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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Barbados Marine Spatial Plan Strengthens Conservation Planning with Training for Stakeholders**

**Bridgetown, Barbados- February 20, 2025** – The Barbados Marine Spatial Plan (BMSP), in collaboration with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) recently concluded a two-day training session on the use of the Marxan Planning Platform (MaPP). This training, which was held from February 13-14, helped stakeholders learn practical, data-driven tools for effective and affordable marine planning to support conservation efforts in Barbados.

Conducted by experts from TNC, the sessions focused on goal setting, planning units, conservation features, and practical applications of MaPP. Participants, including government and private-sector members of the Geospatial Technical Working Group of the BMSP, engaged in hands-on exercises using Barbados-specific data, generating outputs and processing results through Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

“This training is a significant step towards strengthening Barbados’ marine spatial planning process,” said Richard Suckoo, Deputy Project Manager with the Marine Spatial Planning Unit. “By building capacity in Marxan and GIS-based conservation planning, we are ensuring that marine resources are managed in a way that supports both biodiversity conservation and sustainable economic development.”

The session also featured discussions on stakeholder feedback and real-world case studies, enabling participants to design data-driven conservation solutions that balance ecological protection with socio-economic priorities. By enhancing decision-making through systematic conservation planning, the training directly supports Barbados’ commitment to sustainable marine management under the BMSP.

As the marine spatial planning process ramps up this year with the development of several potential inclusive zoning scenarios, the use of MaPP will play a crucial role in developing science-based zoning strategies, ensuring that the nation’s marine resources are used responsibly while maintaining ecological integrity. As Barbados advances its Marine Spatial Plan, collaborations with stakeholders and organizations like TNC will remain essential in achieving a balanced and sustainable blue economy.

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### **About the Barbados Marine Spatial Plan**

The Barbados Marine Spatial Plan (“BMSP”) speaks to the evidence-based, participatory zoning of Barbados’ marine space as well as the requisite administrative and legal arrangements to achieve long-term sustainable ocean management. It is administered by the Marine Spatial Planning Unit (MSP Unit), which is a division of the Coastal Zone Management Unit (CZMU) of the Ministry of Environment and National Beautification, Green and Blue Economy as the MSP authority in Barbados. The BMSP is being developed in partnership with The Nature Conservancy and the University of the West Indies Cave Hill, and with the financial and technical support of the InterAmerican Development Bank, to encourage sustainable national socio-economic development, promote cooperation and reduce conflicts between users.