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15 to 17 March 2021

CARIBBEAN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME:

**DRAFT REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF
THE WIDER CARIBBEAN REGION 2020-2030**

**Implementing the Cartagena Convention and Supporting the 2030 Agenda for
Sustainable Development**

DRAFT
**Caribbean Environment Programme: Regional Strategy for the
Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the
Wider Caribbean Region -**

**Implementing the Cartagena Convention &
Supporting the 2030 Agenda for
Sustainable Development.
2021-2030**

Table of Contents

DRAFT.....	1
CARIBBEAN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME: REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT OF THE WIDER CARIBBEAN REGION -	1
IMPLEMENTING THE CARTAGENA CONVENTION & SUPPORTING THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.....	1
2021-2030.....	1
LIST OF ACRONYMS.....	4
FORWARD (TO BE FINALISED)	5
1. INTRODUCTION.....	6
2. BACKGROUND	10
2.1 COASTAL AND MARINE ENVIRONMENT OF THE WIDER CARIBBEAN REGION - A SHARED VITAL RESOURCE	10
2.2 CARTAGENA CONVENTION AND CARIBBEAN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME.....	12
CARTAGENA CONVENTION MECHANISMS	14
2.3 GLOBAL AND REGIONAL FRAMEWORKS.....	17
2.3.1 INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORKS GUIDING THE STRATEGY.....	17
2.3.2 REGIONAL FRAMEWORK FEEDING INTO THE STRATEGY	20
3. REGIONAL STRATEGY	21
3.1 VISION AND MISSION	21
3.2 PRINCIPLES	22
3.3 OVERALL AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	24
3.4 THE CARTAGENA CONVENTION NETWORK AND THE CEP STRATEGY	27
3.4.1. POLLUTION PROGRAMME: TOWARDS A POLLUTION AND LITTER FREE WIDER CARIBBEAN REGION	28
3.4.2. MARINE BIODIVERSITY PROGRAMME: TOWARDS HEALTHY ECOSYSTEMS AND ENHANCED BIODIVERSITY IN THE WIDER CARIBBEAN REGION.....	33
3.4.3. GOVERNANCE	38
3.4.4. PARTNERSHIPS.....	41
4 KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION.....	1
4.1 FACILITATING UPTAKE OF RESULTS.....	1
4.2 COMMUNICATING WITH THE WIDER PUBLIC AND RAISING AWARENESS	2
5. IMPLEMENTATION AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION.....	4
5.1 AN INSTITUTIONAL COORDINATION FRAMEWORK TO IMPLEMENT THE STRATEGY.....	4

5.2 SUSTAINABLE FINANCING..... 5

6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION..... 7

6.1 CONTRIBUTION OF THE CEP STRATEGY TO THE REPORTING OF SDG 14 TARGETS AND INDICATORS..... 7

LIST OF ANNEXES..... 10

SUMMARY OF VISION, GOALS, OUTCOMES AND OUTPUTS OF THE THEORY OF CHANGE OF THE CARTAGENA CONVENTION - CEP
..... 14

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CaMPAM	The Caribbean Marine Protected Areas Management Network and Forum
Cartagena Convention	Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCAD	Central American Commission for Environment and Development
CEP	Caribbean Environment Programme
CIMAB	The Center of Engineering and Environmental Management of Coasts and Bays (CIMAB)/ The Regional Activity Center (RAC) for the Protocol concerning Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol)
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CLME+	Catalyzing Implementation of the Strategic Action Programme for the Sustainable Management of shared Living Marine Resources in the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems
CMS	Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals
CTF	Caribbean Trust Fund
GCRMN	Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GPA	Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Sources and Activities
IMA	Institute of Marine Affairs/ The Regional Activity Center (RAC) for the Protocol concerning Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol)
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LBS	Land Based Sources of Marine Pollution
OECS	Organization for Eastern Caribbean States
RAC	Regional Activity Centre
RAMSAR	Convention on Wetlands of International Importance
RAN	Regional Activity Network
ROLAC	Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean ì UN Environment Programme
RSSD	Regional Seas Strategic Directions
SAP	Strategic Action Plans (of Large Marine Ecosystems)
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SPA	Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WCR	Wider Caribbean Region

FORWORD (To be finalised)

Countries bordering the Wider Caribbean Sea, particularly the Small Island Developing States and Island Territories, are heavily dependent on the ocean for socio-economic prosperity and human wellbeing. Thriving marine-based economic sectors such as fisheries, tourism, shipping, and petroleum provide employment and livelihoods for millions across the region and generate vast revenues for the countries. Fisheries and marine-based tourism in particular are critical pillars of the economies of the Island States and Territories. Moreover, Governments in the region have begun to recognize the immense potential of this natural capital for development of the blue economy and are increasingly re-aligning their national development paradigm with this concept. Despite the vital benefits we derive from marine ecosystems, increasing human populations, poorly planned urbanization, and harmful production and consumption patterns are generating unprecedented pressures on the marine environment¹.

Within the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR), there are various initiatives that focus on integrated ocean governance, marine spatial planning, land use planning, integrated watershed and coastal zone management, as well as ecosystem-based approaches. The 2021-2030 Regional Strategy for the Cartagena Convention- Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP) is intended to serve as a basis for the further development, implementation and integration of these approaches, and those oriented to ocean-based economies and blue economy approaches. It will further facilitate synergies and integrated, holistic support to Contracting Parties for meeting their obligations under the Cartagena Convention, its Protocols and related regional and global commitments. Important Action plans and strategies such as the regional plan on Marine Litter, Nutrients and Habitats Strategies², the CARICOM biodiversity Strategy, amongst others are articulated through the CEP strategy.

[The Cartagena Convention](#) is the only regional legally binding instrument within the framework of the United Nations for the protection and sustainable development of the coastal and marine environment of the Wider Caribbean Region. It facilitates regional cooperation for managing the use of coastal and marine resources among the 38 Member States and Territories of the WCR. The Convention is supported by three technical agreements or Protocols on Oil Spills, Marine Biodiversity (Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife – SPAW) and Pollution (Land-Based Sources of Marine Pollution – LBS) as well as a series of regional strategies and thematic action plans.

This Strategy aims at framing the effective implementation of the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols, reflecting the main principles and directions set by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDG 6, 8, 14, 17 and others as appropriate), the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework and the Paris Agreement under the UNFCCC. It will also contribute to the UN Decade of Action for the SDGs, the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and the UN Decade of Ocean Science.

It builds on the UNEP/MTS³ to promote and reinforce ecosystem-based ocean governance based on the Regional Seas programmes while applying science-based approaches in the sustainable use of biological resources and ecosystem services including a coherent implementation of the post-2020 biodiversity framework with other multilateral environmental agreements. In the field of ocean governance, Regional Seas Programmes continue to be UNEP's delivery mechanism working also with other ecosystem-based organizations, such as regional fisheries bodies.

It also reflects the UNEP 2050 vision of: *“Planetary sustainability for people, prosperity and equity, where net zero carbon emissions and resilience towards climate change are achieved, humanity prospers in harmony with nature*

¹ [STATE OF THE CARTAGENA CONVENTION AREA REPORT](#), An Assessment of Marine Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities in the Wider Caribbean Region, May 2019

² Developed under the GEF supported CLME+ project

³ <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/7621>

and pollution is prevented and controlled, while ensuring good environmental quality and improved health and well-being for all”.

The unique governance framework of the Cartagena Convention, its Protocols and Strategic Action Plans offers a shared opportunity to develop cross-boundary and multi-stakeholder solutions and approaches to ecosystem-based management and information and technology transfer⁴ to address the transboundary threats and common challenges of the wider Caribbean region and its three LMEs.

Important Action Plans and Strategies developed by the Cartagena Convention Secretariat, RACs and RANs such as the regional strategies and action plans on Marine Litter, Nutrient Pollution and Marine Habitats⁵, underpin the overall implementation of this CEP strategy, while contributing to other relevant regional and sub-regional strategies such as the CARICOM Biodiversity Strategy.

This strategy will guide the effective coordination of the multiple policies, initiatives and projects within the regional ocean governance framework for the successful implementation of the CEP and support Governments of the Wider Caribbean Region in meeting their obligations under the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols.

It is through the protection and sustainable use of the regions natural resources while controlling, preventing and reducing marine pollution from land and marine-based sources that the region will increase its ability to achieve the SDGs and other global and regional commitments.

1. INTRODUCTION

The social and economic development and wellbeing of the people of Latin America and the Caribbean are intricately linked to its coastal and marine environment and living marine resources. The economic value of the Caribbean Sea to fishing, transport, trade, tourism, mining, energy, and carbon sequestration is estimated at US\$407 billion per year⁶.

- **US\$407 billion:** conservative estimate of the gross revenues generated in 2012 by the ocean economy in the Caribbean Sea aloneⁱ
- **US\$53 billion:** estimate of the gross revenues generated in 2012 by the ocean economy for the Island States and Territoriesⁱ
- **US\$7.9 billion:** recent estimated value of coral reef-associated tourism in the Caribbeanⁱⁱ

However, despite the vital benefits derived from marine ecosystems, these resources are being severely impacted by multiple threats including increasing human populations, harmful production and consumption patterns, the effects of climate change, overfishing and pollution from (1) Sewage; (2) Pesticide and Fertilizer run-off; (3) Solid Waste and Plastics; (4) Oil and (5) Industrial Activities.

The Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (« Cartagena Convention »)⁷ was adopted in Cartagena, Colombia on 24 March 1983 and entered into force on 11 October 1986. It remains to date the only regional legally binding agreement for the protection, sustainable development, and use of the region’s coastal and marine resources.

The Convention is supported by three Protocols on Oil Spills, Marine Biodiversity (Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife – SPAW) and Pollution (Land Based Sources of Marine Pollution – LBS).

Twenty-six countries from the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR) are Contracting Parties to this legal framework and are assisted to implement their commitments through a network of Regional Activity Centers (RACs) and Regional

⁴ Regional Strategy and Action Plan for the Valuation, Protection and/or Restoration of Key Marine Habitats in the Wider Caribbean 2021 – 2030, United Nations Environment Programme - Caribbean Environment Programme (UNEP-CEP)

⁵ Developed under the GEF supported CLEM+ project

⁶ From SOCAR 2019, ⁱPatil et al. 2016 ⁱⁱSpalding et al. 2018

⁷ As one of the UN Environment administered Regional Seas Conventions where secretariat functions, managing of finances and technical assistance are provided by UNEP

Activity Network (RANs), a dedicated Secretariat (UNEP/CAR/RCU) and supported by diverse and well-established partnerships.

Update of the strategy

Decision II of the Seventeenth Intergovernmental Meeting on the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme and Fourteenth Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (Cayenne, French Guiana, 15-17 March 2017) requested the Cartagena Convention Secretariat to update the Strategy for the CEP.

An audit conducted of the Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP) in 2015, by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) recommended, amongst others to: update the strategy for CEP to assure that programme activities are aligned with strategic goals.

Since the adoption of the Strategy for the development of the Caribbean Environment Programme in 1990, the international community adopted a number of strategic goals related to the conservation and sustainable management of marine and coastal ecosystems.

The Governing Council of UNEP and the United Nations Environment Assembly⁸ and UNEP through its Headquarters, Divisions and Regional Offices have also adopted decisions, Mid Term Strategies, ocean strategies and resolutions that set strategic objectives for the work on oceans. At the same time, Member States have agreed on global targets under various Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), such as the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework and the Paris Agreement under the UNFCCC. This update will furthermore provide an opportunity to contribute to the UN Decade of Action for the SDGs, the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and the UN Decade of Ocean Science as well as respond to other key strategic frameworks such as the EU Green Deal.

UN Member States also adopted the SIDS Accelerated Modality of Action (SAMOA) Pathway⁹ and subsequently the UN General Assembly adopted “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”¹⁰. A goal specific to the sustainable management of oceans was included as Goal 14 “Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development” with close linkages to a number of key SDGs (SDGs 6, 12, 15, 17...). General Assembly Resolutions “Towards the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations”¹¹ recognize the Caribbean Sea as an area of unique biodiversity and a highly fragile ecosystem that requires relevant regional and international development partners to work together to develop and implement regional initiatives to promote the sustainable conservation and management of coastal and marine resources.

Further to the above, it should be recalled that from 1 May 2011 the Wider Caribbean Region was designated a special area under the requirements of MARPOL Annex V “Regulations for the Prevention of Pollution by Garbage from Ships” further stressing the significance of the Caribbean Sea to the region.

UNEP’s Medium-Term Strategy (2022–2025) outlines a trajectory for UNEP to strengthen the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda and address the three environmental crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. While addressing these and other emerging issues impacting the region, the CEP provides an opportunity to ensure:

- linkages with the relevant SDG targets, in particular those related to Goals 6 and 14;
- Close coordination with other regional organizations and IGO’s;

⁸ The UN Environment Assembly (UNEA), the official governing body of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the highest-level governing body on international environmental matter has a transformational role in environmental governance to support the achievement of internationally agreed environmental goals and implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

⁹ resolution A/RES/69/15

¹⁰ resolution A/RES/70/1.

¹¹ Resolutions 63/214 and A/65/301

- Incorporation of the two LMEs Strategic Action Plan (SAP) objectives, targets and indications, as well as close coordination with projects supporting the implementation of the commitments Parties made under these Strategic Action Plans (ie. CLME+ and Gulf of Mexico SAP implementation projects; and
- Identification of partnerships and funding mechanisms for the Strategies' future implementation.

The Regional Seas programmes are guided by strategic directions for 2021-2024 which build on the previous Regional Seas objectives (2017-2020) while setting more ambitious goals to bend the curve of ocean degradation. They will focus on climate change, pollution, biodiversity restoration, ecosystem assessment and knowledge management. These strategic directions are informed by common issues across the 18 Regional Seas programmes, the UNEP's Marine and Coastal Strategy for 2020-2030, the UNEP Medium Term Strategy for 2018-2021 and other ocean related goals/targets including SDGs and key relevant MEAs.

The ratification, adoption and implementation of Regional Seas Conventions, Action Plans and Protocols, is facilitated through working in concert with other Regional Seas Organisations and in collaboration with international and regional organizations, including MEA Secretariats, Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) and other relevant stakeholders.

The new UNEP Global Marine and Coastal Strategy sets strategic directions as concerns sustainable management and the conservation of marine and coastal ecosystems, in line with the 2030 Agenda, to guide and enable the achievement of objectives outlined in the Medium-Term Strategy and programme of work of UNEP. This global strategy identifies and builds internal and external synergies to address cross-cutting issues that are being pursued in other thematic strategies guiding UNEP's work, including the freshwater strategy, Regional Seas Strategic Directions 2021–2024, a biodiversity strategy, and a climate change strategy, to ensure overall efficiency, coherence and impact in delivering the UNEP's programme of work.

In line with the recommendations from the Global RSS to build on RSC as ocean governance platforms, the CEP is to provide the strategic framework to strengthen the role of the Secretariat in support of the protection of the marine environment through its pollution and marine biodiversity programmes and provide the framework for regional policy coordination mechanisms for governance of the marine environment.

Within the Wider Caribbean Region, there are various initiatives that focus on integrated ocean governance, marine spatial planning, land use planning, integrated watershed and coastal zone management, and an ecosystem-based approach to managing the use of shared living marine resources sustainably across the region. A transition towards inclusive, cross-sectoral and sustainable models of development and production has progressed across the region, with several local, national and regional initiatives advancing various components necessary for sustainable ocean-based economies. When considered holistically, these initiatives can provide the foundation of a regional sustainable blue economy strategy.

« Towards the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations »¹²: recognizes that the Caribbean Sea as an area of unique biodiversity and a highly fragile ecosystem that requires relevant regional and international development partners to work together to develop and implement regional initiatives to promote the sustainable conservation and management of coastal and marine resources.

The UNEP MTS makes reference to UNEP's 'Sustainable Blue Economy Initiative'¹³ to facilitate sustainable ocean-based economic, social and environmental benefits within the planetary boundaries of oceans and coasts. Engaging with countries, Regional Seas and many partners, it seeks to enhance decision-making, enabling conditions and capacities to develop and implement sustainable, climate-resilient and inclusive blue economy policies, strategies and solutions that reduce human impacts and support the sound use of marine and coastal ecosystems and their many services.

¹² resolution / adopted by the General Assembly in 2009, A/RES/63/214

¹³ <https://www.unepfi.org/blue-finance/>

The Cartagena Convention CEP strategy responds to the COVID-19 crisis by building upon

- Contributions of the UN Environment Assembly to the 2020 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development¹⁴ notes that the COVID-19 outbreak calls for the urgent need to address threats to ecosystems and recognizes the role of regional coordination as key to address transboundary issues and facilitate regionally coherent approaches;
- In [Working With the Environment to Protect People](#), UNEP lays out how it is adjusting its work in response to COVID-19 through supporting partners to “build back better” – through stronger science, policies that back a healthier planet and more green investments.
- The BRIDGETOWN DECLARATION made at the XXII Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1-2 February 2021 represents “ A CALL FOR ACTION ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSION OF COVID-19 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT RECOVERY IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN”. The Forum concluded that the pandemic underscored the need to (i) enhance and maximize regional cooperation as the scale and complexity of the challenges requires concerted and tailored regional and sub-regional efforts, (ii) sustainably integrate the environmental dimension to include better conservation and sustainable use of natural resources into economic and social development planning, (iii) apply Ecosystem-based approaches for environmental management and climate actions to be effective to promote healthy ecosystems and provide benefits for human health and the social and economic development of communities, where restoration of biodiversity and implementation of ecosystem- based approaches are essential to meet the Sustainable Development Goals, (iv) consider sustainable ocean-based economies for effective actions that enable the conservation and sustainable use of ocean, marine and coastal resources towards the sustainable development of countries in the region, (v) access to clean water and sanitation, (v) the reactivation of the tourism industry and the (vi) strengthening the Science - Policy interface as a fundamental instrument for objective and well-informed decision-making. In doing so, an integrated approach to public policies in fisheries, agriculture, maritime transport, tourism, and marine minerals is needed.

The unique structure of the Cartagena Convention, its CoPs and Parties

The Cartagena Convention and governance processes, with a dedicated Secretariat, regular meetings of governing bodies (CoPs, IGMs), senior officials as well as technical bodies (such as Scientific and Technical Advisory Committees – STACs, Steering Committees, and thematic working groups), contribute to strengthening strategic regional presence, policy coherence and regional ocean governance.

The Convention, its Protocols and action plans have both a normative and implementation mandate. They provide an expression of common regional priorities, including those in the delivery of global mandates such as the [2030 Agenda](#), provisions of MEAs and [United Nations Environment Assembly \(UNEA\) resolutions](#). They also provide platforms for taking action, including through integrated assessment, policy development, capacity building and exchange, as well as through implementation of national, sub-regional and regional projects.

The Cartagena Convention through the implementation of its Protocols including Regional Strategies and Action Plans, also provides a comprehensive framework for development of blue economy related activities. This CEP Strategy aims to strengthen, streamline and coordinate these efforts to implement the relevant agreed commitments and decisions of the Convention and form the basis for the further development and implementation of ocean-based economies and blue economy approaches. It will furthermore facilitate a more integrated approach to the delivery of the pollution and marine biodiversity programmes in support of the implementation of the Cartagena Convention, its Protocols and related regional and global commitments.

¹⁴<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/32194/UNEA%20contribution%20to%20the%20HLPF%202020%20final%20version%2030%20April%202020.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Coastal and Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region - a shared vital resource

The coastal and marine environment forms a fundamental part of the economic, recreational, cultural and spiritual ethos of the WCR and its peoples. However, marine and land-based activities including by global phenomena such as climate change and sea-level rise increasingly impact the marine environment's capacity to provide goods and services that support livelihoods and sustained socio-economic development and well-being.

Environmental changes increase the vulnerability of local communities especially those that depend directly or indirectly on coastal and marine resources. Anything that damages the productivity of the marine food chain and overall health of the region's marine ecosystems is therefore a significant threat to the health and well-being of those societies and threatens future development opportunities.

The coastal and marine environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR) supports numerous industries including tourism, fisheries, transportation, trade, mining, recreation and encompasses tropical and subtropical ecosystems, from coral reefs to mangrove forests and seagrass beds, each with their unique wildlife and marine biodiversity.

The coral reef-mangrove-seagrass complex has been described as one of the most biologically diverse and productive systems in the world, with strong interlinkages between the three sub-ecosystems. These habitats host significant species diversity, including endemic and threatened species, as well as commercially valuable species. The Western Caribbean ecoregion has been identified as one of 10 marine biodiversity hotspots globally. There are 15 Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas in the wider Caribbean. The Mesoamerican Reef along the coasts of Mexico, Belize, Guatemala and Honduras is the largest barrier reef in the Western Hemisphere and the second largest in the world.

These ecosystems provide essential ecosystem services and tangible and intangible benefits to adjacent coastal communities and countries. More than 134 million people who live on or near the coast benefit from the ocean for their livelihoods, recreation, health, well-being, culture and spirituality.

The surface of the WCR is about 3.3 million km², with an average depth of 2,200 m and a coastal length of 55,383 km. The coast/area ratio (km/km²) is double the world's average, highlighting the importance of coastal management for the region. With over 40 million people living within 10 km of the coastline, human activities are reported to threaten ²/₃ of the Caribbean's coral reefs, placing ¹/₃ at high risk.

The WCR contains 28 independent states and 19 dependent overseas territories (USA, UK, France, and the Netherlands), which range from the largest to the smallest in the world, and from the most developed—USA and European countries—to the least developed (Haiti). A unique feature of the WCR is the presence of 22 Small Island Developing States (SIDS), the largest number of SIDS in any of the world's LMEs. Another unique feature is that this region has the highest number of maritime boundaries than anywhere else in the world. This means that much of the marine resources as well as the environmental problems are shared, which presents a considerable challenge for the effective management of the region's marine environment and living marine resources. (SOCAR)

A prominent hydrologic feature of the WCR is the immense combined extent of the watersheds that drain into the Wider Caribbean Sea and the presence of river systems that are among the world's largest. The proportion of drainage basin area relative to the total national area in the WCR is 57% (SOCAR).

A number of assessments including the CLME Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA)¹⁵ identified a weakness in governance as the overarching root cause for the three main transboundary issues of overfishing, pollution and habitat degradation. Other factors include limited human and financial resources; inadequate knowledge; inadequate public awareness and participation; inadequate consideration of the value of ecosystem goods and

¹⁵ Developed under the UNDP/GEF CLME Project

services; population and cultural pressures; trade and external dependency. Climate change was further identified as a key cross cutting and overarching issue.

Protecting the Large Marine Ecosystems (and associated living resources) that compose the Wider Caribbean region is vital to safeguarding the future of the 26 countries and 18 overseas territories in this region. The report on the State of Marine Habitats in the Wider Caribbean (SoMH) and the Regional Strategy and Action Plan for the Valuation, Protection and/or Restoration of Key Marine Habitats in the Wider Caribbean 2021 -2030 (RSAP) are two important tools towards this end.

The two landmark reports on the State of Marine Pollution and the State of Marine Habitats in the Wider Caribbean Region¹⁶ endorsed by the 2019 Conference of Parties to the Convention, highlight the status and trends in marine pollution and marine biodiversity that will be critical for future policy and political decision-making processes to deliberate on. In this region with a diverse constituency, multiple initiatives, growing pressures and emerging issues to tackle, will require coordinated policy and management responses in the coming years to sustain the valuable resource base of the WCR ecosystems.

Box: XXX

The reports point to the following pressures and impacts:

Pressures due to Marine Pollution:

1. Excessive Nutrient loads mainly from runoff of agricultural fertilizers and the discharge of untreated sewage are major pressures on the marine environment leading to harmful algal blooms, dead marine zones, degraded habitats such as coral reefs, and poor water quality.
2. Land-based pollution hotspots are evident in several locations influenced by discharge from rivers and urban areas, with levels of most indicators higher in the wet season.
3. The WCR is among world regions with the highest concentrations of floating microplastics and macroplastics. It was estimated that in 2015, 1.3 million tons of plastics were introduced to the region's coastal waters.

Impacts on Marine Biodiversity,

1. The most recent comprehensive analysis of Caribbean coral data estimates that average coral cover has declined from an estimated 34.8% in the 1970s to just 16.3%
2. Mangroves and seagrass have also degraded due to Climate Change, Pollution and unplanned development but specific data is lacking for many countries.
3. The designation of ecologically sensitive or biologically important areas has been a key management strategy used to conserve coral reefs, mangroves and seagrass but these need to be managed more effectively.

Given the global environmental and development commitments to be met, these reports now offer the region an opportunity to demonstrate the collective efforts towards long-term sustainability through actions and decisions that are underpinned by credible assessments of the state of the regions marine environment.

Some of the most significant policy recommendations from the reports include to:

- Develop National Pollution Prevention and Marine Habitat Restoration Plans to assist in implementing the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols.
- Quantify the economic contribution of coastal and marine resources to national economies and the social and economic costs of pollution impacts.
- Facilitate the development and enhancement of national data and information management systems for more evidence-based decision making.
- Support the enhancement of national monitoring and assessment programmes including through laboratory capacity building for monitoring new and emerging pollutants.

¹⁶ Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem+ and Integrating Land, Water and Ecosystem Management Projects funded by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) Feb 2021 reference

- Scale up the implementation of experiences and best practices to address marine pollution and biodiversity loss in an integrated manner.

The states of the region have demonstrated their political commitment to the protection and development of marine and coastal resources through their ratification and implementation of the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols.

The WCR is one of the most interconnected and dynamic environments in the world, with multiple socio-economic and ecological benefits derived from diverse economies, cultures and ecosystems. With the value of the ocean economy in the Caribbean estimated at US\$407 billion, the sustainable ocean economy approaches including sustainable lifestyles are expected to further contribute to Sustainable Development and the 2030 Agenda. To maintain the continued provision of the benefits derived from 'natural marine and coastal capital' as the foundation of sustainable development, the multiple impacts on marine and coastal environments need to be addressed holistically.

To this end, a transition towards inclusive and sustainable economic models is needed. 'Sustainable blue economies' and 'sustainable ocean-based economies' will be guiding principles to ensure current and future delivery of benefits from marine and coastal ecosystems through integrated policy and sustainable management approaches, to generate long-term socio-economic shifts that create viable jobs, eradicate poverty and strengthen resiliency to climate change.

2.2 Cartagena Convention and Caribbean Environment Programme.

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) established the Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP) as one of its Regional Seas Programmes in recognition of the importance and value of the WCR's fragile and vulnerable coastal and marine ecosystems including endemic plants and animals and the importance of these resources to the sustainable development of the region. This led to the adoption of an Action Plan in 1981 and the development and adoption of the Cartagena Convention for the Protection and Development of the Wider Caribbean Region on 24 March 1983.

The Cartagena Convention covers the marine environment of the Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean Sea and the areas of the Atlantic Ocean adjacent thereto, south of 30° north latitude and within 200 nautical miles of the Atlantic coasts of the States. This area covers 28 islands and continental states, plus several islands which are dependent territories.

Four states participate with their dependent territories or associated states within the region. There are 13 dependent territories, all islands (except for French Guiana), grouped by their respective metropolitan countries as follows:

- 5 overseas territories of the United Kingdom;
- 3 overseas regions (départements) and 2 overseas collectivities of France;
- 3 self-governing units of the Kingdom of the Netherlands;
- 1 organized, unincorporated U.S. territory;
- 1 US territory with commonwealth status.

The list of Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention and its respective Protocols is provided in **Annex 1**. The WCR includes two Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs); the Gulf of Mexico (U.S and Mexico) and the Caribbean Sea¹⁷. It also includes part of the North Brazil Shelf LME (Suriname, Guyana, French Guiana are all part of the North Brazil LME).

¹⁷ Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Panama, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, United States, Venezuela



The Cartagena Convention is the only regional binding legal instrument within the framework of the United Nations for the protection and development of the region's marine environment. It facilitates regional cooperation for managing the use of coastal and marine resources among the 38 Member States and Territories of the WCR. The full ratification of the Convention and its Protocols by all countries in the WCR constitutes a high priority target for the period of implementation of this Strategy. From the 28 UN Member Governments in the Wider Caribbean Region 26 have ratified the Convention and committed to protect, develop, and manage their common waters individually or jointly.

The Cartagena Convention area and the 4 LMEs it largely intersects: The Wider Caribbean. Data sources: Cartagena Convention area (UNEP-CEP - 2017), LMEs (NOAA - 2009), land (GADM - 2018)



The WCR includes two Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) : the Gulf of Mexico (U.S and Mexico) and the Caribbean Sea¹⁸ and covers part of the North Brazil Shelf LME (Suriname, Guyana, French Guiana are all part of the North Brazil LME).

Cartagena Convention Mechanisms

Contracting Parties

The Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention, supported by the Secretariat to the Convention (CAR/RCU), have together developed and formed the unique regional institutional, legal and implementing framework for the protection and development of the region's marine and coastal environment. Responding to the commitments of 3 pillar Protocols, Strategic Action Plans, regional strategies and plans, the Cartagena Convention network facilitates regional co-operation for managing the sustainable use of coastal and marine resources among the 38 Member States and Territories of the WCR.

Secretariat

UNEP through the Caribbean Regional Coordinating Unit (CAR/RCU) provides the Secretariat for the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols. The Cartagena Convention Secretariat plays a lead role in supporting the Parties in the implementation of their commitments under the Convention, its Protocols, Strategies and Action plans.

Bureau

The Bureau, elected at the beginning of each Conference of Parties to the Cartagena Convention, consists of a President, three Vice-Presidents and a Rapporteur and would provide broad oversight of the implementation of the Strategy.

Monitoring Committee

The Monitoring Committee, also chosen from Contracting Parties at biennial meetings, will be responsible for providing overall policy direction and guidance to the Secretariat during intersessional periods.

Regional Activity Centres (RACs) and Regional Activity Networks (RANs)

Regional Activity Centres (RACs) and Regional Activity Networks (RANs) form an important part of the Cartagena Convention network to strengthen the delivery of activities in support of the Convention and its Protocols *and increase the level and depth of cooperation and sharing of expertise in the CEP region*. They provide regional and technical support to Contracting Parties to meet their obligations under the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols including technical expertise and assistance in the development and implementation of programme and project activities.

Committees and Working Groups

Committees and Working Groups are established at Meetings of Contracting Parties to provide additional technical, management and/or policy advice and guidance for achieving the mandate of the Secretariat and specific Meeting Recommendations and/or Decisions.

Country Focal Points

National, Technical and Protocol Focal Points play an essential coordination role working through national and, as appropriate sub-regional and regional coordinating mechanisms and/or committees to ensure synergies with other relevant national, regional and global programmes, projects and activities.

Invaluable contributions are made to the Convention by a network of partner institutions from academia and research (such as INVEMAR, NOAA and universities) among others as well as by an active network of NGOs and civil society organizations.

Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Panama, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, United States, Venezuela

The Convention, as a comprehensive, umbrella agreement, is supported by three technical agreements or Protocols on Oil Spills, Marine Biodiversity (Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife – SPAW) and Pollution (Land Based Sources of Marine Pollution – LBS), namely:

- Protocol Concerning Co-operation in Combating Oil Spills in the Wider Caribbean Region (“Oil Spills Protocol”) adopted on 24 March 1983 and entered into force on 11 October 1986.
- Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (“SPAW Protocol”) adopted on 18 January 1990 and entered into force on 18 June 2000.
- Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (“LBS Protocol”) adopted on 6 October 1999 and entered into force on 11 July 2010.

Supporting regional Strategies and Action Plans:

- First adopted in 2008 as a regional policy response to the growing concerns of litter accumulation in the Caribbean Sea, the **Regional Action Plan for Marine Litter Management in The Wider Caribbean Region (RAPMaLi)** later updated in 2010, addresses the challenge of marine litter and plastics pollution and serves as a comprehensive toolkit to assist Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in particular to incorporate proper waste management across all sectors. It is now supported by a Regional Marine Litter Strategy completed in 2020.
- A Regional Nutrients Pollution Reduction Strategy and Action Plan and a Regional Marine Habitat Restoration Strategy and Action Plan were finalized in 2021¹⁹.
- An Integrated Water Resource Management Framework to Support Implementation of the Cartagena Convention, developed in 2021, provides technical and policy strategic recommendations to outline a regional IWRM framework to address existing challenges and opportunities. Water is identified as the number one priority for adaptation actions in most of the intended nationally determined contributions (INDCs) and is directly or indirectly related to all other priority areas (UNESCO, UN Water 2020).
- A regional framework on Science and Research serving effective ocean governance in the WCR²⁰ identified priority research topics from the perspective of decision makers who are charged with implementing policies.

¹⁹ UNEP(DEPI) CAR WG.41/INF.10 presented at the STAC LBS meeting in March 2021

²⁰ Acosta, A.A., R.A. Glazer, F.Z. Ali, and R. Mahon. 2020. Science and Research Serving Effective Ocean Governance in the Wider Caribbean Region. Report for the UNDP/GEF CLME+ Project (2015-2020). Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute. Marathon, Florida USA.

Cartagena Convention network

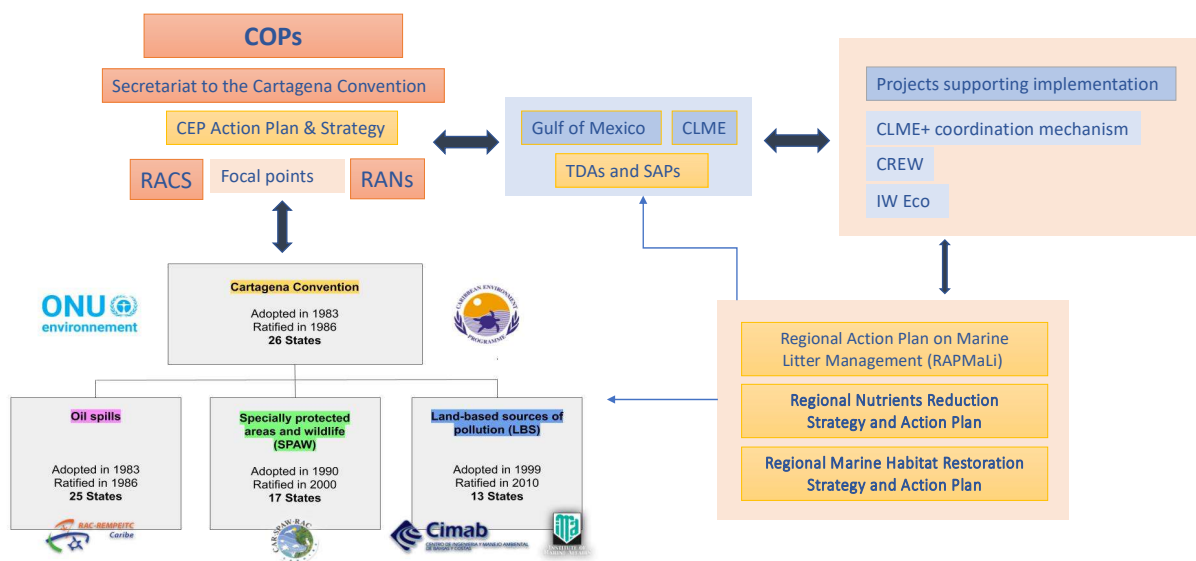


Figure XXX: Cartagena Convention network

Two complementary Strategic Action Programmes (SAPs) for Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) were developed between 2008-2013 and are now under implementation:

- **The Strategic Action Programme for the Gulf of Mexico Large Marine Ecosystem²¹** addresses three transboundary environmental problems (i) Pollution including eutrophication and harmful algal blooms (HABs); (ii) Habitat modification (wetland loss, connectivity, loss of resilience); and (iii) Overfishing of shared, migratory and connected fish stocks. It identifies 6 strategic areas:
 1. Improve Water Quality
 2. Enhance economic vitality by avoiding depletion and recover degraded living marine resources
 3. Conserve Coastal and Marine Ecosystems
 4. Mitigate and Adapt to Climate Change and Sea Level Rise
 5. Improve Science Education and Outreach
 6. Cross-Cutting Issues

- **The Strategic Action Programme for the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems²²** aims to contribute to preserving or restoring the health of reef, continental shelf and pelagic ecosystems as to provide goods and services in a way which optimizes the ecosystems' contributions to societal well-being and the region's development needs. The SAP implementation is supported by the CLME + SAP project²³; (more detail in Annex XXX. CLME+ SAP) with
 - (i) a **long-term vision for the CLME+ region, ecosystem Quality Objectives (EcoQOs) and Societal Benefits Objectives (SBOs)**, to which the SAP Strategies and Actions are to contribute,
 - (ii) **overarching and ecosystem specific Strategies**, as well as
 - (iii) **priority Actions**.

²¹ Global Environment Facility (GEF) funded "Integrated Assessment and Management of the Gulf of Mexico Large Marine Ecosystem" project (2008-2013)²¹, adopted in 2012 and revised in 2015; Seen Annex III.

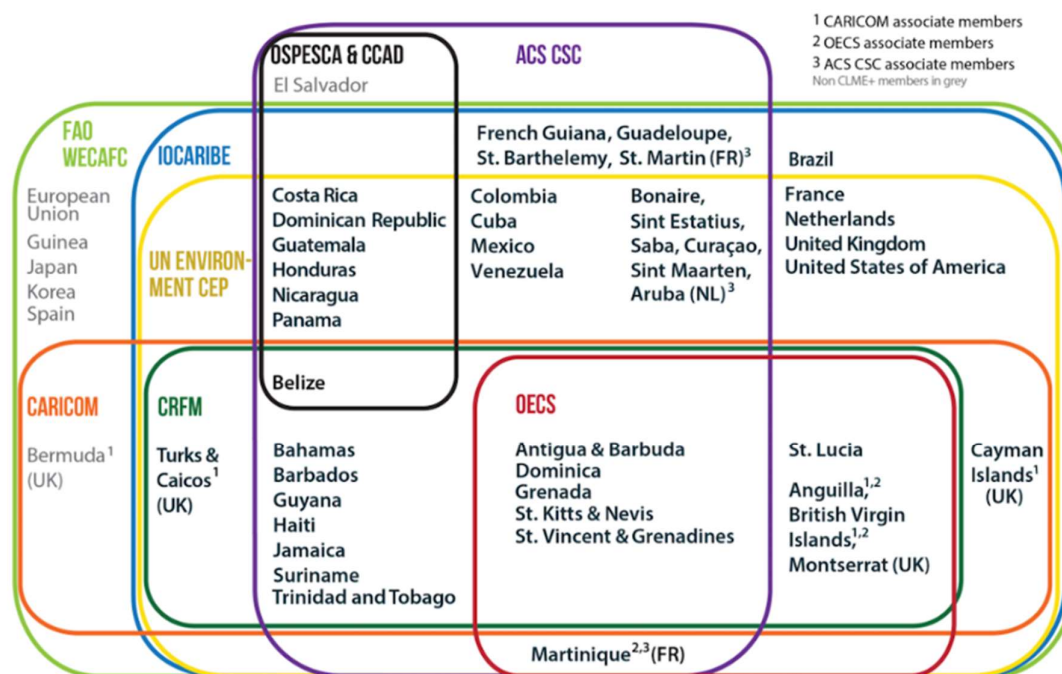
²² Prepared initially as part of the UNDP/GEF "Sustainable Management of the Shared Marine Resources of the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME) and Adjacent Regions" project (2009 -2014)²², in 2013

²³ <https://www.clmeproject.org/>

2.3 Global and Regional Frameworks

Together with its governance and coordination functions, the Secretariat will be assisted in the implementation of the CEP strategy through its network of RACs and RANs as well as through the implementation of programmes on pollution, marine biodiversity and knowledge management and communications. Several relevant international and regional frameworks will also support the Secretariat to achieve integrated and efficient delivery of the objectives of this strategy and the effective implementation of biennial work plans and budgets.

Figure xx: Overview of regional institutions



2.3.1 International frameworks guiding the strategy

There are several global multilateral environmental agreements and organizations whose activities are key for the protection and management of the oceans.

At the international level, the Sustainable Development Goals, the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA), the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and the Small Island Development States (SIDS) Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway are essential to the implementation of this Strategy, as follows:

(i) UNEA:

In May 2016, Resolution 2/10 on Oceans and Seas of the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-2) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) re-emphasized the importance of the Regional Seas Programme as the regional mechanism for the conservation and sustainable management of oceans and seas. This resolution highlights the importance of reinforcing cooperation, coordination, communication, and sharing of best practices and information among the existing regional seas conventions and action plans across different geographical areas in line with the UNEP Regional Seas Strategic Directions²⁴. Furthermore, it encouraged UNEP to continue to participate in the process initiated by the UN General Assembly in its Resolution 69/292 on the development of an international legally binding instrument under the United

²⁴ 2017–20 (para. 11)

Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of the marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (para. 9).

At [UNEA-4](#)²⁵ the Assembly adopted a Ministerial Declaration, resolutions and decisions of which the following, amongst others, are relevant to the CEP strategy:

- **Regarding Biodiversity and Ecosystems** resolutions on protection of the marine environment from land-based activities (UNEP/EA.4/L.12), build on work done by the long-standing Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA). Additional resolutions were adopted on mangroves (UNEP/EA.4/L.13), sustainable coral reefs management (UNEP/EA.4/L.14) and peatlands (UNEP/EA.4/L.19) as well as on rangelands and pastoralism (UNEP/EA.4/L.17). The wide-ranging resolution on biodiversity and land degradation (UNEP/EA.4/L.11) gives a boost to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and to the land degradation neutrality (LDN) target in the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), also highlighting the need for Member States to engage in developing a strong post-2020 global biodiversity framework. Specifically, it requests UNEP to support Member States in strengthening ecosystem resilience, and to develop and build on sustainable wildlife-based economies, as well as explore “innovative financing” for ecosystem restoration and conservation.
- **On Resource Efficiency, Chemicals and Waste** UNEA-4 adopted resolutions on strengthening global governance on marine plastic litter and microplastics (UNEP/EA.4/L.7), solid waste management (UNEP/EA.4/L.8), [sound management of chemicals and waste](#) (UNEP/EA.4/L.9), addressing single-use plastics pollution (UNEP/EA.4/L.10), and [sustainable nitrogen management](#) (UNEP/EA.4/L.16). The latter decision on sustainable nitrogen management is seen as key in addressing an important issue for agriculture and water quality worldwide.
- **Environmental Governance:** A resolution on gender equality, human rights and the empowerment of women and girls in environmental governance (UNEP/EA.4/L.21) requests UNEP to facilitate the collection of disaggregated data on progress made in achieving gender equality in environmental policies and programmes, and to report back to UNEA-5.

(ii) UNEP’s Marine and Coastal Strategy (2021-2024) includes a number of guiding objectives to help inform the strategy, namely:

1. Reduce threats to marine biodiversity and restore damaged ecosystems;
2. Promote sustainable consumption and production systems and facilitate circular economy transition to combat marine pollution.
3. Accelerate response to the threat of climate change, enhancing adaptation and resilience of ocean ecosystems and coastal communities;
4. Enhance monitoring and assessment of the status of coastal marine ecosystems;
5. Enhance knowledge management to facilitate access to existing knowledge, information and data, including indicators and metrics to be used in assessments.

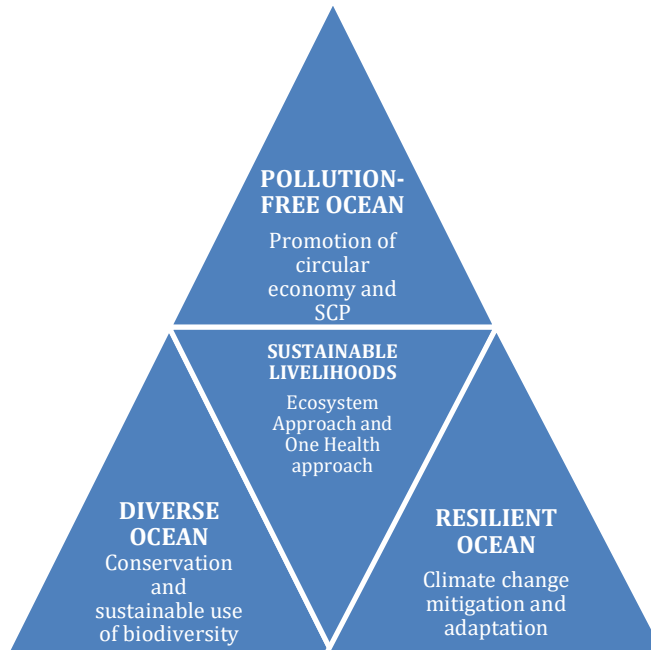
Specific to Marine biodiversity the **UNEP Marine and Coastal Strategy specifies the following strategic objectives**

(i) establish knowledge-base on marine and coastal ecosystems to inform policies on human activities affecting their functions; (ii) Support policies and strategies enabling integrated management and sustainable use of marine and coastal ecosystem services and (iii) Innovate financing instruments and initiatives facilitating sustainable blue economy transition.

²⁵ convened in Nairobi, Kenya, from 11-15 March 2019

(iii) Regional Seas Strategic Directions.

The overlying objective of the **Regional Seas Strategic Directions (RSSD)** is to achieve a diverse, resilient and pollution-free ocean that supports equitable sustainable livelihoods. This includes climate stability, living in harmony with nature, ocean sustainability and operating within planetary boundaries. The RSSD also brings together commitments and activities of ocean-related aspects of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and other relevant voluntary instruments and provides further clarity on the contribution of Regional Seas Conventions to UN Decades on: Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030), Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030), and Action towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.



Figure

1. Integration between thematic policy priorities, promoting the ecosystem approach to anchor the strategic direction to the sustainable development realm.

- (iv) **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.** The 2030 Agenda sets the overall context for the strategy, and its implementation will assist Contracting Parties in meeting the Sustainable Development Goals. The strategy is closely linked to Goal 14, while also recognizing that ocean-related issues are not restricted to Goal 14, but integral to the full range of Goals and those related to food security, clean water and sanitation, freshwater and terrestrial ecosystems, poverty reduction, good jobs, economic growth, sustainable consumption and production, and climate resilience.
- (v) **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.** UNCLOS establishes the wider global commitment on sustainable management of marine resources, several provisions of which have been considered in this strategy²⁶.
- (vi) **SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway.** The Secretariat is contributing to the ocean-related section of the SAMOA Pathway by addressing marine pollution and protection of coral reef and other vulnerable marine ecosystems.

Other relevant multilateral environmental agreements include United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and those under the auspices of other international organizations, notably those administered by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) on shipping and dumping issues (such as the International

²⁶ (V and VII of the Convention on management obligations of countries within exclusive economic zones and on the high seas with respect to conservation and utilization of living resources; XII of the Convention provides for the protection and preservation of the marine environment through actions by countries to implement measures to prevent, reduce and control pollution of the marine environment, reduce the risk of introducing alien species, fostering global and regional cooperation, investment in research and the exchange of information and data.

Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as modified by the Protocol of 1978 relating thereto) and the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) at global and regional levels.

The CEP Strategy will strive to continue integration of relevant global and regional commitments and synergies to enhance communication between different protocols and MEAs²⁷ with a view to identifying opportunities for complementary collaboration on issues of mutual interest and concern.

The Secretariat of the Cartagena Convention (CAR/RCU) will continue to ensure synergies within the governance network of the Cartagena Convention and more particularly with its Regional Activity Centers and RANs²⁸ for coherent and efficient delivery. It will also stay engaged in relevant global efforts and implications it might have on the work of the Secretariat such as ongoing discussions on (i) governance of areas beyond national jurisdiction and (ii) the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects, which led to the first World Ocean Assessment.

The Secretariat's thematic program on marine biodiversity (SPAW) supports countries of the WCR in meeting objectives of the global cluster of biodiversity conventions and initiatives such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar), the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), as well as the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI). In addition, through the pollution sub-programme, the Secretariat supports the implementation of the Chemical cluster of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) including the Basel, Rotterdam, Minamata and Stockholm Conventions. These all have secretariats under the auspices of UNEP. Other Conventions and Agreements governed by the International Maritime Organization such as the London Convention, Ballast Water Convention and MARPOL Conventions further support the objectives of the two technical sub-programmes of the Secretariat.

2.3.2 Regional framework feeding into the strategy

Several thematic and management strategies and strategic action plans have been developed by and/or are in the process of being developed by the Secretariat and regional partners which will complement this strategy. These are listed as **Annex XXX**. The Cartagena Convention - CEP Strategy will therefore form the framework for mandates provided by Contracting Parties to the Secretariat for meeting the obligations of the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols.

- i. **The Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean**, at their XXII Meeting²⁹ in February 2021 took a number of key decisions on pollution, chemicals and waste, climate change, biodiversity and ecosystem restoration. The Regional [Coalition on Circular Economy](#) was also launched at this occasion; as a regional platform to enhance **inter-ministerial, multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder cooperation**, to support the transition to the circular economy with a life cycle thinking approach, foster long-term economic productivity and green jobs, while tackling global challenges like climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss.
- ii. **UNEP: Regional and Sub-Regional Offices in the Wider Caribbean.** The Regional Office for Latin American and the Caribbean has initiated the development of a regional strategy to support the implementation of UNEP's Programme of Work in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- iii. **Caribbean Sea Commission.** The Association of Caribbean States (ACS) and its partners have been pursuing the Caribbean Sea Initiative since 1998 mainly through promotion of the UN General Assembly Resolution "Towards the Sustainable Development of the Caribbean Sea for Present and Future Generations." It was first adopted in 1999 and subsequently reported upon, revised, and readopted (Resolution 65.155). In the process, the Caribbean Sea Commission (CSC) was established in 2008 to promote and oversee the sustainable use of the Caribbean Sea and potentially provide a regional harmonization of ocean governance policy and a coordination function for the

²⁷ Especially with those MEAs where MoUs foresee collaboration

²⁸ On issues such as Reporting and Project Development for example

²⁹ hosted by Barbados and the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP)
<https://www.coalicioneconomiacircular.org/en/elementor-7/inicio-english/>

wider Caribbean region. The CSC has adopted the Large Marine Ecosystem (LME) governance framework as its working model for regional ocean governance arrangements.

- iv. **Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas and Caribbean Community Common Fisheries Policy.** The 2001 Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas established the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), including the Common Market and Single Economy Organisation. CARICOM promotes development of policies for the protection of the environment, efficient management, and sustainable use of natural resources, and sustainable development. In ensuring “the prudent and rational management of the resources of Member States,” the treaty recognizes both the “precautionary” and the “polluter pays” principles. It also recognizes principles related to preventative action, rectification of environmental damage at source, and the need to protect the region from harmful effects of hazardous materials transported, generated, disposed of, or shipped through or within the Caribbean community.
- v. **CARICOM’s Draft Environment and Natural Resources Policy Framework.** This articulates a regional approach to the sustainable management of the environmental and natural resources of member states. It reflects an awareness that unsustainable use of resources could undermine regional sustainable development options within the context of the 2030 SDGs. It proposes a structure for balancing the need to exploit land, air, water, and oceans for economic development with the maintenance of healthy environments. As an umbrella policy framework, it provides the guiding principles for planning the protection, conservation, and sustainable use of the environmental and natural resources of the CARICOM member states.
- vi. **CCAD Regional Environmental Strategy Framework 2015-2020.** The CCAD strategy responds in a comprehensive manner to the three framework conventions of the United Nations Organization: The United Nations Framework Convention on the Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention to Combat Desertification and Drought. Strategic action b) focuses on Forests, Seas and Biodiversity. Some key elements of this strategic line consider an approach that captures the natural wealth terrestrial and marine, ecosystem benefits, including the restoration of ecosystems, genetic variability, mangrove conservation, sustainable fisheries, and specific actions that allow the ordering of coastal marine space such as the restoration of wetlands, control and maritime surveillance control of ecosystems and compliance with international conventions such as the Convention on Biological Diversity.

In addition to these policy agreements, there are important regional and sub-regional programs that provide environmental policy guidance and promote better practices for the marine environment. A number of these have resulted in concrete, region-wide multi-partner projects that respond to specific coastal and marine issues in the WCR.

3. REGIONAL STRATEGY

In a region with such a large and diverse constituency, a regional approach to ocean governance is essential to achieve sustainability while enabling synergies and cooperation to avoid duplication and ensuring efficient use and leveraging of financial, technical and human resources. The Cartagena Convention is considered today to be one of the most developed and innovative cooperative arrangements and a valuable framework for decision makers in the region.

This strategy for the Cartagena Convention CEP is expected to contribute to the following Vision and Mission while conforming to the principles outlined in 3.2 below.

3.1 Vision and Mission

(i) Vision: Healthy, resilient and biologically diverse coastal and marine ecosystems of the Wider Caribbean Region provide a secure supply of ecosystem goods and services for human well-being and livelihoods and contribute to sustainable development/SDGs for the benefit of present and future generations.

(ii) Mission: To facilitate integrated ecosystem-based management through the control, reduction and prevention of marine pollution and the conservation, sustainable use and restoration of coastal and marine resources and habitats.

The Vision and Mission are achieved through the effective implementation of the Cartagena Convention³⁰, and delivering on its Protocols and Action Plans, as well as Strategic Action Plans (SAPs) relevant to the WCR.

3.2 Principles

The strategy will be guided by the following principles:

Building on the previous CEP strategy, continue “to ensure the achievement of the following general objectives: (i) sustainability of the resource base; (ii) equitable distribution of benefits from resource utilization; (iii) preservation of environmental quality and protection of human health; (iv) mitigation of natural and technological hazards; (v) maintenance and enhancement of ecosystem productivity; (vi) maintenance of habitat protection and biological diversity; (vii) assessing the environmental impact of urban growth; (viii) preservation and development of cultural integrity; (ix) strengthened regional co-operation; and (x) participation of the region in global environmental management efforts. »

And more specifically “To provide integrated planning mechanisms at the national and regional levels that will allow for the rational utilization of marine and coastal resources”.

This strategy is also guided by the principles of UNEP’s Oceans Strategy on enhancing ecosystem-based management; applying the precautionary principle, promoting source-to-sea approaches in management of land-based pollution; expanding sustainable consumption and production patterns; fostering natural capital considerations in resource management; taking the polluter pays principle into consideration where appropriate and strengthening the science-policy interface. These principles are well enshrined across the Sustainable Development Goals.

A. Ecosystem-based management approach

The strategy embodies all core principles of ecosystem-based management, which aims to manage in an integrated and precautionary manner human uses and their cumulative impacts on marine and coastal ecosystem functioning on an ecological scale, rather than confined to jurisdictional boundaries. Adopting this approach will address the shortfalls of traditional single-sector approaches and provide a comprehensive, integrated approach to the management of human-ecosystem interactions. Basing management decisions on the ecosystem entails that planning needs to be adapted to the dynamics of the whole ecosystem to at least preserve, if not to enhance, their potential to delivering services and benefits society depends upon.

B. Source-to-Sea approach

Unsustainable activities and poor land management practices result in pollution and eutrophication and degrade freshwater ecosystems and marine and coastal ecosystems in receiving waters. The strategy advocates the application of source-to-sea or ridge-to-reef management principles to mitigate pollution and maintain water quality and ecosystem health from points of origin to zones of discharge within the marine environment. Source-to-sea management fosters the coordination of action across all sectors of the continuum in pollution mitigation including sea-based sources of pollution.

C. Sustainable consumption and production

The strategy will contribute to the decoupling of economic growth from environmental degradation in the marine environment by applying life cycle-based approaches, taking all phases of resource use into account, based on the use of fewer resources, including energy and water, to produce less waste and pollution, by promoting and enabling sustainable economic and trade practices, using various tools, including sustainability certification, standards and traceability systems, and by strengthening policy and governance frameworks.

³⁰ Article 3 on General Provisions and process and Article 4 on broad actions needed to prevent, reduce and control pollution and to ensure sound management and use of marine biodiversity.

D. Natural capital approach

This principle acknowledges that nature provides innumerable services that underpin food security, human well-being and, indeed, the global economy. These services, as often the case in the marine environment, are rarely valued in terms that can be entered into national economic accounts and national planning processes and, in lacking visible or equivalent monetary value, are often traded away inappropriately. Biodiversity and ecosystem services in marine and coastal environments must be incorporated into policy and decision-making processes, and better described in terms that decision-makers can understand and use.

E. Science-policy interface

The strategy seeks to reinforce the application of scientific evidence on the health, functions and value of ecosystems, without prejudice to the long-standing recognition of the precautionary principle, to trigger needed policy reform at the national and regional levels to support comprehensive ecosystem-based management and improve sustainable consumption and production patterns. Greater scientific understanding of human stressors and their implications on ecosystem functions can enhance the design and implementation of effective and adaptive management measures to increase ecosystem sustainability and resilience to global climate change.

F. Resilience Building

The strategy recognises the need for overall system resilience to build resilient societies, economies and ecosystems to address the vulnerability conditions of the WCR. Thus, inclusive, integrated resilience building as an umbrella principle is to guide the design of policies, institutions, and regulatory instruments of the Cartagena Convention network.

G. Gender mainstreaming

This principle includes (a) equitable access to resources, (b) inclusive governance, (c) increased resilience towards sustainable and equitable natural resource-based growth, and (d) provide opportunities for decision making at all levels; will be an integral part of the implementation of the CEP and in establishing programme indicators and targets³¹. Globally, evidence shows clear correlation between gender equality and positive environmental outcomes in view of women's active role in the conservation and restoration of natural resources from which they derive livelihoods³². In this regard, achieving a sustained and inclusive environmental governance impact, requires the adoption of a holistic approach which integrates gender into all stages of strategies, programmes and projects from design to implementation to monitoring and evaluation of impacts.

H. One Health for all

During this pandemic time, it has been clear the implications of living in a world where population is growing and expanding to new lands, climate conditions are changing, ecosystems are suffering a critical degradation and that people, animals and plants are moving all around the globe. Thus, many governments and institutions are promoting the One Health concept defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as: An approach to designing and implementing programs, policies, legislation and research in which multiple sectors communicate and work together to achieve better public health outcomes. In the post pandemic world, all the agendas must be connected in one way or another to the One Health approach.

I. Public participation

The Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America, known as Escazu Agreement is unique because it is an environmental and a human rights regional agreement for the 33 countries of the Latin America and the Caribbean Region, and it establishes the principles

³¹ https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/7642/-Gender_equality_and_the_environment_A_Guide_to_UNEPs_work-2016Gender_equality_and_the_environment.pdf.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y; Manoa David Owino 2017, Gender and environmental management: Who's role? Who's responsibilities? World Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities 3 (3), 61-63.

³² <https://www.wri.org/blog/2016/03/if-you-care-about-environment-you-should-care-about-gender>

and provisions for public participation. It is the Latin America and Caribbean region's first environmental treaty, the only binding agreement adopted thus far that has emerged from the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), and it is the first in the world to contain provisions on human rights defenders in environmental matters (ECLAC,2020, Jan. 22).

3.3 Overall and Strategic objectives

Overall Objectives are to:

- Enhance the effectiveness of the Cartagena Convention as the regional platform for supporting integrated ocean governance, and strengthening the Secretariat as the primary mechanism to support its Parties and Member States in integrating ocean related issues with the broader development agenda for the region;
- Ensure that the relevant SDGs and their targets, the post-2020 global biodiversity goals and targets, and other commitments (UNEA) are achieved, through concrete actions to effectively manage and reduce threats and enhance the sustainable use of marine and coastal resources;
- Contribute to strengthening coordination and synergies of the regional governance framework provided by the Cartagena Convention network; and
- Contribute to the Building Forward Better approach³³ by supporting new, sustainable, business models, enabling a just and equitable transition to nature-based solutions and circular economy approaches.

The Strategy pursues four strategic objectives:

- (a) **Strategic objective 1:** Support policies, strategies and action plans that enable the integrated ecosystem-based management and sustainable use of coastal and marine resources; - **Marine Biodiversity Conservation and Management;**
- (b) **Strategic objective 2:** Support the integration of innovative pollution prevention and reduction tools, innovative/appropriate technologies including circular economy approaches, waste as a resource and sustainable consumption and production – **Pollution Prevention, Reduction and Control;**
- (c) **Strategic objective 3:** Support knowledge-base to enhance regional and national policy-making through the Cartagena Convention framework for the sustainable management of coastal and marine resources of the Wider Caribbean Region – **Knowledge Management, Coordination and Communications;**
- (d) **Strategic objective 4:** Implement innovative institutional, policy, legislative and sustainable governance frameworks, financing programmes, projects, instruments and initiatives to facilitate the effective implementation of the Convention, its Protocols, Strategies and Action plans to contribute towards the sustainable development of the WCR and a transition to sustainable ocean-based economies. – **Ocean-Based Economies Governance and Circularity.**

Specific focus areas for each strategic objective are presented below and form the basis for the foreseen outcomes, outputs and assumptions described in section 3.4.

The strategy puts emphasis on coordination, integration and cooperation supported by the ecosystem-based management approach, the cross-cutting character of circularity, sustainable consumption and production (SCP) and communication across all thematic programmes of the CEP Strategy.

Strategic objective 1: Support policies, strategies and action plans that enable the integrated ecosystem-based management and sustainable use of coastal and marine resources; - **Marine Biodiversity Conservation and Management;**

Marine and coastal ecosystem services are under threat from human activities that degrade ecosystem health and functions. The situation is exacerbated by uncoordinated sector policies and management arrangements.

³³ LAC Ministerial and the “UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19”

There are often trade-offs between the benefits generated by various human activities and their cumulative environmental impacts. Integrated policies and management across sectors have the potential to reduce undesirable sector impacts and enable the sustainable use of the system overall, balancing the provision of ecosystem services to various users at appropriate spatial scales. Ecosystem-based coastal and marine planning and management is a key approach to ensure long-term ecosystem service delivery and resilience to environmental change. This will support Contracting Parties in meeting their obligations under the Cartagena Convention and more specifically under the SPAW Protocol and related strategies and action plans.

The indicative list of potential **Partners** for the implementation of the above Strategic Outcomes and Indicative Key Outputs could include:

Strategic objective 2: Integration of innovative pollution prevention and reduction tools, innovative/appropriate technologies including circular economy approaches, waste as a resource and sustainable consumption and production - Pollution Prevention, Reduction and Control.

For the prevention, control and reduction of pollution from land and marine-based sources, the strategy will support the development and implementation of innovative technologies, tools and mechanisms including adoption of sustainable consumption and production principles at all levels, development of activities that use waste as a resource and develop circular economy approaches to reduce the impacts of pollution. The general public, private sector and civil society will be encouraged to transition to sustainable lifestyles through educational and awareness-raising campaigns, including the Clean Seas and the Beat Pollution campaigns, the Sustainable Lifestyles and Education programme and other initiatives, thus influencing the demand for more sustainable products and services that result in reduced pollution of the coastal and marine environment. This will support Contracting Parties in meeting their obligations under the Cartagena Convention and more specifically under the LBS and Oil Spills Protocols and related strategies and action plans.

The indicative list of potential **Partners** for the implementation of the above Strategic Outcomes and Indicative Key Outputs is to be found in the detailed section below.

(e) ***Strategic objective 3: Support knowledge-base to enhance regional and national policy-making through the Cartagena Convention framework for the sustainable management of coastal and marine resources of the Wider Caribbean Region – Knowledge Management, Coordination and Communications;***

This objective will be addressed through facilitating enhanced integrated management of coastal and marine resources within the Cartagena Convention network of Parties, Member States and Territories of the WCR, RACs, RANs, partners.

It includes the review of the WCR environment, knowledge, information and communication and more specifically increased generation, dissemination and use of quality data and information through fully participatory processes. Focuses is not only on training and increasing awareness but to promote attitude and behavior change. The science-based assessment of the functioning of coastal and marine ecosystems and the pressure and drivers that lead to changes in their health will inform the development of appropriate national and regional policies to address those pressure and drivers. The Secretariat, through a strengthened Knowledge Management and Communications Programme and in close coordination with the technical programmes on pollution and marine biodiversity will support the generation and dissemination of data and information for targeted audiences.

This will also assist in contributing monitoring data to UNEP as part of the global monitoring of targets 14.1., 14.2 and 14.5 and others, as appropriate, and in ensuring that data and information from the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR) contribute to Voluntary National Reports and SDG databases through cooperation and agreements with other regional organizations and SDG Focal Points. The State of Convention Area (SOCAR) and State of Marine Habitats Reports produced by the Secretariat and the State of Marine Ecosystems and Associated Economies (SOME) represent frameworks through which data generation and information dissemination will take place.

The Aarhus Convention on Access to information and public participation in decision-making and Access to Justice in environmental matters³⁴ and the UNEP World Environment Situation Room as a platform that implements the Big Data Initiative will also contribute to this strategic objective and represent essential frameworks and knowledge instrument to support progress on delivering the environmental dimension of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

The indicative list of potential **Partners** for the implementation of the above Strategic Outcomes and Indicative Key Outputs is to be found in the detailed section below.

Strategic objective 4: Support the implementation of innovative governance, institutional, policy, legislative and sustainable financing programmes, projects, instruments and initiatives through the Convention, its Protocols and Action plans ***to facilitate a transition to sustainable lifestyles and ocean-based economies. Governance, Circularity and Ocean-Based Economies***

In the context of the CEP, ocean governance involves building on the experience of the Cartagena Convention Secretariat and its supporting framework to strengthen regional cooperation, coordination and coherence to ensure efficient decision making and integrated management and a results-based approach to the management of the use of coastal and marine resources in the Wider Caribbean Region. Traditional investments in the ocean economy have often resulted in negative impacts and externalities, damaging the health of marine and coastal ecosystems and threatening their long-term sustainability. Sustainable investments need to meet the triple bottom line of providing environmental, social and economic benefits. Through this approach, the intended impact will be healthy and productive marine and coastal ecosystems, while ensuring job creation, business development and sustained economic growth. For sustained economic benefits while protecting human health and ecosystem goods and services, maintaining healthy and resilient ocean and coastal ecosystems must be a core priority

These four Strategic Objectives will guide the CEP strategy, with the first two specific objectives referring to the current thematic pollution and marine biodiversity work programmes coordinated by the Secretariat, the third and fourth supporting and enabling the governance framework of the Cartagena Convention with a more coordinated and integrated delivery of the biennial work plans and budgets. Tables 1 and 2 below provide additional details on programme objectives, indicators, related UNEP programmes, protocol obligations and relevant SDG targets.

³⁴ Aarhus, Denmark, June 1998, <https://unece.org/DAM/env/pp/documents/cep43e.pdf>

3.4 The Cartagena Convention network and the CEP strategy

The below Figure depicts the three thematic pillars, reflecting the objectives and Protocols of the Cartagena Convention with its transversal horizontal programmes and regional governance framework supporting regional cooperation and coherent delivery towards the 2030 agenda and other relevant global commitments.

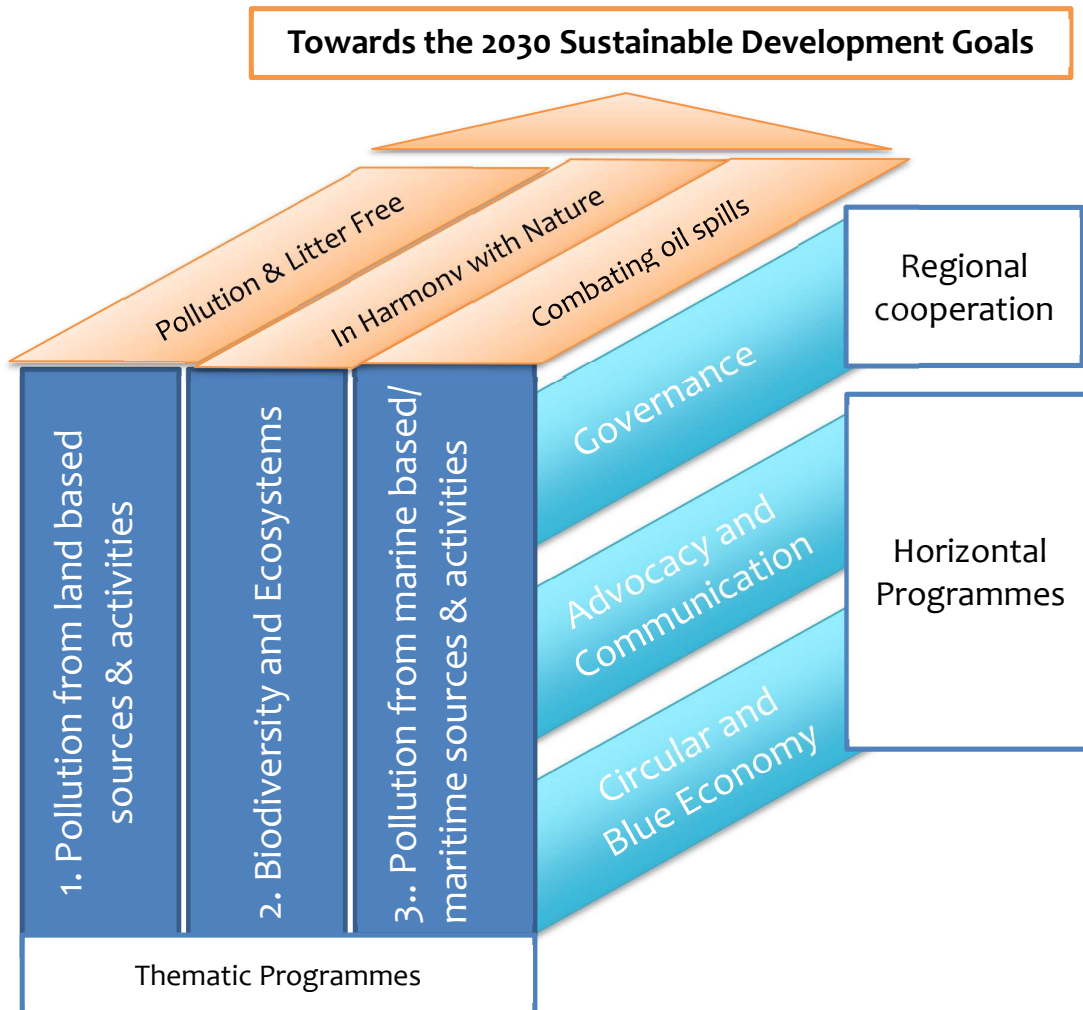
Three thematic sub programmes:

- (i) Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities
- (ii) Marine Biodiversity and Ecosystems Management
- (iii) Marine based/Maritime Activities

Two enabling and cross-cutting horizontal programmes:

- (i) Advocacy and Communication,
- (ii) Circularity, SCP and blue economy

The structure is solidified through foundational regional cooperation facilitated by the Secretariat in the framework of the regional governance structure provided by the Cartagena Convention framework.



3.4.1. POLLUTION PROGRAMME: TOWARDS A POLLUTION AND LITTER FREE WIDER CARIBBEAN REGION

The goal of the thematic Sub-Programme on the Assessment and Management of Environmental Pollution (AMEP) is to prevent, reduce, and control pollution of the coastal and marine environment from land and marine-based sources thereby enabling countries of the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR) to meet their obligations under the Protocols Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol) and Co-operation in Combating Oil Spills (Oil Spills Protocol).

The programme focuses on pollution issues prioritized by Contracting Parties, such as marine litter and microplastics, wastewater management, the reduction of nutrients pollution from non- point sources including poor agricultural practices, and ocean acidification. It also encourages greater transboundary collaboration with other Regional Seas Programmes and Action Plans such as has occurred to date with the OSPAR Commission on marine litter and the Abidjan Convention Secretariat on sargassum.

The specific objectives are to:

- (a) Promote the Cartagena Convention and in particular the LBS Protocol as a platform for increasing collaboration with, and implementation of, pollution prevention, control and reduction activities in the Wider Caribbean Region;
- (b) Support countries in their commitment to the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular through Goal 14, to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development and 14.1 to, by 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, particularly from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution;
- (c) Support initiatives to control, reduce and prevent marine pollution from priority sources and activities;
- (d) Support the implementation of recommendations from the State of Convention Area (SOCAR) Report on Marine Pollution and the associated Regional Nutrients Pollution Reduction and Regional Marine Litter Strategies;
- (e) Contribute to building national and regional capacities for improved monitoring and integrated ecological assessment of marine pollution;
- (f) Promote the use of integrated solutions and tools for addressing pollution including Ecosystem Based-Management approaches to address pollution prevention and marine biodiversity conservation and management that reflect greater integration of the AMEP and SPAW Sub- Programmes.
- (g) Support policy harmonization and management reforms towards improved ocean governance and achieving the targets identified in the Strategic Action Programmes (SAPs) for the Gulf of Mexico (GoM), Caribbean Sea and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems (CLME).
- (h) Support countries in the development of institutional, policy, legal and financial frameworks, mechanisms and instruments necessary for the long-term implementation of the Cartagena Convention and in particular the Land-Based Sources of Marine Pollution Protocol.
- (i) Ensure synergies with relevant decisions of other decision-making fora including UNEA Resolutions and Decisions of Meetings of Ministers with responsibility for the environment, wastewater, agriculture and solid waste.

Objectives, Expected Outcomes and Indicators for the Pollution Programme

Overarching Objective: 1. To strengthen the ability of Contracting Parties to the LBS and Oil Spills Protocols to implement pollution reduction and prevention measures,

LBS Protocol Obligations Articles III, VI, VII, XII, XIV

Expected outcomes:

- Increased capacity of countries to develop and implement local and/or national plans of action for pollution prevention, reduction and control.s

Overarching Objective: 2. To empower stakeholders in their policy and decision making by providing scientific information and knowledge for the Wider Caribbean Region,

LBS Protocol Obligations Articles III, VI, VII, XII, XIV

- Link to Strategic Objective 3

Expected outcomes:

- Enhanced regional and national decision-making and policy-making for improving the management of coastal and marine resources of the Wider Caribbean Region through increased generation, dissemination and use of quality data and information and participatory processes.
- Increased capacity and financing opportunities of states and other stakeholders to assess, manage and reduce risks to human health and the environment posed by land and marine-based sources of marine pollution and associated activities including from chemicals and wastes.

THEME A. Programme Coordination and Management

Strategic objectives:

1. To strengthen regional and national governance mechanisms, resource availability, and capacity for the implementation of and compliance with the Cartagena Convention, the Oil Spills and LBS Protocols, and approved national and regional strategies and action plans for pollution prevention, reduction and control;
2. To mobilize additional resources for implementation of unfunded AMEP projects and activities;
3. To strengthen synergies and collaboration among RACs, international and regional partners, donor organizations and projects active in the Wider Caribbean region and enhance broad stakeholders' participation.

Expected outcomes:

1. New ratifications for the LBS Protocol;
2. New MOUs concluded and/or updated;
3. Joint capacity building/training and/or knowledge management activities;
4. Public/private sector partnerships.

THEME B: Land and Marine Based Sources of Pollution

Ecological Objectives:

1. Pollution from Land and Marine-Based Sources cause no significant impact on coastal and marine ecosystems and human health;
2. New and emerging land-based pollution related problems are identified and tackled, as appropriate.

Strategic objectives:

1. To control, prevent and reduce marine pollution from land and marine-based sources.

Expected outcomes:

1. Countries with pollution related policies, legislation and/or regulations updated and/or developed;
2. New and/or updated guidelines on marine pollution;
3. Training and Capacity Building Workshops
4. Increase in Contracting Parties with:
 - (a) National Plans of Actions developed to address marine pollution, wastewater, marine litter and nutrients

- (b) National/Pilot Projects focusing on pollution reduction activities

THEME C: Monitoring and Integrated Ecosystem Assessment

Ecological Objectives:

1. Pollution from land and marine-based sources cause no significant impact on coastal and marine ecosystems and human health;
2. New and emerging land-based pollution related problems are identified and tackled, as appropriate.

Strategic objectives:

1. To control, prevent and reduce marine pollution from land and marine-based sources.

Expected outcomes:

1. Increase in the number of countries with national recreational water quality monitoring programmes;
2. Increase in the number of countries with system for classification of recreational waters for effluent discharges;
3. Increase in the number of Training and Capacity-Building Workshops.

THEME D. Ecosystem Based Management Approaches

Long-Term Impacts:

1. Sustainable use and development of coastal and marine resources through reduced impacts of land and marine-based pollution;
2. Incorporation of environmental considerations into decision-making processes on the development and use of coastal and marine resources;
3. Coherence is achieved between public and private initiatives and between decisions by the public authorities, which affect coastal and marine ecosystems;
4. Integration of Pollution (LBS) and Marine Biodiversity (SPAW) sub-programme areas through EBM approach.

Expected outcomes:

1. Increase in the number of countries implementing EBM Projects;
2. Increase in the number of Case Studies and/or Experience Nodes on EBM;
3. Increase in the number of Countries supported with Decision Support tools;
4. Increase in the training Courses/Webinars on EBM or related integrated planning tools.

Strategic objectives:

1. To reduce anthropogenic pressures/pollution on coastal and marine areas in order to prevent and/or reduce their degradation;
2. To ensure preservation of the integrity of coastal and marine ecosystems through the control, reduction and prevention of marine pollution;
3. To adopt measures to reduce the negative impact of natural hazards and in particular of climate change which may exacerbate polluting impacts;
4. To ensure that activities in terrestrial, coastal and nearshore marine areas do not increase marine pollution.

THEME E. Knowledge Management and Communications

Strategic objectives:

1. To strengthen knowledge and awareness on best practices, lessons learned and appropriate technologies for the control, reduction and prevention of marine pollution;
2. To compile, analyze and present pollution related data and information for informing policy and decision-making in the Wider Caribbean Region;
3. To ensure visibility of the LBS Protocol, its role and achievements and the work of the Secretariat, LBS RACs and RAN and Regional Nodes;
4. To improve national reporting on sources, status, impacts and responses on marine pollution in the Wider Caribbean Region;
5. To facilitate greater engagement and networking with Governments, Civil Society, Donors, Youth, Private Sector and General Public on marine pollution issues.

Expected outcomes:

1. Increase in number of new reports, videos, fact sheets and publications;
2. Increase in number of press releases and news stories;
3. Increase in number of promotional events;
4. Increase in number of decision support tools on pollution developed and/or piloted;

Implementation Partners

The indicative list of potential **Partners** for the implementation of the above Strategic Outcomes and Indicative Key Outputs of the AMEP POLLUTION programme could include:

- **Collaboration on pollution** monitoring and assessment has taken place through the formal establishments of Regional Activity Centres on Marine Pollution and Oil Spills as well as a Regional Activity Network of technical agencies involved in pollution research and monitoring.
- UNEP Global Programme of Action (GPA) UNEP Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC) and Caribbean Sub-Regional Office (CSRO)
- Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) International Maritime Organization (IMO) National Oceanographic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
- Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Sub-commission for the Caribbean and adjacent regions (IOCARIBE)
- Global Environment Facility (GEF)
- Water Centre for the Humid Tropics of Latin America and the Caribbean [el Centro del Agua del Trópico Húmedo para América Latina y el Caribe (CATHALAC)]
- Organization of Eastern Caribbean (OECS) Caribbean Water and Sewage Association (CAWASA) The Nature Conservancy
- Global Water Partnership – Caribbean and Central America
- Marine and Coastal Research Institute [el Instituto de Investigaciones Marinas y Costeras (INVEMAR)] US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- UN Economic Commission for Latin America (UN ECLAC) Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) Caribbean Water and Wastewater Association (CWWA) Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)
- Association of Caribbean States (ACS) UN Development Programme (UNDP) United Nations University, Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH) Basel Convention Caribbean Regional Centre OSPAR Commission Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI)

Caribbean Nodes and Platforms for UNEP Global Partnerships on Marine Litter, Nutrients and Wastewater (GPML, GPNM, GWII)

The Caribbean Platforms and Nodes for Nutrients, Marine Litter and Wastewater Management established with the support of the UNEP GPA form a framework for this collaboration.

Few sources of pollution affect a wider area or a larger number of people than marine litter. This environmental, human health and aesthetic problem can lead to serious economic losses for coastal communities, the tourism sector, shipping and fishing industries. The Caribbean Node of the Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML-Caribe) was launched in 2016 as a regional node to enhance and operationalize the Caribbean Node on Marine Litter Management in support of the GPML and implementation of the RAPMaLi.

The co-hosts of the node are the Cartagena Convention Secretariat and the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute, a regional not-for-profit organization. The Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (RAPMaLi) for the Caribbean continues to be the framework for supporting the implementation of the Honolulu Strategy and UNEP Global Partnerships on Waste and Marine Litter. The development of a new Regional Marine Litter Strategy will further complement this effort in the Wider Caribbean Region.

The Secretariat will continue to support the further development of the Caribbean Platform for Nutrient Management developed under the GPAs Global Partnership on Nutrient Management (GPNM). This will include

the implementation of the Regional Nutrients Pollution Reduction Strategy & Action Plan as well as feasibility studies, investment plans and business cases relating to nutrient reduction³⁵. It will further collaborate with other UNEP offices and key partners in the development of programmes, projects and activities in support of the blue economy, sustainable consumption and production, green economy, solid and liquid waste management including wastewater as a resource (circular economy) and oceans governance.

³⁵ From UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.39/3

3.4.2. MARINE BIODIVERSITY PROGRAMME: TOWARDS HEALTHY ECOSYSTEMS AND ENHANCED BIODIVERSITY IN THE WIDER CARIBBEAN REGION

The SPAW Protocol entered into force on 18 June 2000, and since the Sixth Meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP6)³⁶.

The objectives of the SPAW Programme are to:

- (a) Increase the number, and improve the management, of national protected areas and species in the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR);
- (b) Support the conservation of threatened and endangered species and the sustainable use of natural resources to prevent them from becoming threatened and endangered;
- (c) Develop a strong regional capability for the coordination of information exchange, training and technical assistance in support of national biodiversity conservation efforts; and
- (d) Coordinate activities with the relevant international biodiversity treaties and initiatives such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar), Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), the Convention on the International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC), and the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) and its global networks.

The coordination of this thematic programme involves to:

- (a) Promote the ratification of, accession to, and effective implementation of the SPAW Protocol;
- (b) Ensure that the formulation and implementation of programme activities satisfy the requirements and needs of the SPAW Protocol and its Contracting Parties;
- (c) Develop coordination, collaboration, and communication mechanisms with other agreements, organizations and programmes relevant to SPAW's objectives;
- (d) Improve coordination of regional programming for protected areas and wildlife in the WCR; and
- (e) Oversee the day-to-day activities and general coordination of the various projects and activities of the SPAW Programme.

Overall objectives and expected outcomes for the Marine Biodiversity Sub- Programme

Objective 1. SPAW Protocol promotion and improved implementation

SPAW Protocol Obligations: Articles 3, 5, 6,10, 16,17, 18, 22

Expected outcomes:

³⁶ with the accession of Honduras in 2018, there are to date seventeen (17) Governments that are Contracting Parties (Belize, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, France, Grenada, Guyana, Honduras, The Netherlands, Panama, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, The Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago, United States of America and Venezuela)

- States increasingly implement their obligations under the Cartagena Convention, the SPAW Protocol and supporting MEAs while achieving their national environmental priority goals, targets and objectives
- States increasingly integrate ecosystem-based management approaches into national development and planning processes
- States increasingly incorporate and facilitate capacity building training and awareness campaigns into national development and planning processes

Objective 2: Improved coordination on SPAW related issues

Expected outcomes:

- States increasingly collaborate with each other, and the Cartagena Convention Secretariat, to address emerging environmental issues

The Regional Strategy and Action Plan for the Valuation, Protection and/or Restoration of Key Marine Habitats in the Wider Caribbean 2021-2030 (RSAP) is one of the tools developed by the Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) Thematic Sub-Programme of the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment) - Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP) to support conservation and sustainable use of coastal and marine ecosystems in the wider Caribbean. The RSAP is aligned with and contributes to implementation of global, regional and sub-regional instruments relating to marine habitats and supports their implementation.

Core operating and guiding principles have been defined for the RSAP as follows:

- Integration of ecological, social, and economic imperatives in decision-making for sustainable use of natural resources and maintenance of the integrity of ecosystems;
- Precautionary principle ensures protection and restoration of ecosystems and ecosystem services where financial gain and investments may result in deterioration of this biodiversity;
- Use of strategies and management interventions at multiple scales – including site, national and landscape scales – to ensure the continued flow of ecosystem goods and services for social and economic development;
- Engagement of, shared ownership and coordination among, the members of the multi-level institutional regional framework for ocean governance;
- Stakeholder participation in coastal and marine governance, including in programme design, implementation, and assessment in order to optimise the knowledge, capabilities, and capacities of the public sector, private sector, civil society and academia;
- Alignment with regional and global compacts to support Member States in their efforts to deliver on existing MEA commitments; and
- Knowledge management, communication and information sharing with stakeholders to strengthen multisectoral participation and foster support for the conservation and sustainable use of coral reefs, mangroves and seagrasses.

Table xxx below sets out the main pillars, goals and objectives of the RSAP.

Table

Pillar 1. Ecosystem health and resilience	Goal 1. Improve ecosystem health, biodiversity and resilience	Objective 1. Enhance ecological integrity and function of coral reefs, mangroves and seagrass beds Objective 2. Decrease and reverse habitat loss Objective 3. Support species diversity and species populations within the three habitats
Pillar 2. Sustainable use	Goal 2. Sustainably use coastal and nearshore marine resources for national and regional development	Objective 4. Mainstream coral reefs, mangroves, seagrasses, and associated sub-ecosystems and essential species in sectoral, national and regional policies and plans as well as national budgets, accounting and reporting systems

		Objective 5. Reduce threats to the habitats from coastal/marine-based sectors and development activities that impact coral reefs, mangroves and seagrasses
Pillar 3. Governance and partnerships	Goal 3. Strengthen regional governance systems and partnerships for the management of the marine/coastal resources of the wider Caribbean	Objective 6. Enhance coordination and reduce conflicts and gaps to improve programme synergies Objective 7. Improve governance of marine and coastal resources at national, sub-regional and regional levels
Pillar 4. Enabling systems and capacity	Goal 4. Strengthen legal and institutional frameworks to effectively manage the marine/coastal resources of the wider Caribbean	Objective 8. Improve science-based decision-making and use of local/traditional knowledge in policy, planning, and management of coastal ecosystems Objective 9. Improve the effectiveness of resource and protected area management institutions and the impact of management interventions Objective 10. Enhance the sustainability of financing mechanisms for protected areas and other site-based conservation efforts

Box XXX on the Strategic Objectives of the SPAW programme and CLME+ supported by the SAP:

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES OF THE SPAW SUB-PROGRAMME AND CLME+ SAP SUPPORTED BY THE RSAP

The RSAP supports the objectives of the SPAW Sub-programme component on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Coastal and Marine Ecosystems to:

- mobilise the political will and actions of Governments and other partners for the conservation and sustainable use of coral reefs and associated ecosystems such as mangroves and seagrass beds; and
- effectively communicate the value and importance of coral reefs, mangroves and seagrass beds, including their ecosystem services, the threats to their sustainability, and the actions needed to protect them (UN Environment 2017).

The strategy also supports the CLME+ SAP: Strategy 4 to enhance the governance arrangements for ecosystem-based management of reefs and associated ecosystems, and especially: Action 4.4 Coordinate and enhance (sub-)regional and national efforts for the conservation of the biodiversity of reef and associated habitats, including through the strengthening of networks of marine protected areas (MPAs) and initiatives for sustainable reef fisheries such as programmes for dealing with alien invasive species or regulating essential species population (biomass) as the herbivores fish and spawning aggregations.

The RSAP also supports Strategy 1 to enhance the regional governance arrangements for the protection of the marine environment.

Implementation Partners

The indicative list of potential **Partners** for the implementation of the above Strategic Outcomes and Indicative Key Outputs of the SPAW thematic programme could include:

- **Collaboration on biodiversity** monitoring and assessments with IUCN, WWF, CBD, RAMSAR and Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), especially with regards to CLME and Gulf of Mexico SAP implementation

Coordination and communication with the following organisations, in keeping with collaborative arrangements established with many of them:

- AIDA
- CRFM
- Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat
- Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES)
- CBD
- CMS
- Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI)
- Inter-governmental Oceanographic Commission's Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions/United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (IOCARIBE/UNESCO)
- ICRI

- IUCN
- INVEMAR
- IWC
- Mesoamerican Reef Fund (MAR Fund)
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
- OSPAR Commission
- Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)
- ReefCheck
- Sargasso Sea Commission
- The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
- The Ocean Foundation
- The Voluntary Scheme for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in Territories of European Overseas (BEST Initiative)
- UNEP - Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC) Action Plan
- UNODC
- World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA)
- FAO-WECAFC
- Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network (WIDECAST)

3.4.3. GOVERNANCE

Governance architecture

The challenges and strategies for developing effective regional, integrating and coordinating mechanisms for governance of the marine ecosystems of the wider Caribbean have been documented (e.g. Mahon et al. 2013; Mahon and Fanning 2019a and 2019b). The institutional framework that governs decision-making for the wider Caribbean reflects a complex arrangement of overlapping mandates involving:

- National governments, their agencies and inter-ministerial committees;
- regional inter-governmental bodies and their technical agencies – such as, Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Central American Integration System (SICA), Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS); Association of Caribbean States (ACS), Organization of American States (OAS);
- United Nations programmes, commissions, regional offices, and sub-regional offices; and
- civil society, academia, resource users and other stakeholders, which are playing increasing roles.

With significant increase in the number and scale of stakeholder institutions as well as related international, regional, sub-regional and national environmental programmes and projects addressing different aspects of sustainable management of coastal and marine resources in the WCR, there has however been limited consolidation of efforts and projects³⁷.

Recognising that weak regional ocean governance³⁸, including legal and institutional frameworks, inadequate environmental quality standards and legislation, was identified as a root cause of the problems facing the region, this strategy aims at strengthening collaborative ocean governance and living marine resources management efforts through the implementation of commitments under the Cartagena Convention framework. This will require close coordination of the Secretariat with key international, regional and national partners, initiatives and projects. A stakeholder mapping and dedicated sustainable finance plan will be part of the implementation plan of the CEP strategy in order to ensure synergies and avoid duplication of efforts and resources and enhance opportunities to leverage sustainable and innovative financing for the Convention.

Proposals for the establishment of a Permanent Coordination Mechanism for the CLME+ SAP and related partnerships are currently under development and will require close integration with the implementation of the CEP. These initiatives are invaluable in supporting the monitoring of progress with ocean sustainability instruments, goals and commitments as well as sustainable financing of ocean governance programmes, projects and activities in the region.

Revitalising regional ocean governance in the WCR

Strengthening and expanding the regional, sub-regional and national-level collaborative governance and living marine resources management efforts is key to the successful and coherent implementation of the CEP strategy.

The CEP strategy is expected to provide the enabling conditions for the Parties, Member States and partners of the Cartagena Convention network including its Secretariat to efficiently deliver key mandates (Articles 4-10) of the Cartagena Convention, Protocols and related legally binding Regional Plans and Action Plans and environmental sustainability in the WCR. It will also support all Contracting Parties to respond to related regional and global commitments and MEAs that the region has committed to.

In the context of the CEP, governance focuses on an integrated and efficiently coordinated support to the Contracting Parties to develop and implement legislation and policies and strengthen institutions to achieve common strategic objectives and achieve compliance with agreed relevant obligations at international (including MEAs) and regional level.

The CEP strategy encourages the creation of interlinkages among the components of the Cartagena

³⁷ Muñoz Sevilla and Le Bail 2017

³⁸ Governance was identified as a root cause of issues in the Transboundary Diagnostic Analyses conducted by the CLME Project (2009-2014) which developed the CLME+ SAP

Convention including RACs, RANs, Focal Points, Partners and Projects where synergies and complementarities among regional partners in the WCR can be leveraged, while respecting the mandates of each entity.

The strategy further envisions the framework for an efficient decision-making process and results-based approach, effective coordination among its partners, the review of the marine and coastal environment of the WCR, knowledge management, advocacy, information and communication, as well as to strengthen collaboration with major actors, programmes and initiatives working in and for the WCR.

The strengthened role of the Cartagena Convention network

The Regional Coordinating Unit (UNEP-CAR/RCU) was established in 1986 in Kingston, Jamaica and is the Secretariat to the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols. Today the activities of the CEP focus mainly on supporting Governments of the Wider Caribbean region in meeting their obligations under the Convention and their protocols with a focus on capacity building, technology transfer, policy, legislative and institutional reforms, information management and exchange, and on environmental education and training. This is done through a range of national, sub-regional and regional programmes, projects and activities as well as direct bilateral technical assistance.

At its core there are three thematic sub programmes: on (i) Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities, (ii) Marine Biodiversity and Ecosystems Management and (iii) Marine based/Maritime Activities that are supported by an enabling Advocacy and Communication programme. Cross-cutting horizontal issues include Circularity, climate change and blue economy.

This multisectoral structure requires effective coordination, mainstreaming and integration which is to be provided by a foundational governance work program to be facilitated by the Secretariat for the Cartagena Convention framework.

The Cartagena Convention Secretariat supports an expanded role for the Regional Activity Centres (RACs) and the Regional Activity Network (RAN) for implementing the Convention, its Protocols, Strategies and Action Plans and relevant and appropriate, related LME Strategic Action Plans (SAPs). This includes proposals for the RACs to develop strategic plans to assist the Secretariat in the implementation of the CEP by mobilising funds and developing new projects and activities as part of a work plan to be approved by Contracting Parties. The Secretariat has established formal working arrangements with the following institutions that form part of the RANs – Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI), Centro del Agua del Trópico Húmedo para América Latina y el Caribe (CATHALAC), Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA), Instituto de Investigaciones Marinas y Costeras (INVEMAR). The Secretariat continues to strengthen partnerships with academic institutions to assist, amongst others, in the generation and analysis of data.

The Secretariat will also continue to seek support from ongoing projects and activities for the effective implementation of the CEP to meet the obligations and commitments under the Cartagena Convention, its Protocols and Action Plans, including assisting countries with monitoring, data collection, analysis and reporting. Particular emphasis is given to ensuring joint delivery within the Cartagena Convention network, creating synergies and avoiding duplication, and greater and more effective pooling of the use of financial and human resources for the sustainable development and protection of the marine and coastal environment of the WCR.

Cross thematic collaboration is taking place through development and joint implementation of projects with other UN agencies, NGOs and Development Banks as well as through formal Memoranda of Cooperation signed with MEA Secretariats and regional fisheries bodies. These collaborations and MOU's will further contribute to joint reporting on the SDG 14 targets, though supporting countries in their monitoring and reporting and their contribution to regular regional assessments.

Achievement objectives:

To achieve the effective implementation of the CEP strategy there is a need for strengthening the regional governance network provided by the Cartagena Convention including:

- (i) the necessary and adequate resources need to be mobilized and leveraged,
- (ii) capacities strengthened for the effective implementation of the Cartagena Convention, its

- Strategies and Action Plans,
- (iii) participative stakeholder involvement enabled,
 - (iv) knowledge based assessments of the WCR environment developed for informed decision making and
 - (v) overall visibility of the CEP/Cartagena Convention ensured.

Strengthening science-policy interface will be a priority, as well as facilitating the increased participation of stakeholders in environmental decision-making processes.

National-to-Regional-Global Collaboration

The Secretariat will serve as regional conduit for the delivery of decision-support tools, guides and assessments that are built around ecosystem-based approaches and developed at the global level. Regional Activity Centres and Networks (RACs and RANs) which comprise of indigenous, national and regional institutions will contribute to the generation and analysis of scientific and policy options to enhance decision-making at the national level. The CEP will serve as an important implementing platform for the UNEP's Oceans strategy, including through capacity-building, knowledge-sharing, pilot activities and the exchange of experiences among policymakers, planners and managers.

RACs and RANs

There are currently four (4) RACs supporting the implementation of the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols: One specifically supporting the Oil Spills Protocol, two the Pollution or LBS Protocol and on the Biodiversity or SPAW Protocol.

1. **Oil Spills Protocol:** The Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Information and Training Center for the Wider Caribbean (REMPEITC-Caribe) in Curacao. For more information, visit their [website](#).
2. **Pollution/LBS Protocol:** The Centre of Engineering and Environmental Management of Coasts and Bays in Cuba.
3. **Pollution/LBS Protocol:** [The Institute of Marine Affairs](#) in Trinidad and Tobago; and
4. **SPAW Protocol:** The Regional Activity Centre for [Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife \(SPAW-RAC\)](#) in Guadeloupe.

As part of the Regional Activity Networks (RANs) the GCFI plays an important role as the co-host with the Cartagena Convention Secretariat for Global Partnership on Marine Litter Caribbean Node to drive the implementation of Regional Action Plan for Marine Litter (RAPMaLi) for the Wider Caribbean Region and is further guided by a Regional Marine Litter Strategy. The GPML-Caribbean Node represents a partnership for national and regional organizations, governments, research, and technical agencies and individuals, that work together to reduce the quality and impact of marine litter in coastal zones of the Wider Caribbean Region.

- As part of the implementation of the CEP, particular emphasis will be given to strengthening the role of the RACs and RANs, the collaboration between them and with the Secretariat in order to most effectively meet the obligations under the Cartagena Convention, its Protocols, Strategies and Action Plans.
- Greater integration of the AMEP and SPAW Work Programmes has been welcome both in terms of cross sectoral synergies and resource efficiency.
- Additional strengthening of collaboration and synergies with RACs and RANs such as RAC REMPEITC and IMO for example, will provide Contracting Parties with technical assistance relating to the remediation of oil contaminated sites, management of oil contaminated wastes, the use of dispersants in oil spill responses, ballast water management, and the management of ship-generated wastes;

3.4.4. Partnerships

Given the complexity of ocean governance in the Wider Caribbean Region, the Secretariat will work both within and outside the United Nations system to advance synergetic and cost-effective collaboration and programmes, ranging from regional governance, normative knowledge generation, innovation and advice to capacity-building and in-country delivery. To this end, the Secretariat has been and will continue to work closely with both environmental institutions and those in other sectors to support national and regional activities. Partnerships with research institutes and non-government organizations across international, regional and national levels is a further priority.

The collaboration with the network of other Regional Seas programs such as the OSPAR Commission and the Abidjan Convention provide important ground for exchange of best practices, lessons learnt and replication where appropriate.

Annex VI provides a list of MOUs between the Cartagena Convention Secretariat and relevant regional and global organizations and MEAs.

(i) United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development

An important priority for the Secretariat will be to support the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030), which is coordinated by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and in collaboration with partners through UN-Oceans, to support collaborative efforts to reverse the cycle of decline in ocean health and to gather ocean stakeholders worldwide behind a common framework that will ensure ocean science can fully support countries in creating improved conditions for sustainable development of oceans.

(ii) Thematic partnerships

The Secretariat will also facilitate direct technical and policy support and ensure complementarity and build synergies with the following thematic partnerships, amongst others:

Coral Reefs: This will involve the continued development of the Caribbean Coral Reef Monitoring Network under the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCMRN-Caribbean) and collaboration with the Global Coral Reef Partnership.

Ecosystem Based Management Approach Regional Nodes: This has been supported through projects such as CLME+ and “Biodiversity for Sustainable Development in the Caribbean” to promote the application of the EBM approach.

Marine Protected Areas: The Caribbean Marine Protected Area Managers Network and Forum (CaMPAM) will be used to strengthen Protected Areas Management in the Wider Caribbean Region and to facilitate the Training of Trainers (ToT) programme.

Marine Mammals: A Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) between the UN Environment/Secretariat to the Cartagena Convention and the International Whaling Commission (IWC) will support projects for developing networks of marine protected areas dedicated to the conservation of marine mammals in the Caribbean.

Ocean Acidification: Partnership with the Ocean Foundation, NOAA and IOC/UNESCO will support ocean acidification monitoring and mitigation projects in key marine ecosystems in the WCR.

Sargassum: The Secretariat and the SPAW RAC will facilitate data and information sharing across the region and promote joint research amongst the Secretariats of the Cartagena and Abidjan Convention, UN Environment GPA and other UN Environment Programmes involved in assessing Sargassum landings in the WCR and West Africa.

Sea Turtles: The Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network (WIDECASST) and Inter-American Convention (IAC) for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles will form regional frameworks for continued work in this area by the Secretariat.

Marine Litter/Plastics: The Caribbean Node for Marine Litter Management co-hosted by the Gulf and Fisheries Institute (GCFI) and the Secretariat as well as the Caribbean Marine Litter Action Plan and Strategy, and the Trash Free Partnership International will form the framework for Marine Litter Management projects and activities. This will support the overall Global Partnership for Marine Litter (GPML). Synergies will be established with other regional and sub-regional Marine Litter and Solid Waste Action Plans.

Wastewater: The Secretariat will continue to work closely with the Caribbean Water and Wastewater Association (CWWA) which was identified as the Caribbean Node for the Global Wastewater Initiative coordinated through the UN Environment GPA.

Nutrients: The Caribbean Platform for Nutrients Management is hosted by the Cartagena Convention Secretariat and together with the Regional Nutrients Pollution Reduction Strategy, Action Plan and Investment Plan will guide future programmes, projects and activities.

Oil Spills & other marine-based pollution: The Regional Activity Centre for Oil Spills – RAC REMPEITC will be the framework for cooperation with the IMO and its Marine Environment Protection Committee for effective implementation of a wide range of measures to prevent and control pollution caused by shipping and other maritime operations.

4 KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION

Effective and targeted coordination, communication, advocacy, education, public engagement and knowledge management will drive progress towards achieving the objectives of this strategy.

A comprehensive Knowledge management and communication strategy will support the implementation of the Cartagena Convention - CEP strategy. Particular emphasis will be given to the importance of sharing and dissemination of the scientific and technical information that the region's comprehensive reports on Marine Pollution (SOCAR) and on Marine Habitats for the wider Caribbean Region have compiled³⁹ in order to bridge that science to policy gap and bring greater awareness to multiple target audiences and to promote and undertake region-wide, integrated reporting, in the form of "the State of the Marine Environment, and its contributions to socio-Economic development in the region" (SOME).

The report on the State of Marine Habitats in the Wider Caribbean (SoMH) and the Regional Strategy and Action Plan for the Valuation, Protection and/or Restoration of Key Marine Habitats in the Wider Caribbean 2021 -2030 (RSAP) are embodiments of the desired institutionalization and mainstreaming of the TDA and SAP under the stewardship of the UNEP's Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP) and within the mandate of the Cartagena Convention and the SPAW Protocol. While preparation of the SoMH and implementation of the RSAP are collective undertakings, the responsibility for driving them lies with the Cartagena Convention Secretariat.

4.1 Facilitating uptake of results

Communication of results, lessons learned, best practices, innovations and challenges to Contracting Parties, partners and donors is critical to the successful implementation of the strategy. Targeted communication on the practical application and customization of new knowledge, management approaches and guidance is essential to enable Parties to tackle key environmental issues and implement solutions that ensure sustainable and resilient oceans and coasts.

Targeted efforts to raise awareness will be achieved through training/outreach and new knowledge-sharing platforms. Capacity-building initiatives, including the training-of-trainers, E-Learning and massive open online courses, with specific focus on oceans and coastal ecosystems, will increase capacities, networking and experience-sharing on ocean-related issues.

The implementation of a reinforced Cartagena Convention - CEP's Knowledge Management Strategy will build on the existing Communication strategy (Annex V) and those developed for specific projects and/or platforms and will enable the design of targeted information and knowledge management products. Key recommendations from reports such as the State of Convention Area Report on Marine Pollution and State of Habitat Report will be communicated using various dissemination mechanisms, networks and approaches relevant to the target

³⁹ with support from the UNDP/GEF CLME+ and UNEP/UNDP/GEF IWeco Projects

audiences including behavior change and promotion of Sustainable Consumption and Production patterns.

Recognising the importance of coordination, sharing of knowledge and collaboration among initiatives, the CLME+ Hub⁴⁰, was developed as an online platform to serve as a global gateway of knowledge, resources and tools to support the achievement of the CLME+ Vision and SAP. This will contribute to the integrated implementation of the CEP strategy as the coordinating governance mechanism for the region.

4.2 Communicating with the wider public and raising awareness

The Secretariat will work to regionalize relevant global campaigns to stimulate wider public engagement and behavioral change. These include the Clean Seas and Beat Pollution campaigns, and “Wild for Life”, a recently launched coral reef campaign. These all play important roles in building awareness, inspiring people to join the cause, and changing destructive practices and behavior across relevant sectors but need to reflect regional and sub-regional socio-economic and cultural realities.

Central to these campaigns are multimedia storytelling and activities to mobilize people around the issue and the solutions – where possible, by showcasing the impact of the work of the Secretariat and partner agencies. The campaigns also provide platforms to form new partnerships with civil society actors and the private sector.

The Secretariat will partner with the media, private sector, community-based, and non-governmental organizations and key actors (including “ambassadors” or “champions”) to demonstrate and advocate for the value of marine and coastal resources and the importance of the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols.

⁴⁰ <https://clmeplus.org/the-clme-hub/>

A knowledge management strategy will be developed building on the existing communications strategy to support the effective implementation of the CEP strategy. Effective communication during the implementation of the Strategy will:

- Raise the visibility and promote the value and impact of the work of the, Contracting Parties, Secretariat, partners and projects actively engaged in coastal and marine management in the WCR;
- Raise awareness and expand the reach of information on the protection and sustainable use of marine and coastal resources in WCR;
- Demonstrate the impact of the work being done by the Secretariat, its projects and partners to encourage replication of efforts and impart lessons learnt, best practices and challenges faced/overcome;
- Increase availability of, and access to data and information on coastal and marine resource management through strengthening of websites, networks and databases and increase stakeholder involvement in the work of the Secretariat; and
- Strengthen the capacity of countries in the region to report on efforts to achieve the SDGs.

Key messages to guide the implementation of the strategy include:

- The marine and coastal resources of the Wider Caribbean Region provide environmental and health benefits to the region's people. These resources are at risk of being destroyed by the impacts of pollution from land-based sources and marine activities, overfishing, unplanned coastal development, invasive species, habitat destruction and climate change.
- Regional Cooperation is required to foster the sustainable use and development of coastal and marine resources in the Wider Caribbean Region and address transboundary issues of common concern through effective, integrated management that allows for economic growth and sustainable livelihoods.
- Circular and blue economy approaches support the sustainable use of coastal and marine resources and long-term sustainable development.
- Sustainable production and consumption and circularity are essential for ecosystems restoration and preservation.
- Sustainable development is dependent on an improved understanding of the value of coastal and marine resources to national development.

5. IMPLEMENTATION AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

5.1 An institutional coordination framework to implement the Strategy

Implementation of the strategy is to be: responsive to regional and national needs, based on participation and partnerships, coherent, inclusive while being adaptive and flexible; result-based and resource-efficient ensuring effective knowledge generation and sharing and enable the Secretariat to better support Contracting Parties in the implementation of CoP Decisions and Obligations of the Convention and its Protocols.

The Cartagena Convention and its Protocols cover a range of marine and coastal environmental protection/management issues implemented with the support of the different work programmes of RACS and RANS and with the help of regional, sub-regional and national partners and projects. These have made important contributions in the context of emerging priority issues such as Sustainable consumption and production and circularity, oceans-related climate change issues, ie. Ocean Acidification and ocean-based economies including Blue Economy approaches. The Secretariat has a central role in the regional coordination of these initiatives and activities to ensure the coherent and effective support to the overall objectives of the Convention and its Protocols and in responding to Decisions of Contracting Parties.

As part of the implementation plan for the CEP, a foundational governance workprogram would complement the existing thematic sub-programs coordinated by the Secretariat.

The governance work program would include the following objectives:

1. To strengthen the existing governance network both within the institutional framework of the Cartagena Convention as well as cross-sectorial and regional coordination in order to enhance participation and engagement of all stakeholders in a transparent decision-making process;
2. To strengthen the capacity of Contracting Parties for the implementation of and compliance with the Cartagena Convention, its Protocols, Regional Strategies and Action Plans;
3. To strengthen synergies, complementarities, and collaboration among international and regional partners and organizations active in the WCR;
4. To promote effective science policy interface mechanisms at regional and national level and strengthen the application of the ecosystem-based approach to the management of human activities with the view to achieving the vision and goals of the Convention;
5. To coordinate the implementation of a comprehensive resource mobilization strategy for the efficient delivery of the work plan of the Cartagena Convention/CEP;

This would lead to the following expected outcomes:

- Effective Implementation by the Contracting Parties of their obligations under Cartagena Convention, its Protocols, and Regional Strategies and Action Plans.
- Systemic strengthening and effective functioning and delivery of CEP decision-making and its advisory bodies.

-
- Coordinated approaches to strengthen capacities for the implementation of the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols.
 - Complementarity and policy coherence ensured within the CEP-Cartagena Convention system's policy and regulatory instruments.
 - Enhanced partnerships and multi-stakeholder engagement, including with the private sector.

Formal MOUs have been developed with several regional agencies including WECAFC, CRFM, OSPESCA and IOCARIBE for enhancing synergies in programme development and implementation. A CEP governance workprogram could be further extend this to joint resource mobilization and joint project development and implementation.

5.2 Sustainable Financing

A long-term, integrated approach to adequate budgetary provisions will be needed to meet the commitments made under the Cartagena Convention, its Protocols, Action plans and ensure effective implementation of work plans.

Current status: The core budget of the Secretariat is supported by member contributions to the Caribbean Trust Fund (CTF); in addition to a small percentage of in-kind contributions. Projects and activities are largely funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), member countries and bilateral donors with in-kind contributions of the Secretariat being used to support project implementation.

The CTF has consistently supported core operational requirements of the Secretariat, provided that all Governments meet their voluntary contributions to the CTF in a timely manner.

Several member states also provide extra-budgetary contributions via e.g. hosting of meetings and seconding of experts. For the funding of the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Information and Training Centre, the Secretariat is cooperating with the private sector.

Specific Goal and Objectives

Goal: To establish a coordinated and systematic resource mobilization strategy as requested by Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention.

Objectives:

- Develop the architecture for Financial Sustainability of the Convention network
- Map out the priorities, needs and gaps to be addressed under the CEP, including the resources available within the Cartagena Convention network and assess those resources required to meet these commitments;
- Develop a framework for ensuring consistent and reliable contributions by Contracting Parties to the Caribbean Trust Fund (CTF)
- Develop a Mapping of donors, IFIs including private sector involvement

-
- Capacity building for Project Development and implementation
 - Facilitate and coordinate matchmaking of needs, projects and donors, IFIs with other IGOs;
 - Enhance private sector partnerships including foundations to access financing opportunities in the areas of pollution, biodiversity, Blue Economy and climate change.

Proposed Approach

This strategy recognizes that donor interventions are being increasingly driven by domestic and foreign policies with several other regional and international agencies involved in the management of coastal and marine resources.

Current and potential new funding sources include among others:

- Bilateral donors
- The Global Environment Facility (GEF)
- Green Climate Financing
- United Nations Multi-Country. Sustainable Development Framework (UN MSDF)
- Development Banks building on relationships already established with the InterAmerican Development Bank (IDB), World Bank (WB) and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)
- The European Union (the EU Green Deal, regional and national indicative programs)
- Environmental foundations interested in coastal and marine issues
- Private sector following UNEP's Guidelines for Engagement with the Private Sector.

A comprehensive resource mobilisation strategy targeted specifically at the effective implementation of the CEP strategy and its supporting regional strategies and action plans, including its support to the commitments of the Parties under the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols as well as integrating emerging issues such as circularity/green/blue economy/SCP as well as disaster risk preparedness in the overall context of sustainable development of the WCR.

A targeted stakeholder mapping will be part of the comprehensive Resource Mobilization strategy identifying actors and resources available to contribute to financial sustainability of the Cartagena Convention. The development of innovative financial mechanisms and affordable financing to assist countries within the WCR constitutes a very high priority. (SOCAR)

As one of the options, an independent working group or a Financial Committee could be established by Contracting Parties to assist in the oversight of financing and resource mobilization efforts by the Secretariat. This Committee would establish a planned, systematic and uniformed approach for reporting on the generation and use of funds. Such periodic evaluations would ensure that voluntary contributions are used efficiently and effectively in the delivery of the biennial work plans and budgets and ensure Contracting Parties are kept updated on implications of any short falls in contributions.

6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Article 13 of the Cartagena Convention states “..*the Contracting Parties undertake to develop and co-ordinate their research and monitoring programmes relating to the Convention area and to ensure, in co-operation with the competent international and regional organisations, the necessary links between their research centres and institutes with a view to producing compatible results...*”.

An adaptive management approach will be utilized to monitor the implementation of this strategy. A Mid Term review is proposed in 2026 to assess the progress made under the current strategy and align with the review of other global and regional strategies such as the UNEP strategy amongst others. As part of these reviews, the accomplishments, lessons learned, challenges and evolving global dynamics of leadership in the marine and coastal environmental sphere will be considered. This will allow the strategy to be adapted to major environmental and political changes occurring regionally and where relevant globally. Regular reviews of achievements and challenges will not only provide an opportunity to evaluate progress but will also provide communication opportunities.

This rolling review to monitor the implementation of the strategy will include periodic evaluations of strategic priorities and related activities including regional strategies and action plans developed by the Secretariat. This is to ensure that all priorities and actions remain up to date and serve the overarching goal of the Cartagena Convention, adapting to environmental, societal and political changes in the region and globally. The monitoring will be supported by biennial reports from national focal points, the Regional Activity Centres and the Cartagena Convention Secretariat on activities carried out in relation to the strategic priorities and the activities formulated for the implementation of the CEP Strategy.

The continued development of periodic State of Convention Area (SOCAR) and State of Habitat Reports as an integral part of the development of State of Marine Ecosystems and Associated Economies Report (SOMEE), and provision of information to the CLME+ Strategic Action Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism with defined indicators and targets will be a key component of the Monitoring and Evaluation process.

Meetings of Contracting Parties supported by the Monitoring Committee will evaluate the appropriateness of strategic priorities that form the basis for biennial work plans and budgets.

The reporting template for the national reporting on the Cartagena Convention and Protocols agreed during the Fifteenth Intergovernmental Meeting on the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme and Twelfth Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention (October 2012) may be adapted to include reporting on measures taken by Contracting Parties to implement aspects of this CEP Strategy.

6.1 Contribution of the CEP Strategy to the reporting of SDG 14 Targets and Indicators

The following recommendations could strengthen the role of the Secretariat and the use of the CEP Strategy in the SDG monitoring and review process:

- Review and align objectives, targets and indicators with the SDGs within the Wider Caribbean Region, in coordination with other partners.
- Develop an approach to regional assessments that can report on the SDG implementation.
- Ensure regional coordination towards SDG reporting.
- Contribute monitoring data to UNEP as part of global monitoring of targets 14.1., 14.2 and 14.5.
- Ensure data and information from the WCR contribute to Voluntary National Reporting (VNR) and SDG databases through cooperation and agreements with other regional organizations and SDG Focal Points.
- Prepare an SDG Outlook document to capture the vision of how CEP will contribute to future reporting.
- Strengthen existing mechanisms to share future data related to eutrophication, marine litter and MPAs as a contribution to the global database on SDG Indicators 14.1.1 and 14.5.1, to be discussed and agreed with Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention. (global and regional mechanism of SDG data bases should interact to facilitate country reporting):
 - Include support to national institutions to generate more data to fulfil SDG reporting needs;
 - Strengthen mechanism of reporting to the UN, UNEP and the Secretariat and encourage regional institutions to provide information and relevant data to facilitate country reporting.
- It should be noted that so far, the majority of the VNR reports have not engaged CEP in their development and very few refer to the work of the Cartagena Convention and CEP (Jamaica and Belize as notable exceptions).

It is therefore recommended that CEP should:

- ✓ Establish a regional coordination mechanism to ensure SDG Focal point and teams responsible for future VNR reports incorporate CEP assessment results and coordinate with Cartagena Convention- CEP network and national focal points and experts; and
- ✓ Ensure inputs provided to future VNR reports (in particular Guatemala, Guyana and Saint Lucia for the 2019 HLPF and Costa Rica, Honduras and Trinidad and Tobago for 2020).

Table 3. Overall contribution of CEP key strategic documents and monitoring programmes to SDG 14 targets. (to be completed)

CEP Protocol, Strategies and Monitoring	Target 14.1	Target 14.2	Target 14.4	Target 14.5	Target 14.6	Target 14.7
Cartagena Convention and Protocols Reporting	✓	✓		✓		
Gulf of Mexico SAP	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
CLME+ SAP	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Action Plan on Marine Litter	✓					
SOCAR report and CEP Monitoring Program	✓					
Regional Nutrients Pollution Reduction	✓					
Regional Marine Habitat	✓					

Other possible targets include:

- **Goal 2 (End Hunger)**, especially 2.4 regarding sustainable food production and maintaining ecosystems;
- **Goal 5 (Gender Equality)**, especially 5.a to give women equal rights to economic resources;
- **Goal 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation)** including 6.3 and 6.5 regarding water pollution dumping and hazardous wastes and integrated water resource management as well as 6.6, 6.7 and 6.8;
- **Goal 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy)**, especially 7.2 regarding renewable energy;
- **Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth)** especially 8.3, 8.4 and 8.9 related to innovative small and medium enterprises, consumption and production and sustainable tourism;
- **Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities)**, especially 11.6 to reduce environmental impacts on cities;
- **Goal 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production)**, especially 12.2, 12.4 and 12.5;
- **Goal 13 (Climate Action)**, especially 13.1 and 13.2 regarding resilience and integration into national policies and
- **Goal 15 (terrestrial ecosystems, forests, desertification, biodiversity)**, especially 15.1, 15.5, 15.8 and 15.9
- **Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals)**, especially 17.16 and 17.18.

Conclusions (TO BE FINALISED)

This strategy will guide the Cartagena Convention network and the Secretariat's efforts to:

1. Engage in joint coordination of oceans governance and management for optimal use of ocean space and ecosystem goods and services;
2. Mainstream coastal and marine issues into development planning and policy setting processes;
3. Protect and as appropriate, restore natural coastal capital;
4. Facilitate the development and implementation of circular and resource-efficient policy pathways;
5. Map and conduct integrated assessments and valuation of marine and coastal ecosystem services;
6. Provide training and capacity development for Contracting Parties to enable them to meet their obligations to the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols while supporting the environmental dimension of sustainable ocean-based economies;

LIST OF ANNEXES

Annex I:	List of Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols
Annex II:	List of Regional Strategies developed under the Cartagena Convention Secretariat <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regional Nutrients Pollution Reduction Strategy• Regional Habitat Restoration Strategy• Regional Action Plan and Strategy for Marine Litter Management• Regional Strategic Action Plan to Minimize the Transfer of Harmful Aquatic Organisms and Pathogens in Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments Wider Caribbean Region• Regional Strategy for the Control of Lionfish in the Mesoamerican Reef (MAR)• Regional Strategy for the Control of Invasive Lionfish in the Wider Caribbean• Caribbean Island Oil Spill Pollution Preparedness Response (OPRC) Plan• Plan Regional De Preparacion, Respuesta Y Cooperacion Contra Derrames De Hidrocarburos Y Sustancias Nocivas Y Potencialmente Peligrosas Para America Central (PRC-CA)• Feasibility study on the development of a Regional Reception Facilities Plan (RRFP) for the SIDS of the WCR• Long-Term Strategic Plan for RAC REMPEITC (2015-2025)• Pollution Research Strategy
Annex III:	Strategic Action Programme for the Gulf of Mexico Large Marine Ecosystem
Annex IV:	The 10-year Caribbean & North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems Strategic Action Programme (CLME+ SAP - 2015-2025)
Annex V:	Cartagena Convention Secretariat Communications Strategy
Annex VI:	List of MOUs with Partner Agencies and Multilateral Environmental Agreements

Landmark reports

1. The State of Nearshore Marine Habitats in the Wider Caribbean United Nations Environment Programme - Caribbean Environment Programme (UNEP-CEP) Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI), Technical Report No 1
2. Regional Strategy and Action Plan for the Valuation, Protection and/or Restoration of Key Marine Habitats in the Wider Caribbean 2021 – 2030
United Nations Environment Programme - Caribbean Environment Programme (UNEP-CEP) Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI), Technical Report No 2
3. Cartagena Convention/CEP Regional Nutrients strategy
4. IWRM framework to support the implementation of the Cartagena Convention

Key programmes and projects contributing to the implementation of the Convention:

CLME+:

Under the project entitled “Sustainable Management of the Shared Living Marine Resources of the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem and Adjacent Regions” (CLME project), a Strategic Action Programme (SAP) was developed for sustainable marine resource management. The SAP sets six strategies with a view to strength cooperation and coordination amongst countries in the region and to enhancing the implementation of the ecosystem approach. At the regional level, the three overarching Strategies to strengthen and operationalise a regional governance framework for shared Living Marine Resources are:

- Enhance the regional governance arrangements for the protection of the marine environment.
- Enhance the regional governance arrangements for sustainable fisheries.
- Establish and operationalise a regional policy coordination mechanism for governance of the marine environment, with initial focus on shared living marine resources.

Coordinating Mechanism (proposed) through output of GEF funded CLME project and currently under discussion. The regional Intergovernmental Organisations (IGOs) with responsibility for ocean issues are a critical component of the Regional Governance Framework for the Wider Caribbean Region. In all cases they have been established by a signed agreement, have a secretariat and hold regular intergovernmental meetings (IGMs) in which member countries take decisions. Eight IGOs form part of an “Interim Coordination Mechanism for the Sustainable Management, Use and Protection of shared Living Marine Resources in the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems” (CLME+ SAP ICM) with the objective to “enhance regional coordination and collaboration, support oversight and integration of actions for sustainable fisheries and the protection and sustainable use of the marine environment”:

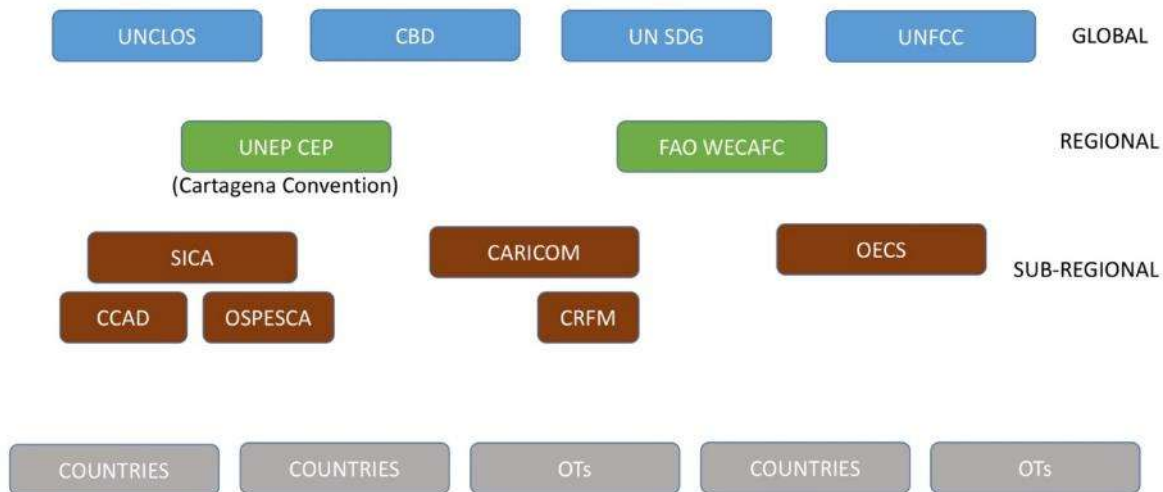
- Secretariat for the Cartagena Convention;
- The Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission of FAO (WECAFC)
- The IOC of UNESCO Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions of UNESCO (IOCARIBE)
- The Organisation of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector of the Central American Isthmus (OSPESCA)
- The Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD)
- The Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM)
- The Caribbean Community (CARICOM), represented by its Secretariat
- The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), represented by the OECS Commission

The CEP strategy will play a central role in the proposed Coordination Mechanism building on the Cartagena Convention framework to improve cross-sectoral coordination of regional ocean governance related to ocean-based sustainable development, including strategies for a sustainable ocean-based economy.

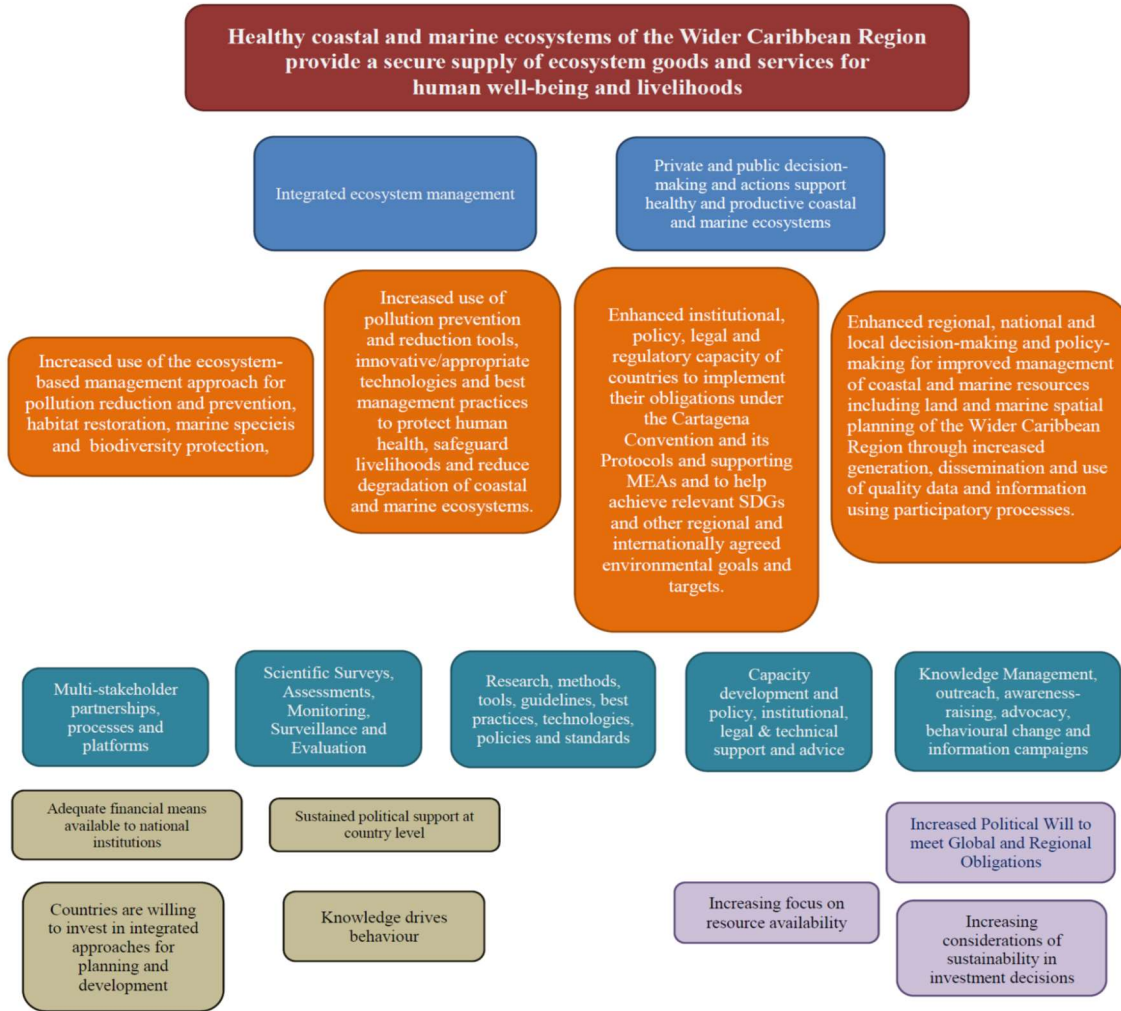
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- The EU funded ACP mainstreaming project (exact title to be added)
 - The Caribbean Marine Protected Areas Management Network and Forum (CaMPAM)
 - Caribbean Regional Fund for Wastewater Management (CReW)

 - Upscaling and enhancing the Caribbean Regional Fund for Wastewater Management through an integrated approach of applying technical solutions with innovative financing mechanisms (CReW+)
 - Integrating Water, Land and Ecosystem Management in Caribbean Small Island Developing States (IWECO)

Multi-level, nested Regional Governance Framework for the CLME+ region



Summary of Vision, Goals, Outcomes and Outputs of the Theory of Change of the Cartagena Convention - CEP



Note: Key deliverables in the theory of change are related to either a single output or a group of outputs

