

Cartagena Convention Secretariat

DRAFT REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT OF THE WIDER CARIBBEAN REGION 2026–2030

Implementation of the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols

KEY MESSAGES

1. The Caribbean Sea is at risk and the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols provide a framework for collaborative responses through this Regional Strategy.

The marine environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR) faces mounting pressures from pollution, habitat loss, invasive species, variable ocean temperatures and ocean acidification. The Cartagena Convention and its three Protocols, the only legally binding regional agreement for the Caribbean marine environment, are the instruments Contracting Parties have used to address these pressures collectively. This Strategy lays out a vision under those instruments for the period 2026–2030.

2. This Strategy focuses on implementation.

The 2026–2030 Strategy is developed as an overarching framework to support coordinated implementation and/or use of regional strategies, action plans, guidelines and tools by the Secretariat and Parties based on previous COP mandates and decisions. These include topics such as: marine litter; nutrients; marine protected areas; coastal and marine ecosystems and endangered and threatened species, including marine mammals and sea turtles; oil spills; sargassum; knowledge management; and resource mobilization.

3. Four Strategic Objectives.

The Strategy's four Strategic Objectives cover: pollution prevention and control; marine biodiversity conservation; knowledge management and communications; and governance, circularity and sustainable blue economies. All are delivered through COP mandates and decisions and implemented through the Cartagena Convention Secretariat working with Regional Activity Centres (RACs), Regional Activity Networks (RANs) and Parties.

4. Financing the Convention is a matter for Contracting Parties.

The Caribbean Trust Fund (CTF) is the foundation of the Cartagena Convention Secretariat's (CCS) core operations. Outstanding CTF contributions from some Contracting Parties pose a direct risk to the Convention's financial stability. The Resource Mobilization Strategy, noted at COP 18, sets out a comprehensive approach to diversifying and sustaining the Convention's funding base.

5. Measuring progress: Mid-Term Review in 2028.

The Strategy introduces headline outcome indicators at the Strategic Objective level and commits the Secretariat to preparing a Baseline Document at the end of Year 1. A Mid-Term Review is proposed for 2028.

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACS	Association of Caribbean States
ALCE	Latin American and Caribbean Space Agency
AMEP	Assessment and Management of Environmental Pollution
BBNJ	Agreement on Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction
CaMPAM	Caribbean Marine Protected Areas Management Network and Forum
CANARI	Caribbean Natural Resources Institute
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCS	Cartagena Convention Secretariat
CEP	Caribbean Environment Programme
CIMAB	Centre of Engineering and Environmental Management of Coasts and Bays (RAC for LBS Protocol)
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CLME+	Catalyzing Implementation of the SAP for the Sustainable Management of shared Living Marine Resources in the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf LMEs
CMS	Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals
COP	Conference of the Parties
CTF	Caribbean Trust Fund
DOALOS	Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (United Nations)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GCFI	Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IGO	Intergovernmental Organization
IMA	Institute of Marine Affairs (RAC for LBS Protocol)
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LBS	Land-Based Sources of Marine Pollution
LME	Large Marine Ecosystem
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
MMAP	Action Plan for the Conservation of Marine Mammals in the Wider Caribbean Region
MPA	Marine Protected Area
NbS	Nature-based Solutions
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OECS	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
OPRC	Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation
RAC	Regional Activity Centre
RAN	Regional Activity Network

REMPEITC-Caribe	Regional Marine Pollution Emergency, Information and Training Centre for the Wider Caribbean (RAC for Oil Spills Protocol)
SCP	Sustainable Consumption and Production
SICA	Central American Integration System
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SOCAR	State of the Convention Area Report
SOMEE	State of Marine Ecosystems and Associated Economies Report
SPAW	Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife
STAC	Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee
TDA	Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WCR	Wider Caribbean Region
WIDECAST	Wider Caribbean Sea Turtles Conservation Network
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

FOREWORD

The countries bordering the Caribbean Sea in its broadest sense, particularly Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Island Territories are deeply dependent on the ocean for their socio-economic prosperity and human well-being. Flourishing marine-based economic sectors, such as fisheries, tourism, shipping and energy, provide employment and livelihoods for millions of people across the region and generate more income and non-monetary benefits for countries.

In addition, fisheries and marine tourism are key pillars of the economies of Island States and Territories. That is why Governments are increasingly recognizing the immense potential of coastal and marine natural capital for the development of the blue economy and its dependence on the quality and health of ecosystems, habitats, water and associated species. Despite the vital benefits derived from marine ecosystems, anthropogenic factors such as increasing human populations, poorly planned urbanization, unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, and the effects of variable ocean temperatures and ocean acidification are generating unprecedented pressures on the marine environment.

In the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR), Convention and Protocol COPs have endorsed various thematic regional strategies and action plans. Through approved work plans and COP decisions, Contracting Parties work on topics such as integrated ocean governance, marine spatial planning, integrated watershed management, and coastal zone management. This Regional Strategy 2026–2030 for the Cartagena Convention provides an overarching framework for the planning and implementation of biennial work plans and COP Decisions.

The regional Action Plans and Strategies include ones for Marine Litter, Nutrients, Marine Habitats, Oil Spills and related regional and subregional commitments developed under the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols. It aims to support the effective implementation of the Convention and its Protocols, reflecting the main principles and guidelines established by the Contracting Parties, as appropriate, through COP Decisions, including those of the Eighteenth Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP 18), in accordance with national priorities, capacities and legal frameworks, as well as with regional strategies on Knowledge Management ((UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.48/INF.7) and Resource Mobilization ((UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.49/INF.10).

Overall, this Strategy will guide the effective coordination of relevant policies, initiatives and projects within the region and support Contracting Parties in fulfilling their obligations under the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols.

1. INTRODUCTION

On 24 March 1983, the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (Cartagena Convention) was adopted in Cartagena, Colombia, and entered into force on 11 October 1986. It is the main legally binding regional agreement to protect, develop and sustainably use the coastal and marine ecosystems of the region.

Twenty-six WCR countries are Contracting Parties to this legal framework and are assisted in meeting their commitments through a network of Regional Activity Centres (RACs) and Regional Activity Networks (RANs), a dedicated Secretariat and diverse and well-established partnerships.

1.1 Development of the 2026–2030 Strategy

The Strategy consolidates the regional priorities set out in the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols into an updated framework to guide cooperation and implementation over the five years.

The first Strategy for the development of the CEP was adopted in 1990 for the period 1990–1995. In fulfilment of the mandate of the second Decision of the Seventeenth Intergovernmental Meeting on the Action Plan for the CEP (Cayenne, French Guiana, 15–17 March 2017), the Cartagena Convention Secretariat prepared a draft Strategy 2023–2030 and this 2026–2030 Strategy builds on that preparatory work and subsequent discussions, while aligning with the decisions taken at COP 18.

This Strategy strengthens the role of the Cartagena Convention Secretariat in supporting its Contracting Parties in the protection of the marine environment through its marine pollution and biodiversity programmes and provides a basis for regional policy coordination and governance of the marine environment within the broader framework of the objectives of the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols.

1.2 The Structure of the Cartagena Convention

The Cartagena Convention and its governance processes, which include a dedicated Secretariat, regular meetings of the governing bodies (Bureau of the Convention, Conferences of the Parties (COPs), Intergovernmental Meetings), senior officials, Focal Points and technical bodies (Scientific and Technical Advisory Committees, Steering Committees and thematic working groups), contribute to strengthening the regional strategic presence, policy coherence and regional ocean governance.

This Convention, through the implementation of its Protocols, including Regional Strategies and Action Plans, also provides a framework for the development of activities related to the blue economy. This Strategy aims to strengthen, streamline and coordinate such efforts by the WCR countries to implement the legally binding provisions, commitments and decisions agreed under the Convention.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Coastal and Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region

The area of the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR) is approximately 3.3 million square kilometers, with an average depth of 2,200 meters and a coastal length of 55,383 kilometers (UNEP, 2009). The coast-to-area ratio is double the global average, underscoring the critical importance of coastal management for the region. With more than 40 million people living within 10 kilometres of the coast, human activities threaten two-thirds of the Caribbean's coral reefs, with hard coral cover declined by 48% between 1980 and 2024 (Wicquart et al., 2025).

The WCR comprises 28 sovereign States and 18 overseas territories, 26 of which are Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention. These are among the largest and smallest States in the world. A unique feature of the WCR is the presence of 22 SIDS, the largest number of SIDS in any of the world's Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs). Another distinguishing feature is that this region has the largest number of maritime boundaries in the world, which means that much of the marine and coastal ecosystems as well as environmental issues are shared, presenting both challenges and opportunities for effective management.

A prominent hydrological feature of the WCR is the immense combined extent of the watersheds that drain into the Caribbean Sea and the presence of some of the largest river systems in the world. The proportion of the drainage basin area in relation to the total national area in the WCR is 57%.

In addition, several assessments, including the CLME+ project's Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA), identified a weakness in governance as the main cause of the three main transboundary problems: overfishing, pollution and habitat degradation. Other factors include limited human and financial resources; inadequate knowledge; insufficient public awareness and participation; and inadequate consideration of the value of ecosystem goods and services. The effects of variable ocean temperatures and ocean acidification represent a fundamental cross-cutting issue that affects all aspects of coastal and marine management in the region.

The State of the Convention Area Report (SOCAR) on Marine Pollution and the report on the State of near-shore marine habitats highlight the status and trends of marine pollution and marine biodiversity. These reports offer the region an opportunity to demonstrate collective efforts towards long-term sustainability through actions and decisions supported by credible assessments of the marine environment.

2.2 Cartagena Convention and Caribbean Environment Programme

UNEP established the CEP as one of its Regional Seas Programmes in recognition of the importance and fragility of the WCR's coastal and marine ecosystems, including endemic fauna and flora, and the importance of these resources for the sustainable development of the region. This led to the adoption of a plan of action in 1981 and the subsequent adoption of the Cartagena Convention on 24 March 1983.

The WCR is defined in Article 2(1) of the Cartagena Convention. It encompasses two primary LMEs: the Gulf of Mexico (United States and Mexico) and the Caribbean Sea. (It also intersects part of the North Brazil Shelf LME, which covers Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana).

2.3 Institutional and Legal Framework of the Cartagena Convention

The Convention, as a framework agreement, is supported by three technical Protocols:

- The Protocol on Cooperation in Combating Oil Spills in the Wider Caribbean Region (Oil Spill Protocol), adopted on 24 March 1983, and entered into force on 11 October 1986.
- The Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW Protocol), adopted on 18 January 1990, entered into force on 18 June 2000.

- The Protocol on Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol), adopted on 6 October 1999 and entered into force on 13 August 2010.

The institutional support framework is composed of the Contracting Parties, who, with the assistance of the Secretariat, have the primary responsibility for guiding the operations of the organization. To this end, they are supported by a Bureau that provides overall oversight of the implementation of the Strategy and the Work Plan approved by the Conference of the Parties (COP). RACs and RANs provide regional and technical support to Contracting Parties to meet their obligations under the Convention and its Protocols.

2.3.1 Regional Guiding Frameworks for the Strategy

This Strategy is guided primarily by the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols, as well as by the decisions emanating from the Conferences of the Parties, the most recent being COP 18 of the Cartagena Convention. It responds specifically to the following COP 18 decisions: the first Decision on the approval of the 2026-2027 work plan and budget of the Cartagena Convention; the second on continued development of a revised regional strategy; the third supporting the Secretariat's Resource Mobilization Strategy and, finally, the fourth supporting the Regional Knowledge Management and Communications Strategy. These decisions provide an authoritative mandate for the structure, priorities and institutional arrangements outlined in this Strategy. The development of this strategy has also taken into account other relevant regional and sub-regional frameworks that Contracting Parties have endorsed.

The Cartagena Convention and its Protocols apply within a broader international legal context. The Strategy takes into account relevant global instruments, notably UNCLOS as the foundational framework for the law of the sea, the BBNJ Agreement for areas beyond national jurisdiction, and those MEAs (Multilateral Environmental Agreements) with which the Secretariat collaborates in the areas of biodiversity, chemicals and wastes, and maritime security. These instruments can guide the technical work of the Secretariat and its RACs, but they do not displace the primacy of the Convention and its Protocols as the operational framework for this Strategy.

2.4 Implementation of the Strategy

The implementation of this Strategy is articulated through a clearly defined institutional chain, which is based on the legal and governance framework of the Cartagena Convention. This chain represents the primary instrument through which all the activities, outputs and results described in this Strategy are carried out:

The Cartagena Convention and its three Protocols (Oil Spills, SPAW, LBS) The foundational legal obligations and mandates to which all Contracting Parties are bound.
COP and Intergovernmental Meeting Decisions Political direction and specific mandates provided by Contracting Parties at Conferences of the Parties to the Convention and the Protocols. These decisions determine priorities, approve work plans and budgets, and provide operational guidance to the Secretariat.
Scientific and Technical Advisory Bodies Science-based guidance, review of technical outputs, and recommendations to the Protocol STACs and as appropriate to the Protocol or Convention COPs.
The Secretariat The coordinating hub of the Convention network, responsible for facilitating implementation of COP decisions, managing the Programme of Work and budget, supporting Contracting Parties, and coordinating with RACs, RANs, and partners.
Regional Activity Centres (RACs) and Regional Activity Networks (RANs) These operational arms of the Convention, deliver technical assistance, training, assessments, and projects across the three Protocol sub-programmes (LBS, SPAW, Oil Spills). RAC strategic plans are aligned with and subordinate to the biennial Work Plan approved by the COPs.
National Focal Points and Contracting Parties National Focal Points are the Secretariat's primary point of contact for Contracting Parties and participate in meetings of the STACs and COPs. The Contracting Parties implement obligations at the national level, and are responsible for fulfilling Convention and Protocol obligations, including national reports.
Partner Institutions and Regional Bodies CARICOM, ACS, OECS, SICA and others who complement and reinforce the work of the Convention network within their respective mandates.

The Biennial Work Plans and Budgets, approved by the Conference of the Parties, translate the Strategy into concrete activities, with specific time frames and resources.

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 allowing for synergies and cooperation to avoid duplication and ensure the efficient use and leverage of limited financial, technical and human resources.

The Strategy's theory of change is as follows: the marine environment of the Wider Caribbean Region is under increasing pressure due to pollution, habitat loss, overexploitation, invasive species, variable ocean temperatures and ocean acidification. These pressures have transboundary dimensions that no country can address alone. The Cartagena Convention and its three Protocols provide the regional legal framework and institutional chain from the COP to the Secretariat, Regional Activity Centres (RACs), Regional Activity Networks (RANs) and country focal points to address these pressures with the goal being measurable improvements in pollution control, biodiversity conservation and ocean governance across the region.

The four Strategic Objectives of this Strategy address the main causal pathways by which this change is achieved; the Roadmap translates them into specific, time-bound and measurable activities; and governance and financing mechanisms ensure that the institutional chain can deliver results.

One of the main functions of this Strategy is to serve as a general framework for the implementation of regionally owned Action Plans and Strategies developed within the framework of the Cartagena Convention or in partnership with its Secretariat, as listed in Annex II.

3.1 Vision and Mission

VISION

Healthy, resilient, and biologically diverse coastal and marine ecosystems of the Wider Caribbean Region that provide a secure supply of ecosystem goods and services for human well-being and livelihoods, contributing to sustainable development for the benefit of present and future generations.

MISSION

To facilitate integrated ecosystem-based management through the prevention, control, and reduction of marine pollution; the conservation, sustainable use, and restoration of coastal and marine resources and habitats; and regular monitoring and assessment —through the effective implementation of the Cartagena Convention, its Protocols, Strategies, and Action Plans.

3.2 General Approaches

The following general approaches guide the implementation of this Strategy:

A. Ecosystem-based Management Approach

The Strategy incorporates all the core elements of ecosystem-based management, which aims to manage human uses and their cumulative impacts on the functioning of marine and coastal ecosystems at the ecological scale in an integrated and precautionary manner. Being based on management decisions in the ecosystem implies that planning must be adapted to the dynamics of the entire ecosystem to preserve, and even enhance the provision of the services and benefits on which society depends.

B. Source-to-Sea Approach

Unsustainable activities and poor soil management practices lead to pollution and eutrophication, degrading freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems. The Strategy also calls for the application of source-to-sea or ridge-to-reef management approaches to mitigate pollution and maintain water quality and ecosystem health from points of origin to discharge areas into the marine environment.

C. Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP)

The Strategy applies life-cycle approaches, taking into account all phases of resource use, in order to use fewer resources to produce less waste and pollution. It promotes sustainable economic and trade practices and strengthens relevant regulatory and governance frameworks in the region. In the context of the Caribbean, sustainable consumption and production are of particular importance to the tourism economy, the largest economic sector in the region where waste generation, coastal construction, water use, and supply chain impacts generate significant environmental pressures. It is also relevant for coastal fisheries, where unsustainable harvesting, poor post-harvest handling and inadequate cold chain infrastructure cause both ecological damage and economic losses. The Strategy supports SCP approaches that are practical, appropriate to the SIDS context and aligned with the transition to a circular and blue economy.

D. Natural Capital Approach

This approach recognizes that nature provides countless services that sustain ecosystem integrity, food security, and human well-being. The biodiversity and ecosystem services of marine and coastal environments should be incorporated into policy-making and decision-making processes, and described in terms that decision-makers can understand and act upon. This is increasingly reflected in the blue economy approaches adopted by countries in the Wider Caribbean Region.

E. Science-Policy Interface

The Strategy strengthens the application of scientific evidence on the health, functions and value of ecosystems without prejudice to the entrenched precautionary approach to drive the necessary policy reforms at the national and regional levels. A greater scientific understanding of anthropogenic stressors and their implications for ecosystem functions can improve the design and implementation of effective and adaptive management measures.

F. Building Resilience

The Strategy recognizes the need for overall systemic resilience for building resilient societies, economies and ecosystems in the face of vulnerability conditions in the Wider Caribbean Region. Inclusive and integrated resilience-building systems, including through the use of nature-based solutions (NbS), should guide the design of policies, institutions and regulatory instruments of the Cartagena Convention structure, as well as the nature of programme and project interventions.

G. Stakeholder Participation and Access to Information

Effective ocean governance depends on the active participation of all sectors with interests in the marine environment. The Strategy promotes open, transparent and well-structured stakeholder engagement processes, including equitable and fair access to environmental data and information, meaningful participation of coastal, indigenous and fisheries communities, involvement and financing of the private sector. It also includes NGOs and academia, incorporating local and traditional ecological knowledge where available. The participation of young people and women is encouraged, especially in the areas of environmental monitoring, awareness-raising and communications. These are practical operational requirements for effective implementation, not abstract principles.

H. One Health — Ecosystems, Livelihoods and Human Health

In the Caribbean, the health of marine and coastal ecosystems is directly linked to the health and food security of coastal communities. Degraded reefs, polluted coastal waters and depleted fish stocks have a direct impact on human nutrition, livelihoods and well-being. The Strategy incorporates a One Health perspective specifically in relation to: the effects of land and marine based sources of pollution on seafood safety and recreational water quality, the dependence of fishing communities on coastal and marine ecosystem health, traditional knowledge, indigenous communities, where applicable, and the associated public health implications.

I. Partnerships with Society as a Whole

Governments alone cannot achieve the ambitions of this Strategy. The Secretariat, Regional Activity Centres (RACs) and Contracting Parties will actively promote partnerships with the private and financial sector, international agencies, civil society, academic and research institutions, the media and the general public. The Strategy draws on regional frameworks that support access to

environmental information and public participation as a practical basis for ensuring that regional initiatives are informed and accountable to the inputs of communities, traditional knowledge and affected sectors. The results and impacts of the partnerships will be communicated to Contracting Parties through the regular biennial reporting process.

3.3 General Objectives and Strategic Objectives

3.3.1 General objectives

The general objectives of the Strategy are to:

- Enhance the effectiveness of the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols as a regional platform for inclusive and fair ocean governance; strengthening the Convention Secretariat as the primary mechanism to support Contracting Parties in integrating relevant ocean and coastal issues into the broader development agenda for the wider Caribbean Region.
- Support Contracting Parties in fulfilling their obligations and commitments under the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols, including the implementation of COP Decisions.
- Assist Contracting Parties in the fulfilment of other regional obligations and commitments provided they align with their obligations under the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols.
- Support Contracting Parties and Member States in generating, analysing, compiling and disseminating technical and scientific information to improve decision-making at national and regional levels.
- Promote effective partnerships between the public sector, the private sector, international organizations and civil society that enable a just and equitable transition to ecosystem-based approaches and circular economy approaches, facilitating more effective implementation of the Cartagena Convention, its Protocols and COP Decisions.

3.3.2 Strategic Objectives

The Strategy is structured around four interrelated Strategic Objectives:

SO1	Prevention, Reduction and Control of Pollution	Support the integration of innovative pollution prevention and reduction tools, appropriate technologies including circular economy approaches, waste-as-a-resource initiatives, and sustainable consumption and production frameworks, supporting Contracting Parties in meeting their obligations under the LBS and Oil Spills Protocols.
SO2	Protection, Conservation and Management of Marine Biological Diversity	Support policies, strategies, and action plans that enable integrated ecosystem-based management approaches and the sustainable use of coastal and marine resources, supporting Contracting Parties in meeting their obligations under the SPAW Protocol and related regional strategies and action plans.
SO3	Knowledge Management, Coordination and Communications	Support enhancement of the knowledge base for regional and national policy-making and decision-making for the sustainable management of coastal and marine resources of the WCR, aligned with the Regional Knowledge Management Strategy.
SO4	Governance, Circularity and Sustainable Blue Economies	Support the implementation of innovative governance, institutional, policy, legislative, and sustainable financing programmes, projects, instruments, and initiatives through the Convention, its Protocols, Strategies, and Action Plans to facilitate a transition to sustainable blue economies, including improved governance, circularity, and resource mobilization aligned with the Resource Mobilization Strategy.

Strategic Objective 1: Prevention, Reduction and Control of Pollution

The objective 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-based and marine sources, enabling the countries of the Wider Caribbean Region to meet their obligations under the LBS Protocol (Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities) and the Oil Spills Protocol.

For the prevention, control and reduction of pollution from land-based and marine sources, the Strategy will support the development and application of innovative technologies, tools and mechanisms, including the adoption of sustainable consumption and production approaches at all levels. It will encourage the development of activities that use waste as a resource and circular economy approaches to reduce the impacts of pollution. In addition, the public, the private sector and civil society will be encouraged to transition to sustainable lifestyles through education and awareness-raising campaigns, thus influencing the demand for more sustainable products and services that reduce pollution of the coastal and marine environment.

Key areas of the first strategic objective include:

- Implementation of the Regional strategy and action plan for the management of marine litter
- Implementation of the regional strategy for the reduction of nutrient pollution
- Strengthening the Regional system for preparing and coordinating the response to oil spills
- Monitoring and assessment of the quality of coastal and marine waters
- Promoting sustainable production and consumption frameworks appropriate to the Caribbean context
- Support for the development of national legislation and policies on marine pollution
- Capacity building for pollution monitoring, assessment and reporting

Strategic Objective 2: Protection, Conservation and Management of Marine Biological Diversity

Marine and coastal ecosystem services are increasingly threatened by human activities that degrade ecosystem health and functions. These activities are often compounded by uncoordinated sectoral policies and inadequate planning and management decisions. There is therefore a need to promote integrated and ecosystem-based approaches in all sectors to reduce pressures, support the sustainable use of marine ecosystems and balance the provision of ecosystem services at appropriate spatial scales.

This strategic objective will have to support Contracting Parties in fulfilling their obligations under the Cartagena Convention and, more specifically, the SPAW Protocol and related regional strategies and action plans. Priority areas include:

- Implementation of the Regional Strategy and Action Plan for the Valuation, Protection and/or Restoration of Key Marine Habitats 2021–2030, including the Regional Habitat Restoration Strategy
- Implementation of Regional Recovery Action Plans (RRAPs) for sea turtles and other threatened species
- Implementation of the Action Plan for the Conservation of Marine Mammals (MMAP), including the Regional Management Plan for the West Indian Manatee
- Management and conservation of Specially Protected Areas and inclusion of new sites in the SPAW List
- Strengthening regional networks of marine protected areas, including the Caribbean Marine Protected Area Management Network, the network of SPAW sites, and collaboration with other MPA networks
- Control of invasive species, including through the Regional Strategy for the Control of Invasive Lionfish in the Wider Caribbean
- Marine spatial planning and integrated coastal zone management through comprehensive planning tools such as Sustainable Ocean Plans.

- Ecosystem assessment and valuation, including through an integrated State of the Convention Area Report (SOCAR) that will include assessment of the state of marine and coastal ecosystems
- Enhancing regional coordination between the SPAW Protocol and other global processes related to marine biodiversity to enable more effective implementation by Contracting Parties of their SPAW Protocol obligations.
- Strengthening regional coordination and implementation of ecosystem-based responses to Sargassum floods, through the implementation of the Cartagena Convention Action Plan on Sargassum Inundation

Strategic Objective 3: Knowledge Management, Coordination and Communications

This objective will be facilitated through the implementation of the Regional Knowledge Management and Communications Strategy noted by the Contracting Parties.

Support to the knowledge base includes the continuous review of the environment, knowledge, information and communications of the Wider Caribbean Region. More specifically, it will be achieved through the generation, dissemination and use of quality data and information through participatory processes, including the development of subregional databases and information platforms. The focus is on training, awareness-raising and promoting behaviour change.

The State of the Convention Area Report (SOCAR) on Marine Pollution and the State of Marine Habitats Reports, as well as the State of Marine Ecosystems and Associated Economies (SOME) report, represent key frameworks for data generation and information dissemination. Priority areas include:

- Regular production and dissemination of integrated SOCAR Reports on Marine Pollution and Marine Habitats Reports, including tailored reports for decision makers.
- Development of decision support tools and databases for Contracting Parties, guided by the Regional Framework for Science and Research
- Strengthening the knowledge management platform and digital infrastructure of the Cartagena Convention Secretariat
- Exploring opportunities for data interoperability between member countries to inform decision-making.
- Regional capacity building for environmental monitoring and data management
- Communication campaigns adapted to regional and sub-regional socio-economic and cultural realities
- Strengthened partnerships with the media, civil society, the private sector, youth organizations and academia
- Digital transformation integrated into monitoring, evaluation, and reporting systems
- Identification of synergies with other regional initiatives such as the Latin American and Caribbean Space Agency (ALCE) for the generation and strengthening of information.

Strategic Objective 4: Governance, Circularity and Sustainable Blue Economies

Improved ocean governance will build on the expertise of the Cartagena Convention Secretariat and its support framework to strengthen regional cooperation, partnerships, coordination, harmonization and reporting on goals and targets. This will facilitate more efficient decision-making, inclusive management, and a results-based approach to managing the use of coastal and marine ecosystems in the WCR.

This objective is guided by the Secretariat's Resource Mobilization Strategy and the broader governance framework established by COP decisions. In addition, it includes the application of the principles of the circular economy, the development of the blue economy and sustainable financing mechanisms. Priority areas include:

- Implementation of COP decisions and governance mandates
- Strengthening national and regional legislative and policy frameworks for ocean governance
- Implementation of the Secretariat's Resource Mobilization Strategy, including the recovery of outstanding arrears
- Development of innovative financial mechanisms and instruments for the Cartagena Convention
- Promotion of blue economy frameworks and circular economy approaches, where appropriate
- Strengthening regional coordination on ocean governance with CARICOM, ACS and other regional bodies
- Capacity building for the development of sustainable, inclusive and fair blue economies.
- Monitoring and compliance by countries of their national obligations under the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols through the reporting process.

4. ROADMAP OF OUTPUTS, RESULTS AND INDICATORS

This first table contains the roadmap of proposed outputs, expected results, indicators and key partnerships to achieve the four Strategic Objectives over the period 2026–2030. This road map will be implemented through biennial work plans and budgets to be approved by the Conference of the Parties.

Strategic Objective / Sub-programme	Output / Activity	Expected Outcome	Indicator	Key Partners
Strategic Objective 1: Prevention, Reduction and Control of Pollution				
SO1 — LBS & Oil Spills Protocols	1.1 Support increased ratifications of the LBS Protocol	Increased number of Contracting Parties to the LBS Protocol	Number of new Contracting Parties to LBS Protocol	RAC CIMAB, RAC IMA
SO1	1.2 Support implementation of the LBS Protocol through updated national action programmes	More countries with updated national action programmes for land-based sources of marine pollution	Number of countries with active national LBS action programmes	RAC CIMAB; RAC IMA; CARICOM; GEF
SO1	1.3 Implement the Regional Marine Litter Management Strategy and Action Plan.	Measurable reduction in marine litter entering the Wider Caribbean Region.	Volume of marine litter intercepted through regional initiatives;	UNEP; RACs; NGOs; Private sector
SO1	1.4 Implement the Regional Nutrients Pollution Reduction Strategy.	Reduced nutrient loading in key coastal areas and improved water quality.	Number of countries implementing nutrient reduction measures; monitoring data from key sites.	RAC IMA; RAC CIMAB; Development Banks
SO1	1.5 Strengthen regional oil spill preparedness, response, and coordination systems.	Improved regional capacity for oil spill prevention, preparedness, and response.	Number of national contingency plans updated; joint exercises conducted.	RAC REMPEITC-Caribe; IMO; OECS; Private sector
SO1	1.6 Promote circular economy approaches and sustainable consumption in key economic sectors.	Increased adoption of circular economy practices in tourism, fisheries, and coastal industries.	Number of circular economy projects implemented by Contracting Parties.	GEF; EU; Development Banks; Private sector
SO1	1.7 Build capacity for coastal and marine water quality monitoring and assessment.	More countries with functional water quality monitoring programmes.	Number of countries with harmonized water quality monitoring protocols; number of trained personnel.	RAC IMA; RAC CIMAB; CARICOM; CaMPAM
Strategic Objective 2: Protection, Conservation and Management of Marine Biological Diversity				
SO2 — SPAW Protocol	2.1 Support new ratifications and implementation of the SPAW Protocol.	Increased number of Contracting Parties to the SPAW Protocol.	Number of new ratifications; number of	UNEP; CBD; CITES; CMS

Strategic Objective / Sub-programme	Output / Activity	Expected Outcome	Indicator	Key Partners
			countries submitting biennial implementation reports.	
SO2	2.2 Update and implement the Regional Strategy and Action Plan for Key Marine Habitats 2021–2030.	Improved status and management of key marine habitats including coral reefs, seagrasses, and mangroves.	Hectares of habitat under active management; restoration milestones achieved.	RAC SPAW; CaMPAM; GCFI; CANARI
SO2	2.3 Implement Regional Recovery Action Plans for sea turtles and threatened species.	Improved conservation status and favourable population trends for priority species.	Number of nesting sites protected; population trend data for priority species.	RAC SPAW; WWF; WIDECAST; IAC; CARICOM
SO2	2.4 Advance marine spatial planning and integrated coastal zone management.	More countries with marine spatial plans aligned with ecosystem-based management approaches.	Area and percentage of coastal and marine zones covered by formally adopted and implemented integrated coastal zone management or marine spatial planning instruments	ACS; CARICOM; OECS; Development Banks
SO2	2.5 Strengthen the management, ecological representativeness, connectivity and level of protection of the SPAW-listed Protected Areas Network.	A more effectively managed, ecologically representative and connected network of protected areas in the Wider Caribbean Region.	Number and percentage of SPAW-listed Protected Areas undertaking periodic management effectiveness assessments using nationally or internationally recognized methodologies; percentage demonstrating improvement over the baseline.	RAC SPAW; CaMPAM; IUCN; GEF
SO2	2.6 Enhance regional coordination between SPAW and other global processes relating to marine biodiversity to enable more effective implementation of the SPAW Protocol by Contracting Parties	Enhanced implementation of the Cartagena Convention and SPAW Protocol due to interlinkages with related Global Biodiversity implementation processes.	Number of Contracting Parties applying tools, guidance, data or capacity generated through these initiatives;	UNEP; DOALOS; IUCN; CARICOM
SO2	2.7 Coordinate regional response to Sargassum	Improved regional preparedness and	Number of countries with	RAC SPAW; RAC IMA;

Strategic Objective / Sub-programme	Output / Activity	Expected Outcome	Indicator	Key Partners
	inundation events through the implementation of the Cartagena Convention Action Plan on Sargassum inundations as a cross-protocol priority linking biodiversity conservation objectives under SPAW with nutrient management and pollution reduction efforts under the LBS Protocol	coordinated response to sargassum inundation events, reducing economic and ecological impacts on coastal communities.	active sargassum monitoring and response plans; early warning advisories issued; documented reduction in response times.	CARICOM; ACS; Development Banks; FAO
Strategic Objective 3: Knowledge Management, Coordination and Communications				
SO3 — Knowledge & Communications	3.1 Produce and disseminate periodic SOCAR Reports on Marine Pollution and Marine Habitats.	Contracting Parties including Decision-makers have access to current, credible, and regionally relevant environmental data.	SOCAR reports produced on schedule; citation and uptake by policymakers and technical personnel.	RAC IMA; RAC CIMAB; RAC SPAW; CLME+ partners
SO3	3.2 Implement the Regional Knowledge Management and Communications Strategy.	Improved access to and use of knowledge products by Contracting Parties and partners.	Number of knowledge products produced; usage statistics of the Secretariat's information platforms.	RAC network; CLME+; CARICOM; Research institutions
SO3	3.3 Strengthen digital transformation for monitoring, reporting, and communications.	More efficient and effective data collection, analysis, and reporting by Contracting Parties.	Number of digital tools deployed; number of countries using digitised reporting systems.	UNEP; Development partners; Technology partners
SO3	3.4 Implement targeted regional communications and public awareness campaigns.	Increased public awareness and stakeholder engagement on marine environment issues.	Reach and engagement metrics of campaigns; number of new partnerships with media and civil society.	UNEP; NGOs; Private sector; Youth organisations
SO3	3.5 Build capacity in environmental monitoring, data management, and science-policy interface.	Enhanced national and regional capacity for evidence-based coastal and marine decision-making.	Number of training events; number of personnel trained; improvement in reporting quality.	RACs; CARICOM; Academic institutions; GEF
Strategic Objective 4: Governance, Circularity and Sustainable Blue Economies				
SO4 — Governance & Finance	4.1 Implement COP 18 decisions and strengthen the Cartagena Convention governance framework.	COP 18 mandates fully operationalised through biennial work plans and secretariat activities.	Proportion of COP 18 decisions addressed in biennial work	Contracting Parties; RACs; UNEP

Strategic Objective / Sub-programme	Output / Activity	Expected Outcome	Indicator	Key Partners
			plan; Secretariat activity reports.	
SO4	4.2 Implement the Secretariat's Resource Mobilization Strategy.	Diversified and sustainable funding base for the Caribbean Trust Fund and project portfolio.	Total resources mobilised; recovery rate of outstanding CTF unpaid/outstanding voluntary contributions; number of new donor partnerships.	Contracting Parties; GEF; EU; Development Banks; Private sector
SO4	4.3 Develop innovative financial instruments for marine environment management.	Contracting Parties have access to innovative financing vehicles for ocean governance.	Number of new financial instruments developed or accessed; volume of financing leveraged.	Development Banks; GCF; Private sector; CARICOM
SO4	4.4 Strengthen monitoring, compliance, and reporting systems.	Improved national reporting and compliance with Cartagena Convention and Protocol obligations.	Number of countries providing biennial national reports; implementation rate for COP Decisions.	Contracting Parties; RACs; UNEP
SO4	4.5 Promote blue and circular economy approaches in Caribbean development frameworks.	Caribbean blue economy frameworks increasingly aligned with marine environment protection objectives.	Number of national blue economy or equivalent frameworks developed and/or adopted at national level	CARICOM; ACS; Development Banks; Private sector; FAO

5. CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

Effective and targeted coordination, communication, advocacy, education, public participation, knowledge management and digital transformation will drive progress towards the objectives of this Strategy. For this reason, three cross-cutting themes underpin the four Strategic Objectives.

5.1 Communications and Awareness Raising

The Secretariat will be responsible for the development and implementation of regional communication campaigns for diverse audiences that encourage greater public participation and behavioural change. These include campaigns on clean seas, reducing marine litter, conserving coral reefs and protecting endangered species. Campaigns should reflect regional and subregional socio-economic and cultural realities and should be conducted in relevant languages.

A central element of these campaigns is multimedia storytelling and activities aimed at mobilizing people around problems and their solutions, wherever possible, showing the impact of the work of the Secretariat and partner agencies. The Campaigns provide platforms for new partnerships with civil society actors and the private sector.

Subject to COP Decisions and mandates given by Contracting Parties, the Secretariat should strengthen partnerships with the media, the private sector, community-based and non-governmental organizations, youth organizations, the academic and research community, and key champions to demonstrate and promote the value of marine and coastal ecosystems and the importance of the Caribbean Sea to the WCR.

5.2 Knowledge Management

For this cross-cutting theme, the Implementation of the Regional Strategy for Knowledge Management and Communications will be fundamental. A comprehensive knowledge management approach builds on the existing communication strategy to support the effective implementation of the overall Strategy. This will allow for the design of specific information and knowledge management products.

Key recommendations from reports such as SOCAR on Marine Pollution and Marine Biodiversity will be communicated through various dissemination mechanisms, networks and approaches relevant to various audiences of the Convention. Knowledge management products will be available in multiple languages and formats appropriate for different audiences, from technical experts to policymakers and the general public.

The Secretariat should facilitate the exchange of knowledge between Contracting Parties, RACs, RANs, and regional partners, promoting the exchange of best practices, lessons learned and innovative approaches to marine environmental management.

5.3 Digital Transformation

Digital transformation is a cross-cutting enabling theme that improves the effectiveness and efficiency of the four Strategic Objectives. The Secretariat will integrate digital technologies and tools into its core functions, including:

- The Development of digital platforms for the collection, management and visualization of environmental data,
- Digitization of national reporting processes to improve data timeliness and quality,
- The Use of remote sensing, satellite imagery and other emerging technologies for marine surveillance,
- The Development of e-learning and virtual capacity-building tools accessible to all Contracting Parties,
- Strengthening the Secretariat's web presence and digital communications to reach a wider audience.

The Digital transformation will be carried out in a manner that is accessible, affordable and appropriate to the technical capacities of the various Contracting Parties in the Wider Caribbean Region.

6. GOVERNANCE, IMPLEMENTATION AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

6.1 Governance Framework

6.1.1 Regional Ocean Governance

Strengthening and expanding coordination at the regional, subregional and national levels on collaborative governance and management of marine and coastal ecosystems is critical to the successful implementation of the Regional Strategy of the Secretariat of the Cartagena Convention. This Strategy provides the enabling conditions for Contracting Parties, Member States and Cartagena Convention network partners to efficiently implement the key mandates of the Convention, its Protocols and related Regional Strategies and Action Plans.

In the context of the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols, governance focuses on efficiently integrated and coordinated support to Contracting Parties to develop, implement, enforce policies and legislation and strengthen institutions in order to achieve common strategic objectives and the effective implementation of agreed obligations. The CCS's Regional Strategy encourages the creation of interconnections between the components of the Cartagena Convention, including RACs, RANs, Focal Points, Partners and Projects, where synergies and complementarities can be exploited while respecting the mandates of each entity.

The Secretariat has two thematic sub-programmes: first, the Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPA) and then, the Assessment and Management of Environmental Pollution (AMEP) supported by facilitating and cross-cutting activities of Knowledge Management and Communications. Other cross-cutting issues include circularity, ecosystem-based management and the blue economy. This multisectoral structure requires effective coordination, integration and mainstreaming, facilitated by a foundational governance work programme coordinated by the CCS.

The technical cooperation platforms developed under the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols, including regional working groups and expert networks, provide operational mechanisms that can be further leveraged to strengthen the implementation of the Convention's priorities in all thematic areas.

6.1.2 The Structure of the Cartagena Convention

All implementation within the framework of this Strategy is channelled through the institutional chain of the Cartagena Convention. The CCS occupies the focal point for this chain: it translates COP Decisions and STAC recommendations into programmatic activities, manages the Caribbean Trust Fund and project portfolio, coordinates the work of RACs and RANs, and engages with national focal points. No significant programme activity is carried out outside of a biennial Work Plan and Budget approved by the Conference of the Parties.

The Cartagena Convention Secretariat promotes broader participation of RACs and RANs in the implementation of the Convention's Protocols, Strategies and Action Plans. The RACs have developed strategic plans to assist the CCS in mobilizing funds and developing projects as part of the approved biennial work plans. However, the CCS has formalized the working agreements with several agencies through Memorandums of Understanding that are now part of the RANs. These agreements are regularly reviewed and reported to the Contracting Parties.

Thematic synergy is channelled through joint projects with UN agencies, NGOs, Development Banks and through formal Memorandums of Cooperation with MEA Secretariats and regional fisheries bodies. These external partnerships are always framed as support, and not a substitution, for the fulfilment of the obligations of the Convention through the institutional chain described above.

6.1.3 Partnerships

As ocean governance in the WCR is complex, the CCS will work within and outside the UN system to promote synergistic and cost-effective collaboration and programmes ranging from regional governance and normative knowledge generation to innovation, advice, capacity-building and in-country implementation. In this way, the CCS may support dialogue on relevant global initiatives and

cooperation on activities in the region aligned with the objectives of the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols.

At the international, regional and national levels, partnerships with research institutes and non-governmental organizations are another priority. The results and impact of these partnerships will be communicated to Contracting Parties to assess their effectiveness in support of biennial work plans and budgets.

In addition, collaboration with the network of other Regional Seas Programmes, such as the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic and the Abidjan Convention, provides an important forum for the exchange of best practices, lessons learned and their replication, where appropriate.

6.2 Institutional Coordination Framework

Based on participation and partnerships, alignment and inclusiveness, the implementation of the Strategy must respond to regional and national needs, while being adaptable and flexible. It must be results-based and resource-efficient. As part of the CCS's implementation plan, a foundational governance work programme complements the existing thematic sub-programmes coordinated by the CCS.

The governance work programme seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. Strengthen the existing governance network within the institutional framework of the Cartagena Convention, as well as cross-sectoral and regional coordination to enhance the participation and engagement of all stakeholders in a transparent decision-making process.
2. Strengthen the capacity of Contracting Parties to implement and comply with the Cartagena Convention, its Protocols, Regional Strategies and Plans of Action.
3. Strengthen synergies, complementarities, collaboration between partners and international and regional organizations operating in the WCR.
4. Promote effective science-policy interface mechanisms at the regional and national levels by strengthening the application of the ecosystem approach to the management of human activities.
5. Coordinate the implementation of the Resource Mobilization Strategy for the efficient execution of the work plan of the Convention.

The following results are expected from the above:

6. Effective implementation by Contracting Parties of funding commitments under the Cartagena Convention, its Protocols, Regional Strategies and Action Plans.
7. Systemic strengthening and effective functioning of the decision-making and advisory bodies of the CCS.
8. Coordinated approaches to strengthen capacities for the implementation of the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols.
9. Complementarity and regulatory coherence within the political and regulatory framework of the Cartagena Convention.
10. Strengthened partnerships and multi-stakeholder engagement.

6.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

Article 13 of the Cartagena Convention stipulates that "the Contracting Parties undertake to develop and coordinate research and monitoring programmes within the scope of the Convention and to ensure, in cooperation with relevant international and regional organizations, the necessary links between their research centres and institutes with a view to achieving compatible results."

An adaptive management approach will be used to monitor the implementation of this Strategy. A Mid-Term Review is planned in 2028 to assess progress and align with the review of other regional

strategies. As part of these reviews, achievements, lessons learned, challenges and evolving regional leadership dynamics in the marine and coastal environment will be considered.

In addition, this continuous review will include regular assessments of strategic priorities and related activities, including the regional strategies and action plans developed by the CCS. Furthermore, the follow-up will be supported by the biennial reports of the national focal points, the RACs, and the CCS, in collaboration with civil society and relevant partnerships.

Key performance indicators

In addition to the output and activity indicators set out in the Roadmap (Section 4), the Strategy is underpinned by a set of key performance indicators at the Strategic Objective level. Such indicators assess performance in the environmental and governance domains rather than activities and provide the basis for the Mid-Term Review and the end-of-term evaluation. Key indicators include:

- SO1: coastal water quality trend at sentinel monitoring sites across the WCR, assessed by harmonized regional protocols; the number of Contracting Parties with functional national pollution monitoring programmes.
- SO2: Status and trend of the extent of key marine habitats (coral reefs, mangroves, seagrass beds) in the Convention Area; number of threatened species for which data on population trends are available and show a stable or improving state.
- SO3: Proportion of Contracting Parties actively using the knowledge products of the CCS in national policy and planning processes; timeliness and use of SOCAR reports, as assessed at the COP.
- SO4: Proportion of Contracting Parties submitting their biennial national reports on time; compliance rate of contributions to the CTF; number of COP decisions on which the CCS reports on progress in their implementation.

The CCS will prepare a Baseline Document linking existing SOCAR, State of Marine Habitats, and SOME data to these headline indicators in the first year of implementation of the Strategy. It will identify data gaps and propose a timeline for filling them through planned assessment activities. This Baseline Document will be submitted to the Bureau for endorsement and will constitute the benchmark for the 2028 Mid-Term Review.

National Reporting

A key component of the monitoring and evaluation process will be the continued development of regular and integrated SOCAR reports on marine pollution and marine habitats as an integral part of SOME, the provision of information to the CLME+ Strategic Action Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism with defined indicators and targets.

The Meetings of the Contracting Parties shall assess the relevance of the strategic priorities that form the basis of the biennial work plans and budgets. Contracting Parties may wish to decide whether the existing national reporting templates should be amended to include reporting on this Strategy, subject to its adoption/approval or whether a separate reporting template should be developed for monitoring and reporting purposes.

6.4 Sustainable Financing and Resource Mobilization

They will need an integrated long-term approach to have adequate budgetary arrangements in place to meet the commitments made under the Cartagena Convention, its Protocols and Action Plans, and to ensure the effective implementation of the work plans. The implementation of this section is guided by the CCS's Resource Mobilization Strategy, which was noted by the Contracting Parties through a COP 18 Decision and is available as a supplementary document to this Strategy.

Current Status: The core budget of the CCS is funded by members' contributions to the Caribbean Trust Fund (CTF), in addition to a small percentage of in-kind contributions. Projects and activities are mainly funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), RACs, member countries and bilateral donors.

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

Contracting Parties continue to be a challenge to the financial stability of the Convention and require priority attention. The recovery of outstanding arrears is a governance responsibility at the COP level, not a mere management function of the CCS; Contracting Parties are urged to address arrears as a matter of urgency in order to preserve the financial integrity of the Convention.

Resource Mobilization Goals and Objectives

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

Objectives:

- Develop the architecture for the financial sustainability of the Convention network, including through the recovery of outstanding arrears of all Contracting Parties.
- Identify the priorities, needs and gaps to be addressed under the CCS, including the resources available within the Cartagena Convention network and those needed to meet commitments.
- Develop a framework to ensure consistent and reliable contributions from Contracting Parties to the CTF.
- Develop a mapping of donors, International Financial Institutions and private sector participation.
- Strengthen the capacity of the CCS and the CARs for the development and implementation of projects.
- Facilitate and coordinate the matching of needs, projects, and donors, including International Financial Institutions and other IGOs.
- Improve partnerships with the private sector, including foundations, to access funding opportunities in pollution management, biodiversity conservation, and blue economy development.

A specific mapping of the actors involved is part of the Resource Mobilization Strategy and identifies the actors and resources available to contribute to the financial sustainability of the Cartagena Convention.

Contracting Parties may wish in the future to establish an independent Financial Committee to assist in the oversight of the CCS's financing and resource utilization activities. Such a Committee would establish a planned, systematic and uniform approach to reporting on the generation and use of funds, ensuring that voluntary contributions are used efficiently and effectively in the implementation of biennial work plans and budgets. This function is currently exercised by the Bureau of the Contracting Parties.

7. CONCLUSION

The marine environment of the Wider Caribbean Region faces increasing pressures from pollution, habitat degradation, overexploitation, invasive species and the effects of variable ocean temperatures and ocean acidification. At the same time, the region is increasingly recognizing the immense potential of its coastal and marine ecosystems for sustainable development, food security and human well-being.

This Strategy 2026–2030 provides a regionally based framework for the next phase of the implementation of the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols. It is based on the premise that the Convention, its three Protocols and the governance architecture surrounding them such as the COP, the CCS, the RACs and the RANs, and national focal points will need to work closely together to ensure that the WCR's marine environment will be protected and sustainably managed.

The Strategy will support a more integrated implementation and/or use of various strategies, action plans, guidelines and tools by the Cartagena Convention Secretariat and/or Contracting Parties to the Convention and/or its Protocols. Some of these have been formally approved or endorsed through COP Decisions while others will be used by Parties and/or the Secretariat, as appropriate, to guide future actions.

The Strategy calls on all Contracting Parties to fulfil their commitments to the Convention and its Protocols, to their contributions to the CTF and to the biennial Work Plans they approve and invites partners across the region to support this work in a spirit of shared stewardship of the Caribbean Sea.

The Cartagena Convention Secretariat is ready to facilitate regional coordination, support the implementation of the priorities approved by the COP and work in collaboration with Contracting Parties, RACs, and RANs. It should also work with regional organizations to promote the protection and sustainable management of the marine and coastal environment of the Wider Caribbean Region.

ANNEXES

Annex I: Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols

Table of Contracting Parties and their Dates of Ratification or Accession to the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols (Oil Spills, SPAW, LBS).

Contracting Party	Cartagena Convention	Oil Spills Protocol	SPAW Protocol	LBS Protocol
Antigua and Barbuda	11-Sep-86	11-Sep-86	-	13-Jul-10
Bahamas	24-Jun-10	24-Jun-10	24-Jun-10	24-Jun-10
Barbados	28-May-85	28-May-85	14-Oct-02	29-Jun-19
Belize	22-Sep-99	22-Sep-99	04-Jan-08	04-Feb-08
Colombia	03-May-88	03-May-88	05-Jan-98	-
Costa Rica	01-Aug-91	01-Aug-91	-	26-May-16
Cuba	15-Sep-88	15-Sep-88	04-Aug-98	-
Dominica	05-Oct-90	05-Oct-90	-	-
Dominican Republic	24-Nov-98	24-Nov-98	24-Nov-98	06-Sep-12
France	13-Nov-95	13-Nov-95	05-Apr-02	04-May-07
Grenada	17-Aug-87	17-Aug-87	05-Mar-12	05-Mar-17
Guatemala	18-Dec-89	18-Dec-89	-	-
Guyana	14-Jul-10	14-Jul-10	14-Jul-10	14-Jul-10
Honduras	13-Oct-18	13-Oct-18	13-Oct-18	13-Oct-18
Jamaica	01-Apr-87	01-Apr-87	-	05-Nov-15
Mexico	11-Apr-85	11-Apr-85	-	-
Netherlands	16-Apr-84	16-Apr-84	02-Mar-92	-
Nicaragua	25-Aug-05	25-Aug-05	04-May-21	-
Panama	06-Nov-87	06-Nov-87	27-Sep-96	09-Jul-03
Saint Kitts and Nevis	15-Jun-99	15-Jun-99	10-Oct-24	10-Oct-24
Saint Lucia	30-Nov-84	30-Nov-84	18-May-00	30-Jan-08
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	11-Jun-90	11-Jun-90	26-Jul-91	-
Trinidad and Tobago	24-Jan-86	24-Jan-86	10-Aug-99	28-Mar-03
United Kingdom	28-Feb-86	28-Feb-86	-	-
The United States	31-Oct-84	31-Oct-84	16-Apr-03	13-Feb-09
Venezuela	18-Dec-86	18-Dec-86	28-Jan-97	-

Annex II: Regional Strategies and Action Plans under the Cartagena Convention

The following Regional Strategies and Action Plans have been developed within the framework of the Cartagena Convention. It should be noted that the following are part of the implementation framework of this Strategy:

- [Action Plan for the Conservation of Marine Mammals in the Wider Caribbean Region](#) (MMAP) (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.43/INF.31/Rev. 1)

- [Regional Nutrients Pollution Reduction Strategy](#) (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.41/INF.10/Rev.1)
- [Regional Habitat Restoration Strategy](#)
- [Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter Management](#) (CEP Technical Report 72)
- [Regional Marine Litter Management Strategy](#)
- [Regional Strategic Action Plan to Minimize the Transfer of Harmful Aquatic Organisms and Pathogens in Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments in the Wider Caribbean Region](#)
- [Regional Strategy for the Control of Invasive Lionfish in the Wider Caribbean](#)
- [Regional Strategy and Action Plan for the Valuation, Protection and/or Restoration of Key Marine Habitats in the Wider Caribbean Region \(2021–2030\)](#)
- [Regional Framework for Science and Research Serving Effective Ocean Governance in the Wider Caribbean Region](#)
- [Regional Management Plan for the West Indian Manatee](#) (CEP Technical Report 51)
- Regional Recovery Action Plans (RRAPs) for Sea Turtles:
 - <https://www.unep.org/cep/resources/report/sea-turtle-recovery-action-plan-suriname-2026-2035>
 - <https://www.unep.org/cep/resources/report/cep-technical-report-no-54>
 - <https://www.unep.org/cep/resources/report/cep-technical-report-27>
 - <https://www.unep.org/cep/resources/report/cep-technical-report-26>
 - <https://www.unep.org/cep/resources/report/cep-technical-report-25>
 - <https://www.unep.org/cep/resources/report/cep-technical-report-24>
 - <https://www.unep.org/cep/resources/report/cep-technical-report-18>
 - <https://www.unep.org/cep/resources/report/cep-technical-report-17>
 - <https://www.unep.org/cep/resources/report/cep-technical-report-16>
 - <https://www.unep.org/cep/resources/report/cep-technical-report-15>
 - <https://www.unep.org/cep/resources/report/cep-technical-report-12>
 - <https://www.unep.org/cep/resources/report/cep-technical-report-11>
- [Caribbean Island Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Cooperation \(OPRC\) Plan](#)
- [Medium-Term Strategic Plan for the Regional Activity Centre for the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency, Information and Training Centre – Caribbean \(RAC REMPEITC-Caribe\)](#) UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.39/INF.11
- [Medium-Term Strategic Plan for the Regional Activity Centre for the Institute of Marine Affairs \(RAC IMA\)](#) UNEP(DEPI) CAR WG.41/4a Rev.1
- [Medium-Term Strategic Plan for the Regional Activity Centre for the Centre of Engineering and Environmental Management of Coasts and Bays \(RAC CIMAB\)](#) UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.41/4b/Rev.1
- [Medium-Term Strategic Plan for the SPAW Regional Activity Centre \(SPAW-RAC\) \(2023–2028\)](#) UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.43/INF.6
- [Regional Knowledge Management and Communications Strategy](#) (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.48/INF.7)
- [Resource Mobilization Strategy](#) (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.49/INF.10)
- [Cartagena Convention Action Plan on Sargassum Inundation](#) (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.45/INF.27 Rev.3)