

# Design and Launch of a Mentorship Program for Caribbean Marine Protected Area Managers

## ***The Challenge***

The economic health and well being of Caribbean nations is dependent on goods and services provided by functioning coastal ecosystems. Coral reefs, sea grass beds and mangroves harbor a vital source of protein for local populations, protect coastlines from storms and wave damage and fuel a robust \$25 billion annual tourism industry. Yet coastal ecosystems throughout the region are in decline due to intensive near shore development and land clearance, agriculture, sedimentation, over fishing, unsustainable tourism growth and ever-increasing threats from climate change and ocean acidification.

## ***Evolution of the Caribbean Marine Protected Area Managers Network and Forum***

Since its founding in 1997, CaMPAM has grown into an extensive network of managers, decision makers, academics, conservation organizations and stakeholders who strive toward the common goal of strengthening MPA management effectiveness through training, capacity building, adoption of best practices, and peer-to-peer collaboration and communication. Operating under the auspices of UNEP-CEP as Secretariat of the SPAW Protocol, and guided by an Executive Team, CaMPAM today is the most active and far-reaching network of Caribbean professionals promoting information exchange and sharing lessons learned on coastal and marine resource conservation issues.

## ***Mentoring, Peer Exchange and Replication of Effective Management Strategies***

Mentoring, sometimes referred to as professional coaching, has long been recognized as an effective means to improve individual and organizational performance. In mentoring programs, mentors demonstrate, explain and model while protégés (mentees) observe, question, explore and apply new skills. Acting on the request of marine resource professionals from across the region, CaMPAM is facilitating the design and “pilot” launch of a Mentorship Program for Caribbean MPA managers.

***The primary goal of the CaMPAM Mentorship Program is to sustainably enhance MPA manager/practitioner competencies in the Wider Caribbean through the development of mentoring relationships (professional coaching) that respond to common and emerging training, capacity building and technical assistance needs.***

Eight senior marine resource professionals (mentors) from around the Caribbean have collaborated closely with CaMPAM to develop strategic lines of action, a programmatic framework and a work plan to guide early program development. CaMPAM is now requesting “Expressions of Interest” from MPA managers and associated institutions across the region that may benefit from matching with available mentors who possess extensive experience and can share effective management strategies.

## ***Monitoring and Evaluation to Ensure Long Term Programmatic Success***

CaMPAM plans a comprehensive approach to program evaluation that fosters collaboration, mutual trust and responsibility among all participants. Only through cultivation of a shared sense of accountability, commitment and program ownership among mentors and mentees will such an evaluative framework prove effective in monitoring professional growth and improvements in MPA management capacity.

**For more information about how you and your MPA can get involved please contact:**

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