



Distr. LIMITED

UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.41/INF.22/Rev.2

10 October 2023

Original: ENGLISH

Fifth Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) to the Protocol concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS) in the Wider Caribbean.

Virtual


15 to 17 March 2021

CARIBBEAN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME:

**DRAFT REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE PROTECTION AND
DEVELOPMENT OF THE WIDER CARIBBEAN REGION 2023-2030**

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

This meeting is being convened virtually. Delegates are kindly requested to access all meeting documents electronically for download as necessary.

An underwater photograph of a coral reef. The scene is dominated by large, brownish-yellow coral structures, possibly brain coral or similar, which are partially covered in green algae. In the foreground, a vibrant purple sea fan coral stands out against the lighter-colored rocks. The background shows a clear blue ocean with some smaller, white branching coral visible. The overall lighting is bright, suggesting a shallow depth.

**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.**

2023-2030

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CaMPAM	The Caribbean Marine Protected Areas Management Network and Forum
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CBO	Community-based Organizations
CCS	Cartagena Convention Structure
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)
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
CoPs	Conference of the Parties
CTF	Caribbean Trust Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IGM	Intergovernmental Meetings
IGO	Intergovernmental Organizations
IMA	Institute of Marine Affairs/ The Regional Activity Center (RAC) for the Protocol concerning Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol)
LBS	Land Based Sources of Marine Pollution
LME	Large Marine Ecosystem
MEA	Multilateral Environment Agreement
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPA	Marine Protected Area
NbS	Nature-based Solutions
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
RAC	Regional Activity Centre
RAN	Regional Activity Network
RSSD	Regional Seas Strategic Directions
SAMOA	Small Island Development States Accelerated Modalities of Action
SAP	Strategic Action Programmes (of Large Marine Ecosystems)
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SOCAR	State of the Convention Area
SOMEE	State of Marine Ecosystems and Associated Economies
SPAW	Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife
UNEA	United Nations Environment Assembly
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WCR	Wider Caribbean Region

FOREWORD

Countries bordering the Wider Caribbean Sea, particularly the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) 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 and non-monetary benefits for the countries. Fisheries and marine-based tourism in particular are critical pillars of the economies of the Island States and Territories. Moreover, Governments are recognising the immense potential of this natural capital for development of the blue economy¹ and how dependent it is on the quality and health of the ecosystems, habitats, water, and dependent species. They are increasingly re-aligning their national development paradigm with this concept. Despite the vital benefits we derive from marine ecosystems, anthropogenic factors such as climate change, increasing human populations, poorly planned urbanization, and harmful production and consumption patterns are generating unprecedented pressures on the marine environment².

Within the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR), there are various initiatives that focus on integrated ocean governance, marine spatial planning, land use planning, integrated watershed management, and coastal zone management, as well as ecosystem-based approaches. The 2023-2030 Regional Strategy for the Cartagena Convention and 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 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. This Strategy provides an overall framework for implementation of Action plans and strategies developed through the Cartagena Convention Secretariat on Marine Litter, Nutrients, and Marine Habitats³, and other relevant regional and sub-regional strategies.

It 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, 12, 14, 17 and others as appropriate), the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway, the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. 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.

Overall, this strategy will guide the effective coordination of the relevant policies, initiatives and projects within the region and support Governments of the Wider Caribbean Region in meeting their obligations under the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols.

¹ The “blue economy” concept seeks to promote economic growth, social inclusion, and the preservation or improvement of livelihoods while at the same time ensuring environmental sustainability of the oceans and coastal areas. (World Bank 2017).

² 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.

³ Developed under the GEF supported CLME+ project.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (« Cartagena Convention »)⁴ was adopted in Cartagena, Colombia, on 24 March 1983 and entered into force on 11 October 1986. It is the only legally binding regional agreement for protecting, sustainably developing, and using the region's coastal and marine resources.

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

1.1 Development of the 2023-2030 strategy

A Strategy for the development of the CEP was first adopted in 1990 for the period 1990-1995 but has not been reviewed and/or updated since then. Since this adoption over 30 years ago, the international community has adopted a multitude of strategic goals related to the conservation and sustainable management of marine and coastal ecosystems.

Decision II of the Seventeenth Intergovernmental Meeting on the Action Plan for the CEP 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 outdated Strategy for the Cartagena Convention and CEP.

The Regional Seas programmes, including the CEP, 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. These programmes focus on climate change, pollution, ocean acidification, biodiversity restoration, ecosystem assessment and knowledge management. These strategic directions are informed by common issues across the 18 Regional Seas programmes, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Marine and Coastal Strategy for 2020-2030, the UNEP Medium Term Strategy for 2022-2025 and other ocean-related goals/targets, including SDGs and key relevant Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs).

In line with the recommendations from the Global Regional Seas Strategic Directions (RSSD) to build on Regional Seas Convention as ocean governance platforms, this Strategy provides a strategic framework to strengthen the role of the Cartagena Convention Secretariat in support of the protection of the marine environment through its pollution and marine biodiversity programmes and provides a framework for regional policy coordination mechanisms for governance of the marine environment.

1.2 The Structure of the Cartagena Convention

The Cartagena Convention and governance processes, with a dedicated Secretariat, regular meetings of governing bodies (Convention Bureau, Conference of the Parties (CoPs), Intergovernmental Meetings), senior officials, Focal Points as well as technical bodies (such as Scientific and Technical Advisory Committees, Steering Committees,

⁴ As one of the UN Environment administered Regional Seas Conventions where secretariat functions, managing of finances and technical assistance are provided by UNEP.

and thematic working groups), contribute to strengthening strategic regional presence, policy alignment and regional ocean governance.

The Convention, its Protocols, and action plans have both a normative and implementation mandate. They express common regional priorities, including those in delivering global mandates such as the [2030 Agenda](#), provisions of MEAs and [United Nations Environment Assembly \(UNEA\) resolutions](#). They also provide platforms for taking action as well as an incentive to enact national legislation, including through integrated assessment, policy development, capacity building and exchange, and through the 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 framework for the development of blue economy-related activities. This Strategy aims to strengthen, streamline, and coordinate these efforts by countries in the WCR to implement the Convention's relevant agreed legally binding provisions, commitments, and decisions, and form the basis for the further development and implementation of blue economy approaches. It will, furthermore, facilitate a more integrated approach to the delivery of pollution and marine biodiversity programmes in support of implementing the Cartagena Convention, its Protocols, and related regional and global commitments.

2.0 BACKGROUND

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

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 two-thirds of the Caribbean's coral reefs, placing one-third at high risk.

The WCR contains 28 sovereign states and 18 overseas territories (including the United States of America, United Kingdom, France, and the Netherlands), 26 of which are Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention. These range from the largest to the smallest in the world and from the most developed – United States of America and European countries – to the least developed (Haiti). 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 unique feature is that this region has the highest number of maritime boundaries worldwide. This means that much of the marine resources and environmental problems are shared, which presents a considerable challenge and some unique opportunities for effectively managing 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 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).⁵

Several assessments, including the 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 (CLME+) Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis,⁶ identified a weakness in governance as the overarching root cause for the three main transboundary issues of overfishing, pollution, and habitat degradation. Other factors identified include limited human and financial resources; inadequate knowledge; inadequate public awareness and participation; inadequate consideration of the value of ecosystem goods and services; population and cultural pressures; trade and external dependency. Climate change was further identified as a key cross-cutting and overarching issue.

The two landmark reports on the State of Marine Pollution⁷ and the State of Nearshore Marine Habitats in the Wider Caribbean Region⁸ 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. This region, with a diverse

⁵ UNEP/CEP 2019. STATE OF THE CARTAGENA CONVENTION AREA An Assessment of Marine Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities in the Wider Caribbean Region JULY 2019, UNEP/CEP Technical report number XX. Authors: S. Heileman, L. Talaue McManus, C. Corbin, L. Christian, D. Banjoo, S. Adrian and E. Mayorga.

⁶ Developed under the UNDP/GEF CLME Project.

⁷ UNEP/CEP 2019. STATE OF THE CARTAGENA CONVENTION AREA An Assessment of Marine Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities in the Wider Caribbean Region JULY 2019 UNEP/CEP. Authors: S. Heileman, L. Talaue McManus, C. Corbin, L. Christian, D. Banjoo, S. Adrian and E. Mayorga.

⁸ United Nations Environment Programme- Caribbean Environment Programme (2020). The State of Nearshore Marine Habitats in the Wider Caribbean. CLME+ Project Information Product Series - Technical Report 1. Port-of-Spain: CANARI.

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.

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 region's marine environment.

2.2 Cartagena Convention and Caribbean Environment Programme.

The UNEP established the 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 fauna and flora 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 WCR on 24 March 1983.

The WCR includes two LMEs; the Gulf of Mexico (United States of America and Mexico) and the Caribbean Sea⁹. It also includes part of the North Brazil Shelf LME (Suriname, Guyana, and French Guiana are all part of the North Brazil LME) depicted below in *Figure 1*.



Figure 1: The Cartagena Convention Area and the three LMEs which intersect the Wider Caribbean Data sources: Cartagena Convention area (UNEP-CEP-2017), LMEs (NOAA-2009), land (GADM-2018)

⁹ 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.

2.3 Cartagena Convention Institutional and Legal framework

The Convention, as an 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”) was 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”) was 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”) was adopted on 6 October 1999 and entered into force on 11 July 2010.

The supporting institutional framework comprises the Contracting Parties, who, with the support of the Secretariat, are primarily responsible for guiding the operations of the organisation. They are supported by a Bureau, which provides broad oversight of implementation of the Strategy and the Programme of Work adopted by the COP. Complementing and supportive of the work of the Cartagena Convention’s Structure (CCS) are the RACs and RANs. 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. Figure 2 below provides a graphical structure of the institutions and how their operational modalities contribute to the work of the CCS.

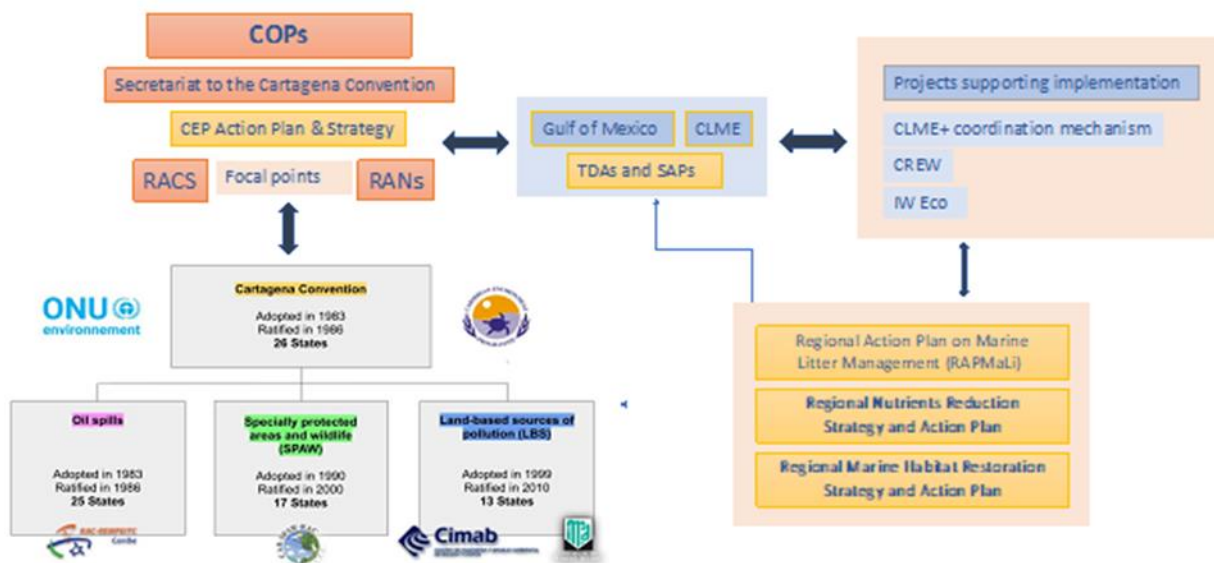


Figure 2: Cartagena Convention Governance Structure

2.3.1 Global and Regional Frameworks

The Secretariat coordinates and collaborates with several relevant international and regional institutions that, to different degrees, support the objectives of this strategy and the effective implementation of biennial work plans and budgets. These institutions are further supported by several regional and sub-regional technical bodies with mandates for environment, human health, climate change, disaster risk reduction among others relevant to the work of the Convention.

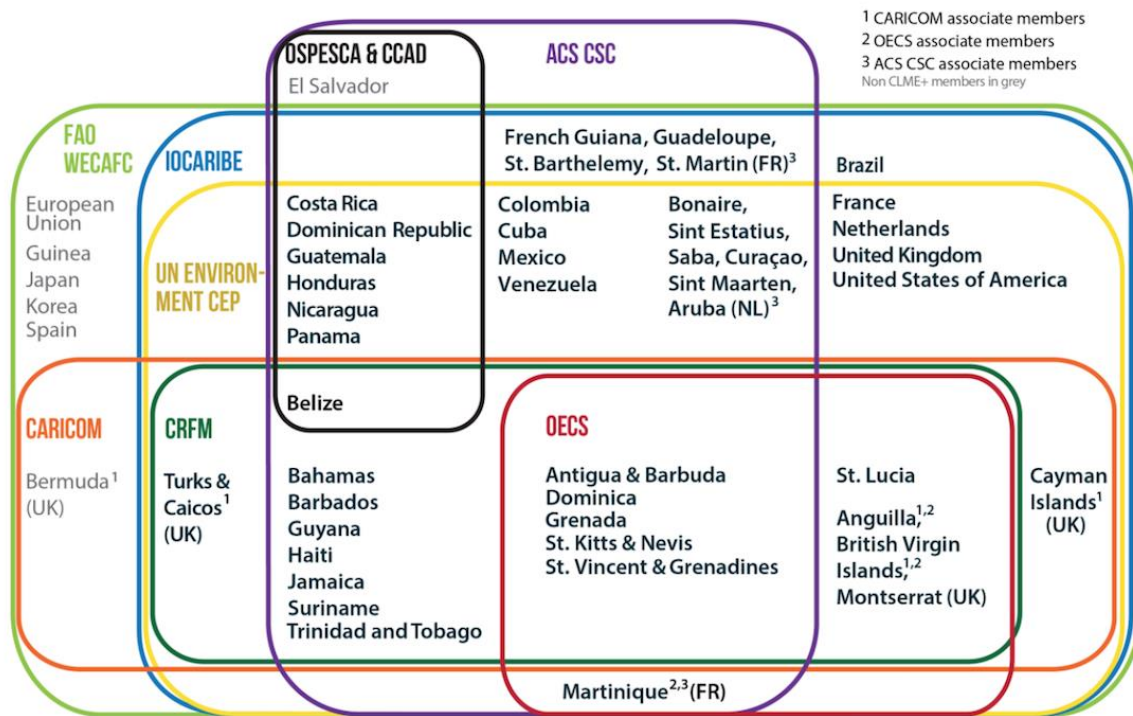


Figure 3: Overview of Relevant Regional Institutions

2.3.2 International frameworks related to the Strategy

There are several global MEAs and organisations whose activities are key for protecting and managing the oceans. At the international level, the Strategy aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals, the UNEA, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the post-2020 GBF and the SAMOA Pathway. Of special note is the RSSD, which aims to achieve a diverse, resilient, 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 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.

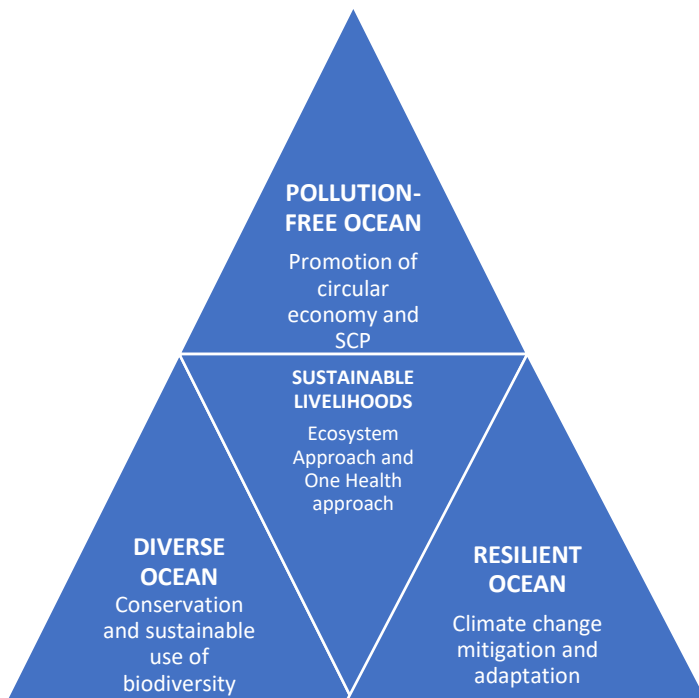


Figure 4: Integration between thematic policy priorities, promoting the ecosystem approach to anchor the strategic direction to the sustainable development realm.

The Secretariat’s thematic programme on marine biodiversity (SPAW), subject to its ratification by countries in the WCR, can support those Contracting Parties in meeting the objectives, where appropriate, of the global cluster of biodiversity conventions and initiatives such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, as well as the International Coral Reef Initiative. In addition, through the pollution sub-programme, the Secretariat supports the implementation of the Chemical cluster of the 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 International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, further support the objectives of two technical sub-programmes of the Secretariat. The Secretariat will continue collaboration with the International Whaling Commission on areas of shared interest, including responsible whale watching, bycatch mitigation, and ship strike reduction of marine mammals.

2.3.3 Regional Frameworks related to the Strategy

Several regional frameworks and mechanisms including management strategies and thematic action plans have been developed by and/or are in the process of being developed by the Secretariat and other regional partners, which will complement this strategy, within their respective scopes. These include the following:

- i. The Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean
- ii. UNEP: Regional and Sub-Regional Offices in the Wider Caribbean
- iii. Association of Caribbean States - Caribbean Sea Commission
- iv. Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas and Caribbean Community Common Fisheries Policy

- v. Caribbean Community (CARICOM's) Draft Environment and Natural Resources Policy Framework
- vi. Central American Committee on Environment and Development Regional Environmental Strategy Framework 2015-2020
- vii. Organization of Eastern Caribbean States Development Strategy 2019-2028
- viii. Procaribe+ Coordinating Mechanism on Ocean Governance

The Cartagena Convention - CEP Strategy will therefore provide the framework for addressing the mandates provided by Contracting Parties to the Secretariat for meeting the obligations of the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols. Several of these have resulted in concrete, region-wide multi-partner projects that respond to specific coastal and marine issues in the WCR.

3.0 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. This strategy for the Cartagena Convention and 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:* To support healthy, resilient and biologically diverse coastal and marine ecosystems of the Wider Caribbean Region which provide a secure supply of ecosystem goods and services for human well-being and livelihoods and contribute to sustainable development for the benefit of present and future generations.
- (ii) *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.

The Vision and Mission are achieved by effectively implementing the Cartagena Convention¹⁰ and delivering on its Protocols, Strategies and Action Plans, and Strategic Action Programmes (SAPs) relevant to the WCR.

3.2 General Principles and Approaches

The following general principles and approaches will guide the strategy:

A. Ecosystem-based management approach

The strategy embodies all core elements 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. Incorporating this approach will address the shortfalls of traditional single-sector approaches and provide a comprehensive, integrated approach to managing human-ecosystem interactions. Basing management decisions on the ecosystem entails

¹⁰ 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.

that planning needs to be adapted to the dynamics of the whole ecosystem to at least preserve, if not enhance, their potential to deliver 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 for the application of source-to-sea and/or ridge-to-reef management approaches 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

Inclusion of this concept in the strategy will focus on 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; promoting and enabling sustainable low carbon economic and trade practices; considering the use of various tools, including sustainability certification, standards and traceability systems, and by strengthening policy and governance frameworks.

D. Natural capital approach

This approach acknowledges that nature provides innumerable services that underpin ecosystem integrity, food security, human well-being, and, the global economy. As is often the case in the marine environment, these services are rarely valued in terms that can be entered into national economic accounts and planning processes and, 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 decision-makers can understand and use. This is increasingly reflected in blue/green and ocean-based economy approaches by countries in the Wider Caribbean Region.

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 approach, 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 significant issues like 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 approach 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 including through the use of nature-based solutions.

G. Gender mainstreaming

This approach includes (a) equitable access to resources, (b) inclusive governance, (c) increased resilience towards sustainable and equitable natural resource-based growth, and (d) providing opportunities for decision making at all levels. The approach will be an integral part of the implementation of the CEP strategy and in establishing programme indicators and targets¹¹. Globally, evidence shows a clear correlation between gender equality and positive environmental outcomes in view of women's active roles in conserving and restoring natural resources from which they derive livelihoods¹². In this regard, achieving a sustained and inclusive environmental governance impact requires the adoption of a holistic approach which integrates gender mainstreaming into all stages of strategies, programmes and projects, from design to implementation to monitoring and evaluation of impacts.

H. One Health for all

During the COVID-19 pandemic (roughly 2020-2021), it became clear that the world's population is growing and expanding to new lands, climate conditions are changing, ecosystems are suffering a critical degradation, and people, fauna and flora are moving all around the globe. Thus, many governments and institutions are promoting the One Health concept, defined by the World Health Organization as an approach to designing and implementing programmes, policies, legislation, and research in which multiple sectors communicate and work together to achieve better public health outcomes. In the post-pandemic world, relevant agendas should 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 the Escazu Agreement, is unique because it is an environmental and human rights regional agreement for the 33 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean Region, and it establishes principles 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). The Escazu Agreement can guide the Cartagena Convention in developing mechanisms to ensure meaningful participation of communities and other stakeholders in the development and implementation of regional strategies and action plans, ensure that the rights of human rights defenders are protected and respected in the implementation of regional initiatives, develop mechanisms for ensuring transparency and access to information in its decision-making processes and enhance cooperation and coordination with other regional agreements and initiatives related to environmental protection and sustainable development.

J. A Whole of Society Approach

The strategy recognises that a whole of society approach should be embedded in ocean action, governance, and finance. Governments, the private sector, civil society, academia, and the public all have an integral role in

¹¹ 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.

¹² <https://www.wri.org/blog/2016/03/if-you-care-about-environment-you-should-care-about-gender>.

contributing to a sustainable blue economy. This approach envisages that meaningful participation is fostered through viable partnerships towards collective impact from all stakeholders.

3.3 Overall Goals and Strategic Objectives

3.3.1 Overall Goals are to:

- Enhance the effectiveness of the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols as the regional platform for supporting integrated ocean governance and strengthening the Convention's Secretariat as the primary mechanism to support its Parties and Member States in integrating relevant ocean-related issues with the broader development agenda for the WCR.
- Support Contracting Parties in the implementation of their obligations and commitments under the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols, including implementation of CoP Decisions.
- Support Contracting Parties in meeting relevant SDGs and targets, relevant Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework goals and targets, and other relevant political commitments, as appropriate, through concrete actions for the protection and development of the marine environment of the Wider Caribbean Region
- Support its Parties and Member States in the generation, analysis, compilation and visualization of technical and scientific information for improved national and regional decision-making. and
- Promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships that enable a just and equitable transition towards ecosystem-based approaches and circular economy approaches that facilitate more effective implementation by countries of their obligations under the Cartagena Convention, its Protocols and the CoP.the

3.3.2 Strategic Objectives

Strategic objective 1: Support the integration of innovative pollution prevention and reduction tools and best practices, innovative/appropriate technologies, including circular economy approaches and continuous monitoring that consider waste as a resource and sustainable consumption and production – **Pollution Prevention, Reduction and Control.**

Strategic objective 2: Support policies, strategies and action plans that enable integrated ecosystem-based management approaches and the sustainable use of coastal and marine resources; - **Marine Biodiversity Conservation and Management.**

Strategic objective 3: Support the 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 Wider Caribbean Region – **Knowledge Management, Coordination and Communications.**

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, Strategies and Action plans to facilitate a transition to sustainable blue economies, including improved governance and circularity - **Governance, Circularity, and sustainable economies.**

3.3.2.1 Strategic objective 1: 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.**

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

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 the adoption of sustainable consumption and production approaches at all levels, development of activities that use waste as a resource and develop circular economy approaches to reduce the impacts of pollution. The public, 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. 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 regional strategies and action plans.

3.3.2.2 Strategic objective 2: Support policies, strategies and action plans that enable integrated ecosystem-based management approaches and sustainable use of coastal and marine resources; - **Marine Biodiversity Conservation and Management.**

Marine and coastal ecosystem services are threatened by human activities that degrade ecosystem health and functions. Uncoordinated sector policies and inadequate planning and management decisions may exacerbate the situation and do not always include an assessment of overall impacts. There are often trade-offs between the benefits of various human activities and their cumulative environmental impacts. Integrated policies and management across sectors can 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 key to ensuring 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.

This will support Contracting Parties in meeting their obligations under the Cartagena Convention and, more specifically, under the SPAW Protocol and related regional strategies and action plans.

3.3.2.3 Strategic objective 3: 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 Wider Caribbean Region – **Knowledge Management, Coordination and Communications.**

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

Supporting the knowledge base includes the ongoing review of the WCR environment, knowledge, information, and communications. More specifically, it will be attained through increased generation, dissemination and use

of quality data and information through fully participatory processes including through the development of sub-regional databases and information platforms. The focus is on training, increasing awareness, and promoting attitude and behaviour 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 organisations and SDG Focal Points. The State of Convention Area (SOCAR) on Marine Pollution and State of Marine Habitats Reports produced by the Secretariat, as well as the State of Marine Ecosystems and Associated Economies (SOME) report, represent frameworks for data generation and information dissemination to take place.

3.3.2.4 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, Strategies and Action plans to facilitate a transition to sustainable blue economies including improved Governance and Circularity. **Governance, Circularity, and sustainable economies based on the oceans.**

Improving ocean governance will need to build on the experience of the Cartagena Convention Secretariat and its supporting framework to strengthen regional cooperation, partnerships, coordination, alignment and reporting on goals and targets. This will facilitate more efficient decision-making and integrated, inclusive management as well as 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 livelihoods, business development, gender-sensitive interventions and sustained economic growth. Maintaining healthy and resilient ocean and coastal ecosystems should be a core priority for sustained economic benefits while protecting human health and ecosystem goods and services.

Table 1: Roadmap of outputs, outcomes, indicators, and partnerships to achieving the strategic objectives of the CEP Strategy 2021-2030

Strategic Objectives	Outputs	Outcomes	Possible Indicators	Partnerships
Strategic objective 1: 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.	1.1. Member States undertake relevant international obligations by ratifying or acceding to the LBS and Oil Spills Protocol.	New ratifications/accessions for the LBS and Oil Spills Protocol.	Number of countries that ratify or accede to the LBS and Oil Spills Protocol.	Collaboration on pollution monitoring, reporting, and assessment has taken place through the formal establishments of RACs on Marine Pollution and Oil Spills as well as RANs of technical agencies and, partnerships with relevant MEAs, Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs), Community-based Organizations (CBOs), Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), academic and research institutions, development banks and the private sector involved in marine pollution research and monitoring. This will include cooperation on relevant pollution reduction goals and targets reflected in other Global MEA targets and commitments to ensure synergies.
	1.2a. Support for the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically Goal 14, to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development and target 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 and other relevant global initiatives. 1.2b Implement recommendations from SOCAR and the associated Regional Nutrients Pollution Reduction and Regional Marine Litter Strategies.	States more effectively implement their obligations under the Cartagena Convention and the LBS Protocol and support the SDGs and other relevant MEAs, as appropriate, while achieving their national environmental priority goals, targets, and objectives.	Incentives to reduce land-based sources and marine litter. Amount of recycled waste on land (%). Port waste reception facilities available (%). Locations and frequency of algal blooms reported. Number of action plans by contracting parties that address preventing and reducing marine litter and land based sources. Number of water quality related beach alerts/closures per month/annum.	
	1.3 c. Consideration of relevant decisions of other decision-	Increase in consideration of, as appropriate, with relevant	Number of consultations at national, sub-regional and	

Strategic Objectives	Outputs	Outcomes	Possible Indicators	Partnerships
	making fora, including UNEA Resolutions and Decisions of Meetings of Ministers responsible for the environment, wastewater, agriculture, and solid waste.	decisions from other decision-making fora.	regional levels to enhance coordination.	
	1.4 Policy alignment and management reform towards improved ocean governance and achieving the targets identified in the SAPs for the Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean Sea and North Brazil Shelf LME.	Greater alignment of the legislative and policy environment as to reduce fragmentation, gaps, and overlaps.	Number of achieved targets.	
	1.5 Development of institutional, policy, legal and financial frameworks, mechanisms, and instruments necessary for the long-term implementation of the Cartagena Convention and the Land-Based Sources of Marine Pollution Protocol.	<p>Increased capacity of countries to develop and implement local and/or national plans of action for pollution prevention, reduction, and controls.</p> <p>Countries with pollution-related policies, legislation and/or regulations updated and/or developed;</p>	<p>Number of:</p> <p>a. National Plans of Action developed to address marine pollution, wastewater, marine litter, nutrients and other priority point and non-point sources of marine pollution.</p> <p>b. National/Pilot Projects focusing on pollution reduction activities.</p> <p>c. Updated monitoring assessments of pollution and reduction activities.</p> <p>d. Number of action plans under implementation.</p>	
	1.6 Development and regional adoption of methodologies, tools and technologies that support the reduction of land and marine-based pollution.	Increased research and development on technologies, tools, and methodologies towards pollution reduction.	<p>Number of funded innovative pollution reduction technologies.</p> <p>Accelerator programs for pollution reduction.</p>	

Strategic Objectives	Outputs	Outcomes	Possible Indicators	Partnerships
			Number of countries implementing tools, technologies, and methodologies for pollution reduction.	
	1.7 Environmental considerations streamlined into development processes and coastal and marine resources managed in a way that prevent and/or reduce land and marine-based pollution.	Improvement of integrating environmental considerations into development processes.	Number of countries that are streamlining and implementing sustainable practices into plans and policies at all levels.	
	<p>1.8a. h1. Promotion of sustainable consumption and production approaches and practices.</p> <p>1.8b Implementation of Activities that use waste as a resource and promotion of circular economy approaches to reduce the impacts of pollution.</p>	Enhanced sustainable consumption and production and circular economy approach.	<p>No of national and/or regional activities that incorporate sustainable production and consumption approaches.</p> <p>Number of national and/or regional projects and activities that promote waste as a resource and the use of circular economy approaches to reduce the impacts of pollution.</p>	
	<p>1.9a Systems for classification of recreational waters for effluent discharges developed and implemented in the region.</p> <p>1.9b Identification of recreational areas that are considered outstanding and/or very high value/quality that may need greater protection.</p>	<p>Increase in the number of countries with a system for classifying recreational waters for effluent discharges.</p> <p>Increase in the number of countries with national recreational water quality monitoring programmes.</p>	Number of countries with national recreational water quality monitoring systems and a system for classification of recreational waters for effluent discharges.	

Strategic Objectives	Outputs	Outcomes	Possible Indicators	Partnerships
	<p>1.10a Capacity of personnel involved in monitoring and assessment enhanced through training activities.</p> <p>1.10b Sharing best practices, lessons learnt, data and information pollution monitoring.</p>	<p>Increase the number of Training and Capacity-Building Workshops.</p> <p>Increased capacity and financing opportunities of Contracting Parties 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.</p> <p>Capacity and involvement of all stakeholders to provide guidance on the governance of pollution reduction activities.</p>	<p>Number of training and capacity-building workshops.</p> <p>Level of knowledge and skill related to pollution monitoring. (based on an established baseline and harmonized assessment methodology).</p>	
	<p>1.10c Digital transformation integrated into monitoring and evaluation assessment.</p>	<p>Increased integration of digital transformation into monitoring and evaluation assessment projects.</p>	<p>Number of projects and programmes using digital transformation for more effective monitoring and evaluation.</p>	
<p>Strategic objective 2: Support policies, strategies and action plans that enable integrated ecosystem-based management approaches and the sustainable use of coastal and marine resources; - Marine Biodiversity Conservation and Management.</p>	<p>2.1a Member States undertake relevant international obligations by ratifying and acceding to the SPAW Protocol.</p> <p>2.1b States supported in implementing international and regional conventions and agreements that directly and indirectly relate to ecosystem-based management to meet national obligations in a cross-</p>	<p>New ratifications or accessions for the SPAW Protocol.</p> <p>States more effectively implement their obligations under the SPAW Protocol and support MEAs while achieving their national environmental priority goals, targets, and objectives.</p>	<p>Number of countries that ratify or accede to the SPAW Protocol.</p> <p>Number of committed actions to international and regional agreements relating to ecosystem-based management.</p>	<p>Collaboration on marine biodiversity monitoring and assessment has taken place through the formal establishments of RACs on Marine Biodiversity as well as RANs of technical agencies and, partnerships with relevant MEAs, IGOs, CBOs, NGOs, academic and research institutions, development banks and the private sector involved in marine biodiversity research and</p>

Strategic Objectives	Outputs	Outcomes	Possible Indicators	Partnerships
	sectoral and integrated manner.			monitoring including the use of citizen science.
	2.2 Programme activities formulated to implement the SPAW Protocol by Contracting Parties.	Programme activities that satisfy the requirements and needs of the SPAW Protocol.	Number of programme activities implemented by Contracting Parties.	
	2.3 Development of coordination, collaboration, and communication mechanisms with other agreements, organisations, and programmes relevant to SPAW's objectives.	Enhanced coordination, collaboration and communication to achieve SPAW's objectives.	The type and level of coordinated mechanisms among organisations.	
	2.4 Resources mobilised to support Contracting Parties and Member States to develop/improve/update and enact national policies, strategies, and management plans on adaptive capacity to climate change, area-based and Marine Protected Area (MPA) management, ecosystem early warning system development, MSP and the blue economy with attainable goals, targets and actions and a robust monitoring framework.	All targeted countries develop/improve/update and enact national policies, strategies, and management plans on the adaptive capacity to climate change, area based and MPA management under the SPAW Protocol, ecosystem early warning system development, MSP and the blue economy.	Number of countries with relevant national policies, strategies, and management plans addressing marine and coastal ecosystem conservation.	
	2.5 Ecosystem-based management approaches integrated into national development and planning processes.	States increasingly integrate ecosystem-based management approaches into national development and planning processes.	Number of projects and plans that streamline integrated ecosystem-based management.	
	2.6 Contracting Parties and Member States supported to develop and protect areas of	Increase in improved management of national	Number of protected areas listed under the SPAW Protocol.	

Strategic Objectives	Outputs	Outcomes	Possible Indicators	Partnerships
	threatened species and habitats, thus ensuring biodiversity is not lost due to compounding damaging activities.	protected areas and species in the Wider Caribbean Region.	Protected area coverage of important biodiversity areas.	
	2.7 Regional programming for protected areas and wildlife in the WCR coordinated.	Greater regional coordination for protected areas and wildlife; development of species-specific action plans; increase in national wildlife protection legislation;	Number of consultations amongst Contracting Parties. Number of regional collaborative projects.	
	2.8 The use of nature-based solutions for protecting marine and coastal ecosystems and reducing biodiversity loss expanded, including through education and awareness initiatives.	Uptake of Nature-based Solutions (NbS) in Contracting Parties' projects and programmes. Increased awareness of NbS value to projects.	Number of countries that implement NbS into projects. Partnerships and technical guidance on the effective use of NbS. Level and type of education and awareness initiatives in NbS.	
	2.9 Ecological, social, and economic considerations integrated in decision-making that promotes the blue economy and contributes to poverty alleviation, food security and economic growth.	Blue economy practices are embedded in the framework of policy with achievable goals targeting poverty reduction, food security and economic growth.	Type and level of ecological, social, and economic considerations streamlined into decision-making.	
	2.10a Training provided for natural resource professionals on technologies, integrated ecosystem management, monitoring and assessment and best practices. 2.10b Capacity built to promote information sharing,	States increasingly incorporate and facilitate capacity-building training and awareness campaigns into national development and planning processes.	Number of capacity-building training and awareness campaigns implemented.	

Strategic Objectives	Outputs	Outcomes	Possible Indicators	Partnerships
	<p>knowledge management and communication, towards conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal ecosystems.</p> <p>2.10c Stakeholders participate in coastal and marine governance, including in programme design, implementation, and assessment to optimise the knowledge, capabilities, and capacities of the public, private, civil society, and academia.</p>			
<p>Strategic objective 3: Support the 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 Wider Caribbean Region – Knowledge Management, Coordination and Communications</p>	<p>3.1 Awareness of the Cartagena Convention, its Protocols and Action Plans raised at the national level, including through development and dissemination of knowledge products.</p>	<p>Increase in awareness of the Cartagena Convention and its components.</p>	<p>Number of partnerships/networks and extent of data/information exchange.</p>	<p>Regional Activity Centres on Marine Biodiversity, Marine Pollution, and Oil Spills as well as a Regional Activity Network of technical agencies, IGOs, Academic and Research Institutions developed and/or enhanced.</p>
	<p>3.2 b. Coordination and collaboration among RACs, RANs, international and regional partners, donor organisations and projects active in the Wider Caribbean region and enhance broad stakeholders' participation.</p>	<p>Improved regional capability for coordinating information exchange, training, and technical assistance supporting national biodiversity conservation efforts.</p> <p>Enhanced coordination, collaboration, and communication mechanisms with other agreements, organisations, and</p>	<p>Type and level of coordination and collaborations formed.</p>	

Strategic Objectives	Outputs	Outcomes	Possible Indicators	Partnerships
		<p>programmes relevant to SPAW's objectives.</p> <p>Improved coordination of regional programming for protected areas and wildlife in the WCR.</p> <p>States increasingly collaborate with each other and the Cartagena Convention Secretariat to address emerging environmental issues.</p>		
	<p>3.3a Coordinated capacity-building programmes developed to address gaps in knowledge and skills for implementation at the national level, using existing tools and methodologies.</p> <p>3.3b Knowledge-based participatory approaches that incorporates traditional and local knowledge promoted.</p> <p>3.3c Successful national actions and best practices replicated and/or upscaled at the regional level.</p> <p>3.3d Women, youth, indigenous peoples, and marginalised groups are supported in their efforts to disseminate information that</p>	<p>Joint capacity building/training and/or knowledge management activities.</p> <p>Increase in the number of case studies and/or experience notes on Ecosystem-based management.</p> <p>Increase in the training courses/webinars on ecosystem-based management or related integrated planning tools.</p> <p>Increase in the number of new reports, videos, fact sheets and publications.</p> <p>Increase in the number of press releases and news stories.</p>	<p>Number of participants as beneficiaries of the training and recipients of the communication materials.</p> <p>Number of communication materials prepared and disseminated.</p> <p>Number of recipients at the technical management level.</p> <p>Number of countries supported with decision support tools. Assessment of use and/or uptake of communication materials.</p>	

Strategic Objectives	Outputs	Outcomes	Possible Indicators	Partnerships
	aligns with the Cartagena Convention, its Protocols and Action Plans.	<p>Increase in the number of promotional events.</p> <p>Increase in the number of countries supported with decision-support tools on pollution developed and/or piloted.</p>		
	3.4 Digital transformation streamlined into data management and analysis, and stakeholder communication and collaboration.	Improved efficiency and effectiveness of environmental management, stakeholder engagement and collaboration, and evidence-based decision-making.	<p>Development of digital platforms for data sharing and analysis.</p> <p>Adoption of electronic reporting systems.</p> <p>Integration of digital tools and technologies into capacity-building programs and outreach activities.</p>	
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, Strategies and Action plans to facilitate a transition to sustainable blue economies including improved governance and circularity - Governance, Circularity, and sustainable blue economies.	4.1 Innovative solutions researched, developed and used for monitoring and assessment a.	Increase in research, development and use of innovative technologies for monitoring and assessment.	<p>Number of countries using innovative approaches to monitoring and assessment of the coastal and marine environment and its resources.</p> <p>Extend of involvement in target beneficiaries/communities in the identification and implementation of solutions</p>	Contracting Parties and member states, regional and sub-regional IGOs, Development Banks, UN Agencies, private sector, RACs and RANs.
	4.2 Opportunities for Public-Private Partnerships in the development of sustainable blue and circular economies	Public/private sector partnerships.	Positive Evaluation of Outcomes of Partnerships	

Strategic Objectives	Outputs	Outcomes	Possible Indicators	Partnerships
	identified and as appropriate, supported.	New Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) concluded and/or updated.		
	4.3 Revised and updated guidelines for RACs and RANs developed to enable more efficient and effective implementation of the work programme by the Secretariat.	A reduction in overlaps/duplications and conflicts amongst RACs and RANs and other agencies; increased resources to implement RAC workplans and programmes.	Revised mandates of RACs and RANs consistent with strategic objectives and aligned to relevant international standards.	
	4.4 Contracting Parties and Member States supported, where appropriate, to assess their capacity to comply with goals and targets established under the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols, including streamlining of gender-sensitive interventions, in their national strategies and action plans.	Regional policies that deliver gender interventions.	Number of updated policies, action plans and strategies that include a gender lens. Gender inclusiveness in technical and management levels.	
	4.5 Strengthening monitoring, assessment and improving reporting systems to inform evidence-based decision-making and enhance transparency and accountability.	Contracting Parties have improved monitoring, reporting, compliance, and enforcement mechanisms under the Cartagena Convention. Greater evidence-based decision-making based on the improved data collection and analysis. Funding proposals better reflect the state of coastal and marine resources and their	Number of countries providing biannual reports to the Cartagena Convention Secretariat.	

Strategic Objectives	Outputs	Outcomes	Possible Indicators	Partnerships
		management in the Wider Caribbean Region.		

The above targets and indicators are expected to be achieved through the work of the Secretariat, Regional Activity Centres, Partner Agencies and Contracting Parties. These will be defined in specific biannual work plans and budgets. Baselines for relevant indicators will be defined in order to monitor progress in implementation.

4.0 CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

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

4.1 Communications and Raising Awareness

The Secretariat will work to embrace and incorporate relevant global campaigns to stimulate wider public engagement and behavioural 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 behaviour across relevant sectors, but must 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.

Subject to COP Decisions and mandates provided by Contracting Parties, the Secretariat will strengthen partnerships with the media, private sector, community-based, and non-governmental organizations, youth organizations, the academic and research community, and key actors (including “ambassadors” or “champions”) to demonstrate and advocate for the value of marine and coastal resources and the importance of the Caribbean Sea to countries of the Wider Caribbean Region and the framework provided by the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols.

4.2 Knowledge Management

A knowledge management strategy will be developed, building on the existing communications strategy to support the effective implementation of the CEP strategy. It 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 audiences, including behaviour change and promotion of Sustainable Consumption and Production patterns. An effective Knowledge Management strategy will seek to undertake the following:

- 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 the 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, as appropriate.

4.3 Digital Transformation

UNEP is involved in a broader Digital transformation initiative involving the use of technology and digital platforms to streamline processes, improve data management and analysis, and enhance stakeholder communication and collaboration. In the WCR, Digital technologies have the potential to drive innovation, transform business models, and increase productivity, all of which have significant repercussions for humanity's present and future. New opportunities may be available to enhance the work of the Cartagena Convention Secretariat through digital transformation, including the potential to evaluate and monitor sustainability progress, optimise resource use, lower greenhouse gas emissions, and promote more circular economy approaches.

An effective digital transformation will help to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of environmental management, enhance stakeholder engagement and collaboration, and support evidence-based decision-making.

This will be pursued through the initiatives as follows:

1. Sustainable Digital Ecosystem for the Planet: Supporting and scaling up environmental change through an effectively governed and inclusive data architecture and digital ecosystem for the planet.
2. A digital planetary dashboard that provides near real-time and automated monitoring of global progress against key environmental targets of the SDGs, Resolutions of the UN Environmental Assembly and Multi-lateral Environmental Agreements.
3. Use of predictive analysis and modelling to identify key risks linked to environmental degradation, climate change & pollution and the related gender and socio-economic factors.
4. Development of global environmental data standards and safeguards for public-private partnerships.
5. Shifting Markets and Consumer Behaviours: Catalysing a transformative use of environmental digital public goods to amplify and accelerate progress towards global climate, biodiversity and pollution goals and targets.
6. Inform and transform markets, supply chains and consumer lifestyles towards sustainable outcomes by deploying transformative applications that leverage and harness environmental digital public goods.
7. Influence economic incentives and human behaviours to favour sustainability by embedding environmental sustainability data, metrics and values into the digital economy's platforms, applications, filters, and algorithms.
8. Digital Literacy, Innovation and E-governance: Strengthening environmental digital literacy and e-governance capacities of diverse stakeholders to engage in the environmental dimensions of digital transformation, with an emphasis on the global South.
9. Increased public involvement in decision-making, open innovation, and citizen science.

10. Innovation and accelerator hubs to identify and advance digital sustainability innovations in a co-creative manner.”¹³

By integrating digital tools and technologies into capacity-building programs and outreach activities, Member States can increase access to training and support, improve knowledge-sharing and collaboration, and enhance the effectiveness of their programs.

¹³ Digital Transformation - UNEP Medium Term Strategy 2022-2025 <https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/technology/what-we-do/digital-transformation/what-uneps-ambition>.

5.0 GOVERNANCE, IMPLEMENTATION AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

5.1 Governance

Decision-making in the wider Caribbean involves a complex arrangement of overlapping mandates. Relevant entities include:

- National governments, their agencies, and inter-ministerial committees.
- Regional inter-governmental bodies and their technical agencies – such as CARICOM, Central American Integration System, Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States; Association of Caribbean States, Organization of American States.
- United Nations programmes, commissions, regional offices, and sub-regional offices; and
- Civil society, academia, resource users and other stakeholders.

5.1.1 Support for other global initiatives

The CEP Strategy promotes and supports progressive actions that align with key priorities and goals that have previously been identified and endorsed at the international level, and that are of common/shared interest for the WCR, such as:

- Treaty on Plastics Pollution¹⁴ UNEA Resolution 5/14, “End plastic pollution: Towards an international legally binding instrument”¹⁵
- Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction¹⁶
- Kunming-Montreal GBF¹⁷
- SDGs 6, 8, 14, 17 and others as appropriate¹⁸
- RSSD 2022-2025¹⁹

5.1.2 Regional Coordination on Ocean Governance

5.1.2.1 Revitalising regional ocean governance in the WCR

Strengthening and expanding coordination on regional, sub-regional and national-level collaborative governance and living marine resources management efforts is key to successfully implementing the CEP strategy. The CEP strategy is expected to provide the enabling conditions for the Contracting 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

¹⁴ UNEA Resolution 5/14 entitled “End plastic pollution: Towards an international legally binding instrument” 2022.

¹⁵ UNEA Resolution 5/14 entitled “End plastic pollution: Towards an international legally binding instrument” 2022.

¹⁶ Draft Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction 2023.

¹⁷ Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework 2022.

¹⁸ Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development 2015.

¹⁹ Regional Seas Strategies Directions 2022-2025.

Contracting Parties to respond to related regional and global commitments and MEAs to which they have committed.

In the context of the CEP, governance focuses on 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 effective implementation of agreed relevant obligations at the international (including MEAs) and regional level. The CEP strategy encourages the creation of interlinkages among the components of the Cartagena 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. Contracting Parties through COP decisions would provide guidance on how best the Secretariat could respond to ocean governance and coordinating in the Wider Caribbean Region and to identify additional indicators for monitoring implementation.

5.1.2.2 The strengthened role of the Cartagena Convention structure

The CCS has three thematic sub-programmes: (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 the 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, and its components.

The Cartagena Convention Secretariat supports an expanded role for the Regional Activity Centres (RACs) and the Regional Activity Networks (RANs) for implementing the Convention, its Protocols, Strategies and Action Plans and relevant and appropriate, related LME SAPs. The RACs have developed strategic plans to assist the Secretariat in mobilising funds and developing new projects and activities as part of approved biennial work plans and budgets. The Secretariat has established formal working arrangements with several agencies through MoUs that now form part of the RANs – Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute, Centro del Agua del Trópico Húmedo para América Latina y el Caribe, Caribbean Public Health Agency, Instituto de Investigaciones Marinas y Costeras and will continue to strengthen partnerships to assist, amongst others, in generating and analysing data.

Cross-thematic collaboration occurs through the development and joint implementation of projects with other UN agencies, NGOs and Development Banks and through formal Memoranda of Cooperation signed with MEA Secretariats and regional fisheries bodies. These collaborations and MoUs will further contribute to joint reporting on the SDG 14 targets by supporting countries in their monitoring and reporting and their contribution to regular regional assessments.

Achievement objectives:

To achieve effective implementation of the CEP strategy, there is a need to strengthen regional coordination by the Cartagena Convention, including:

- (i) resources mobilised and leveraged, including through recovery of outstanding arrears from all Contracting Parties

- (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

National-to-Regional-Global Collaboration

The Secretariat and the RACs will serve as regional conduits for delivering decision-support tools, capacity building guides, and assessments built around ecosystem-based approaches and developed at the global level. RACs and RANs, which comprise local, 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

While their work is coordinated and facilitated by the Secretariat, the RACs are the main leaders of the activities mentioned in the Programme of Work adopted by the CoPs.

5.1.3 Partnerships

Given the complexity of ocean governance in the Wider Caribbean Region, the Secretariat will work 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 are a further priority. The results and impacts of these partnerships will be communicated to Contracting Parties to assess their effectiveness in support of the implementation of the biennial work plans and budgets.

The 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 ground for the exchange of best practices, lessons learnt and replication where appropriate.

5.2 An Institutional Coordination Framework to Implement the Strategy

Implementation of the strategy should be responsive to regional and national needs, based on participation and partnerships; alignment and inclusivity, while being adaptive and flexible; result-based and resource-efficient, ensuring effective knowledge generation and sharing and enabling the Secretariat to support Contracting Parties in implementing better the CoP decisions and obligations of the Convention and its Protocols.

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

The governance work program will seek to achieve the following objectives:

1. Strengthen the existing governance network within the institutional framework of the Cartagena Convention, as well as cross-sectorial and regional coordination, to enhance participation and engagement of all stakeholders in a transparent decision-making process.
2. Strengthen the capacity of Contracting Parties for the implementation of and compliance with the Cartagena Convention, its Protocols, Regional Strategies and Action Plans.
3. Strengthen synergies, complementarities, and collaboration among international and regional partners and organisations active in the WCR.
4. Promote effective science-policy interface mechanisms at the regional and national levels 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. Coordinate the implementation of a comprehensive resource mobilisation strategy for the efficient delivery of the work plan of the Cartagena Convention/CEP.

The above is expected to lead to the following outcomes:

1. Effective implementation by the Contracting Parties of their financing commitments under the Cartagena Convention, Protocols, and Regional Strategies and Action Plans.
2. Systemic strengthening and effective functioning and delivery of CEP decision-making and advisory bodies.
3. Coordinated approaches to strengthen capacities for implementing the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols.
4. Complementarity and policy alignment within the CEP-Cartagena Convention system's policy and regulatory instruments.
5. Enhanced partnerships and multi-stakeholder engagement

5.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

Article 13 of the Cartagena Convention states, “...***the Contracting Parties undertake to develop and coordinate 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 utilised 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. 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 RACs, and the Cartagena Convention Secretariat in collaboration with civil society and relevant partnerships on activities carried out in relation to the strategic priorities and the activities formulated for the implementation of this Strategy.

The continued development of periodic SOCAR and State of Habitat Reports as an integral part of the development of 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 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 including revision of indicators. This will be subject to decisions and the mandate provided by Contracting Parties

5.4 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, and Action plans and ensure the 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 primarily funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), RACs, member countries and bilateral donors, with in-kind contributions of the Secretariat being used to support project implementation.

The CTF has consistently supported the 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, e.g. hosting of meetings and seconding of experts. In seeking funding for 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 utilisation strategy as Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention.

Objectives:

- Develop the architecture for the Financial Sustainability of the Convention network, including through recovery of outstanding arrears from all Contracting Parties.
- 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 CTF.
- Develop a Mapping of donors, International Financial Institutions, including private sector involvement.
- Capacity building for project development and implementation.
- Facilitate and coordinate matchmaking of needs, projects and donors, International Financial Institutions with other IGOs.
- Enhance private sector partnerships, including foundations, to access financing opportunities in pollution, biodiversity, Blue Economy, and climate change.

Proposed Approach

This strategy utilised that donor interventions are increasingly driven by domestic and foreign policies, with several other regional and international agencies involved in managing coastal and marine resources. Current and potential new funding sources include, among others:

- Bilateral donors
- The GEF
- Green Climate Fund
- United Nations Multi-Country. Sustainable Development Framework
- Development Banks building on relationships already established with the InterAmerican Development Bank, World Bank and the Caribbean Development Bank
- 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 Utilisation strategy explicitly targeted 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 will be developed..

A targeted stakeholder mapping will be part of the comprehensive Resource Mobilization strategy identifying actors and resources available to contribute to the financial sustainability of the Cartagena Convention. Therefore, developing 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 the Contracting Parties to assist in the oversight of financing and resource utilisation efforts by the Secretariat. This Committee would establish a planned, systematic and uniform 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 the implications of any shortfalls in contributions.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The region will increase its ability to achieve the SDGs and other global and regional commitments. The approach to advancing the WCR should be guided by the ambitious goals set out in UNEP Vision 2050 and Agenda 2030 by working towards the protection of marine biodiversity and ecosystems, the prevention and reduction of pollution, and the improvement of livelihoods and stewardship in a holistic and comprehensive manner. This requires collaboration across sectors and stakeholders, as well as the integration of environmental, social, and economic considerations in all decision-making processes. All efforts should prioritize the promotion of sustainable practices and technologies, the development of innovative solutions, and the empowerment of local communities, women, youth, indigenous and vulnerable groups.

Specifically, this strategy will guide the Cartagena Convention network and the Secretariat's efforts to:

1. Engage in coordination on ocean 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. Promote the protection and, as appropriate, restoration of 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 blue economies.

Adopting a transformative approach that addresses the root causes of environmental degradation and inequality creates a pathway to meaningful progress towards a more just and sustainable future for all.

ANNEXES

Annex I: Table 2: Table of Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols

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

Annex II: List of Supporting and Regional Strategies developed under the Cartagena Convention Secretariat

- Action Plan for the Conservation of Marine Mammals in the Wider Caribbean Region (MMAP)
- An Integrated Water Resource Management Framework
- Regional Nutrients Pollution Reduction Strategy
- Regional Habitat Restoration Strategy
- Regional Action Plan and Strategy for Marine Litter Management
- 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 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
- Regional Strategy and Action Plan for the Valuation, Protection and/or Restoration of Key Marine Habitats in the Wider Caribbean 2021 – 2030
- Regional framework on Science and Research
- Regional Management Plan for the West Indian Manatee
- Regional Recovery Action Plans (RRAPs) for sea turtles in the Caribbean region
- 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 the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Information and Training Center for the Wider Caribbean (2015-2025)
- Long Term Strategic Plan for RAC IMA (2021-2026)
- Long Term Strategy and Workplan for RAC CIMAB 2021-2030
- SPAW RAC Strategic Plan 2023-2028
- Pollution Research Strategy