

Title Page /Cover Sheet

Title: Laying the Foundation for Regional Ocean Planning in the U.S. Caribbean

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Project Summary

Project Name/Title: Laying the Foundation for Regional Ocean Planning in the US Caribbean

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Brief Project Summary: In the islands of the Caribbean, all communities are coastal. They are therefore disproportionately dependent upon the ocean and its resources to support dynamic ecosystems, clean waters, working waterfronts, interstate commerce, tourism, recreation, navigation, energy, and healthy, disaster resilient communities. Just as on land, the demand for access to and utility of marine and coastal areas is growing. A need exists for the development of a comprehensive regional ocean partnership (ROP) plan for the U.S. Caribbean territories to manage coastal and marine ecosystems as they respond to natural processes and anthropogenic activities. Effective communication, coordination, and cooperation among the regional stakeholders are necessary to develop sustainable management plans specific to regional territories and nations, and for the Caribbean region as a whole, that aim to reduce existing and anticipated conflicts among stakeholders. By way of written intent from the Governors, the U.S. territories are committed to advancing coastal and marine spatial planning (CMSP) in alignment with the Ocean Policy Task Force Recommendations. The articulation of the Governors' intent builds upon and supports established territorial initiatives to advance CMSP within the Puerto Rico Coastal Management Program (PRCMP) and regional initiatives, driven in large part by the local universities and non-governmental organizations. The purpose of this Cooperative Agreement is to address Focus Area 2 of the NOAA Regional Ocean Partnership Funding Program and support the development of an effective Regional Ocean Partnership in the United States Caribbean region that will allow for forward thinking planning and management of the submerged lands and waters that span these jurisdictions. This Agreement will apply multidisciplinary and multi-sector approaches to marine and coastal zone management; develop frameworks that support coastal and marine policies and legislation that enable regional ocean planning mechanisms; establish a Caribbean ROP framework for CMSP; and improve coordination and management of CMSP related spatial data within the region.

Partners: The Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands Offices of the Governor; The Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources; The U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources; The Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands Divisions of Coastal Zone Management; The University of the Virgin Islands; The University of Puerto Rico; The Caribbean Regional Association and Caribbean Integrated Ocean Observing System; The Puerto Rico Sea Grant Program; The Caribbean Coral Reef Institute

Proposed funding for each year of the project:

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Amount
Allowable Direct Costs	440,853	472,131	384,053	1,297,037
Indirect Costs at 20.00%	88,171	94,426	76,811	259,407
TOTAL COSTS	529,024	566,557	460,864	1,556,444

Project Description

Goals and Objectives

Goal: This project aims to establish mechanisms that will improve regional collaboration on ocean management in order to reduce user conflicts, improve cohesive regional planning, and support healthy communities and ecosystems for present and future generations. An ecosystem-based management approach will address cumulative effects from anthropogenic activities to ensure the protection, integrity, maintenance, resilience, and restoration of ocean and coastal Caribbean ecosystems, while promoting multiple sustainable uses.

Year 1 Objectives:

1. Initiate stakeholder involvement in the development of the Caribbean ROP and its work plan.
2. Formalize and launch a Caribbean Regional Ocean Partnership governing body.
3. Complete a review of local, territorial, federal, national, and international policy related to coastal and marine spatial planning governance and the establishment of regional ocean planning mechanisms for the U.S Caribbean region.
4. Improve collaboration between regional CMSP data managers.

Year 2 Objectives:

1. Draft Caribbean ROP priorities and associated work plans.
2. Develop frameworks that support coastal and marine policies and model legislation that enables regional ocean planning mechanisms in the Caribbean.
3. Establish regional CMSP data management/data standards that comply with local and federal standards.

Year 3 Objectives:

1. Engage broad stakeholder involvement to review, refine, and finalize Caribbean ROP work plans.
2. Identify sustainable funding mechanisms for Caribbean ROP.

This Agreement will achieve its goal by implementing each objective identified, which will build regional capacity through a collaborative process and enable proactive planning for multiple uses of coastal, marine, and transboundary areas.

Background: As the only inhabited jurisdictions of the United States of America in the Caribbean Sea, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the Territory of the United States Virgin Islands (USVI) offer a suite of unique opportunities for the people of our nation. Just as on land, the demand for access to and utility of marine areas and coasts is growing. Energy systems, commercial fishing, recreation, shipping, and wilderness are increasingly competing for limited space. As the U.S. Caribbean coastal and marine areas become more crowded, a clear process is needed to reduce conflicts between users, optimize the use of coastal and marine resources, and help ensure that ocean health is not compromised and productivity for current and future generations is protected. The U.S. Caribbean is in need of a streamlined and coordinated approach and thoughtful planning to minimize conflicts, maximize the ocean's benefits to people, and maintain healthy marine habitats.

The Puerto Rico Coastal Management Program (PRCMP) has already initiated the development of a Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning process. However, a need exists for a comprehensive regional ocean partnership (ROP) plan for the U.S. Caribbean territories to manage coastal and marine ecosystems as they respond to natural processes and anthropogenic activities. An effective Caribbean ROP plan should consider the Ocean Policy Task Force Recommendations and the United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) marine spatial planning guidelines that can be agreed to by the Caribbean regional territories and nations due to the connectivity of coastal and marine ecosystems and their resources. Effective communication, coordination and cooperation among the regional stakeholders are necessary to develop sustainable management plans specific to regional territories and nations, and for the Caribbean region as a whole, that aim to reduce existing and anticipated conflicts among the

stakeholders. A Caribbean ROP initiative, led by PRCMP and USVI government, will build upon existing frameworks and take lessons learned from other regional initiatives and partnerships.

To be successful, a Caribbean ROP needs: (a) a policy analysis and structure that is sensitive to the U.S. jurisdictional constraints-and unique island territory realities that differ from the mainland-and lays a functioning framework for international participation from jurisdictional neighbours such as Dominican Republic and the British Virgin Islands; (b) awareness among decision makers and stakeholders on the benefit of CMSP to address cumulative effects of activities, ensure the protection of sensitive ecosystems, integrity, maintenance, resilience, and restoration of ocean and coastal Caribbean ecosystems, while promoting multiple sustainable uses; and (c) a regional work plan developed with participation from and endorsed by stakeholders. Additionally, in order to hit the ground running when it comes time to implement a regional work plan endorsed by stakeholders, a Caribbean ROP will need: (d) consistently managed spatial data and frameworks to promote interoperability and sharing of information; and (e) contextually appropriate Decision Support Tools. This proposal addresses (a) through (d) of the aforementioned requirements for a successful Caribbean ROP. We anticipate addressing requirement (e) in future years after the initial establishment and launch of the Partnership.

This proposal meets or exceeds all three of the “other criteria that affect eligibility”, which are identified in section III.C. of the FFO report. Firstly, the Caribbean Regional Ocean Partnership initiative is primarily being initiated by the U. S. Caribbean governments through the Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Recourses and the USVI Office of the Governor, with support from The Nature Conservancy. The governor’s interest in establishing a Caribbean ROP and the Conservancy serving as the administrator of this proposal is demonstrated by their written support, which has been included in [Appendix](#). Secondly, The Nature Conservancy, with a long history in the Caribbean, and partnerships with regional groups, governments, communities, and local NGOs, can ensure strong collaboration and effective project implementation. The Conservancy has the experience, expertise, and capacity to develop an advanced regional ocean partnership between these jurisdictions and their easterly and westerly island neighbours. The Conservancy has garnered valuable lessons from the CMSP work we have implemented around the world, including in the Caribbean states of St. Kitts and Nevis and the Dominican Republic. Additionally, the Conservancy has played an active role in other North American Regional Ocean Partnerships, and due to our internal structure for collaboration between regions, we are able to draw upon relevant U.S. experiences, particularly from the Governor’s South Atlantic Alliance, the Gulf of Mexico Alliance, and the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council. Finally, the primary investigators on this proposal ([Appendix](#)), key partners, and letters of support ([Appendix](#)) that are a part of this proposal package demonstrate the formal commitments within existing and relevant agencies and organizations to see the outcomes of this project integrated into regional and territorial ocean management planning processes and coastal and ocean resource management policies.

Partnerships: This project will build partnerships within the government by allocating dedicated project staff to be housed within the implementing agencies (specifically, the Puerto Rico Coastal Management Program of DNER and an agency to be determined by the USVI Office of the Governor). These positions will coordinate government agency and relevant organization/stakeholder group involvement at key places in the development process. Additionally, they will help build support for CMSP by raising awareness within the government agencies and stakeholder groups on its benefits, including reduced conflicts, enhanced compatibility among uses, sustained ecosystem functions and services, providing for public access, and increasing certainty and predictability for economic investments. This project will promote broad participation by engaging stakeholders and community leaders from the private sector, commercial and recreational fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, cruise ships companies, commercial navigation and shipping industry, marina and boat owners and operators, and others. This work will leverage efforts of existing organizations, such as the Caribbean Regional Association (CaRA), the Puerto Rico Sea Grant Program, the Caribbean Coral Reef Institute, the

Caribbean Fisheries Management Program, relevant Federal and territorial agencies and municipalities, and other relevant organizations. Additionally, this project will improve the effectiveness of existing data sets by establishing mechanisms for regional data management, based on local and federal standards, thus improving communication and interoperability. To promote working relationships and advance the objectives of this proposal, regular meetings for regional and sub-regional councils and boards will be held and facilitated. The success of this project will rely heavily on remote communication and sharing of information, an online collaborative space will be established early. Creating an environment that encourages and supports remote teamwork will allow broader participation, cooperation, and sharing of documents and data as the Caribbean ROP develops.

Audience: The initial products from this project will directly support the governing body of the Caribbean Regional Ocean Partnership. Results (i.e. policy analysis and model legislation) will also be made available to other jurisdictions and planning bodies as well as local agencies and organizations. This will provide leveraging opportunities within the region and support the advancement of planning initiatives beyond the scope of this project. Additionally, the partnership between the relevant data users in the region will provide streamlined and consistent data for any initiative that relies on these data. These users are anticipated to range from government agencies, university researchers, and non-governmental organizations. It is not anticipated that training will be needed to use products from this project. Any training or orientation that becomes necessary will be handled appropriately by relevant service providers.

Approach (work plan): To achieve the objectives outlined herein, this proposal integrates three key tasks: 1) formalizing and launching a Caribbean Regional Ocean Partnership and developing a regional work plan, 2) conducting a policy analysis of applicable local, territorial, federal, national, and international policy and establishing a framework for regional ocean planning mechanisms, and 3) coordinating regional spatial data efforts and developing regional data management and sharing mechanisms.

Task 1 – Formalize and launch a Caribbean Regional Ocean Partnership and Develop a Regional Work Plan: Although the Governor’s of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands have stated their interest in collaborating on regional ocean management and establishing a Caribbean Regional Ocean Partnership to address the recommendations of the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force, local agency capacity is limited. Providing funding to support new positions that will be tasked with forging the necessary relationships between agencies, organizations, and stakeholder groups is essential to the successful development and implementation of a Caribbean ROP. This task will respond to the request for capacity support and place a dedicated position within each lead agency in Puerto Rico and the USVI. The Conservancy will work with government agency partners to draft position descriptions and recruit and select appropriate talent. To minimize the potential perception of bias in the planning process, the Conservancy will co-coordinate all activities under this task with the lead government agencies. This task will also facilitate the formation of the Partnership by providing funding for travel and other expenses related to participation in planning meetings, including participation of jurisdictions outside of the U.S. such as the Dominican Republic (DR) and the British Virgin Islands (BVI). Additionally, the Conservancy will provide technical expertise derived from other Caribbean and international CMSP processes and U.S. based Regional Ocean Partnership experiences. This task will use the draft ROP structure (Appendix), which was developed by the lead agencies on this proposal, as a starting point. By the end of Year 1 of this Agreement, regional planning body members will be identified; roles and responsibilities defined; and a “Kick-Off” event will launch the newly established Caribbean ROP. By the completion of Year 2 of this Agreement, regional ocean management objectives will be identified; a draft of the Caribbean ROP work plan will be developed; semi-annual planning body meetings will be held; and a charter for the institutional arrangement of the partnership will be designed. By the completion of Year 3 stakeholder feedback will be gathered and incorporated into the Caribbean ROP work plan; and sustainable funding mechanisms to support the Partnership will be identified.

Task 2 – Conduct a Policy Analysis: Legal analyses and information will be necessary to assist stakeholders in making well informed decisions about how to structure and implement a Caribbean ROP. This task will build upon challenges faced by the Caribbean Fisheries Management Council by acknowledging that although the U.S. Caribbean shares the same geologic shelf and marine resources with our international neighbors, we have separate jurisdictional constraints. In order to keep costs reasonable, through the assistance of pro bono counsel, the Conservancy’s role will be to research and develop drafts of the legal agreements required to structure and enable a Caribbean ROP framework. The frequent involvement of broad-based partners and stakeholders will promote the development of well-tailored products. Depending on the guidance of partner agencies, Year 1 deliverables may include a survey of authorities and institutions governing coastal and resource management in the region and a primer document identifying and analyzing various approaches existing ROPs have taken to (a) convene the ROP; (b) identify and involve stakeholders; (c) accommodate international partners; and (d) conduct the business of the ROP. Year 2 products will include a set of recommendations and the development of supporting legal documents. This task should be completed by the end of Year 2.

Task 3 – Coordinate Regional Spatial Data Efforts and Develop Regional Data Management and Sharing Mechanisms to Support Future Planning Activities: This task will build upon existing and relevant regional spatial data efforts, such as those housed within CaRA-including CarICOOS-, the Puerto Rico Sea Grant Program, the Caribbean Coral Reef Institute, and the governments themselves, to coordinate regional management of key datasets to be consistent with territorial and federal regulations and guidelines and support CMSP processes. In addition to establishing clear and coordinated data management protocols for partner groups, this task will comprehensively assess capacity to participate in a web-based data sharing system. This will be accomplished by working collaboratively with partners and other interested organizations. Each of the four neighboring jurisdictions-Puerto Rico, USVI, BVI, DR- are at different stages of development and utilization of spatial analysis tools. Some have well-established GIS programs and protocols and widely available geospatial technology, while others are still in the early stages of developing their capacity for spatial planning. In addition to collaboratively establishing coordinated data management and sharing guidelines, under this task, each jurisdiction will be methodically assessed for existing spatial data infrastructure, data quality, and overall capacity to implement and maintain these elements of spatial data analysis. Early in Year 1, relevant and interested organizations/programs in the DR and BVI will be identified and engaged in the project. By the end of Year 1, the assessments of the partner organizations in Puerto Rico and USVI will be completed. By the end of Year 2, the assessments of the partner organizations in the DR and BVI will be completed. By the completion of Year 2, data management protocols and structures will be in place within participating jurisdictions, organizations, and efforts. Year 3 will seek to address technological or other deficiencies that may be identified in the first two years of this Agreement. Coordination between existing relevant spatial data efforts will be ongoing throughout Year 1, Year 2, and Year 3 of this Agreement.

Benefit: Strengthening capacity within government agencies will allow for improved agency functioning and satisfying of departmental mandates. This increased capacity will not only avoid detracting from current work but ensure that undivided attention is afforded to the Partnership initiative. The policy work completed under this project will create a context sensitive foundation for an effective Caribbean Regional Ocean Partnership that addresses the complexity of inter-jurisdictional management of marine resources. Additionally, this work may serve as a case study for other island jurisdictions seeking to implement CMSP processes, particularly in other Caribbean nations. The participatory approach that will be employed throughout will ensure that a broad spectrum of stakeholders is educated and engaged, thus leveraging and strengthening existing regional efforts and capacity. The innovative online collaboration tool will serve as an imperative communication tool for participants in this project and be a model for remote participation for other efforts dependent on input from diverse groups in widespread locals.

Milestone Schedule:

	Y1 Q1	Y1 2Q	Y1 3Q	Y1 4Q	Y2 1Q	Y2 2Q	Y2 3Q	Y2 4Q	Y3 1Q	Y3 2Q	Y3 3Q	Y3 4Q
Stakeholder involvement												
Partnership "Kick-Off" event												
Relevant CMSP data managers identified and coordinated												
Policy review completed												
Regional objectives identified												
Data assessments completed												
Draft ROP work plan												
Data protocols finalized												
Legal recommendations & models developed												
ROP work plan finalized												
Sustainable funding mechanisms identified												
Targeted technology gaps addressed												
Education & outreach												

Project Budget: Direct project costs of \$1,297,037 are budgeted based on an estimate of reasonable and necessary expenses that will be incurred directly for the purpose of carrying out the proposed activities. Additional indirect costs of \$259,407 are budgeted at 20% of direct costs, as capped for this funding opportunity. Detailed budget information, including a budget narrative is included in the Appendix. A copy of our Federal Indirect Cost Negotiation Agreement, dated September 7, 2010 and showing a Fixed Carry forward rate of 23.13% for the period 07/01/10 to 6/30/11 is included as an attachment to this application. Although no match funds are committed, The Nature Conservancy is currently and will continue to carry out activities that advance the goals of this proposal.

Proposal Yearly Budget				
EXPENDITURES	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Amount
PERSONNEL	127,150	128,050	112,150	367,350
FRINGE BENEFITS	53,403	53,781	47,103	154,287
TRAVEL	17,800	17,800	17,800	53,400
EQUIPMENT	-	-	-	-
SUPPLIES	11,500	5,500	7,500	24,500
CONTRACTUAL	200,000	215,000	147,500	562,500
CONSTRUCTION	-	-	-	-
OTHER	31,000	52,000	52,000	135,000
Allowable Direct Costs	440,853	472,131	384,053	1,297,037
Indirect Costs at 20.00%	88,171	94,426	76,811	259,407
TOTAL COSTS	529,024	566,557	460,864	1,556,444

Appendices

TO BE COMPLETED AND ADDED.