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## **Caribbean Biological Corridor Strategic Plan towards 2030 Executive Summary**

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CARIBBEAN  
BIOLOGICAL  
CORRIDOR



# Caribbean Biological Corridor Strategic Plan towards 2030

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



A large, faint, stylized graphic of a fish is visible in the background, rendered in a lighter shade of blue than the page background. The fish is oriented horizontally, facing right, with its head and eye clearly defined.

# **Caribbean Biological Corridor Strategic Plan towards 2030**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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## INTRODUCTION

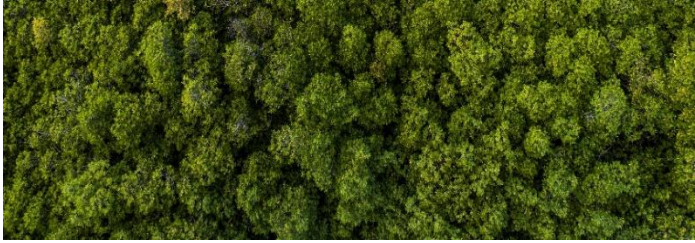
The Caribbean Biological Corridor initiative has experienced a strengthening process in which its general bases and conceptual model have been scientifically redefined and consolidated, new conservation priorities have been agreed upon, and a new, much broader spatial demarcation has been established. Moreover, in the process the foundations for its future development have been laid, and the mechanisms for its institutionality and financial sustainability were defined and are being implemented. An essential and culminating tool to undertake this new developmental stage of the CBC initiative is its Strategic Plan towards 2030.

The plan aims to serve as a tool to complement and support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the CBC member countries. To this end, it has been aligned with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and UNEP's Mid-Term Strategy for 2022-2025 - en route to

2030. Recognizing the role of the European Union in supporting the initiative, the Plan has also considered its Biodiversity Strategy for Latin America and the Caribbean (Beyond the Jaguars); as well as the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Strategy for the implementation of the Global Strategic Plan for Biological Diversity of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) until 2022 and beyond. The Plan seeks to help CBC member countries respond to commitments to Multilateral Environmental Agreements, especially those related to the Forum of Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean, the Global Biodiversity Framework of Kunming-Montreal, those emanating from the climate summits, and within the development frameworks that the United Nations has signed with the countries.







## CONSERVATION PRIORITIES

Conservation priorities were defined for both fine filter (species and groups of species) and coarse filter (ecosystems or groups of ecosystems). After a complex process of definitions, analysis, and consultations, 139 species were selected, grouped into 14 groups considered fine-filter conservation priorities. Additionally, other species are priorities for monitoring, as they are indicator species of regional connectivity, including migratory raptors and passerines. As coarse filter conservation priorities, four ecosystems or groups of ecosystems were selected that are

representative of the threatened ecoregions of the Caribbean: Humid forests and pine forests, dry forests and xerophytic shrublands, mangrove forests and coral reefs. They were spatially assessed to find the highest priority conservation sites by applying a set of selection criteria.

The list of conservation priorities must be updated periodically to incorporate changes in prioritization criteria or conservation status of species and ecosystems, as agreed by the initiative's member countries.





## CBC DESIGN

### Strategic axes

Five strategic axes associated with the essential functions of the CBC were defined, based on the premises emanating from the agreements of the Ministerial Committee meetings.

1. Maintain ecological connectivity through the conservation and restoration of key ecosystems.
2. Effective conservation of the most representative and threatened biodiversity values of the insular Caribbean.
3. Strengthening resilience to climate change.
4. Sustainability of development in communities.
5. Strengthening capacity for governance, south-south cooperation and coordinated work among multiple actors and at multiple scales.

### Objectives, mission, and vision

The overall objective of the CBC Initiative is to build a strong, collectively sustained, institutional regional approach to the conservation and management of shared terrestrial and marine biodiversity of regional importance in the Caribbean Islands, which contributes to both global conservation and poverty reduction in the region.

Its specific objectives are:

1. Ensure the effective conservation of marine and terrestrial biodiversity of regional importance and its ecological connectivity in key sites of the insular Caribbean.

2. Strengthen governance and the creation of effective cooperation networks at different levels, to achieve a sustainable social-ecological relationship between communities of resource users and the ecosystems that provide them.
3. Work within its geographic scope to improve the resilience of ecosystems to climate change and promote ecosystem-based adaptation measures.

The mission of the initiative is to *“Achieve the effective conservation of marine and terrestrial biodiversity of regional importance and the maintenance of ecological connectivity in key sites of the insular Caribbean, considering the challenges of a changing climate, the development needs of communities, and ensuring the coordination, integration and cooperation of all relevant actors.”* It is designed to stimulate action to create an environmentally sustainable future in the insular Caribbean based on respect for the functioning of ecosystems, recognition of development needs and addressing shared challenges.

Its vision for 2030 is that *“The CBC is a consolidated, financially sustainable and effective South-South cooperation initiative for the conservation of biodiversity of regional importance for the insular Caribbean, which ensures and monitors its ecological connectivity in key sites and promotes the sustainable development in a context of changing climate”*. Its vision for 2050 is for the Caribbean to be *“A region where nature remains alive, diverse, intact and healthy, and is used wisely and*



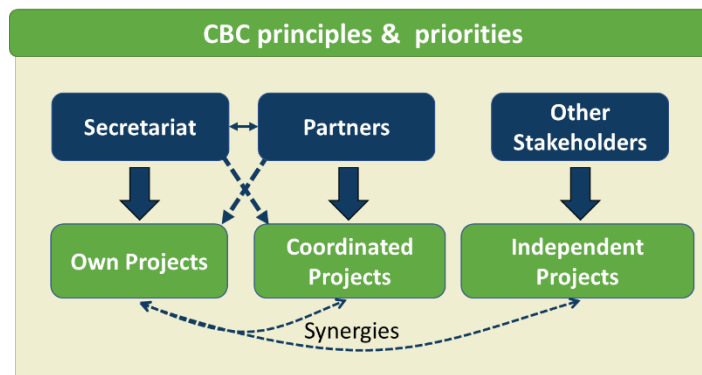
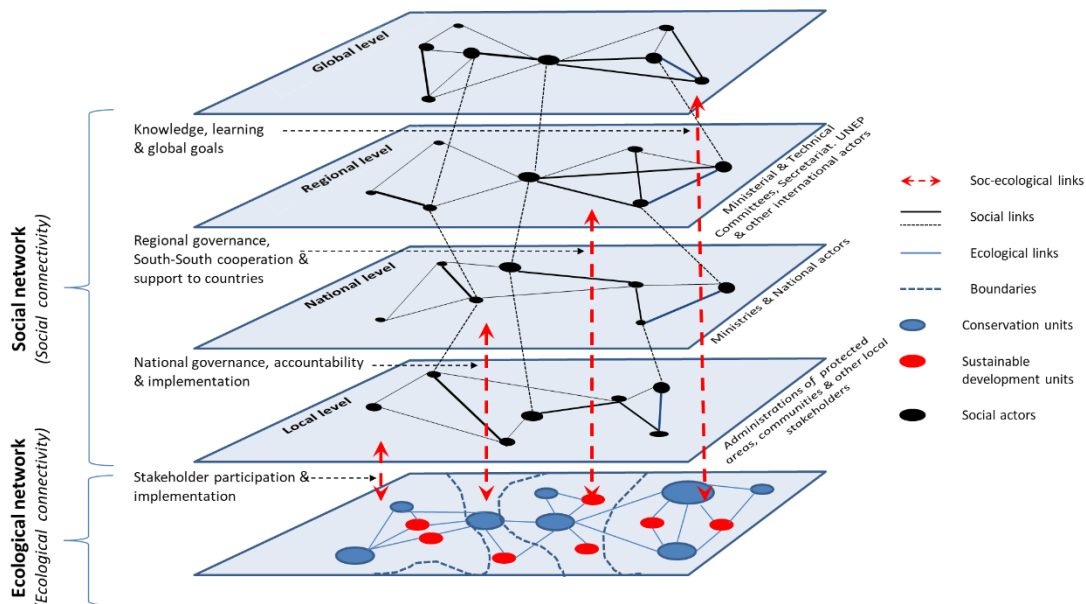
sustainably for the benefit of a diverse but peaceful, fair, inclusive and prosperous society”.

### Conceptual model

The CBC is conceptualized as a complex social-ecological system, in which territorial biodiversity conservation units are interconnected in an ecological network that interacts with a social network formed by the stakeholders that regulate, govern, and use the resources. The CBC goes beyond ecological connectivity because the initiative works closely with the social network of stakeholders composed of

decision-makers, regulatory and enforcement authorities, civil society, the private sector, as well as individual users of natural resources.

At the same time, the CBC is conceived as a South-South cooperation platform (as a social network) in which its fundamental principles and priorities are promoted, and anyone who wishes to contribute is invited to participate. The participation may be through projects developed by the Secretariat or with the participation of the Secretariat, or through completely independent projects.



## Geographic scope

The current CBC demarcation covers 142,007 km<sup>2</sup>, of which 28,746 km<sup>2</sup> (20%) corresponds to core conservation zones and 113,261 km<sup>2</sup> (80%) to connectivity zones, 67% is in marine areas, and 71 % corresponds to protected areas. The CBC demarcation is not static, and its review cycle must start at least

every three years. This review includes not only changes that are evidently necessary due to the new agreed thematic and spatial priorities, but also those that become necessary as new countries and territories join the initiative.





## CONSERVATION ISSUES

Eleven critical threats were identified considering their scope, intensity, and irreversibility, all shared by one or more conservation priorities:

1. Indiscriminate deforestation
2. Selective logging of high-value species of trees.
3. Wildfires.
4. Overfishing.
5. Bycatch.
6. The impact of fishing gear on benthic habitats and species.
7. Introduced, invasive and/or predatory species.
8. Infrastructure development and urbanization.
9. Pollution.
10. Poaching, and illegal collection of wild species.
11. Climate change.



Three key elements directly threaten the sustainable, healthy, and resilient development of rural communities in the CBC: the degradation ecosystems that reduces their capacity to provide renewable resources and services, and their high climate and socioeconomic vulnerability.

The main knowledge, conservation and/or restoration gaps recognized for the CBC are seagrasses, deep-sea marine ecosystems, threatened flora, and freshwater ecosystems, which are only indirectly represented in current priorities and demarcation. Restoration priority areas have not been identified nor are they part of the current demarcation, making a systematic analysis of conservation and restoration gaps in the CBC necessary.

Main threats from an institutional and financial point of view, are the lack of updated and robust legal support for the initiative and its governance system, and the limited implementation of existing mechanisms to guarantee the financial sustainability of the initiative. Other important problems and barriers identified are insufficient formal arrangements with key actors; limited intervention at the local scale; weak incorporation of marine issues; insufficient technical capacity, and information and communication infrastructure; frequent political changes and instability in some of the member countries, and the extend, fragmentation and diversity of the Caribbean geography.



## STRATEGIC PROGRAM

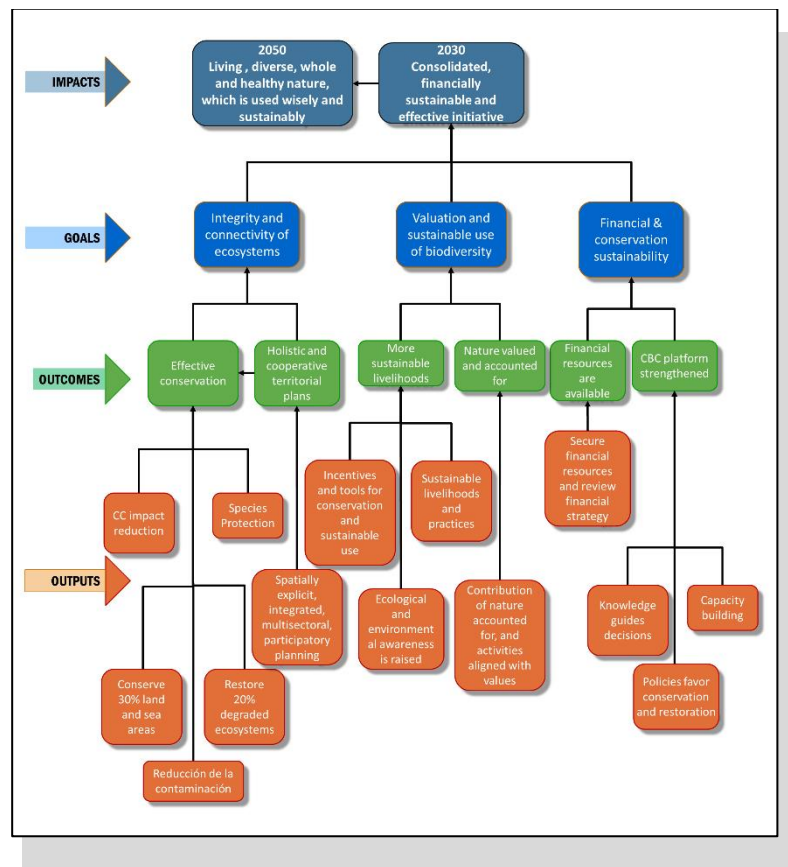


### Theory of Change

Associated with the results and outputs of Plan's Theory of Change, 100 general actions were identified and grouped into 15 work programs.

To ensure the long-term conservation of the CBC priorities, it is expected to effectively protect at least 30% of the initiative's marine and terrestrial areas, have at least 20% of the priority areas in degraded ecosystems under restoration, ensure the effective protection of priority threatened species and reduce the impacts of climate change in key areas. Together with this, integrated, participatory and multisector spatial planning instruments will be developed.

On the other hand, tools and incentives will be developed for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, practices that lead to more sustainable livelihoods will be implemented, the environmental awareness of communities and decision-makers will be raised, the contribution from nature to economies will be accounted for, and the alignment of development policies and plans with the values of nature will be promoted. The hope is to provide sustainable livelihoods in rural communities and for nature's contribution to economies to be adequately valued and accounted for.



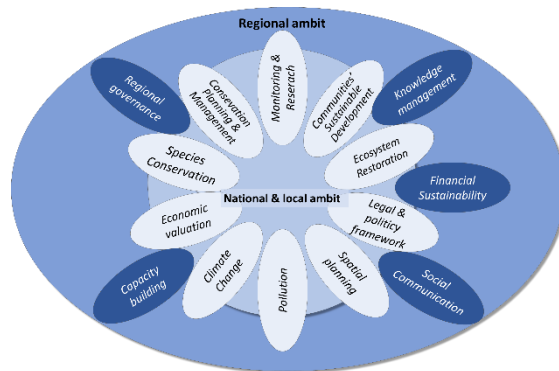
Finally, the Plan will systematically review and update the financial strategy and ensure the necessary funds for its implementation and long-term sustainability. The capacities of key actors will also be strengthened, knowledge will be compiled or generated, and tools will be developed to guide decisions, while policies that favor conservation and restoration in member countries will be promoted. All this work is expected to strengthen the CBC initiative as a platform for governance and subregional cooperation.

The six results to be achieved (Effective conservation, holistic and cooperative territorial plans, more sustainable livelihoods, nature valued and accounted for, sufficient financial resources available, and a strengthened CBC platform) will lead to achieving the initiative's three general goals: the integrity and connectivity of ecosystems, the valuation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and the financial sufficiency and effective management for conservation. The successful implementation of the plan is expected to achieve the 2030 vision, and with its continuity, expansion and development, the 2050 vision.

During the implementation of the plan, the CBC's regional governance and south-south cooperation platform will focus on implementing and giving special follow-up to five of the programs:

- Governance.
- Knowledge management.
- Social communication.
- Capacity building.
- Financial sustainability.

It is expected that the burden of the implementation of all other programs will occur mainly at the national and local levels under the leadership of partners in member countries.



### Estimated budget

A reserved estimate of the minimum resources necessary for the implementation of essential actions at the subregional level results in a budget of 50 million dollars for the 8 years of the plan. This budget will ensure the implementation of programs managed at the regional level, will allow key actions of other programs that influence national policies to be carried out, and will guarantee the development of pilot experiences to promote good practices.

It will be strategic to raise resources for the endowment funds. Approximately between 15 and 25 million dollars would be sufficient to ensure the sustainability of the initiative's governance system and cooperation platform, as well as to maintain the basic services, and monitoring and evaluation activities provided by the Secretariat at the subregional level.

Download the full version of the Strategic Plan here:

<https://cbcbio.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/CBC-Strategic-Plan-EN.pdf>

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