

Ref: IAIDIR/2026/12

27 May 2026

NOTIFICATION

Subject: Approval of the GEF SargMarine Project and IAI Participation

Dear Madam or Sir,

I am pleased to inform you that the project “Promoting the Integrated Management of Sargassum: Building Resilient Tourism and Fisheries Sectors through the Conservation of Marine Ecosystems in Caribbean Countries (SargMarine)” has been formally approved by the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

Within the SargMarine framework, the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI) will lead Component 2, which aims to strengthen regionally coordinated and country-driven planning and response mechanisms to sargassum influxes across impacted areas of the Caribbean region.

In carrying out this role, the IAI will work in close collaboration with participating countries, as well as with regional institutions, scientific networks, and key stakeholders, to promote coherence, inclusivity, and broader regional relevance. Component 2 will focus on:

- Enhancing the precision, lead time, and geographic coverage of sargassum forecasting models and Early Warning Systems (EWS);
- Improving the customization, accessibility, and uptake of these tools by end users, particularly within the tourism, fisheries, and coastal management sectors; and
- Supporting the integration of robust scientific knowledge into national and regional decision-making processes.

The project has been approved with a total financing envelope of USD 10.9 million, reflecting strong international recognition of the importance of advancing coordinated, science-based responses to sargassum influxes in the Caribbean.

SargMarine will be implemented at the regional level, covering seven countries in the region, including Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and Panama. In the coming months, the operation will be submitted to CAF’s Special Funds Committee, followed by the signature of an implementation agreement with the Organization of American States (OAS), which will serve as the executing agency. Project implementation is expected to commence in August 2026.

The Directorate looks forward to working closely with participating countries, regional partners, and the broader scientific and policy communities as the project advances toward implementation. The IAI remains committed to fostering sustained scientific cooperation in support of resilient, informed, and regionally relevant policy responses to the growing challenges associated with sargassum influxes.

Further updates will be shared as implementation arrangements are finalized.

Please accept, Madam/Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Omar R. L. A.", positioned above the printed name.

Omar López Alfano
Interim Executive Director