as a key component in the protection of sea turtles. Dr. Fastigi also indicated that the law in Grenada still permits catching sea turtles between September and the end of March. Leatherbacks and their eggs are legally protected, but the law is not enforced, making them a target for poachers. It is necessary to find volunteers for patrolling activities, coupling with tour guides, and finding funding.

She also went in on their rescuing activities. They rescued leatherbacks that were caught in nets; these animals were dragged ashore by fishers and the organization had to convince the fishermen with incentives to release the sea turtles. There is no possible way to call the police and report such cases. They concluded that one of the rescued sea turtles came several times to nest on the beaches of Carriacou during the nesting season.

This year, a decline in the number of leatherback nesting was recorded. There was, however, an increase in hawksbill sea turtle nesting. The leatherback and hawksbill are the only two sea turtle species to nest on the island of Carriacou.

In regard to education, a two-year campaign for sea turtle conservation was set up, being promoted through radio and in the newspapers. Community meetings were held, including with police officers. She also addressed measuring the impact of the interventions, stating it was rather difficult to do, but that she received positive feedback from government officials a few years after the campaign. According to the officials in Petite Martinique, another island in Grenada, people were not fond of eating turtles anymore, because the campaign had pointed out that they could get cancer. In the campaign, however, it was pointed out that the turtles had fibropapillomatosis and heavy metals in their bodies, which could make them dangerous to eat. She mentioned that the feedback of the officials was the only measure they had from the campaign, and that campaigning and social media are not always measurable, but that every intervention contributes to the protection and conservation of this species. She concluded that all of their interventions were stopped during COVID, but that they were planning to resume it all next year and that she hoped that their actions could be of any difference to the overall protection and conservation of the leatherback.

St. Kitts and Nevis

Dr. Kimberly Stewart (St. Kitts Sea Turtle Monitoring Network) presented a short update on the activities and prospects in St. Kitts and Nevis from a leatherback perspective.

Recently, a paper was published on their data from 2003 to 2016, which outlined their nesting status. St. Kitts and Nevis originally started with around 400 nests in their first year, gradually declining to 11 nests last year. This year there was a slight increase as up till now 24 nests have been recorded.

St. Kitts and Nevis has transitioned from a night patrol primarily to a morning patrol situation since so few female turtles are being encountered. In the past, full health assessments were done on the females each time they came to the beach, but since they are short on numbers it is not possible from a personnel perspective.

Most recently they worked on projects focusing on hatchling mortality and the causative situations emerging from that, such as pneumonia, renal calcification, and some other health issues. They found that some of the hatchlings within the nest were not emerging, and found some of the early and late-stage embryos. Another interesting finding during these projects was that of all the necropsies performed, only female hatchlings and embryos were found. They hope to continue the project when there are more nesting events, and they can access more nests. They are working to coincide any female health issues that were identified by doing the full health assessments on the females with the health assessment of the hatchlings, but so far, they have not found anything relatable. Interestingly, they have seen an increase in remigration intervals of the females, shifting from every two years, to now every five to seven years or even greater.

In St. Kitts and Nevis, sea turtles are still being harvested; leatherbacks are on the list but are also listed to be removed. Dr. Stewart indicated that leatherbacks are no longer being caught because

they are too large from the sea turtle fisher's perspective and are no longer targeted by the local population, who prefer to eat hawksbills and greens.

From an educational perspective, throughout the year, programs are offered primarily focused on children and sea turtle camps. Every year, about 50 to 80 children are accommodated, educating them on sea turtle nesting and all that comes into play, so they can spread the word. She also stated the use of social media and concluded her part by offering to share her materials and recent articles on the pathology and health side.

Costa Rica

Mr. Didiher Chacon from Costa Rica (WIDECAST's Latin American office) provided updates on the protection and conservation of leatherbacks in Costa Rica, which is located between Nicaragua and Panama in Central America and shares its leatherback population with the Western Caribbean. For example, for years there has been an exchange of leatherbacks from Colombia and Panama to Costa Rica and vice versa. Between the borders with Nicaragua and Panama, there is a coastline of 212 kilometers, where there were ten different projects related to the leatherbacks in the first half of the year. All of the projects were developed by NGOs.

Costa Rica has three important leatherback nesting places, all located in protected areas (Tortuguero National Park, Pacuare Reserve, and Gandoca Manzanillo Wildlife Refuge) in the southern part of the country. The focus of these projects is the protection of nests. Even in protected areas, NGOs have experienced poaching activity which is the primary problem of leatherback conservation in Costa Rica.

Another threat that he mentioned is the ocean rise. This phenomenon occurs for instance in Cahuita National Park, where nests are washed away. Due to this, a lot of work the NGOs do consists of relocating the nests to hatcheries or better places for incubation. He also mentioned that nesting habitat is lost due to coastal development. Most of the development in Costa Rica is to the south, close to Cahuita National Park and Zamia Wildlife Refuge. A possible new problem is caused by the longline fleets that move from the Pacific to the Caribbean. There are, however, no studies that provide insight into the impact of longliners on leatherbacks. He also indicated that there are not a lot of strandings of leatherbacks, which can vary from two to three, five females at max, but not more.

This year, there has been a shift in the nesting season from May to June. The number of nests is, however, really low compared to previous years. He gave an example of Moin Beach, where there were around 1,000 nests last year and up until this year, only 400 nests were counted. This is also the case in other parts of the country. Mr. Chacon also mentioned that the success rate of the nests is very low this year. They are trying to track the temperature of the nests through data loggers to figure out if a possible increase in the temperature contributed to declining nest success.

Questions and Answers

Louise Soanes (Moderator): I have a question for Kimberly, a very specific question about how you can tell that a sea turtle has pneumonia. What are the signs? Is it something we all should be looking out for?

Kimberly Stewart (St. Kitts Sea Turtle Monitoring Network): We were looking at the hatchlings after death. We were doing necropsies and taking sections of each organ, then looking at them histologically. So, that would be something we were looking at microscopically, for those specifically. I do not anticipate we would see a female coming in with pneumonia. If you have a juvenile or a sub-adult present in the water, they often flow asymmetrically, and you can see clinical signs associated with that. But for the hatchlings, it was completely histopathology, and we were taking samples of early and late-stage and dead hatchlings in the nest, and then looking at those. Another thing I forgot to add on our side is that our hatchling success rate is also very low. We have around a 7% hatch success here in St. Kitts. So, that was one of the reasons we were looking a little bit further at those hatchlings, trying to determine what was causing that.

Louise Soanes (Moderator): Thanks, Kimberly. One of the more specific actions in the RAP was to build some capacity, to do some more training on how to identify health issues, and what kind of things people should be looking for. So, that is where what you are working on in St. Kitts comes in really useful as the RAP progresses and some training can be organized or planned, so that was very useful to share.

Marina Fastigi (KIDO Foundation): I have a question. When we started with the leatherback, usually we had to do a lot of relocation because they used to prefer to nest less than ten feet from the high tide line. Recently, we found a change in behavior, where they come to the beach and then go really close to the vegetation line. I do not know if anybody experienced this kind of change of behavior. Are just our turtles doing that or do all the leatherbacks do that?

Louise Soanes (Moderator): Does anybody have similar experiences?

Kimberly Stewart (St. Kitts Sea Turtle Monitoring Network): I have not seen that change here in St. Kitts, but we have also had such a low number of nesting. I cannot say that I have a large enough number to make a prediction, but we have not noticed that here. It is very interesting though.

Farah Mukhida (Moderator): Kimberly, which lab or university or agency do you collaborate with to get your data? Like those histopathology reports and data analyzed?

Kimberly Stewart (St. Kitts Sea Turtle Monitoring Network): As far as the necropsies go, because I work at Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine we work with the pathologists and staff here. We do the excavations and then send them over to the pathologists. I have also had a graduate student who worked in Grenada, and one who worked in St. Croix. We would do the training so they could take the animal and do the gross necropsies, and then mail the samples back here where pathologist could review them. We do have other individuals and other locations that I am sure would be happy to review but we also are available, and sometimes it's a little bit easier to send samples within the region versus trying to ship into the US.

Farah Mukhida (Moderator): Yes, that makes sense. Especially if they are regulated by CITES.

Louise Soanes (Moderator): Are there any more updates? Karen, are you aware of any other updates from any of the other WIDECAST countries that are particularly relevant or ongoing?

Karen Eckert (WIDECAST): We heard from St. Kitts, Grenada, and Costa Rica, because they are some of our best monitored populations. It would also be really interesting to hear from Puerto Rico and the USVI. I do not think they are represented in this group today, but they also do really extraordinary work with saturation tagging, satellite telemetry, GIS story maps, and so on. I believe that Puerto Rico is relatively stable in terms of leatherbacks, but that St. Croix is significantly declined. Bryan Wallace (who is in the audience today) might have some insight into that as well. Otherwise, I think we heard a good mix of input and really appreciate everybody's expertise.

Break-out Discussions

Ms. Soanes gave a brief outline of what the breakout discussions entailed. The participants were split into breakout groups based on their preference or their ability to share more in-depth information related to a specific strategic line. They had to indicate in the chat which breakout group they wanted to be in or they could self-assign to a group. Those who had not indicated which group they wanted to be in or who were not able to assign themselves, were placed in a group by Ms. Wijntuin, who created and managed the breakout groups. At the end of the 15-minute breakout discussions, each group reported on two priority areas within the RAP that require more focus. That was followed by a Q&A and continued discussion.

The following discussion questions were given as a thread:

- Where and how cross-country collaborations can be most effective?
- What needs to be done to support such collaboration?
- What needs to be done on the ground?
- Who needs to be involved?
- What are the constraints to such collaboration?

Strategic Line 1

Ms. Olga Koubrak (SeaLife Law) presented on behalf of the group that discussed Strategic Line 1 – Legislation and Enforcement. In terms of priorities, it was agreed that enforcement is a priority. From the presentations earlier that day it was concluded that the laws that protect leatherbacks exist in all three countries of the Guianas and Trinidad and Tobago. However, all four countries seem to have problems with enforcement.

Ms. Koubrak indicated that the focus should be on enforcement and that the way the group saw regional collaboration working towards stronger enforcement is through developing workshops and sharing information on best practices, or lessons learned from different countries. She also mentioned identifying governments/ countries who do very good work around this theme, and who could use their diplomatic channels to align their neighboring countries with their enforcement policies and laws, which can be seen as peer pressure in one way and in another as a sort of collaborative approach, where different agencies come together and brainstorm different ideas that work for them. In terms of who needs to be involved, it was clear that the enforcement agencies need to be involved, along with the legal community, the judiciary, as well as the local communities, the fisher communities, and the conservation communities, because they are all

going to be affected by enforcement actions. She emphasized that whatever the enforcement plans and actions decide on, they must be appropriate for the situation and need to work for everybody.

Strategic Line 2

Dr. Karen Eckert (WIDECAST) presented on behalf of the group that discussed Strategic Line 2 – Protection and Management of Critical Habitats. She thanked Tevin Butler from the Wildlife Section of the Forestry Division of Trinidad and Tobago, for taking notes on behalf of the group. She built upon what Ms. Koubrak mentioned, stating that it was also discussed in her group to identify “the champions” who are doing things right in terms of habitat protection and then to identify and provide training on those best practices. She emphasized the importance of all the parties being on the same page and thus identifying what is important and perhaps even using the same (or similar) data sheets and apps, to make data sharing more efficient. The group also emphasized the importance of having both marine and terrestrial protected habitats. The focus is currently more on the nesting beaches and their protection but should be broadened to the marine environment, following the emphasis of the RAP on bycatch. During the discussion it was also indicated that not every country has a fisheries management plan, even though they should, and it should be ecosystem-based, looking at the resilience of the food web and in this case support sea turtles as well. Furthermore, it was stated to be more open to collaboration and to discuss topics such as data sharing agreements and building trust. It became clear that it is not so easy to have collaboration between governments, and that NGOs may be more suited to this aspect. She also mentioned making maximal use of the SPAW and IAC treaties, whose only mandate is to promote cross-collaboration. She made a call to use these platforms to encourage, incentivize, and peer-pressure all parties to fall in line.

Dr. Eckert then handed the word over to Mr. Tevin Butler. He emphasized the need for MOUs, to ease collaboration and generation of funds. He also touched upon a comment made by Mr. Kevin Muhammad, who indicated the use of treaties as a possible strategy to supersede national laws that may be indifferent to turtle protection (for example that may still sanction turtle harvesting).

Strategic Line 3

Ms. Farah Mukhida reported on behalf of the group discussing Strategic Line 3 – Community Engagement. Their main priority was to create a communications and engagement strategy for the region. The strategy should include indicators, to assess success and measure actual implementation. Engagement is an important factor to include because it should not only be about sharing messages but actually involving communities and stakeholders in the work and taking messages beyond what has been said. It was recognized that those involved are not necessarily experts in communication and that a certain level of expertise is needed when designing the strategy. This might be one of the costs to account for when the budgets for creating the plan are developed. It was suggested that NGOs lead the development of the action plan. This would entail that representatives from NGO communities across the region would develop the plan rather than it being government-led. This is partly because it is sometimes easier for NGOs to develop those strategies and to have those conversations with different stakeholders to ensure that everyone’s voices are heard and different strategies can be accounted for.

Strategic Line 4

Ms. Louise Soanes reported on behalf of the group discussing Strategic Line 4 – Scientific Data Needs. Within this group, they touched upon the regional database, whose developing process has yet to be commenced, most possibly because of a lack of knowledge and capacity with regard to Information Technology (IT). Dr. Reia Guppy from Trinidad and Tobago mentioned that she was involved in a CARICOM project a few years ago that focused on coastal ecosystems and where a very similar database was developed as identified in the RAP. Countries submitted their reports on an annual basis and summary reports were publicly available. It was not mandatory to submit a peer-reviewed paper, but they had to be willing to share their work with the wider region in the form of a summary. The aspect of different levels of priority access to access real/whole data was also a point of discussion in the group. She also mentioned standard methods to make sure that everyone is on the same page, using similar data sheets, collecting the data in standard ways, and having a resource where things like data sheets and methodologies can be found.

To start the process of developing the Regional Hub, it would be good to get in touch with people of the CARICOM project to know how they did it and learn about the development process, the mechanisms used, and the actual costs that were involved. It would give the developing process of the Regional Hub a more focused approach.

Another point of discussion was the priority data needs. Dr. Kimberly Stewart (St. Kitts Sea Turtle Monitoring Network) spoke about collecting health data where it would be useful to include training and making people comfortable with that kind of data. She suggested it would be good to start with simple checks and data collection and to build on that over time.

From the side of Trinidad and Tobago, it was made clear that more nesting beach monitoring is needed. There is some monitoring going on but there are no funds for stipends available to pay qualified trained staff.

There was also a point about the focus being more on the female turtles, nestlings and hatching success, but less on the male turtles. The need to know what is happening with the males seems to be a priority, too, and needs a bit more work in the next few years.

Presentation: RAP Governance Mechanism

Presenter: Ms. Olga Koubrak (SeaLife Law/ Consultant WWF-Guianas)

Ms. Olga Koubrak started her presentation on the RAP Governance Mechanism by expressing her thanks for the opportunity to present her work. This presentation is included as Annex IV.

Task and Objective

Her task was to develop and establish a governing body that will be successful in implementing the RAP in the next five years. She mentioned that she personally experienced it as an interesting but quite challenging project, mostly because of its comprehensive character, requiring all four countries to coordinate and work together. The aim was also to have a bottom-up approach, where the stakeholders on the ground have a lot to say about how the RAP should be implemented.

Work with the Advisory Committee

In her work, Ms. Koubrak was advised by an Advisory Committee, consisting of five members:

- Ms. Claudine Sakimin (Suriname)
- Ms. Diana Fernandes (Guyana)
- Ms. Mathilde Lasfargue (French Guiana)
- Dr. Karen Eckert (WIDECAST)
- Ms. Danielle Lewis- Clarke (Trinidad and Tobago)

Ms. Koubrak met a couple of times with the Advisory Committee to discuss what was looked for in the governance mechanism. Rather than having a new independent charity or nonprofit, it was agreed to develop a governance mechanism that was a project model hosted at an already established organization. In addition, they also wanted to make sure that the Advisory Committee for the RAP (the oversight committee) was independent, in a sense that actions are not necessarily driven by funder request and how funders want things to happen, but by the most appropriate way to implement the RAP on the ground, according to the stakeholders involved. They also want to make sure that the governance mechanism has the ability to fundraise, meaning a centralized fundraising mechanism within the governance mechanism that will allow for funds to be distributed to different working groups, depending on the need in a particular situation.

Proposed Governance Mechanism

She presented the proposed governance mechanism, mentioning that several structures had been discussed. She then went on to give a brief description of the hierarchical structure of the governance mechanism. The RAP Advisory Body will be on top of the structure, consisting of four delegations from the four countries: Guyana, French Guiana, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. Most likely a maximum of two people from different agencies will be appointed per delegation, to encourage cross-agency collaborations within the RAP implementing countries.

The representatives/delegates are expected to be knowledgeable about sea turtles and the policy situation and to know how to get policy action through within their governments. There is also a representative of WIDECAST in the RAP Advisory Body and the IAC has volunteered to be the intergovernmental organization. In both instances, it is believed that WIDECAST and the IAC will bring together a lot of experience and technical expertise, not only in the area of working with turtles, but also when it comes to implementing large international projects. If the RAP Advisory

Body feels that there is a need for somebody else to be represented on the Advisory Body, then an organization or person could be added later on.

The RAP Advisory (oversight) Body is going to be in charge to make sure that the RAP is being implemented in the way that best reflects the needs of the stakeholders. In terms of the actual implementation, WWF-Guianas has agreed to host the Project Coordinator who will be in charge of managing the whole project and reporting to the RAP Advisory Body (see below). The role of Project Coordinator is said to be a full-time position.

In order to get specific expertise, three experts will be appointed and will answer to the Project Coordinator. Ms. Koubrak reasoned why there will be three specialists, instead of four, one for every strategic line. When identifying the specialists, she focused on the core expertise needed in order to implement each particular line of action. For the strategic line focusing on enforcement, it was evident that someone with legal training is needed. In the case of community engagement that would be someone with expertise on outreach and education, and in the case of scientific data needs someone with expertise in science and technology. However, when it comes to the habitat protection line of action, the approach needed is very interdisciplinary and brings together expertise from all three groups. Therefore, the second line of action will be split between the three specialists, depending on the element of habitat protection that needs to be worked on. Ms. Koubrak also indicated that the three specialists will be part-time consultants, in charge of leading their corresponding working group.

She explained that the working groups are going to be flexible, in the sense that the specialists will determine who should be in the working group(s) in consultation with stakeholders and based on the particular task at hand. This will allow engagement with the most relevant stakeholders, depending on the particular action that is being worked on, while at the same time providing the flexibility to have stakeholders change groups or for other stakeholders to come in.

The Project Coordinator will be coordinating the specialists, making sure that there is cross-group collaboration, that the same tasks are not being repeated and that conflicting priorities do not arise under the project. The Project Coordinator will be reporting twice a year to the RAP Advisory Body. This will happen in a meeting where the Project Coordinator, and perhaps the specialists will report their work and ask advice from the RAP Advisory Body, which in its turn will provide the necessary advice.

Fundraising

In terms of fundraising, the governance mechanism will have its own fundraising mechanism with the capacity to raise funds within (and outside of) the WWF network. There were discussions with WWF-Netherlands, which has agreed to provide some fundraising expertise and assistance. A diversity of sources of financing will be needed, so there is still work being done on identifying the best way to design the fundraising mechanism that allows access to sources within and outside of the WWF network.

Challenges

Developing the governance mechanism has been challenging because the aim is to minimize bureaucracy, while making sure that risk management systems acceptable to funders are in place.

She emphasized this because a substantial amount of money will be involved, and funders will want to make sure that it is spent as intended. According to Ms. Koubrak there should be a right balance between a very formal and a very informal structure, where a happy medium is found and the most can be achieved with the time that is available.

Currently, the endorsement of the RAP by the four countries is pending. The endorsement is desired because it demonstrates the political will to engage with the RAP and to implement the lines of action.

Questions and Answers

Olga Koubrak (SeaLife Law/ WWF-Guianas Consultant): The governance structure is still a bit of a work in progress. As I mentioned, we ran into some challenges. There is no precedent where the four countries come together with other relevant stakeholders and develop an action plan from the bottom up. Usually there is an organization that hosts and sorts of manages the whole thing. So, this is a unique situation in that regard. We do want to maintain that independent bottom-up approach, while at the same time we obviously need to have a legal structure around us in order to make sure that we have proper financial accountability.

Karen Eckert (WIDECAST): Olga, can you repeat for us why the fourth line of habitat protection does not appear there? It is merged with something else. I would think that that would be a really important one.

Olga Koubrak (SeaLife Law/ WWF-Guianas Consultant): The way I see habitat protection is that the actions in it are often a combination of policy structure and law enforcement, but equally of science and education actions. One option was just to have a specialist for habitat protection, but I felt that it would be difficult to find a person who is an expert in all three of those core expertise, who would be able to lead a working group. So, to me, it made more sense to divide the tasks among these three experts, depending on for example if we were looking to protect critical habitat that will go towards the Law and Enforcement specialist to engage with those actions. If we are looking for community engagement and making sure that the community needs are taken into account, that will go to the Education and Outreach specialist, who will have the expertise in order to basically carry out those actions. But if there are any other suggestions, I am open to those as well.

Karen Eckert (WIDECAST): No, I think in any good strategic plan there are always cross-cutting issues, and the protection of terrestrial and marine habitat does require all of those. It cannot happen in isolation. In fact, it only happens in the context of what we do in these other three. So, I just think that we should make it clear, that with the tasking of these specialists there is their specialty plus the whole strategic line of habitat.

Olga Koubrak (SeaLife Law/ WWF-Guianas Consultant): Thank you for clarifying this, Karen.

Farah Mukhida (Moderator): You might have mentioned it, Olga, but what sort of communication happens between the various working groups? Because there is that level of

overlap. How is it envisioned so that tasks are divided and there is no duplication or there is collaboration even amongst the different working groups when there is that overlap?

Olga Koubrak (SeaLife Law/ WWF-Guianas Consultant): The Project Coordinator will be in charge of organizing the three specialists and dividing up the tasks among them, based on their expertise. There is no built-in collaboration between working groups per se, and it will have to go through the specialists themselves. So, for example, if the Law and Enforcement specialist and the Science and Technology specialist decide that they need a working group that, for example, takes scientific data on habitat use and then develop the policy or a legal framework on how to protect it, then they will collaborate and bring their working groups together. They will identify based on their stakeholders. So, the working groups themselves are quite flexible. They will be established based on the particular task at hand, so at any given moment, a specialist may be overseeing, for example, two or three working groups. Depending on the task, s/he will need different stakeholder input. So, these working groups will vary, depending on which task is being implemented at the moment.

Karen Eckert (WIDECAST): I want to emphasize the importance of the working groups. Probably groups should be in plural in each of those three cases, because we do not want to just have ten people, you know, working on this. This will go deep into communities, law enforcement, fisheries organizations, etc. We have had hundreds of specialists weigh in on the action plan itself, and I see that continuing here through your model, where we have this vertical integration of knowledge coming up into these various specialists. So, I think this is really nicely done.

Olga Koubrak (SeaLife Law/ WWF-Guianas Consultant): Yes, thank you. Working groups will be more appropriate, or working groups in brackets as depending on, if you need one working group, or there can be multiple working groups. That is the idea. So, yes, that is really the flexible part of the mechanism.

Sara Henry (WWF-Guianas): I am sure you spent a lot of time working on this, and fixing it up, and it looks great! I am wondering though, if engagement is a better word to outreach, to provide a broader scope. Remembering that the spirit of Strategic Line 3 is about maintaining meaningful engagement, being consistent and so forth. I feel outreach can mean whatever we define it to be, but engagement gives you the idea of it being deeper and broader. Education is fine. Education is education, but engagement is more going out to people to talk to them. And as you said previously, doing more than basic communication and social media activities, and the workshop and the meetings. It is about relationship building, which is what we need. So, it is a suggestion.

Olga Koubrak (SeaLife Law/ WWF-Guianas Consultant): Thank you, Sara. That is an excellent suggestion. I noted that and will make those changes in the wording.

Marleen Stoffelen (WWF-Guianas): I just want to notify you that we have been working on a document which is a press statement to encourage endorsement, because a lot of you have been working on engaging with government institutions and other entities in order to obtain endorsement, but we did not really say “Okay, please endorse us. Endorse the plan in this or this way”. Of course, they can feel free to endorse in the way that those institutions want to endorse, but in order to make it a bit easier, we made this general public statement, in which there are blanks

than can be filled out to announce that they support the Regional Action Plan, and how they will contribute. This public statement has been finalized and we will send it to all of you by the beginning of next week. So, if you send out your letters to the government, or to other organizations, to request endorsement, which you see that it is complicating them, then you have something on hand to make it easier. So, we hope to achieve more success by this press release. I hope that is clear and if there are any questions, please let me know. And if there are no questions, then you can expect an email from us about this next week.

[Update on RAP Endorsement Public Statement](#)

Ms. Marleen Stoffelen, Communications Officer at WWF-Guianas, gave a brief update on the public statement for endorsement of the RAP.

RAP working group members representing the countries covered by this project, have been working on engaging with governments, institutions, and other entities in order to obtain endorsement for the RAP. The Policy Letters were mainly informative and do ask for endorsement, but do not specify directly in terms of how endorsement can be given. To simplify the step to giving endorsement, a general public statement has been developed which governments, institutions and other organizations can complete themselves to announce that they support the RAP and how they will contribute. This public statement will be shared with the stakeholders by email and can be personalized as needed.

A central website, linked to the WIDECAST website, will be developed, where all communication materials about the RAP and future updates will be available. The stakeholders will receive more information about this as well. If in the meantime any communication material is needed, there is a central Google Link that will be sent by mail. Those that do not have access to this link yet can request access by clicking on it.

[Closing Remarks](#)

As part of the closing of the workshop, Ms. Soraya Wijntuin thanked the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Regional Action Plan Working Group members for their support and dedication towards the RAP. The members are Mathilde, Karim, Justine, Danielle, Sara, Diana, Karen, Arjan, Marleen, Monique, and Thiviya. She then thanked the consultants Farah, Louise, and Olga for their hard work and support, the translators Arnold and Patricia, and the note-taker Sefanja for their support on the day of the workshop. Finally, she thanked everyone for attending and participating in the workshop and wished them all a great weekend. The workshop was closed at 3:00 PM (GMT -3:00).

Conclusion and Summary

The Regional Implementation and Adaptation Workshop for the NWA Leatherback Regional Action Plan provided comprehensive insight into the state of affairs regarding the RAP. The WWF-Guianas Consultants, Ms. Farah Mukhida, Ms. Louise Soanes, and Ms. Olga Koubrak presented their work related to the development of a work plan, supporting budgets, and supporting documents for the implementation of the RAP, as well as the development of a governance mechanism and other additional work. With the country updates from the three Guianas and Trinidad and Tobago, it has become clear where each of these countries stands in relation to the specific action lines of the RAP, and what the way forward is for them. The presentations of the countries outside of the Guianas and Trinidad and Tobago, but within the Wider Region has created awareness and understanding in the protection and conservation of the NWA Leatherback, and possible approach from a scientific perspective, especially related to turtle health. The breakout discussions and Q&As have mainly helped to identify perspective gaps, so that certain matters and issues can be taken into consideration.

It emerged from the presentations and discussions (Breakout discussions and Q&As) that:

- The implementation of the RAP is not completely dependent on endorsement by the governments of the implementing countries, but it is desirable.
- Ms. Veronica Caceres has pledged support from the IAC to encourage governments to support the RAP and to become involved in its implementation.
- There are less or more overlaps when it comes to the current actions and future prospects of the RAP implementing countries.
- All four countries have monitoring and surveillance of nesting beaches, especially during turtle nesting season, and some form of legislation to protect NWA leatherback sea turtles.
- It's necessary for the implementing countries to feature fines and prison terms for violations of sea turtle protection statutes." Tackling IUU and bycatch is high priority on the agenda, especially in the Guianas.
- The majority of implementing countries mentioned having or planning to have (more) no-fishing/ no-netting zones.
- Mandates for protection, conservation, monitoring, and sustainable use of marine areas should be included in policy, legislation, and best practice.
- Voluntary no-fishing zones are a possible option for Suriname since it is neighboring to French Guiana and can learn from its experience.
- Trinidad and Tobago is doing an excellent job on satellite tracking of turtles, and is open to sharing their data, that has been collected in collaboration with both national and international organizations.
- Monitoring activities on the nesting beaches are limited due to lack of funds (particularly true for Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago).
- Local communities and fishers are already extensively involved in projects, activities, and research in line with the RAP.
- Quite good use is made of social media awareness to promote awareness and education in all the implementing countries.

- Within the RAP network there are not necessarily many experts in the field of communication and social media.
- Ms. Marleen Stoffelen pledged to help with the development of a regional communications plan for the RAP, including its target audiences and a cost proposal.
- There is a need for short- and long-term solutions to flooding and nesting beach erosion in Suriname.
- Getting fishers to share data is quite difficult in French Guiana. Mr. Imran Khan from Future Fishers (Trinidad and Tobago) shared his successful approach to getting information from fishers.
- With regard to countries outside of the Guianas and Trinidad and Tobago, a decline in the number of leatherback nests has been observed for several years. Only St. Kitts and Nevis reported a slight increase compared to the previous year, but still a steep decline is noted in recent years.
- Poaching is a major problem in Costa Rica, while on St. Kitts and Nevis they have been targeting other sea turtle species and in Carriacou (Grenada) monitoring and surveillance activities on the nesting beaches have paid off.
- The law in Grenada and St. Kitts and Nevis still permits sea turtle harvesting, although leatherbacks are (Grenada) or are proposed to be (St. Kitts and Nevis) legally protected. In the case of Grenada, there is little evidence of law enforcement.
- There is quite a bit of work being done on the part of St. Kitts and Nevis in the area of sea turtle health, which can be very useful in the elaboration and implementation of certain lines of actions in the RAP. Dr. Kimberly Stewart, who is involved in this kind of research, is willing to share her experience and available data in this area.
- In addition to poaching, nest floodings and the possible impact of longliners were also mentioned as threats and should be closely monitored.
- In Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, and Costa Rica, low success rate of nests has been reported and research is being done to find the possible causes.
- In all three Guianas and Trinidad and Tobago there is legislation protecting leatherbacks. All countries, however, seem to have enforcement issues.
- There should be more focus on law enforcement, both on a national and regional level.
- Countries should be identified who do excellent work in certain areas. Their best practices, legislation, and diplomatic channels should then be used to align the other countries.
- All countries need a fisheries management plan that is ecosystem-based and takes into account the resilience of the food web and sea turtles.
- There is a need for MOUs to ease collaboration among communities, projects, and agencies – especially between countries and for the generation of RAP funding.
- Treaties need to be considered to supersede laws that are indifferent to turtle protection and that promote turtle harvesting.
- NGOs and CBOs from across the region are considered the best to lead the development of the RAP. They can ensure all voices are heard and different strategies are accounted for.
- There is a need for standardized data collection and data sharing.
- In terms of developing the Regional Data Hub experience and insights can be gained from the CARICOM project, as mentioned by Dr. Reia Guppy.

- More focused research on male turtles is needed.
- The RAP Governance Mechanism has the structure of a project model, hosted by an already established organization, in this case WWF-Guianas, and with an integrated centralized fundraising mechanism.
- Within the Governance Mechanism there are three specialists who deal with their own area of expertise. All three specialists are involved with the habitat protection action line.
- The Governance Mechanism is quite flexible in terms of working group structure, and communication and collaboration between working groups. It allows the specialists to have charge over one or more working groups.
- A public statement has been developed by WWF-Guianas to help with the endorsement process of the RAP implementing countries and to give direction to the way in which endorsement will take place.

ANNEX I: Agenda



DRAFT AGENDA

REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION AND ADAPTATION WORKSHOP NWA LEATHERBACK REGIONAL ACTION PLAN

June 16, 2023

Objective:

To engage regional stakeholders in French Guiana, Suriname, Guyana, and Trinidad & Tobago in providing input to the strategic lines and actions of the NWA Leatherback Regional Action Plan (RAP), how these are regionally aligned, and the way forward for regional implementation of the RAP.

Date: 16 June 2023 11.00 SR-Time – 15.00 (SR-Time)

Zoom Link: <https://wwfus.zoom.us/j/99448948430?pwd=WEEd5Q2tNWHFpV29xUmtrR0F1SW0xUT09>

Meeting ID: 994 4894 8430

Passcode: 122447

GY/TT	SR/FG	Activity	Leads	Notes
10.00	11.00	Welcoming Remarks	WWF and WIDECAST	
–	–	Goals of the Workshop		
10.05	11.05			
10.05	11.05	5-Year Regional Action Plan	Farah Mukhida and	
–	–	(by Strategic Line)	Louise Soanes	
10.15	11.15		(Independent Consultants – Action Planning)	
10.15	11.15	Initial Questions	Moderators	
–	–			
10.20	11.20			
10.20	11.20	Update: Strategic Line 1 –	Country Teams – Focal	5 minutes/ Country –
–	–	Law & Enforcement	Points	Activities Update
10.40	11.40			
10.40	11.40	Q & A	Moderators	
–	–			
10.50	11.50			

GY/TT	SR/FG	Activity	Leads	Notes
10.50 – 11:10	11.50 - 12.10	Update: Strategic Line 2 – Protection and Management of Critical Habitats	Country Teams – Focal Points	5 minutes/ Country Team - Activities Update - Priorities for next year
11.10 – 11.20	12.10 – 12.20	Q & A	Moderators	
11.20 – 11.25	12.20 – 12.25	Stand-up break!		(Feel free to bring your lunch to the meeting)
11.25 – 11.45	12.25 – 12.45	Update: Strategic Line 3 – Community Engagement	Country Teams – Focal Points	5 minutes/ Country Team - Activities Update
11.45 – 11.55	12.45 – 12.55	Q & A	Moderators	
11.55 – 12.15	12.55 – 13.15	Update: Strategic Line 4 – Scientific Data Needs	Country Teams – Focal Points	5 minutes/ Country Team - Activities Update
12.15 – 12.25	13.15 – 13.25	Q & A	Moderators	
12.25 – 12.45	13.25 – 13.45	Updates from outside of the Guianas and Trinidad and Tobago	Stakeholder Representatives	5 minutes/ Country Team - Activities Update - Priorities over the next five years
12.45 - 12.55	13.45 - 13.55	Q & A	Moderators	
12.55 – 13.00	13.55 - 14.00	Stand-up Break!		
13.00 - 13.15	14.00 – 14.15	Break-out Discussions	Moderators	Four Discussion Groups (topics TBD), each addressing the following questions: -Where and how cross-country collaborations can be most effective -What needs to be done to support collaboration? -What needs to be done on the ground? -Who needs to be

GY/TT	SR/FG	Activity	Leads	Notes
				involved? -Constraints to collaboration? -Potential funding opportunities? *NB Translations are not available in the breakout rooms.
13.15 - 13.25	14.15 - 14.25	Reporting Back	Discussion Group Representative	25 minutes/Discussion Group -Two priority areas within the RAP that each discussion group would like to focus on and why
13.25 - 13.35	14.25 - 14.35	Q & A on Discussion Group Summaries	Moderators	
13.35 - 13.45	14.35 - 14.45	RAP Governing Body – An Introduction	Olga Koubrak – Independent Consultant Governance	How we will oversee RAP implementation, define success, account for finances, and report back to stakeholders
13.45 - 13.55	14.45 - 14.55	Q & A related to Governance	Moderators	
13.55 - 14.00	14.55 - 15.00	Summary of the Day & Next Steps, Concluding Remarks	WWF	

ANNEX II: List of Participants



Names	Organization/ Function	Country
Jeff Gearhart	NOAA	USA
Farah Mukhida	Moderator	Anguilla
Louise Soanes	Moderator	Anguilla
Mike James	Fisheries and Oceans Canada	Canada
Olga Koubrak	SeaLife Law	Canada
Christine Figgner	COASTS	Costa Rica
Karim Chkioua	OFB	French Guiana
Mathilde Lasfargue	OFB	French Guiana
Jean-Baptiste Richard	Action de l'Etat en Mer (AEM)	French Guiana
Vincent Bergthold	DGTM	French Guiana
Marina Fastigi	KIDO Foundation	Grenada
Aiesha Williams	WWF-Guianas	Guyana
Alex Stewart	GWCMC	Guyana
Christina Billey	WWF-Guianas	Guyana
Devon Ronald Dublin	WWF-Guianas	Guyana
Felicia Collins	Protected Areas Commission	Guyana
Hanan Lachmansingh	GWCMC	Guyana
Johann Waldron	GWCMC	Guyana
Kemptorne Daly	WWF-Guianas	Guyana
Pamashwar Jainarine	Guyana National Fisherfolk Organisation	Guyana
Sara Henry	WWF-Guianas	Guyana
Savita Kum	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA)	Guyana
Claire Pusineri	UNEP/CEP SPAW RAC	Regional
Karen Eckert	WIDECAST	Regional

Veronica Caceres	Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC)	Regional
Kimberly Stewart	St. Kitts Sea Turtle Monitoring Network	St. Kitts and Nevis
Patricia van Aerde	Interpreter (EN < > Dutch)	Suriname
Alif Sanredjo	NCD	Suriname
Anna Mohase	WWF-Guianas	Suriname
Arancha Sodikromo	Commewijne Commisariaat	Suriname
Cheyenne Samson	GHFS	Suriname
Databeheer Unit	NCD	Suriname
Gaushimi Poeran	Fisheries Department	Suriname
Heini Langaman	STIDUNAL	Suriname
Henk Bhagwandin	WWF-Guianas	Suriname
Kathleen Gersie	ADEKUS	Suriname
Marleen Stoffelen	WWF-Guianas	Suriname
Seema Manbodh	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation	Suriname
Sefanja Rozendaal	Note-taker	Suriname
Sherwan Ramkhelawan	Coastguard	Suriname
Soraya Wijntuin	WWF-Guianas	Suriname
Starian Aloewanai	STIDUNAL	Suriname
David Singh	WWF-Guianas	Suriname/ Guyana
Angela Ortigara	WWF-Netherlands	The Netherlands
Adrian Wilson	UTT	Trinidad and Tobago
Alana Jute	Institute of Marine Affairs (IMA)	Trinidad and Tobago
Arlene Williams	Las Cuevas Eco Friendly Association	Trinidad and Tobago
Arnold Mc Letchie	Interpreter (FR < > EN)	Trinidad and Tobago
Cassandra Ali	Nature Seekers	Trinidad and Tobago
David Mahabir	Forestry Division	Trinidad and Tobago
Imran Khan	Future Fishers	Trinidad and Tobago
Justine Dolabaille	EMA	Trinidad and Tobago
Kathryn Audroing	Turtle Village Trust	Trinidad and Tobago
Kelly Kingon	UTT	Trinidad and Tobago
Kevin Muhammad	Grande Riviere Nature Tour Guide Association	Trinidad and Tobago

Laura Tardieu	University of the West Indies (UWI)	Trinidad and Tobago
Marc Bejai	Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries – Fisheries Division	Trinidad and Tobago
Michelle Cazabon- Mannette	Coastal Dynamics Limited / SOS Tobago / member of WIDECAST	Trinidad and Tobago
Reia Guppy	UTT	Trinidad and Tobago
Siddiqua Mondol	Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts	Trinidad and Tobago
Tevin Butler	Wildlife Section, Forestry Division	Trinidad and Tobago
Bryan Wallace	Ecolibrium inc.	USA
Monica Bacchus	National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF)	USA

ANNEX III: Master PowerPoint Presentation- Regional Implementation and Adaptation Workshop
NWA Leatherback Regional Action Plan

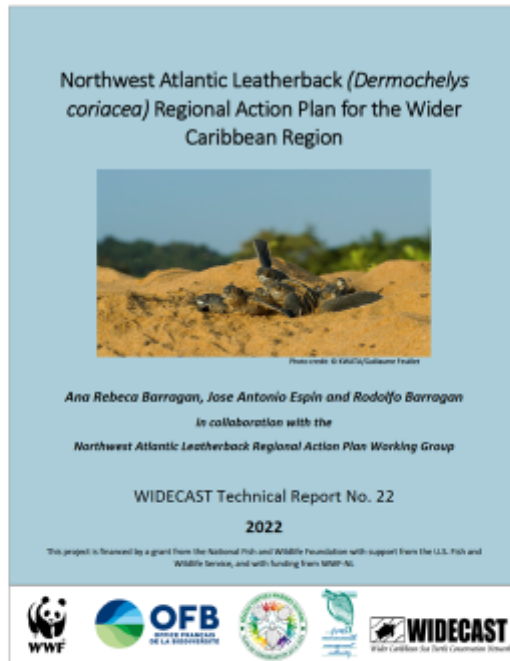


Northwest Atlantic Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) Regional Action Plan

RAP Implementation Workshop, 16 June 2023 © Lauren Kelle/WWF France



Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Regional Action Plan



- Five year action plan (2022-2027)
- **Vision:** To create conditions to address the declining leatherback sea turtle population in the Northwest Atlantic Region, focusing on Suriname, Guyana, French Guiana, and Trinidad and Tobago.
- **Goal:** To define the priority actions and activities to be taken at the distribution range of the Northwest Atlantic leatherback sea turtle, promoting coordination, communication, and collaboration to strengthen the conservation of the species across its range.

Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Regional Action Plan

- **Four strategic themes:**
 - Legislation and Enforcement
 - Protection and Management of Critical Habitats
 - Community Engagement
 - Scientific Data Needs



Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Regional Action Plan : Legislation and Enforcement

- Legislation and Enforcement Components:
 - Review the legal framework in each country and, if needed, update it to include recommendations from this Regional Action Plan
 - Increase enforcement of policies and regulations for effective management and conservation activities at national and regional scales
 - Promote actions to encourage governments to join relevant international conventions, such as the SPAW Protocol and the IAC
 - Enhance enforcement of existing regulations to mitigate leatherback bycatch in IUU fishing gear deployed offshore at key nesting grounds (especially the Guianas and Trinidad)



Estimated Implementation Cost: **USD 1,030,370**

Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Regional Action Plan : Protection and Management of Critical Habitats

- Protection and Management of Critical Habitats Components:
 - Draft a beach management plan through a stakeholder consultative process designed to minimize resource use and conflicts
 - Conduct marine spatial planning, working closely with regional stakeholders and experts and including adequate data in decision-making
 - Enhance efforts to mitigate leatherback bycatch in IUU and legal fishing gear in continental shelf habitats, especially in foraging areas, migratory pathways, and offshore nesting beaches
 - Implement a strategy to reduce the risk of bycatch in IUU or legal fishing gear for leatherback in the oceanic habitat
 - Establish and implement best practice management protocols, developed in consultation with stakeholders, for leatherback high-use areas
 - Develop and implement capacity building/strengthening programs for enforcement agencies



Estimated Implementation Cost: USD 2,124,400

Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Regional Action Plan : Community Engagement

- Community Engagement Components:
 - Secure the participation of human resources with requisite expertise and experience to engage in community consultations; ensure that these consultations are maintained over time
 - Maintain community engagement at all levels (planning, executing, evaluation, monitoring, enforcement, reporting) in support of RAP implementation
- Quantify outreach success as a measure of progress
- Develop a strategy for a long-term commitment to community outreach throughout the region
- Create targeted awareness programs with materials designed for specific audiences



Estimated Implementation Cost: **USD 496,800**

Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Regional Action Plan : Scientific Data Needs

- Scientific Data Needs Components:
 - Develop a regional Information and Communication Technology (ICT) panel for initial discussions on best approaches to develop an accessible regional database/repository
 - Develop a regional Data Hub, with consensus on the types of data needed for regional assessment of the NWA population, guidelines for collection, and terms of reference for use of the information
 - Form a Regional Turtle Legal and IUU Bycatch Working Group focused on coordinating the collection of information needed to define, implement, and assess bycatch mitigation strategies, combat IUU fishing, and advise conservation decision-making agencies
 - From regional recommendations to local implementation: incorporate regional recommendations (nest counts, female counts, threat data) in every Sea Turtle Recovery Action Plan (STRAP)
 - Conduct gap analyses at regional and local levels for priority threats and other data needs



Estimated Implementation Cost: USD 5,393,500

Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Regional Action Plan: supporting documents



- Theme-based logframes and narratives
- List of potential funding opportunities to support national or cross-boundary RAP implementation
- Public Summary document

Country Update on Strategic Line 1: Legislation & Enforcement

Action

L1. Review the legal framework in each country and, if needed, update it to include recommendations from this Regional Action Plan.

L2. Increase enforcement of policies and regulations for effective management and conservation activities at national and regional scales.

L3. Promote actions to encourage governments to join relevant international conventions, such as the SPAW Protocol and the IAC.

L4. Enhance enforcement of existing regulations to mitigate leatherback bycatch in IUU fishing gear deployed offshore at key nesting grounds (especially the Guianas and Trinidad).



Strategic line 1: Legislation and enforcement



1. What is your country already doing within this strategic line?

- Enforcement mechanisms such as roadblocks, enforcement actions within communities and markets.
- Monitoring on the nesting beaches.
- Suriname in the region with prison sentences and fines for peaching of sea turtle eggs
- Bycatch reporting.
- Training of tour guides to visit nesting beaches for sustainable sea turtle tourism
- Use of TEDs (Turtle Excluder Devices) in shrimp trawlers.
- Testing flexible TEDs





Strategic line 1: Legislation and enforcement



2. What does your country plan to do within this strategic line within the duration of the RAP?

- Intensify cooperation with the Police Corps of Suriname
- Involving local communities in enforcement by training park rangers.
- IUU control (illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing) in collaboration with the fishery service in the Marowijne River.
- Clarification of the division of roles between LBB (Lands Bosbeheer) and the Ministry of ROM (Spatial Planning & Environment).
- Also include the leatherback turtle as a protected species in the law.
- Developing new policy based on scientific facts.
- Development of new fisheries law and coastal protection law.





Strategic line 1: Legislation and enforcement



1. What is your country already doing within this strategic line?

- ✓ Developed Marine Mammals Protection Regulation 2022 (to address gear change)
- ✓ Revised and updated the Fisheries Act 2000 to include Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) that addresses IUU fishing from foreign vessels
- ✓ Developed a Wildlife Crime Strategy - multiple agencies such as the Police and Customs Officers were trained in response to wildlife incidents
- ✓ Beach patrols are done to monitor sea turtles – in and outside of protected area VMS are used by trawlers
- ✓ No Netting Zone implemented annually during nesting season along the Shell Beach Protected Area





Strategic line 1: Legislation and enforcement



2. What does your country plan to do within this strategic line within the duration of the RAP?

- ✓ Plans within Protected Areas Commission to strengthen MoUs with NGOs such as WWF to improve sea turtle conservation
- ✓ Continued use of the KOBO App to collect sea turtle data (GPS coordinates etc.) and sharing of that data with NGOs such as WWF
- ✓ Regional meetings planned between WWF and FAO to discuss areas for collaboration
- ✓ Additional wildlife crime training will include more agencies, and with a focus on thorough investigations to improve prosecutions – GWCMC
- ✓ Use of drones in the Shell Beach Protected Area to monitor nesting beaches
- ✓ More joint patrols to monitor nesting beaches – include the Coast Guard for example





Strategic line 1: Legislation and enforcement



1. What is your country already doing within this strategic line?

- Leatherback turtles are protected by national law : intentional destruction, mutilation, capture, disturbance induced by light pollution, pursuit or harassment are prohibited → up to 3 years' imprisonment and a €150,000 fine
- Mandatory use of TEDs (Turtle Excluder Devices) in shrimp trawlers
- National work plan for fisheries control (legal and IUU)
- Monitoring and surveillance of the 2 main nesting sites
- Bycatch and stranding reporting
- National endorsement :
 - RAP integrated into the French Guiana Sea Turtles National Action Plan (NAP) → Presentation to the State Secretary for the Sea in May 2023
 - Letter of intention to become a member of the IAC in February 2023





Strategic line 1: Legislation and enforcement



2. What does your country plan to do within this strategic line within the duration of the RAP?

- Sign a MOU with the other countries to enable cross-border collaboration and participate in the RAP governing body
- IAC accession → promote active participation of IAC Parties in developing resolutions and reporting requirements designed to reduce leatherbacks mortality and IUU fishing
- Participate in developing the Regional Anti-IUU Plan of Action
- Regional meetings to exchange experience and best practices, organize training and joint patrols





Strategic line 1: Legislation and enforcement



1. What is your country already doing within this strategic line?

- Monitoring and patrolling on nesting beaches done every turtle season (Forestry Division).
- Analysis of the national legal and regulatory framework for leatherback protection and conservation completed (2022).
- Literature review - risks, threats, activities that need to be the focus of enforcement for the benefit of leatherback sea turtles
- In progress - the EMA of MPD and Forestry Division of MALF are in communication with the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC) Secretariat and participated in the 10th COP and other committee meetings.





Strategic line 1: Legislation and enforcement



1. What is your country already doing within this strategic line?

- Representation has been made to the government to join the IAC; discussions are ongoing.
- In progress - Turtle Spotter Challenge to gather data on all sea turtles in T&T (SpeSeas)
- Sea turtles protected under national legislation (TT\$100,000 fine and up to 2 years imprisonment)





Strategic line 1: Legislation and enforcement



2. What does your country plan to do within this strategic line within the duration of the RAP?

- Continue annual monitoring and patrolling on nesting beaches.
- Coordinate with SPAW Focal Points for the formation of a leatherback sub-working group.
- To join IAC (pending Ministerial and Cabinet approval).

**Country endorsement of the RAP is pending*



Country Update on Strategic Line 2: Protection and Management of Critical Habitats

Action

H1. Draft a beach management plan designed to minimize resource use and conflicts

H2. Conduct marine spatial planning, working closely with regional stakeholders and experts and including adequate data in decision-making.

H3. Enhance efforts to mitigate leatherback bycatch in IUU and legal fishing gear in continental shelf habitats

H4. Implement a strategy to reduce the risk of bycatch in IUU or legal fishing gear for leatherback in the oceanic habitat.

H5. Establish and implement best practice management protocols, developed in consultation with stakeholders, for leatherback high-use areas

H6. Develop and implement capacity building/strengthening programs for enforcement agencies.



Strategic line 2: Protection and management of critical habitats



1. What is your country already doing within this strategic line?

- Management of zones by type of fishery with enforcement.
- No-fishing zone at Galibi marked with buoys.
- Zone next to fairway free of fish stocks.
- Education sessions for sea turtles
- Local monitoring team at Galibi.
- Testing of Bycatch Reduction Devices (BRDs) for different types of nets.





Strategic line 2: Protection and management of critical habitats



2. What does your country plan to do within this strategic line within the duration of the RAP?

- Improved enforcement and intensification of control and surveillance on the water (IUU approach).
- Creation of a multi-institutional checkpoint at Galibi
- Permanent surveillance of the areas.
- Inclusion of marine areas in a new nature protection law.
- Bycatch reporting including turtle stage.
- Proposal to extend the no-fishing zone.
- Cleaning up silted up creeks for fishing.
- Use of Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs) in all trawlers.
- Reduction of bycatch within the SK fishery.





Strategic line 2: Protection and management of critical habitats



2. What does your country plan to do within this strategic line within the duration of the RAP?

- Research on the health of critical habitats and organisms.
- Update of the Braampunt MUMA.
- Attention to climate change and erosion at Braampunt, including setting up hatcheries.
- Use of traditional knowledge.
- ESI (Environmental Sensitivity Index) mapping and monitoring.
- Extension of the no-fishing zone (in terms of period).
- Deployment of cameras on the beaches.
- Relocation of communities at Braampunt to Pomona.
- Prevent the abandonment and dumping of fishing nets and the removal of Ghost Nets.
- Mapping the hydrodynamics of the coast.





Strategic line 2: Protection and management of critical habitats



1. What is your country already doing within this strategic line?

- ✓ The Coast Guard (informally) maps fishing zones which can identify areas of IUU and bycatch
- ✓ Some enforcement of time/ area restrictions such as the No Netting Zone - (done by Coast Guard)
- ✓ Ongoing conservation work of mangroves adjacent to the Shell Beach Protected Area – contributes to habitat stability (done by Guyana Marine Conservation Society (GMCS))
- ✓ Ongoing work to promote cooperation among fishers and with government - led by the Fisheries Department, Guyana National Fisherfolk Organisation and Trawler Association
- ✓ Resource use and sea turtle conservation activities are captured in the Shell Beach Protected Area management plan and monitoring plan.
- ✓ Coastal surveys currently done collaboratively in Shell Beach Protected Area - (Protected Areas Commission, Coast Guard, Guyana Defense Force)



- ✓ Coastal monitoring of biodiversity, including leatherbacks done outside of protected area



Strategic line 2: Protection and management of critical habitats



2. What does your country plan to do within this strategic line within the duration of the RAP?

- ✓ The Guyana Wildlife Conservation and Management Commission plans to establish MoUs with other government agencies and NGOs which will benefit leatherback conservation
- ✓ Continued collaboration between CRFM, Fisheries Department and Guyana National Fisherfolk Organisation which will promote a multistakeholder approach to leatherback conservation
- ✓ WWF, Fisheries Department, and Guyana National Fisherfolk Organisation will continue to work on reducing IUU
- ✓ Coast Guard will continue with monitoring and enforcement along nesting beaches
- ✓ Guyana National Fisherfolk Organisation plans to reach out to fishermen on the high seas to gauge threats to the marine and fishery ecosystem
- ✓ Guyana has plans to develop a Marine Spatial Plan by 2030 under the LCDS



- ✓ There is a willingness to collaborate with other agencies to share best practices for improved leatherback conservation

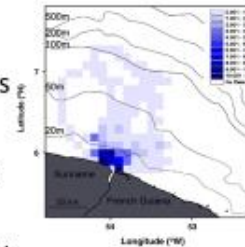


Strategic line 2: Protection and management of critical habitats



1. What is your country already doing within this strategic line?

- Satellite tracking → identify marine areas used by leatherbacks within and between reproductive season
- Management Plan at the Amana Nature Reserve that includes sea turtle conservation activities
- Voluntary no-fishing zone in front of Cayenne/Rémire Montjoly nesting site during part of the nesting season (ARRIBA project)
- Research project involving fishermen (PALICA 2) that tests 4 related to driftnet fishing : change of float color, reduction of the vertical profile of nets, elimination of float lines, use of acoustic transmitters
- Aerial surveys to identify remoted nesting sites and evaluate fishing effort (IUU and legal)



(Fossette et al. 2009)





Strategic line 2: Protection and management of critical habitats



2. What does your country plan to do within this strategic line within the duration of the RAP?

- Continue involving professional fishermen to test alternative fishing gears that will reduce leatherback bycatch while maintaining economic returns
- Create new voluntary no-fishing zones in agreement with fishermen
- Improve control and surveillance on the water during nesting season near the border with Suriname in the maroni estuary
- Prevent the abandonment of fishing nets and remove ghost nets
- Setting up a natural hatchery on Yalimapo beach for leatherback to counter 3 terrestrial threats : erosion, dog predation and poaching → opened in March 2023





Strategic line 2: Protection and management of critical habitats



1. What is your country already doing within this strategic line?

- Monitoring and patrolling on nesting beaches done every turtle season (Forestry Division);
- In progress – Revision of Sea Turtle Recovery Action Plan (National Sea Turtle Task Force [NSTTF]);
- Project – Renewed efforts to support sustainable fishing in T&T (Arizona State University and Ecolibrium);
- Developed beachfront and street lighting guidelines (NSTTF);
- Pilot project: Installation of turtle friendly lights in vicinity of key nesting site (local conservation group & private entity);
- Installation of signage on nesting sites (NSTTF).





Strategic line 2: Protection and management of critical habitats



1. What is your country already doing within this strategic line?

- Key stakeholder collaboration regarding decision-making on applications for events at/near nesting sites;
- Continued advocacy by the NSTTF;
- Preparation of a draft National Sea Turtle Ecotourism Plan;
- Project: Determine and address causes for leatherback decline in the Northwest Atlantic (funding approved);
- Satellite tracking and turtle tagging;
- Drone surveys on some nesting sites;
- Marine Mammal Stranding Network assists with strandings, rescues and rehabilitation;
- Site-specific beach management plans.





Strategic line 2: Protection and management of critical habitats



2. What does your country plan to do within this strategic line within the duration of the RAP?

- Continue annual monitoring and patrolling on nesting beaches.
- Complete revision of STRAP.
- Continue project – Renewed efforts to support sustainable fishing in T&T (Arizona State University and Ecolibrium).
- Complete installation of signage on nesting sites (NSTTF)
- Implement project: Determine and address causes for leatherback decline in the Northwest Atlantic

**Country endorsement of the RAP is pending*



Country Update on Strategic Line 3: Community Engagement

Action

C1. Secure the participation of human resources with requisite expertise and experience to engage in community consultations; ensure that these consultations are maintained over time.

C2. Maintain community engagement at all levels (planning, executing, evaluation, monitoring, enforcement, reporting) in support of RAP implementation.

C3. Quantify outreach success as a measure of progress

C4. Develop a strategy for a long-term commitment to community outreach throughout the region

C5. Create targeted awareness programs with materials designed for specific audiences



Strategic line 3: Community engagement



1. What is your country already doing within this strategic line?

- Generating awareness in society with the help of NGOs
- Use of billboards and social media.
- Training of guides and boat owners.
- Cleaning campaigns on beaches by individuals and companies.
- Education sessions at schools and education centers at Galibi, Braamspunt and Paramaribo Zoo.





Strategic line 3: Community engagement



2. What does your country plan to do within this strategic line within the duration of the RAP?

- Researching the knowledge of the population.
- Attention to this subject at every level of education and integration in the curriculum.
- Tackling pollution by means of introduction of deposits, partnership with Fernandes Bottling for waste management
- Renovation of the education center in the Paramaribo Zoo
- Annual Ocean Expedition and the GHF (Global Health Foundation) PROMAR project to prevent and reduce marine litter.
- More seasonal workers in Galibi, including good housing on site





Strategic line 3: Community engagement



2. What does your country plan to do within this strategic line within the duration of the RAP?

- Increasing awareness among fishermen.
- Emphasize data collection by the fisheries department, targeting turtles and other ETPs
- Information for the community in their own language (Galibi language barrier)
- In Galibi, the renovation of the women's center for information and education and restart of school exchange.





Strategic line 3: Community engagement



1. What is your country already doing within this strategic line?

- ✓ Social media posts about sea turtles, including leatherbacks – Guyana Wildlife Commission
- ✓ Fishermen are encouraged by the Guyana National Fisherfolk Organisation to check nets for sea turtles and to ensure their release
- ✓ Workshops between fishermen, fisher co-ops and Fisheries Department are held to discuss issues
- ✓ Education, awareness and engagements are done with communities adjacent to Shell Beach Protected Area
- ✓ There is existing funding from WWF for community engagements in Shell Beach Protected Area communities. Engagements include a focus on sea turtle conservation.
- ✓ Communities are engaged in current Shell Beach management planning process
- ✓ On-site awareness to communities and primary schools of coastal biodiversity are done outside of the protected area
- ✓ Knowledge, Attitude and Practice Surveys (KAP) conducted in Shell Beach communities





Strategic line 3: Community engagement



2. What does your country plan to do within this strategic line within the duration of the RAP?

- ✓ Promote the importance of sea turtles in the ecosystem, particularly on World Wildlife Day, agriculture month, fisherman's day etc.– multiple agencies
- ✓ Continued outreaches by the Fisheries Department to fisherfolk in all administrative regions of Guyana to learn of concerns and recommendations
- ✓ Guyana National Fisherfolk Organisation Plans to produce a newsletter, replicate experiences learnt in French Guiana, use social media and posters to improve awareness about sea turtles and broader conservation messages





Strategic line 3: Community engagement



1. What is your country already doing within this strategic line?

- French Guiana Sea Turtle Network → website, facebook, Instagram, youtube channel, biannual newsletter
- Education & awareness program : sessions at schools and visits to nesting beaches, organization of special events, cleaning campaigns on beaches, summer activities
- Production of communication materials (tee-shirts, posters, stickers, games, videos...)
- Training courses for socioprofessionals (boat owners, fishers, teachers...)
- Recruitment of 4 community members to run the natural hatchery in Yalimapo beach





Strategic line 3: Community engagement



2. What does your country plan to do within this strategic line within the duration of the RAP?

- Continue school activities and training
- Adapt certain communication tools to outreach different communities and age groups
- Organize school exchange
- Promote participatory science
- Continue to raise awareness among fishermen





Strategic line 3: Community engagement



1. What is your country already doing within this strategic line?

- Social media posts – dos and don'ts during nesting season
- Use of signage to assist with education and awareness.
- Beach cleanups at some turtle nesting sites.
- Presentations in various schools regarding Environmentally Sensitive Species, including turtles.
- Tour guide training





Strategic line 3: Community engagement



2. What does your country plan to do within this strategic line within the duration of the RAP?

- Continue social media posts
- Continue education and awareness activities
- Continue engagement of fishermen regarding bycatch

**Country endorsement of the RAP is pending*



Country Update on Strategic Line 4: Scientific Data Needs

Action

D1. Develop a regional Information and Communication Technology (ICT) panel for initial discussions on best approaches to develop an accessible regional database.

D2. Develop a regional Data Hub, with consensus on the types of data needed for regional assessment of the NWA population, guidelines for collection, and terms of reference for use of the information.

D3. Form a Regional Turtle Legal and IUU Bycatch Working Group

D4. From regional recommendations to local implementation: incorporate regional recommendations (nest counts, female counts, threat data) in every Sea Turtle Recovery Action Plan (STRAP) in the region

D5. Conduct gap analyses at regional and local levels for priority threats and other data needs



Strategic line 4: Scientific data needs



1. What is your country already doing within this strategic line?

- Monitoring dead sea turtles and investigating causes of death.
- Use of the Green Growth Wildlife App, a community-based wildlife data collection app. (not used for sea turtle yet)
- Research on Short- and Long-Term Solutions to Address Sea Turtle Nesting at Braampunt (erosion and flooding of nesting beaches)





Strategic line 4: Scientific data needs



2. What does your country plan to do within this strategic line within the duration of the RAP?

- Collecting data on bycatch and IUU (Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated) fishing (in the near future).
- Working with SMART monitoring for standardized data collection.
- Year-round monitoring on the nesting beaches due to climate change.
- Improving data sharing in a confidential and standardized way, and solving data sharing problems on an international level.
- Need for more validated data.
- Fill in data gaps
- Tackling illegal, incorrect data.
- Research into migration routes, marine food web and knowledge exchange with French Guyana.





Strategic line 4: Scientific data needs



1. What is your country already doing within this strategic line?

- ✓ Sea turtle/ leatherback data needs are identified in the Shell Beach Protected Area research priority list
- ✓ Data on the condition of nesting sites are collected – e.g. GPS coordinates, accretion and erosion, threats etc. – done by PAC in protected area, NAREI collects data with the KOBO App outside of protected area in Regions 2,3,4,5,6
- ✓ Collaborations to collect data on fish catch, bycatch etc. ongoing between Fisheries Department, Upper Corentyne Fishermen Coop Society and Trawler Association





Strategic line 4: Scientific data needs



2. What does your country plan to do within this strategic line within the duration of the RAP?

- ✓ Under the LCDS 2030, there are plans to establish a central database for environmental data
- ✓ Protected Areas Commission to start Passive Integrated Transponders (PIT) tagging of sea turtles, and expand its GIS department to monitor nesting beaches
- ✓ Guyana Marine Conservation Society has available its Girls Drone Unit to contribute to monitoring
- ✓ Continue to collect fishery and sea turtle, bycatch data at landing sites - Guyana National Fisherfolk Organisation, Fisheries Department, and other co-op societies





Strategic line 4: Scientific data needs



1. What is your country already doing within this strategic line?

- Unique database for egg-laying activity (data sharing agreement between stakeholders, standardized protocol)
- Strandings database
- Leatherback tagging since the 80's, satellite tracking and use of biologgers to study behavior → numerous scientific publications
- Observatory of the coastal dynamic (OdyC) → erosion and flooding at Yalimapo beach
- Use of on-board cameras or hiring on-board observers during tests to modify fishing gear (PALICA 2 project)





Strategic line 4: Scientific data needs



2. What does your country plan to do within this strategic line within the duration of the RAP?

- Continue to monitor of egg-laying activity each year
- Database cleanup, validation and storage
- Data analysis at national and international scale
- PIT tagging and satellite tracking : focus on the maroni estuary (key marine area during nesting season) → knowledge exchange with Suriname
- Bioacoustics: hydrophone installation to study turtle vocalizations
- Assessing the impact of foreign IUU fishing in French Guiana (in progress)





Strategic line 4: Scientific data needs



1. What is your country already doing within this strategic line?

- Ongoing research on temperature and sediment factors for hatchling production (universities & NGOs)
- Identification of priority sites and populations for hatchling production (Nature Seekers)
- Research and analysis on patterns and drivers of hatchling production completed and publication in progress (UTT)
- Evaluations of hatch success (community groups/NGOs)
- Data collection and analysis on grain size/sediment vertical profile for beaches (UTT)





Strategic line 4: Scientific data needs



1. What is your country already doing within this strategic line?

- Assessment of beach erosion and accretion at one nesting site using drone technology (Nature Seekers);
- Beach profiling (IMA);
- Gender studies on hatchlings (UTT);
- Population genetics report completed (UTT);
- Data collection and necropsy of dead sea turtles;
- Theoretical data collation ongoing for impact of water temperature on nesting (UTT);
- Project: To assess how nest density affects hatching success at a key nesting site (international and local researchers);
- >20 years of turtle tagging by community groups;
- Project – Renewed efforts to support sustainable fishing in T&T (Arizona State University and Ecolibrium);





Strategic line 4: Scientific data needs



2. What does your country plan to do within this strategic line within the duration of the RAP?

- Continue turtle tagging;
- Continue evaluation of hatching success;
- Continue data collection and necropsy of dead sea turtles;
- Continue project: To assess how nest density affects hatching success at a key nesting site;
- Continue project – Renewed efforts to support sustainable fishing in T&T (Arizona State University and Ecolibrium).

**Country endorsement of the RAP is pending*



ANNEX IV: PowerPoint Presentation – RAP Governance Mechanism

RAP Governance Mechanism

Olga Koubrak
Consultant to WWF-Guianas

REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION AND ADAPTATION WORKSHOP NWA LEATHERBACK
REGIONAL ACTION PLAN

June 16, 2023

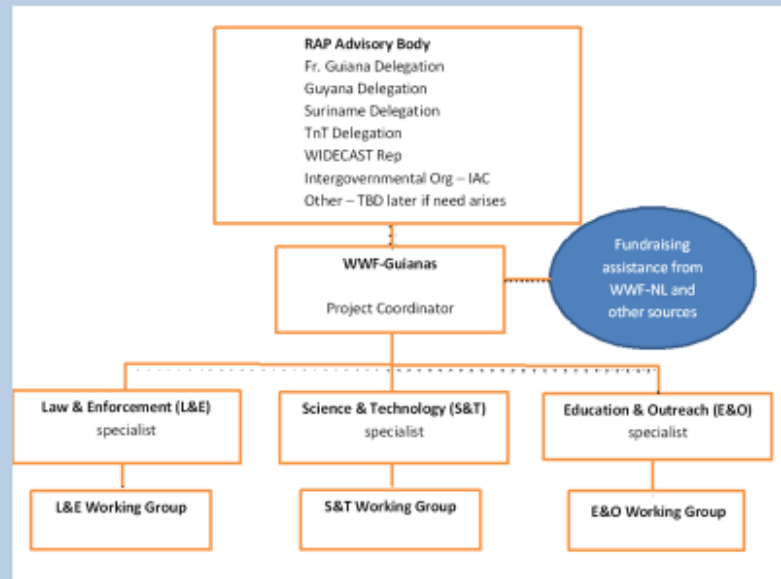
My task:

- To organize and establish the governing body for the **successful** implementation of the RAP **within the 5-year period**

Advisory Committee

- **Claudine Sakimin**, NCD, Suriname
- **Diana Fernandes**, WWF, Guyana
- **Mathilde Lasfargue**, OFB, French Guiana
- **Danielle Lewis-Clarke**, EMA, Trinidad & Tobago
- **Karen Eckert**, WIDECAST

Proposed governance mechanism



Remaining challenges

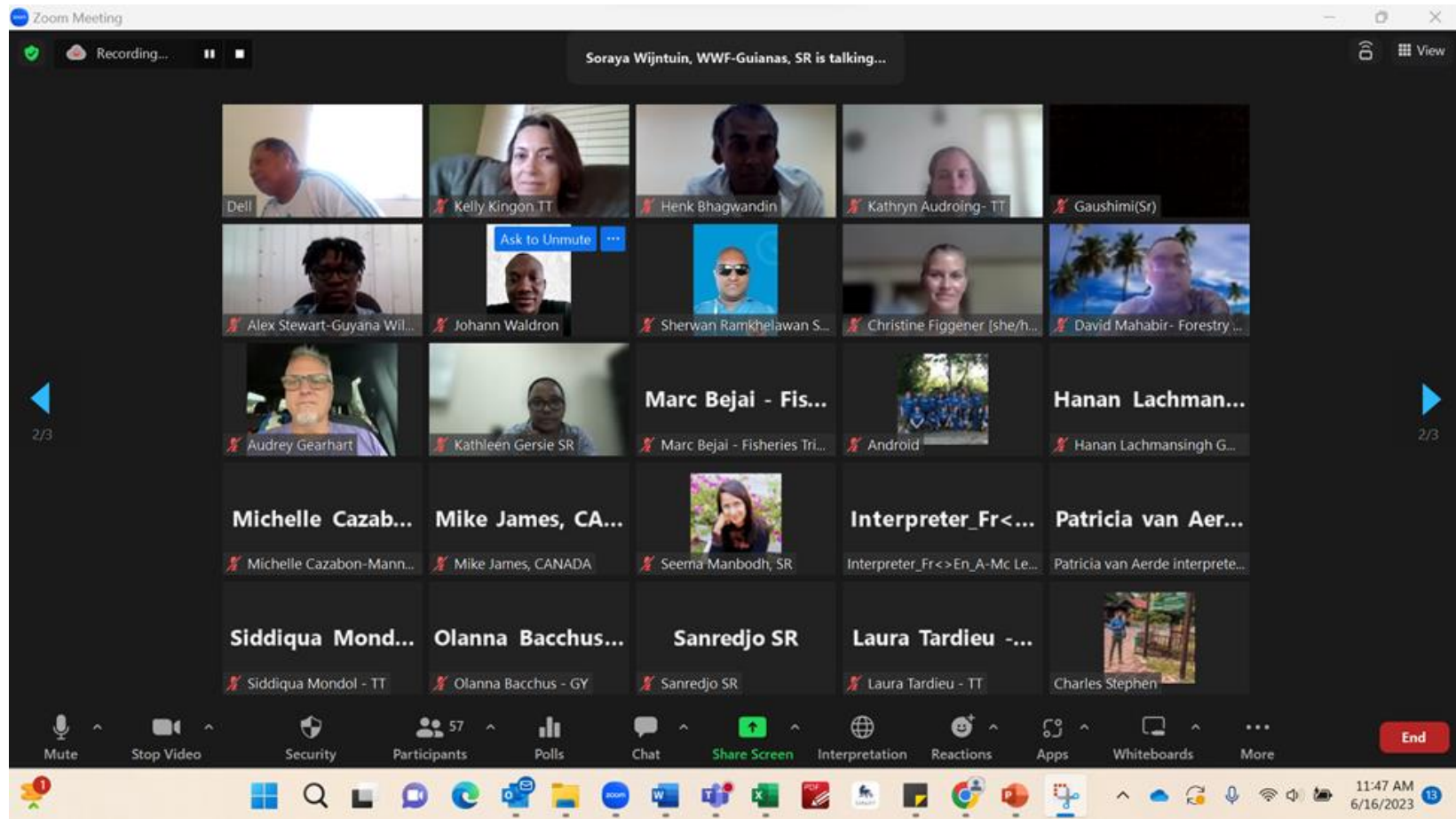
- Developing the fundraising mechanism within the governance structure
- Awaiting national endorsement of the countries to implement the RAP

Thank you!

Questions?



ANNEX V: Group Photos



Zoom Meeting

Recording...

Mathilde LASFARGUE, OFB

Soraya Wijntuin, WWF-Guia...

Sefanja Rozendaal, Note...

Farah Mukhida, Moderator

Louise Soanes, Moderator

Marina Fastigi Kido Foun...

Marleen Stoffelen, WWF...

Dell

heini langaman

Karen Eckert-WIDECAS

Richard (French Guyana)

Tevin Butler (Wildlife Sect...

Anna Mohase, WWF GUI...

CIT-Secretaria-Veronica ...

Monica Bacchus US

Justine Dolabaille, EMA, TT

Sara Henry, WWF- Guian...

Bryan Wallace

Olga Koubrak - SeaLife L...

Aiesha Williams, Guy, W...

Claire Pusineri-SPAW RAC















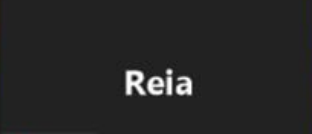





Audrey Gearhart





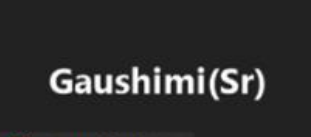


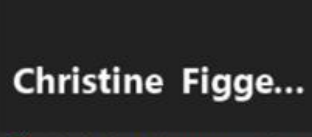

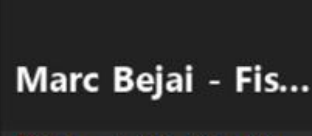


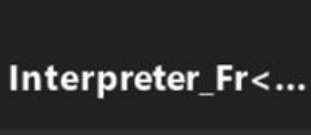
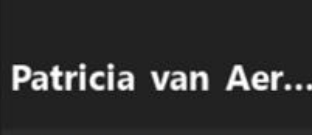
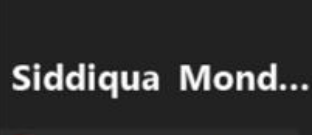




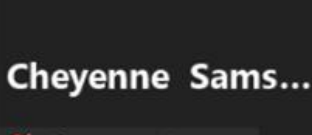
Kimberly Stewart, SK


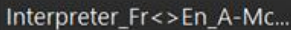
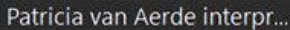
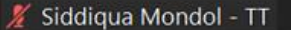




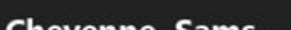











Adrian Wilson - TT

Karim Chkioua - OFB - Fr...

11:46 AM
6/16/2023

 Henk Bhagwandin, W...	 Soraya Wijntuin, WWF...	 Mike James, CA...	 Mathilde LASFARGUE, ...
 Sefanja Rozendaal, No...	 Farah Mukhida, Moder...	 Marina Fastigi Kido Fo...	 Marleen Stoffelen, W...
 heini langaman	 Karen Eckert-WIDECAS...	 Justine Dolabaille, EM...	 Tevin Butler (Wildlife S...
 Anna Mohase, WWF G...	 Sara Henry, WWF- Gui...	 Reia	 Louise Soanes (Moderator)
 Imran Khan Future Fis...	 Bryan Wallace	 Karim Chkioua - OFB - ...	 Alex Stewart-Guyana ...

<p>Alex Stewart-G...</p> <p> Alex Stewart-Guyana ...</p>	<p>Kimberly Stewa...</p> <p> Kimberly Stewart, SK</p>	<p> Claire Pusineri-SPAW ...</p>	<p> Aiesha Williams, Guy. ...</p>
<p>Gaushimi(Sr)</p> <p> Gaushimi(Sr)</p>	<p> Johann Waldron</p>	<p>Olga Koubrak -...</p> <p> Olga Koubrak - SeaLif...</p>	<p>Christine Figge...</p> <p> Christine Figgenger [sh...</p>
<p>Kathryn Audroi...</p> <p> Kathryn Audroing- TT</p>	<p>Marc Bejai - Fis...</p> <p> Marc Bejai - Fisheries ...</p>	<p>CIT-Secretaria-...</p> <p> CIT-Secretaria-Veronic...</p>	<p> Seema Manbodh, SR</p>
<p>Interpreter_Fr<...</p> <p> Interpreter_Fr<>En_A-Mc...</p>	<p>Patricia van Aer...</p> <p> Patricia van Aerde interpr...</p>	<p>Siddiqua Mond...</p> <p> Siddiqua Mondol - TT</p>	<p>Laura Tardieu -...</p> <p> Laura Tardieu - TT</p>
<p> Charles Stephen</p>	<p> Kemptorne Daly - WW...</p>	<p>Christina Billey,...</p> <p> Christina Billey, WWF ...</p>	<p>Cheyenne Sams...</p> <p> Cheyenne Samson</p>

 Seema Manbodh, SR <small>Seema Manbodh, SR</small>	 Interpreter_Fr<...> <small>Interpreter_Fr<>En_A-Mc...</small>	 Patricia van Aer... <small>Patricia van Aerde interpr...</small>	 Siddiqua Mond... <small>Siddiqua Mondol - TT</small>
 Laura Tardieu -... <small>Laura Tardieu - TT</small>	 Charles Stephen <small>Charles Stephen</small>	 Kemptonne Daly - WW... <small>Kemptonne Daly - WW...</small>	 Christina Billey,... <small>Christina Billey, WWF ...</small>
 Cheyenne Sams... <small>Cheyenne Samson</small>	 Alana Jute_IMA... <small>Alana Jute_IMA_TT</small>	 Vincent Bergth... <small>Vincent Bergthold (DG...</small>	 Sanredjo SR <small>Sanredjo SR</small>
 Olanna Bacchus... <small>Olanna Bacchus - GY</small>	 jainarine narine <small>jainarine narine</small>	 Monica.Bacchu... <small>Monica.Bacchus US</small>	 Sherwan Ramk... <small>Sherwan Ramkhelawan</small>
 David Mahabir <small>David Mahabir</small>	 Dell <small>Dell</small>	 Cassandra Ali-TT <small>Cassandra Ali-TT</small>	 Kelly Kingon TT <small>Kelly Kingon TT</small>