

# **Review of Operations, Functioning, and Financing of Regional Activity Centres and Regional Activity Networks of the Cartagena Convention**

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<b>AMEP</b>	Assessment and Management of Environmental Pollution
<b>CAR/RCU</b>	Caribbean Regional Coordinating Unit – Cartagena Convention Secretariat
<b>CEP</b>	Caribbean Environment Programme
<b>CETA</b>	Communication, Education, Training and Awareness
<b>COP</b>	Conference of the Parties
<b>CTF</b>	Caribbean Trust Fund
<b>GEF</b>	Global Environment Facility
<b>IGM</b>	Intergovernmental Meeting
<b>IMO</b>	The International Maritime Organization
<b>LBS</b>	Land-based sources of marine pollution
<b>MAP</b>	Mediterranean Action Plan
<b>MEA</b>	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
<b>MoC</b>	Memorandum of Cooperation
<b>MoU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organisation
<b>RACs</b>	Regional Activity Centres
<b>RAC-CIMAB</b>	Centre of Research and Environmental Management of Transport
<b>RAC-IMA</b>	Institute of Marine Affairs
<b>RAC-REMPEITC</b>	Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Information and Training Center for the Wider Caribbean
<b>RANs</b>	Regional Activity Networks
<b>ROPME</b>	Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment
<b>SPAW-RAC</b>	Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife
<b>UNEP</b>	United Nations Environment Programme
<b>WIDECAST</b>	Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Governments of the Wider Caribbean region, with the assistance of UNEP, formed the Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP) to promote regional cooperation for the protection and development of the marine environment. CEP is administered by the Regional Coordinating Unit (CAR/RCU). The Convention on the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (The Cartagena Convention) and its Protocols are supported by four specialized Regional Activity Centres (RACs): the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Information and Training Center for the Wider Caribbean (RAC-REMPEITC-Caribe), hosted by the Government of Curaçao working in close collaboration with the International Maritime Organization in support of the Oil Spills Protocol; the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW-RAC), hosted by the Government of France in Guadeloupe in support of the SPAW Protocol; and the Institute of Marine Affairs in Trinidad and Tobago (RAC-IMA) and the Centre of Research and Environmental Management of Transport in Cuba (RAC-CIMAB), hosted by the Governments of Trinidad and Tobago and Cuba respectively, both in support of the LBS Protocol.

The 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Cartagena Convention, through its Decision III on “Governance” provides an overarching authority for the present review and analysis as follows: “Requests that the Secretariat, in collaboration with the four (4) Regional Activity Centers (RACs), UNEP HQ and members of the Regional Activity Networks (RANs), conduct a detailed review and analysis of the architecture of the general operations and funding source, and the organization with the Secretariat of the RACs and RANs including reviewing the current guidelines and associated decisions and host agreements for the RACs.”

### The primary aims of this report were to develop:

*An independent review and analysis, conducted in consultation with key partners and lessons learned from other Regional Seas Programmes, of the long-term systemic issues, general operations, financing, and the existing mechanisms within the Convention for the operations of their RACs and RANs, including review of the current, [2008] guidelines for the establishment, hosting and functioning of RACs and RANs; and Recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of RACs and RANs.*

The general approach taken to formulate the recommendations and outcomes presented in this Review was based upon a bottom-up process seeking objective, open and transparent feedback, and lessons drawn from a wide array of information and key stakeholders. This included formal interviews with Coordinators, RACs’ Directors and Host Governments and other Regional Seas Programmes and Action Plans which also have established RACs, civil society, and non-governmental partners. Three virtual meetings with RACs, the Cartagena Convention Secretariat, UNEP headquarters, and National and Technical Focal Points of the Cartagena Convention informed the Review and served to validate preliminary findings. Recommendations emanating from these meetings as well as from discussions with partner organisations and stakeholders were in alignment of those offered by the present review.

### Main findings and outcomes of this Review include:

- RACs and RANs have long been recognised as integral part of CEP’s institutional framework. The concept of RANs is unique to the Cartagena Convention. RACs do not function autonomously, they

have a regional technical role under the direction of Parties, overseen through coordination by the Secretariat. RACs are crucial to programme delivery.

- The legal status of each RAC, while not harmonized, does not hinder their functionality and operations but influences the degree of autonomy in discharging functions and in administrative procedures.
- The differences in the contents of Host Country Agreements reflects time lags in their conclusions and newer requirements to conform with legal advice and standards. Such agreements can be seen as overall frameworks and commitments of host countries but may require amendments to achieve specificity in terms of operation, function, and financial sustainability. There appears to be no immediate need to embark on a more in-depth review of existing Host Agreements, as matter of priority.
- The Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) and the Assessment and Management of Environmental Pollution (AMEP) Sub-programmes have evolved differently. The RACs servicing the LBS Protocol were not originally established solely to support the Protocol but are national institutions which accumulated regional functions and designation as RACs. They are not routinely delegated direct responsibility for the implementation of the AMEP Workplan. On the other hand, SPAW-RAC was created to assist in technical aspects of the SPAW Protocol and it has been engaged more directly in mobilising financial resources. RAC- REMPEITC has also been established to solely support the Oil Spill Protocol and it operates with a different institutional arrangement and governance, though a tripartite arrangement among CEP, the International Maritime Organization (IMO), and the Government of Curaçao.
- The governance arrangements for each RAC are varied and have yet to be fully established in the case of SPAW-RAC, RAC-CIMAB, and RAC-IMA. Terms of Reference, when existing, such as for SPAW-RAC and RAC-REMPEITC, may not be updated to reflect the current realities of the RAC's role, mandate or functionality, nor with clear provisions for monitoring or compliance mechanisms to assess performance of RACs in the delivery of their Workplans.
- RACs reporting lines are to the Secretariat, which provides direct programmatic supervision of RAC activities, as envisaged in the adopted 2008 Guidelines for RACs and RANs. Close communication and inclusiveness of RACs in overall programme design and management is important, as they serve as technical "arms" of the Secretariat and to foster harmonious understanding goals/roles as well as efficient programme delivery.
- Considerable efforts were devoted by the Secretariat, Contracting Parties, and by observer partner organisations in the developing the concept of RACs and RANs. The expanded role of civil society was deemed critically important to the strengthening of RACs. While the current 2008 Guidelines remain adequate, there is a need to refine and reconcile the concept of RACs and RANs to be flexible and accommodate slightly different, but not mutually exclusive options, to closer reflect their evolution of roles and operations, especially regarding "Definitions" and "Establishment." RACs and RANs are not structures that overburden Parties or duplicate existing frameworks but are added values to programme delivery and to the relevance of the Cartagena Convention, strengthening synergies for programme delivery and for enhancement of national capacities.

A series of short-term and medium/long-term recommendations emanating from the present review and analysis are offered, without preempting assignment of priorities, for the consideration by the 20<sup>th</sup> Intergovernmental Meeting /17<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties of the Cartagena Convention.

**A summary of some of the Review's high-level recommendations include:**

- **Enhance governance structures**, making them fully functional for each RAC including composition, terms of reference and reporting requirements for Steering Committees and Advisory Boards. The full scope of the functions and tasks of the Secretariat should be outlined, with defined clear relationship and division of responsibilities with RACs and elements necessary to define a functional cooperative relationship between CEP and RACs/RANs.
- **Develop Terms of Reference for the Focal Points for each RAC and National Focal Points**, to define the main tasks expected to be performed, including the preparation of a "Focal Point Tool Kit," with key documents and decisions, aimed at assisting Focal Points in the delivery of their functions.
- **Develop mechanisms to increase regular communications** between the Secretariat and RACs as well as among RACs, with regular strategic meetings with the participation of RAN organisations and other stakeholders, with corresponding reporting and follow-up on decisions.
- **Foster development of joint programming and strategic planning** by the Secretariat and among RACs to implement workplan for each Protocol and for the design of joint projects. To that end, the development of Medium-Term strategies for each RAC would be desirable and an approach for more integrated workplans, including defined targets and indicators, which would allow for increased monitoring and accountability.
- **Design projects with a bottom-up approach and align with workplans**, in greater consultation and input from Focal Points and stakeholders/partners, specially from RANs, with specific tasks and responsibilities defined for the roles of the Secretariat, RACs and RANs in their implementation.
- **Refine and reconcile the concept of RACs and RANs by Contracting Parties**, through an amendment to the current 2008 Guidelines, to closer reflect their evolution in terms of role and operations, e.g. regarding "Definitions" and "Establishment".
- **Explore opportunities for the possible creation of new RACs/RANs** to further focus the scope of action for programme implementation and active engagement of partners within the institutional framework of CEP.
- **Explore new resource mobilisation avenues for RACs and RANs**, as integral part of CEP Resource Mobilisation Strategy, including possible voluntary Fund/Trust in support of the Cartagena Convention, to complement, not replace the CTF, funding core Secretariat functions, initiatives and/or projects that ensure progress towards achieving agreed targets.
- **Expand the role of civil society and non-governmental (NGO) organisations** with possible definition of a specific/formal cooperation programme, which may contribute to the financial sustainability of RACs and RANs and enhance the operational effectiveness of the Cartagena Convention.

# RÉSUMÉ

Les gouvernements de la région des Caraïbes, avec l'aide du PNUE, ont formé le Programme pour l'environnement des Caraïbes (PEC) afin de promouvoir la coopération régionale pour la protection et le développement de l'environnement marin. Le PEC est administré par l'Unité de Coordination Régionale (CAR/RCU). La Convention sur la protection et le développement de l'environnement marin de la région des Caraïbes (La Convention de Carthagène) et ses protocoles sont soutenus par quatre Centres d'Activités Régionales : le Centre Régional d'information et de formation sur les situations d'urgence en matière de pollution marine pour la région des Caraïbes (CAR-REMPEITC-Caribe), hébergé par le gouvernement de Curaçao, travaillant en étroite collaboration avec l'Organisation maritime internationale à l'appui du protocole sur les déversements d'hydrocarbures ; le Centre d'Activités Régional pour les Aires Spécialement Protégées et la Vie Sauvage (CAR-SPAW), hébergé par le Gouvernement de la France en Guadeloupe à l'appui du Protocole SPAW ; et l'Institut des Affaires Maritimes de Trinité-et-Tobago (CAR-IMA) et le Centre de recherche et de gestion environnementale des transports de Cuba (CAR-CIMAB), hébergés respectivement par les gouvernements de Trinité-et-Tobago et de Cuba, tous deux à l'appui du Protocole LBS.

La 16<sup>e</sup> réunion de la Conférence des Parties à la Convention de Carthagène, par le biais de sa Décision III sur la "Gouvernance" fournit une autorité globale pour le présent examen et analyse comme suit : *"Demande au Secrétariat, en collaboration avec les quatre (4) centres d'activités régionales (CAR), le siège du PNUE et les membres des réseaux d'activités régionales (RAN), effectuent un examen et une analyse détaillés de l'architecture des opérations générales et de la source de financement, ainsi que de l'organisation avec le secrétariat des CAR et des RAN y compris l'examen des lignes directrices actuelles et des décisions associées et des accords de siège pour les CAR."*

## Les principaux objectifs de ce rapport étaient de développer :

*Un examen et une analyse indépendants, menés en consultation avec des partenaires clés et les enseignements tirés d'autres programmes de mers régionales, des problèmes systémiques à long terme, des opérations générales, du financement et des mécanismes existants au sein de la Convention pour les opérations de leurs CAR et RAN, y compris l'examen des lignes directrices actuelles [2008] pour l'établissement, l'hébergement et le fonctionnement des CAR et des RAN ; et Recommandations pour améliorer l'efficacité et l'efficience des CAR et des RAN.*

L'approche générale adoptée pour formuler les recommandations et les résultats présentés dans cet examen était basée sur un processus "ascendant" visant à obtenir des commentaires objectifs, ouverts et transparents, et des leçons tirées d'un large éventail d'informations et de parties prenantes clés. Cela comprenait des entretiens formels avec les coordonnateurs, les directeurs des CAR et les gouvernements hôtes et d'autres programmes et plans d'action des mers régionales qui ont également établi des CAR, la société civile et des partenaires non gouvernementaux. Trois réunions virtuelles avec les CAR, le Secrétariat de la Convention de Carthagène, le siège du PNUE et les points focaux nationaux et techniques de la Convention de Carthagène ont éclairé l'examen et ont servi à valider les conclusions préliminaires. Les recommandations émanant de ces réunions ainsi que des discussions avec les organisations partenaires et les parties prenantes étaient conformes à celles proposées par le présent examen.

## Les principales conclusions et résultats de cet examen comprennent :

- Les CAR et RAN sont reconnus depuis longtemps comme faisant partie intégrante du cadre institutionnel du PEC. Le concept des RAN est propre à la Convention de Carthagène. Les CAR ne fonctionnent pas de manière

autonome, ils ont un rôle technique régional sous la direction des Parties, supervisé par la coordination par le Secrétariat. Les CAR sont essentiels à la prestation des programmes.

- Le statut juridique de chaque CAR, bien qu'il ne soit pas harmonisé, n'entrave pas leur fonctionnalité et leur fonctionnement mais influence le degré d'autonomie dans l'exercice des fonctions et dans les procédures administratives.
- Les différences dans le contenu des accords avec le pays hôte reflètent des décalages dans leurs conclusions et de nouvelles exigences pour se conformer aux conseils et aux normes juridiques. Ces accords peuvent être considérés comme des cadres et des engagements globaux des pays hôtes, mais peuvent nécessiter des modifications pour parvenir à une spécificité en termes de fonctionnement, de fonction et de viabilité financière. Il ne semble pas nécessaire dans l'immédiat de se lancer dans un examen plus approfondi des accords de siège existants, en priorité.
- Les sous-programmes pour les Aires Spécialement Protégées et la Vie Sauvage (SPA) et pour Évaluation et gestion de la pollution de l'environnement (AMEP) ont évolué différemment. Les CAR servant le Protocole LBS n'ont pas été créés à l'origine uniquement pour soutenir le Protocole, mais sont des institutions nationales qui ont accumulé des fonctions régionales et une désignation en tant que CAR. Ils ne se voient pas systématiquement déléguer la responsabilité directe de la mise en œuvre du plan de travail AMEP. D'autre part, le CAR-SPA a été créé pour appuyer dans les aspects techniques du Protocole SPA et il a été engagé plus directement dans la mobilisation des ressources financières. Le CAR-REMPEITC a également été créé pour soutenir uniquement le Protocole sur les déversements d'hydrocarbures et il fonctionne avec un arrangement institutionnel et une gouvernance différente, bien qu'un arrangement tripartite entre le PEC, l'Organisation maritime internationale (OMI) et le gouvernement de Curaçao.
- Les arrangements de gouvernance pour chaque CAR sont variés et doivent encore être pleinement établis dans le cas du CAR-SPA, du CAR-CIMAB et du CAR-IMA. Les termes de référence, lorsqu'ils existent, comme pour le CAR-SPA et le CAR-REMPEITC, peuvent ne pas être mis à jour pour refléter les réalités actuelles du rôle, du mandat ou de la fonctionnalité du CAR, ni avec des dispositions claires pour le suivi ou les mécanismes de conformité pour évaluer la performance des CAR dans la livraison de leurs plans de travail.
- Les lignes hiérarchiques des CAR vont au Secrétariat, qui assure la supervision programmatique directe des activités des CAR, comme prévu dans les directives adoptées en 2008 pour les CAR et les RAN. Une communication étroite et l'inclusivité des CAR dans la conception et la gestion globales du programme sont importantes, car ils servent de «bras» techniques du Secrétariat et favorisent une compréhension harmonieuse des objectifs / rôles ainsi qu'une exécution efficace du programme.
- Des efforts considérables ont été consacrés par le Secrétariat, les Parties contractantes et les organisations partenaires observatrices à l'élaboration du concept des CAR et des RAN. Le rôle élargi de la société civile a été jugé d'une importance cruciale pour le renforcement des CAR. Bien que les directives actuelles de 2008 restent adéquates, il est nécessaire d'affiner et de concilier le concept des CAR et des RAN pour qu'il soit flexible et s'adapte à des options légèrement différentes, mais non mutuellement exclusives, afin de mieux refléter l'évolution de leurs rôles et opérations, en particulier en ce qui concerne "Définitions" et "Etablissement". Les CAR et les RAN ne sont pas des structures qui surchargent les Parties ou dupliquent les cadres existants, mais sont des valeurs ajoutées à l'exécution du programme et à la pertinence de la Convention de Carthagène, renforçant les synergies pour l'exécution du programme et pour le renforcement des capacités nationales.



Une série de recommandations à court terme et à moyen/long terme émanant du présent examen et analyse sont proposées, sans préjuger de l'attribution des priorités, pour examen par la 20<sup>e</sup> Réunion intergouvernementale/17<sup>e</sup> Conférence des Parties à la Convention de Cartagena.

### Le résumé de certaines des recommandations principales de l'examen comprend :

- **Améliorer les structures de gouvernance**, en les rendant pleinement fonctionnelles pour chaque CAR, y compris la composition, les termes de référence et les exigences en matière de rapports pour les comités directeurs et les conseils consultatifs. L'étendue complète des fonctions et des tâches du Secrétariat devrait être décrite, avec une relation et une répartition des responsabilités claires et définies avec les CAR et les éléments nécessaires pour définir une relation de coopération fonctionnelle entre le PEC et les CAR/RAN.
- **Élaborer des termes de référence pour les points focaux** de chaque CAR et points focaux nationaux, afin de définir les principales tâches à accomplir, y compris la préparation d'une «boîte d'outils pour points focaux», avec des documents et des décisions clés, visant à leurs aider dans l'exercice de leurs fonctions.
- **Développer des mécanismes pour accroître les communications régulières** entre le Secrétariat et les CAR, ainsi qu'entre les CAR, avec des réunions stratégiques régulières avec la participation des organisations RAN et d'autres parties prenantes, avec des rapports correspondants et un suivi des décisions.
- **Favoriser le développement d'une programmation conjointe et d'une planification stratégique** par le Secrétariat et entre les CAR pour mettre en œuvre le plan de travail pour chaque protocole et pour la conception de projets conjoints. À cette fin, le développement de stratégies à moyen terme pour chaque CAR serait souhaitable et une approche de plans de travail intégrés, comprenant des cibles et des indicateurs définis, qui permettraient un suivi et une responsabilisation accrus.
- **Concevoir des projets avec une approche "ascendante" et conformément aux plans de travail**, en plus grande consultation et contribution des points focaux et des parties prenantes/partenaires, en particulier des RAN, avec des tâches et des responsabilités spécifiques définies pour les rôles du Secrétariat, des CAR et des RAN dans leur mise en œuvre.
- **Affiner et réconcilier le concept de CAR et de RAN par les Parties contractantes**, par le biais d'un amendement aux Lignes directrices actuelles de 2008, afin de mieux refléter leur évolution en termes de rôle et de fonctionnement, par ex. concernant les "Définitions" et "Etablissement".
- **Explorer les possibilités de création éventuelle de nouveaux CAR/RAN** afin de mieux cibler le champ d'action pour la mise en œuvre du programme et l'engagement actif des partenaires dans le cadre institutionnel du PEC.
- **Explorer de nouvelles voies de mobilisation des ressources pour les CAR et les RAN**, en tant que partie intégrante de la stratégie de mobilisation des ressources du PEC, y compris un éventuel Fonds/Fiducie volontaire à l'appui de la Convention de Carthage, pour compléter, et non remplacer le CTF, en finançant les fonctions, initiatives et/ou des projets qui garantissent des progrès vers la réalisation des objectifs convenus.
- **Élargir le rôle de la société civile et des organisations non gouvernementales (ONG)** avec la définition éventuelle d'un programme de coopération spécifique/formel, qui pourrait contribuer à la viabilité financière des CAR et des RAN et améliorer l'efficacité opérationnelle de la Convention de Carthage.

## RESUMEN EJECUTIVO

Los gobiernos de la región del Gran Caribe, con la asistencia del PNUMA, formaron el Programa Ambiental del Caribe (PAC) para promover la cooperación regional para la protección y el desarrollo del medio ambiente marino. El PAC es administrado por la Unidad de Coordinación Regional (PAC/UCR). El Convenio sobre la Protección y el Desarrollo del Medio Marino de la Región del Gran Caribe (Convenio de Cartagena) y sus Protocolos cuentan con el apoyo de cuatro Centros de Actividad Regional (RAC) especializados.): el Centro Regional de Información y Capacitación sobre Emergencias por Contaminación Marina para el Gran Caribe (RAC-REMPEITC-Caribe), hospedado por el Gobierno de Curazao y que trabaja en estrecha colaboración con la Organización Marítima Internacional en apoyo del Protocolo sobre Derrames de Petróleo; el Centro de Actividad Regional para Áreas Especialmente Protegidas y Vida Silvestre (SPA-W-RAC), hospedado por el Gobierno de Francia en Guadalupe en apoyo del Protocolo SPAW; y el Instituto de Asuntos Marinos de Trinidad y Tobago (RAC-IMA) y el Centro de Investigación y Gestión Ambiental del Transporte en Cuba (RAC-CIMAB), hospedados por los Gobiernos de Trinidad y Tobago y Cuba respectivamente, ambos en apoyo del Protocolo LBS.

La 16ª reunión de la Conferencia de las Partes del Convenio de Cartagena, a través de su Decisión III sobre “Gobernanza”, proporciona una autoridad general para la presente revisión y análisis de la siguiente manera: *“Pide que la Secretaría, en colaboración con los cuatro (4) Centros de Actividad Regional (RAC), la Sede del PNUMA y los miembros de las Redes de Actividad Regional (RAN), realicen una revisión y un análisis detallados de la arquitectura de las operaciones generales y la fuente de financiamiento, y la organización con la Secretaría de los RAC y RAN, incluida la revisión de las pautas actuales y las decisiones asociadas y los acuerdos con países anfitriones de los RAC”.*

### Los objetivos principales de este informe fueron desarrollar:

*Una revisión y análisis independientes, realizados en consulta con socios clave y lecciones aprendidas de otros Programas de Mares Regionales, de los problemas sistémicos a largo plazo, operaciones generales, financiamiento y los mecanismos existentes dentro de la Convención para las operaciones de sus RAC y RAN, incluida la revisión de las directrices actuales [2008] para el establecimiento, hospedaje y funcionamiento de RAC y RAN; y Recomendaciones para mejorar la eficacia y la eficiencia de los RAC y RAN.*

El enfoque general adoptado para formular las recomendaciones y los resultados presentados en esta Revisión se basó en un proceso de abajo hacia arriba que ha buscado comentarios objetivos, abiertos y transparentes, y lecciones extraídas de una amplia gama de información y partes interesadas clave. Esto incluyó entrevistas formales con coordinadores, directores de RAC y gobiernos anfitriones, así como otros programas y planes de acción de mares regionales que también han establecido RACs, la sociedad civil y socios no gubernamentales. Tres reuniones virtuales con los RAC, la Secretaría del Convenio de Cartagena, la sede del PNUMA y los Puntos Focales Nacionales y Técnicos del Convenio de Cartagena informaron la Revisión y sirvieron para validar los hallazgos preliminares.

Las recomendaciones que emanaron de estas reuniones, así como de las discusiones con las organizaciones socias y las partes interesadas, coincidieron con las que ofrece la presente revisión.

### Los principales hallazgos y resultados de esta revisión incluyen:

- Los RAC y RAN han sido reconocidos desde hace mucho tiempo como parte integral del marco institucional del PAC. El concepto de RAN es exclusivo del Convenio de Cartagena. Los RAC no funcionan de forma autónoma,

teniendo un rol técnico regional bajo la dirección de las Partes, supervisados a través de la coordinación por la Secretaría. Los RAC son cruciales para la ejecución del programa.

- El régimen jurídico de cada RAC, si bien no está armonizado, no obstaculiza su funcionalidad y funcionamiento, pero influye en el grado de autonomía en el desempeño de funciones y en los procedimientos administrativos.
- Las diferencias en los contenidos de los Acuerdos de los Países Anfitriones reflejan retrasos en sus conclusiones y requisitos más nuevos para cumplir con el asesoramiento y las normas legales. Dichos acuerdos pueden verse como marcos generales y compromisos de los países anfitriones, pero pueden requerir enmiendas para lograr especificidad en términos de operación, función y sostenibilidad financiera. No parece haber una necesidad inmediata de embarcarse en una revisión más profunda de los Acuerdos de Anfitrión existentes, como cuestión prioritaria.
- Los Subprogramas de Áreas Especialmente Protegidas y Vida Silvestre (SPAW) y de Evaluación y Gestión de la Contaminación Ambiental (AMEP) han evolucionado de manera diferente. Los RAC que prestan servicio al Protocolo LBS no se establecieron originalmente únicamente para respaldar el Protocolo, sino que son instituciones nacionales que acumularon funciones regionales y la designación como RAC. No se les delega rutinariamente la responsabilidad directa de la implementación del Plan de trabajo de AMEP. Por otro lado, SPAW-RAC fue creado para apoyar en los aspectos técnicos del Protocolo SPAW y se ha involucrado más directamente en la movilización de recursos financieros. RAC-REMPEITC también se estableció para respaldar únicamente el Protocolo de Derrames de Hidrocarburos y opera con un arreglo institucional y una gobernanza diferentes, a través de un arreglo tripartito entre el PAC, la Organización Marítima Internacional (OMI) y el Gobierno de Curazao.
- Los arreglos de gobernanza para cada RAC son variados y aún no se han establecido completamente en el caso de SPAW-RAC, RAC-CIMAB y RAC-IMA. Los términos de referencia, cuando existen, como SPAW-RAC y RAC-REMPEITC, pueden no estar actualizados para reflejar las realidades actuales del rol, mandato o funcionalidad del RAC, ni presentan disposiciones claras para el monitoreo o los mecanismos de cumplimiento para evaluar el desempeño de los RAC. en la entrega de sus Planes de Trabajo.
- Las líneas de reporte de los RAC son para la Secretaría, que proporciona supervisión programática directa de las actividades de los RAC, como se prevé en las Directrices adoptadas de 2008 para los RAC y RAN. La comunicación estrecha y la inclusión de los RAC en el diseño y la gestión general del programa son importantes, ya que sirven como “brazos” técnicos de la Secretaría y para fomentar la comprensión armoniosa de las metas/funciones, así como la ejecución eficiente del programa.
- La Secretaría, las Partes Contratantes y las organizaciones socias observadoras dedicaron esfuerzos considerables al desarrollo del concepto de RAC y RAN. El papel ampliado de la sociedad civil se consideró de importancia crítica para el fortalecimiento de los RAC. Si bien las Directrices actuales de 2008 siguen siendo adecuadas, existe la necesidad de refinar y reconciliar el concepto de RAC y RAN para que sean flexibles y se adapten a opciones ligeramente diferentes, pero no mutuamente excluyentes, para reflejar más de cerca su evolución de roles y operaciones, especialmente con respecto a “Definiciones” y “Establecimiento”. Los RAC y RAN no son estructuras que sobrecargan a las Partes o duplican los marcos existentes, sino que son valores agregados para la ejecución de programas y para la relevancia del Convenio de Cartagena, fortaleciendo las sinergias para la ejecución de programas y para mejorar las capacidades nacionales.

Se ofrece una serie de recomendaciones a corto y mediano/largo plazo que emanan de la presente revisión y análisis, sin perjuicio de la asignación de prioridades, para la consideración de la 20ª Reunión Intergubernamental/17ª Conferencia de las Partes del Convenio de Cartagena.

### Un resumen de algunas de las recomendaciones principales de la revisión incluye:

- **Mejorar las estructuras de gobernanza**, haciéndolas completamente funcionales para cada RAC, incluyendo su composición, los términos de referencia y los requisitos de presentación de informes para los comités directivos y las juntas asesoras. El alcance completo de las funciones y tareas de la Secretaría deben ser descritas, con una relación claramente definida y una división de responsabilidades con los RAC, así como elementos necesarios para definir una relación de cooperación funcional entre el PAC y los RAC/RAN.
- **Desarrollar Términos de Referencia para los Puntos Focales de cada RAC y Puntos Focales Nacionales**, para definir sus principales tareas a ser realizadas, incluyendo la preparación de un “Kit de Herramientas para Puntos Focales”, con documentos y decisiones clave, con el objetivo de ayudar Puntos Focales en el desempeño de sus funciones.
- **Desarrollar mecanismos para aumentar la comunicación regular** entre la Secretaría y los RAC, así como entre los RAC, con reuniones estratégicas periódicas con la participación de las organizaciones del RAN y otras partes interesadas, con el correspondiente informe y seguimiento de las decisiones.
- **Fomentar el desarrollo de la programación conjunta y la planificación estratégica** por parte de la Secretaría y entre los RAC para implementar el plan de trabajo para cada Protocolo y para el diseño de proyectos conjuntos. Con ese fin, sería deseable el desarrollo de estrategias a mediano plazo para cada RAC y un enfoque fomentando planes de trabajo integrados, incluidos objetivos e indicadores definidos, que permitirían un mayor seguimiento y transparencia.
- **Diseñar proyectos con un enfoque “de abajo hacia arriba” y en línea con los planes de trabajo**, en mayor consulta y aportes de los Puntos Focales y las partes interesadas/socios, especialmente de las RAN, con tareas y responsabilidades específicas definidas para los roles de la Secretaría, los RAC y las RAN en su implementación.
- **Refinar y reconciliar el concepto de RAC y RAN por parte de las Partes Contratantes**, a través de una enmienda a las Directrices actuales de 2008, para reflejar mejor su evolución en términos de funciones y operaciones, especialmente en cuanto a “Definiciones” y “Establecimiento”.
- **Explorar oportunidades para la posible creación de nuevos RAC/RAN** para enfocar aún más el ámbito de acción para la implementación del programa y la participación activa de los socios dentro del marco institucional del PAC.
- **Explorar nuevas vías de movilización de recursos para los RAC y RAN**, como parte integral de la estrategia de movilización de recursos del PAC, incluido un posible Fondo/Fideicomiso voluntario en apoyo del Convenio de Cartagena, para complementar, no reemplazar el CTF, financiando las funciones, iniciativas y/o funciones centrales de la Secretaría, y proyectos que aseguren el progreso hacia el logro de los objetivos acordados.
- **Ampliar el papel de la sociedad civil y de las organizaciones no gubernamentales (ONG)** con la posible definición de un programa de cooperación específico/formal, que podría por su vez contribuir a la sostenibilidad financiera de los RAC y RAN y mejorar la eficacia operativa del Convenio de Cartagena.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

The Regional Seas Programme of the United Nations reflects political will for coordinated action and provides a legal framework to tackle common marine environmental issues at the regional scale (UNEP, 2014). In addition to addressing common threats and emerging issues, each region has its own specific challenges and priorities.

Most of the Regional Seas Programmes deliver their obligations through Action Plans and/or Strategies, which are adopted by member governments/Contracting Parties to establish a comprehensive framework for protecting the marine environment and promoting sustainable development of their region. Such Action Plans are usually underpinned by a legally-binding Regional Convention (14 Regional Seas have adopted Conventions and currently seven are administered by the United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP] as designated Secretariat) that express the commitment and political will of signatory governments to tackle their common environmental issues through coordinated activities. Most Conventions have associated Protocols (or Annexes) which reflect legal agreements addressing specific issues. In some regions Action Plans and strategies are recognised as soft legal instruments (UNEP, 2014).

In 1981, the Governments of the Wider Caribbean region, with the assistance of UNEP, formed the Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP) to promote regional cooperation for the protection and development of the marine environment. CEP is administered by the Regional Co-ordinating Unit (CAR/RCU) in Kingston, Jamaica since 1986. The Convention on the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region was adopted in March 1983 at Cartagena de Indias, Colombia (thereafter known as the *Cartagena Convention*) following a recommendation by the First Intergovernmental Meeting on the Action Plan for CEP (Montego Bay, Jamaica, 6–8 April 1981). The Convention and the Protocol Concerning Cooperation in Combating Oil-Spills in the Wider Caribbean Region (*Oil Spills Protocol*) were adopted concurrently in 1983, with a second Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (*SPAW Protocol*), adopted in Kingston, Jamaica in January 1990. A third Protocol to the Cartagena Convention, the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities (*LBS Protocol*), was adopted in October 1999 in Oranjestad, Aruba.

Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention are supported in their implementation of the Convention and its Protocols by four specialized Regional Activity Centres (RACs): the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Information and Training Center for the Wider Caribbean (RAC REMPEITC-Caribe), hosted by the Government of Curaçao working in close collaboration with the International Maritime Organization in support of the Oil Spills Protocol; the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW-RAC), hosted by the Government of France in Guadeloupe in support of the SPAW Protocol; and the Institute of Marine Affairs in Trinidad and Tobago (RAC-IMA) and the Centre of Research and Environmental Management of Transport in Cuba (RAC-CIMAB), hosted by the Governments of Trinidad and Tobago and Cuba respectively, both in support of the LBS Protocol (Table 1).

Several other regional and national agencies with whom the Secretariat has long-term cooperation support the work of the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols. In some instances, formally established Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) have recognized such institutions as part of informal or functional Regional Activity Networks (RANs). The Secretariat also has established Memoranda of Cooperation (MoC) or Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with Multilateral Environmental Agreements and other Regional Seas (Table 2).

## 2. MANDATE, OBJECTIVES, AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

The 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Cartagena Convention, through its Decision III on “Governance,” provides an overarching authority for the present review and analysis as follows:

*“4. Requests that the Secretariat, in collaboration with the four (4) Regional Activity Centers (RACs), UNEP HQ and members of the Regional Activity Networks (RANs), conduct a detailed review and analysis of the architecture of the general operations and funding source, and the organization with the Secretariat of the RACs and RANs including reviewing the current guidelines and associated decisions and host agreements for the RACs.”*

Furthermore, additional recommendations and decisions emanating from meetings of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committees (STACs) and Conference of the Parties (COPs) of both the SPAW and LBS Protocols also refer to RACs and RANs, as well as matters pertaining to greater integration of these two Protocols and respective associated SPAW and Assessment and Management of Environmental Pollutants (AMEP) Sub-programmes. Collectively, these decisions recognize that Parties’ views and stances should be dealt with in a balanced and equitable manner, with more transparency and accountability by the Secretariat, to ensure that governance arrangements are clear to all Contracting Parties. A list of these recommendations and decisions from the 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Contracting Parties of the Cartagena Convention, with extracts of most relevant corresponding texts, can be found in Annex 1, along with other relevant recommendations and decisions pertaining to RACs and RANs of the meetings of the Oil Spills, SPAW, and LBS Protocols.

Based on the Terms of Reference for this assignment, the primary aims of this report are to develop:

- *An independent review and analysis, conducted in consultation with key partners, of the long-term systemic issues, general operations, financing, and the existing mechanisms within the Convention for the operations of their RACs and RANs, and*
- *A detailed report and recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of RACs and RANs, considering the increasing programmatic and policy demands by the Contracting Parties to the Convention and the increased support role to be provided by RACs/RANs.*

Also identified in the Terms of Reference are the following tasks and responsibilities:

1. Conduct a detailed review and analysis of the general operations and financing for the RACs and RANs of the Cartagena Convention.
2. Assess effectiveness, transparency, and accountability of established procedures and workflows between the RACs, the Contracting Parties, and the Secretariat, including potential conflicts of interest; processes for providing inputs to the Secretariat and advice to Contracting Parties; programme and project execution; and formal reporting lines.
3. Evaluate the current structure – organizational and technical – of the RACs under other Regional Seas Programmes with a view to identifying best management practices for possible adoption.
4. Review and assess the appropriateness of the current guidelines for the establishment, hosting, and functioning of RACs and RANs by the Secretariat.
5. Review and compile relevant Decisions of Meetings of Conferences of Parties relating to RACs and RANs as input to recommendations for improved effectiveness and efficiency for RACs and RANs.
6. Review and provide recommendations on the adequacy of the existing host agreements between UNEP and RAC Host Governments with a view to ensuring greater harmonization and consistency with other UNEP Regional Seas Host Agreements.
7. Evaluate the proceedings of the last meeting of the SPAW-STAC and recommend possible measures for streamlining provision of services to parties by the Secretariat and the SPAW RAC.
8. Review the new 2021–2030 Strategy for the Cartagena Convention and associated RAC Strategies and identify clear roles for RACs and RANs in the implementation of the CEP Strategy.
9. Consult, as appropriate, with UNEP Headquarters and other Regional Seas Programmes and Action Plans on existing arrangements with their RACs and RANs including the approaches used for incorporation of RAC/RAN activities into biennial Secretariat Work Plans and Budgets, reporting thereof; and
10. Prepare a final report and recommendations for consideration by a Working Group/ Bureau of the Parties to the Cartagena Convention for RAC/RAN operations.

# 3. REVIEW METHODOLOGY AND FRAMEWORK

## DATA COLLECTION

The recommendations and outcomes presented in this Review are based on the collection, synthesis, and analysis of a diverse array of information from the following sources, including but not limited to the following [see Annex 2 for a list of all documents and references]:

- Text of the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols, and of other Regional Seas Conventions, as appropriate;
- Meeting Reports of the Governance bodies and Intergovernmental Meetings of the Conference of the Parties of the Cartagena Convention, and of the SPAW and LBS Protocols and their respective Scientific and Advisory Committees, including relevant Recommendations and Decisions therein pertaining to RACs and RANs;
- CEP financial rules and rules of procedure;
- CEP draft 2021–2031 Strategy;
- CEP Strategic and Functional Review;
- Guidelines for the establishment and functioning of RACs and RANs of the Cartagena Convention and related earlier meeting documents on RACs and RANs;
- Available Strategies, Activity Reports, and Workplans for SPAW-RAC, RAC-CIMAB and RAC-IMA and RAC-REMPEITC, and other relevant documents transmitted by such Regional Activity Centres
- Host Country Agreements for RACs of the Cartagena Convention;
- Memoranda of Understanding concluded between CEP and Partner Organisations, whether or not formally recognised as part of the RANs of the Cartagena Convention;
- Meeting and Technical Reports, documents and websites of the Caribbean, Mediterranean, Northwest Pacific, East Asian, and Eastern Africa Action Plans;
- Meeting Reports, available Host Country Agreements for Regional and Sub-Regional Coordinating Centres, and websites of Multilateral Environmental Agreements, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, Basel, and Stockholm Conventions; and
- UNEP reports and documents of relevance on the Regional Seas Programmes.



## FRAMEWORK AND APPROACH

The scope of this Review, as agreed at a kick-off virtual meeting with representatives of the UNEP Ecosystem Division Branch on 18 October 2021, includes primarily the Caribbean Environment Programme institutional framework focusing on RACs and RANs and, as appropriate, other Regional Seas Programmes and Action Plans which also have established RACs, are in the process of establishing them, or where formal decisions to do so have been adopted. This includes primarily the Mediterranean, Northwest Pacific, ROPME Sea Area, East Asian and Eastern Africa Action Plans, which may provide insight and lessons learned from their operational procedures, practices, and financing. Additionally, the institutional structures of relevant multilateral agreements, which have established Regional, Sub-regional, and Coordinating Centres, such as the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, were also taken into account.

Formal interviews with Coordinators, Directors of RACs, and staff from CEP and the aforementioned Regional Seas Programmes, were carried out in English, French, and Spanish via teleconference tools between October 2021 and March 2022. These interviews ranged on average from 1.0 to 1.5 hours and repeated as needed in the process of this Review. Partner organisations, some formally recognized as RANs of the CEP framework were also interviewed along with other long-standing cooperating institutions, as well as relevant current and former UNEP staff and other experts involved with the work of the Cartagena Convention. Host Governments of RACs were also interviewed. A short list of eight questions was submitted and meant to guide interviews (with slight variations as appropriate) but did not limit the discussions to only those topics. Written responses were offered in a few cases. Advice was sought on the direction, strengths, weaknesses, and needs of the RACs and RANs to effectively contribute and support the implementation of the Cartagena Convention and its programmes.

Information from the virtual “Inception Meeting to enhance collaboration among the UNEP Cartagena Convention Secretariat Regional Activity Centers (RACs),” (16 November 2021) and from discussions with representatives of the Cartagena Convention Secretariat, UNEP headquarters, and National and Technical Focal Points of the Cartagena Convention (23 November 2021 and 22 March 2022) informed the Review and served to validate preliminary findings.

The general approach taken in the formulation of this Review was based on a bottom-up construction of recommendations built upon a process seeking objective, open and transparent feedback, and lessons drawn from a wide array of relevant sources and key stakeholders. The process is meant to ensure a final report that is practical, feasible, and achievable, providing a productive and responsive exercise for the consideration by the 20<sup>th</sup> IGM/17<sup>th</sup> COP of the Cartagena Convention. In this context, an attempt was made to identify short and long-term recommendations without preempting assignment of priorities.

## 4. CURRENT STRUCTURE AND GENERAL OPERATIONS OF RACS AND RANS

### INSTITUTIONAL/LEGAL

#### Secretariat

In 1981, the Governments of the Wider Caribbean region, with the assistance of UNEP, formed the Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP). The Intergovernmental Meeting on the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme (1981) adopted the Wider Caribbean Action Plan, which led to the subsequent development and adoption of the Cartagena Convention in 1983. The Caribbean Regional Coordinating Unit (CAR-RCU) was established in 1986 in Kingston, Jamaica, and functions as the Secretariat for the Cartagena Convention and the Caribbean Environment Programme.

Article 15 of the Cartagena Convention designates UNEP as responsible for carrying out the Secretariat functions for the Convention and its Protocols. Therefore, UNEP-CAR/RCU serves as the Secretariat to the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols. An up-to-date list of Contracting Parties and Signatories to the Cartagena Convention and its three protocols can be found on the [CEP website](#).

While Article 15 outlines general functions of the Secretariat, as well as Articles 9, 22, and XIII, respectively of the Oil Spills, SPAW, and LBS Protocols (See Annex 2 for the texts of these four articles), they do not fully cover the overall extent of tasks of the Secretariat, nor its relationship with RACs and RANs. The nature of the relationship between the Secretariat and these entities is critical to the effective and efficient functioning of RACs, albeit there will be inherent differences and flexibility in arrangements from RAC to RAC.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Short-term action/Implementation:

- + For the sake of clarity and consistency in the use of the terms “Caribbean Environment Programme,” “Regional Coordinating Unit,” “Secretariat of the Cartagena Convention,” the Coordinating Unit should be known externally as the “Cartagena Convention Secretariat/CEP Secretariat.” The term CAR/RCU should only be used for internal administrative purposes within UNEP.
- + To date, no Host Country Agreements nor MOUs concluded with partner organisations contain operational details regarding the relationship between CEP Secretariat and RACs or RANs, or how they function or should be financed. Aiming for an enhanced Governance structure, the full scope of the functions and tasks of the Secretariat should be outlined. This outline should reflect current needs and practices, as well as define the clear relationship and division of responsibilities with RACs and should include a “Terms of Reference” that will provide the basic elements necessary to define a functional cooperative relationship between CEP and RACs/RANs, while also outlining expectations between all parties to the agreement.

## Regional Activity Centres

The concept of Regional Activity Centres (RACs) and Regional Activity Networks (RANs) has long been recognised as an integral part of the Institutional Framework of the Cartagena Convention, as far back as the first Intergovernmental Meeting on the Action Plan in 1981. Recently concluded Host Country Agreements also state the recognition of the RAC “as an integral part of CEP” [e.g. RAC-IMA Host Country Agreement between UNEP and Trinidad and Tobago, article 2].

It is recognised that RACs do not function on their own, but under the direction of and on behalf of the Contracting Parties. RACs have a regional role, overseen through coordination by the Secretariat, even if legally separate institutions, and continue to offer critical support for the effective implementation of the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols. With regards to issues specific to the Protocols they support, RACs do not function autonomously or independently of the objectives of the Cartagena Convention and may offer their own strategies and workplans to support the Convention implementation.

Terms of Reference and a Legal Framework for the Administrative, Technical, and Financial Operations of RACs and RANs were first adopted by Contracting Parties in 1994 as a consequence of the hosting offer and establishment of SPAW-RAC by the Government of France. Subsequent deliberations by Contracting Parties, in light of additional offers for establishment of RACs for the LBS Protocol by both the Governments of Cuba and Trinidad and Tobago, as well as to establish REMPEITC-Caribe in Curaçao as a Regional Activity Centre for the Oil Spills Protocol, culminated in the revision of such early concepts and with the adoption of the current “Guidelines for Establishment and Operation of Regional Activity Centres and Regional Activity Networks for the Cartagena Convention” in 2008 [see Section below and Table 3].

As per the definition of types of RACs in these Guidelines, all four existing RACs of the Convention would fit *generally* under “TYPE C: NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS WITH A REGIONAL FOCUS.” *This is a new or existing national institution that has a regional focus with technical capabilities and expertise in one or more areas related to the Convention and its Protocols.*”

RAC-CIMAB and RAC-IMA are primarily national institutions that already existed prior of being established as RACs. RAC-REMPEITC has always been a dedicated RAC and SPAW-RAC was established with a full and sole mandate to support the SPAW Protocol and its associated SPAW Sub-Programme. Despite the above differences and the fact that the legal status of each RAC at the national level are not harmonized, these differences do not appear to hinder their functionality and operations but do influence the degree of autonomy in discharging certain functions and in administrative procedures. On the other hand, the complexities that may be involved in attempting such a harmonization should be weighed against possible benefits of harmonization in the future.

In reviewing Host Agreements concluded for the establishment of all four RACs (see Table 1) it becomes clear that the differences in their contents reflects, at least partially, time lags in their conclusions and newer requirements to conform with legal advice and standard formats/templates from UNEP. Despite such differences in content, given the lack of details and their focus on general issues, such agreements can be seen as overall frameworks and commitments of host countries, but may require amendments to achieve specificity in terms of operation and function, including operational clarity between the Secretariat, the RAC and RANs.

Nevertheless, there appears to be no immediate need to embark on a more in-depth review of existing Host Agreements, as matter of priority. However, clauses pertaining to financial matters with provisions for regional

activities of the RAC being mainly financed by the Caribbean Trust Fund (CTF) as in the case of the SPAW-RAC Host Agreement, may carry unrealistic expectations. While the CTF risks being depleted if used to finance RACs, current Guidelines explicitly state that RACs and RANs should be self-financed, meaning CTF funds are not to be used to support functioning and operations of the RACs in any event [see section on Financing].

While RACs have been established and have been linked in their objectives and areas of work to one of the three existing Protocols, RACs may also be established to serve the Cartagena Convention without a programmatic focus corresponding to a given Protocol. The Mediterranean Action Plan has established two RACs, namely the Regional Activity Centre for Information and Communication (INFO/RAC) Rome, Italy and Plan Bleu Regional Activity Centre (PB/RAC) Marseille, France, which respond to cross-cutting issues, without being associated or established to respond solely to a particular Protocol.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Short-term action/Implementation:

- + Reiterate the role and importance of RACs and RANs as an integral component of the institutional framework of the Cartagena Convention, as appropriate, in strategic documents such as the CEP Strategy, and external platforms such as social media, relevant websites, and through communication channels with partner organisations and Contracting Parties, so as to avoid perceptions of burdening or duplicating structures [whether existing or planned in the future].

### Medium-long term action/Implementation:

- + Taking into account the current 2008 RAC/RAN Guidelines as appropriate, future new Host Country Agreements or eventual amendments should contemplate incorporating elements regarding self-financing, outside its core operations and maintenance, as well as relationships on functioning/reporting among the CEP Secretariat, the RAC and RANs.
- + There has been long-standing significant support from civil society and the NGO community to the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols, particularly the SPAW Protocol. There is ample room for this engagement to be further continued and expanded with possible definition of a specific/formal cooperation programme, with meetings and associated deliberations of interested civil society organisations/observers as a component of the institutional framework of the Cartagena Convention. A similar process has been established under the Barcelona Convention. Such recognition in turn may contribute to the financial sustainability of RACs and RANs and enhance the operational effectiveness of the Cartagena Convention.

**TABLE 1.** Summary of RACs Status under the Cartagena Convention

REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTRE [DATE ESTABLISHED]	<b>Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Information and Training Center for the Wider Caribbean, RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe, Curaçao [1995]</b>
HOST COUNTRY AGREEMENT/MOU* [DATE SIGNED] MAIN ARTICLES/ SECTIONS	<p>MoU between the Netherlands Antilles, IMO, and UNEP [2002]</p> <p>Two separate MoUs signed, given the dissolution of the Netherlands Antilles in 2010; One MoU between UNEP and Government of Curaçao for the establishment and maintenance of the Centre [1 April 2016]. The second MoU between IMO and the RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe on implementation of the Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme, financial record keeping and reporting. [Further agreements have been developed between the Centre and the Governments of Jamaica and USA through the Coast Guard [2018] to facilitate secondment of senior experts to the Centre.</p> <p>MoU Sections with Curaçao</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1: Definitions</li> <li>2: Operation and functions</li> <li>3: Administrative and financial matters</li> <li>4: Location of the RAC</li> <li>5: Personnel matters</li> <li>6: Immunity and privileges</li> <li>7: Settlement of disputes</li> <li>8: Amendment and termination</li> <li>9: Entry into operation**</li> </ol>
SUPPORTING PROTOCOL [DATE ADOPTED/ ENTRY-INTO-FORCE]	Protocol Concerning Co-operation in Combating Oil Spills [1983/1986]
LEGAL STATUS	The Centre is hosted by the Government of Curaçao under the Ministry of Traffic, Transport and Urban Planning.

<b>REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTRE [DATE ESTABLISHED]</b>	<b>Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife, SPAW RAC, Guadeloupe [2000]</b>
<b>HOST COUNTRY AGREEMENT/MOU* [DATE SIGNED] MAIN ARTICLES/ SECTIONS</b>	<p>Agreement between the Government of the French Republic and UNEP for the Contracting Parties of the Cartagena Convention, [7 June 2000]</p> <p>Articles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1: Definitions</li> <li>2: Operation and functions</li> <li>3: Administrative and financial matters</li> <li>4: Location of the RAC</li> <li>5: Personnel matters</li> <li>6: Immunity and privileges</li> <li>7: Settlement of disputes</li> <li>8: Amendment and termination</li> <li>9: Entry into force**</li> </ul> <p>Annex 1: Contribution of the French Government</p> <p>Annex 2: Financial management</p>
<b>SUPPORTING PROTOCOL [DATE ADOPTED/ ENTRY-INTO-FORCE]</b>	Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) [1990/2000]
<b>LEGAL STATUS</b>	<p>Entity established under French Law and Regulations, with a regional role as defined and financed by Contracting Parties [see discussion under Financing Section], located in the French department of Guadeloupe.</p> <p>As of 2018, administratively attached for human resources and funds management to a local representation of the French Ministry for Environment in Guadeloupe (namely DEAL-Direction de l'Environnement, de l'Aménagement et du Logement). Otherwise independent on its activities and programme strategy.</p>

<b>REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTRE [DATE ESTABLISHED]</b>	<b>Centre of Research and Environmental Management of Transport, CIMAB [Centro de Investigación y Manejo Ambiental del Transporte] Cuba, [2001]</b>
<b>HOST COUNTRY AGREEMENT/MOU* [DATE SIGNED] MAIN ARTICLES/ SECTIONS</b>	<p>Draft agreement pending signature signed, working as RAC since 2001.</p> <p>First draft under consideration by CEP and CIMAB.</p>
<b>SUPPORTING PROTOCOL [DATE ADOPTED/ ENTRY-INTO-FORCE]</b>	Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS) [1999/2010]
<b>LEGAL STATUS</b>	National Research Institute established originally in 1981, currently with financial autonomy (self-financed in terms of core staff and activities), attached to the Senior Organization for Economic Management called "Grupo Marítimo Portuario" (GEMAR), subordinated to the Ministry of Transport of Republic of Cuba

<b>REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTRE [DATE ESTABLISHED]</b>	<b>The Institute of Marine Affairs, IMA, Trinidad and Tobago [2001]</b>
<b>HOST COUNTRY AGREEMENT/MOU* [DATE SIGNED] MAIN ARTICLES/ SECTIONS</b>	<p>Agreement between the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and UNEP concerning the Institute of Marine Affairs as a RAC for CEP [2017] ***</p> <p>Articles</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1: Use of Terms</li> <li>2: Purpose</li> <li>3: Legal capacities</li> <li>4: Premises</li> <li>5: Mandate and Tasks</li> <li>6: Financial Resources</li> <li>7: Meetings and Conferences</li> <li>8: Emblems, Logos, Language, Visibility</li> <li>9: Relationships</li> <li>10: Governance Structure</li> <li>11: Privileges and immunities of UNEP property, funds and assets</li> <li>12: Privileges and immunities of UN personnel and experts</li> <li>13: Settlement of disputes</li> <li>14: Amendment of the Agreement</li> <li>15: Final clauses**</li> </ol>
<b>SUPPORTING PROTOCOL [DATE ADOPTED/ ENTRY-INTO-FORCE]</b>	Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS) [1999/2010]
<b>LEGAL STATUS</b>	National Research Institution, established by Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago No. 15 of 1976, Chap. 37:01. The Act was amended in 1990 (Act 13 of 1990) and further amended in 1996.

\* Clarification obtained from UNEP Legal Division on the use/requirements of “MOUs” vs. “Host Agreements,” indicated that no differences or legal implications exist and either MoU or Host Agreement may be concluded.

\*\* RAC-IMA Agreement contains provision for review of its content every 4 years and remains in force until terminated as per terms of article 15, whereas SPAW-RAC Agreement contains no provisions for such reviews or its duration after enter into force.

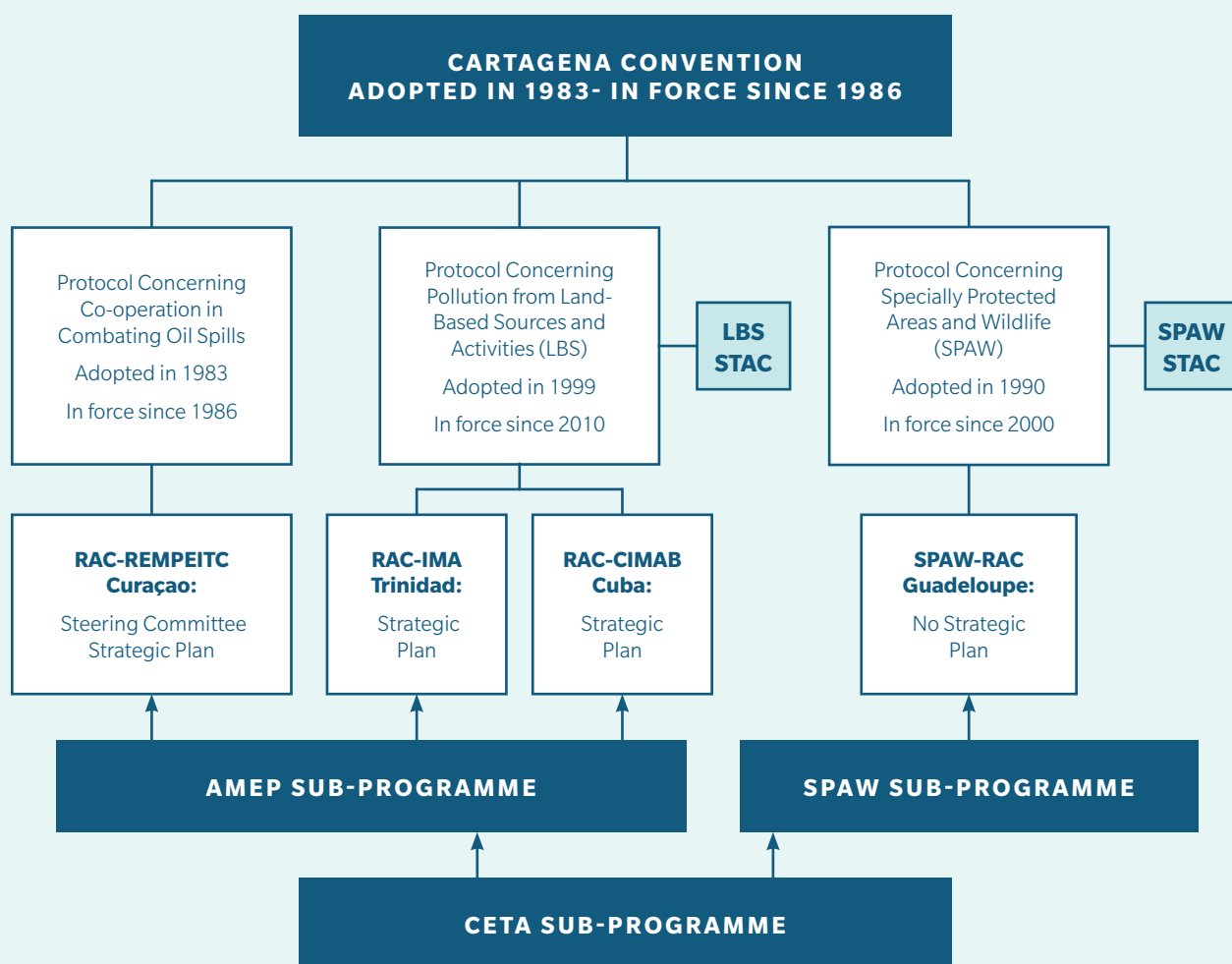
\*\*\* Future harmonization and consistency in the use of the terms “Caribbean Environment Programme,” “Regional Coordinating Unit,” “Secretariat of the Cartagena Convention” is desirable.

## Governance Structures

Currently, different governance structures between the existing RACs, which reflect their national institutional status and the way in which Sub-programmes associated with the Protocols have evolved and been managed by both the Secretariat and the RACs .

The governance arrangements for each RAC are varied and have yet to be fully established in the case of SPAW-RAC, RAC-CIMAB, and RAC-IMA. Terms of Reference, when existing, such as for SPAW-RAC and RAC-REMPEITC, may not be updated to reflect the current realities of the RAC's role, mandate or functionality, nor with clear provisions for monitoring or compliance mechanisms to assess performance of RACs in the delivery of their Workplans.

**FIGURE 1.** Current Governance structure and Sub-Programmes under the Cartagena Convention





While there is no STAC established for the Oil Spills Protocol, the 9th IGM /6<sup>th</sup> COP established a Steering Committee to oversee and provide guidance to the RAC. The RAC-REMPEITC governance structure includes a functioning Steering Committee that meets biennially to review and approve the progress reports, programme workplan, and budget. Its composition may vary from meeting to meeting, but it has been established and includes representatives of the Government of Curaçao, UNEP, IMO, of Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention, and industry representatives. Responsibilities assigned to the Steering Committee include support, guidance, and feedback on the Centre's activities; review biennium workplan and budget; adopt a biennial Strategic Plan; and provide recommendations to the IGM Meeting of the Cartagena for further decisions.

The Second Meeting of the then-Interim Scientific Technical and Advisory Committee (ISTAC) to the LBS Protocol in 2003, decided to establish a Steering Committee for the two LBS RACs, RAC-CIMAB and RAC-IMA, and agreed on its composition, terms of reference, and reporting requirements. Delays in the formal signing of host agreements has hindered the operationalization of these Steering Committees, as well as the establishment of an Advisory Body for both RACs. The SPAW-RAC presently does not have a Governance structure defined and established, although it is supported by a functioning STAC (Figure 1).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Short-term action/Implementation:

- + Current Governance structures for each RAC need to be finalized and made fully functional, and developed in the case of SPAW-RAC, and should form part of the RACs' respective Strategies. Other terms that need to be developed for the SPAW-RAC include the composition, terms of reference, and reporting requirements for both Steering Committees and Advisory Boards as appropriate, with submission for the endorsement of Contracting Parties.
- + Finalization of the Host Country Agreement between the Government of Cuba and UNEP, taking into account in as much as feasible, aspects outlined above and including exclusion of any provisions for regional activities of the RAC being financed by the Caribbean Trust Fund.

### General Operations and Functioning

Currently there are three Sub-programmes supporting the Cartagena Convention. The Assessment and Management of Environmental Pollution (AMEP) Sub-programme supports the implementation of the Oil Spills Protocol and the LBS Protocol, the SPAW Sub-programme supports the SPAW Protocol and the Communication, Education, Training and Awareness Sub-programme (CETA) focus on (1) Education and Awareness and (2) Training supporting the Convention and the other two Sub-programmes on social media and the development of several promotional and outreach products.

The manner in which the SPAW and AMEP Sub-programmes have evolved since their inception have differed, as well as a function of decisions by Contracting Parties and different strategic visions by the Secretariat

over the years. The RACs servicing the LBS Protocol were not originally established solely to support the Protocol but are national institutions which existed on their own prior to the adoption of the Protocol and then accumulated such regional functions and designation as RACs. They are also not routinely delegated direct responsibility for the implementation of components of the AMEP Workplan. They have however supported the implementation of specific programme and project activities that were externally funded. These have been facilitated through Small Scale Funding Agreements (SSFAs) between the Secretariat and the RACs.

On the other hand, SPAW-RAC was created from its inception to assist in the technical aspects of implementation of the SPAW Protocol and associated Sub-Programme. Hence, it has been engaged in and has worked more directly in mobilising financial resources, developing its own workplans in consultation with the CAR/RCU, and/or being responsible for implementation of regional/national projects that assisted Contracting Parties in meeting their obligations under the Cartagena Convention and the SPAW Protocol.

RAC-REMPEITC has also been established to solely support the Oil Spill Protocol and it operates with a different institutional arrangement and governance, which includes a tripartite arrangement among UNEP CEP, IMO, and the Government of Curaçao.

#### *Programme/Project management and operations*

Several decisions of the COP Meetings of both the LBS and SPAW Protocols have called for greater integration among both Sub-programmes given growing synergies and the need for enhanced coordination in programme delivery, as well as calls from Contracting Parties for closer consultation with Focal Points in the development of programme Workplans and project concepts.

While six-month progress reports from the RACs to the Secretariat have been envisaged, such reporting has not been adhered to systematically or formally. The degree of regular communication between the Secretariat and each of the RACs varies, from an *ad hoc* basis to weekly as needed, and may tend to be concentrated with the Director of the RACs.

RACs' reporting lines are to the Secretariat, which provides direct programmatic supervision of RAC activities, as envisaged in the adopted 2008 Guidelines for RACs and RANs. Close communication and inclusiveness of RACs in overall programme design and management is important, as they serve as technical "arms" of the Secretariat and to foster harmonious understanding goals/roles as well as efficient programme delivery.

RACs' strengths are in their capacity to design and implement projects and mobilise external financial resources, in coordination and inputs from the Secretariat and in line with Strategies and workplans. Project development has been prominent in the case of SPAW-RAC, especially given its status as a French institution which can access funds from the EU for Projects, albeit not unlimited and dependent on factors such as geographic scope and timing of project cycles. The LBS Protocol RACs have been more reliant on the Secretariat for project design and funding, as well as their coordination and management, and have been involved mostly in the support of delivery of specific project outputs.

Without clear division of roles and responsibilities for implementation of Sub-programmes with adherence to reporting lines, there is a high risk of duplication of efforts and resources between the Secretariat, RACs, and RANs and the potential for tension between expectations among Secretariat and RAC personnel.

### *Recruitment and staff*

The personnel and administrative structure of RACs vary. While appointment of RAC Directors is at the discretion of the host country, and that of other personnel also varies according to the type of RAC, including whether positions are permanent or project-related, consultation with the Secretariat in the process and identification of job descriptions is desirable. Such consultations are even more pertinent if RACs are expected to have compatible levels of scientific and technical expertise in-house for direct implementation of workplans and projects.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Short-term action/Implementation:**

- + Develop mechanisms and a schedule to increase regular communications between the Secretariat and RACs as well as among RACs. Regular strategic meetings with the participation of partner organisations and other stakeholders, with corresponding reporting and follow-up on decisions, should also occur.
- + Develop Terms of Reference for the Focal Points for each RAC and National Focal Points, to define the main tasks expected to be performed by Focal Points in order to enhance the relationship between Member countries and the Secretariat and RACs, including the preparation of a “Focal Point Tool Kit,” with key documents and decisions, aiming at assisting Focal Points in the delivery of their functions.
- + Define procedures for communication with Contracting Parties/Member Countries, which should generally leave coordination and policy issues to the Secretariat, whereas RACs would communicate and establish guidance on technical matters.

### **Medium/long-term action/Implementation:**

- + Foster development by the Secretariat of joint programming and strategic planning among RACs to implement workplan for each Protocol and for the design of joint projects where possible, mapping synergies among areas of work/cross-cutting issues. To that end the development of Medium-Term strategies for each RAC would be desirable and an approach for more integrated workplans, including defined targets and indicators, which would allow for increased monitoring and accountability.
- + Design projects with a bottom-up approach and align with workplans, in greater consultation and input from Focal Points and stakeholders/partners, specially from RANs, with specific tasks and responsibilities defined for the roles of the Secretariat, RACs and RANs in their implementation.

In addition to the recommendations offered above by the present review, a summary of recommendations emanating from discussions from an Inception Meeting held among RACs is presented below given their relevance to the goals of this review, which are also in alignment with those offered by the present review.

**CONSOLIDATED SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE FOUR RACS  
EMANATING FROM THE INCEPTION MEETING AMONG RACS 16 NOVEMBER 2021**

Enhancing collaboration between RACs and the Secretariat

- Enhance definition of respective roles and responsibilities of each RAC and the Secretariat in the implementation of Workplans.
- Increase inclusiveness of RACs in the global sphere of work of the Cartagena Convention
- More frequent visits of Secretariat staff to the RACs.
- Improving the communication with the RACs in the three official languages of CEP (*recognising great progress in the last two years*) with regular meetings between the Secretariat and RACs, and corresponding reporting and follow-up.
- Support to the RACs in programme coordination with Contracting Parties.
- Coordinate with Secretariat in dissemination of results on lessons learned from pilot/demonstration projects.

Building synergies among RACs

- Carrying out meetings among RACs at least twice a year [presential or virtual].
- Planning and sharing biennial Workplans in coordination among RACs.
- Organizing inter-institutional visits.
- Identification and implementation of joint projects that seek integration of the three. Protocols, including joint activities, meetings, workshops, and webinars.
- Strengthening of relationship between technical focal points of Contracting Parties for all three Protocols.
- Mobilising funds for integrated projects among RACs.

## Regional Activity Networks

A RAN is defined in the current 2008 Guidelines “as a network of regional technical institutions and individuals (including governmental, intergovernmental, non-governmental and academic and scientific organizations) that provide input, peer review, and expertise through the relevant RAC, in a specific scientific or technical area of expertise to increase the level and depth of cooperation and sharing of expertise in the CEP region. Institutions and individuals within the RAN, must be well known in their area of expertise and be willing to provide advice and input to the RAC free of charge, unless arranged otherwise. When under a contractual arrangement with UNEP-CAR/RCU, any institution within a RAN would provide services on an “at-cost” basis. RANs will be coordinated by the RAC in their respective technical area in accordance with the MOU between the UNEP-CAR/RCU and the relevant RAC”.

The same 2008 Guidelines state regarding the establishment of a RAN that “Any RAC may form a RAN with the approval of the Contracting Parties. The RAC should invite relevant institutions to form the RAN. RANs may also be formed by Partner NGOs (See ANNEX V, Section B).”

While Regional Activity Centres (RACs) have also been established by other Regional Seas Programmes and work in collaboration with various partner organisations, the concept and model of Regional Activity Networks (RANs) is unique to the Cartagena Convention. It goes beyond cooperation with partner organisations, with RANs recognised as an integral part of the institutional framework of CEP, including focused roles for programme implementation. Despite not having a formalized MoU with CEP, WIDECAST operates as a RAN for sea turtle conservation. Other RAN-designated organisations might have broader scope in support of the Convention or a particular Protocol and require a formal agreement to delineate operations.

RACs and RANs are not structures that overburden parties or duplicate existing frameworks but instead add value to programme delivery and to the relevance of the Cartagena convention as a coordination mechanism, strengthening synergies for programme delivery, and enhancing national capacities in fulfilling member countries’ obligations.

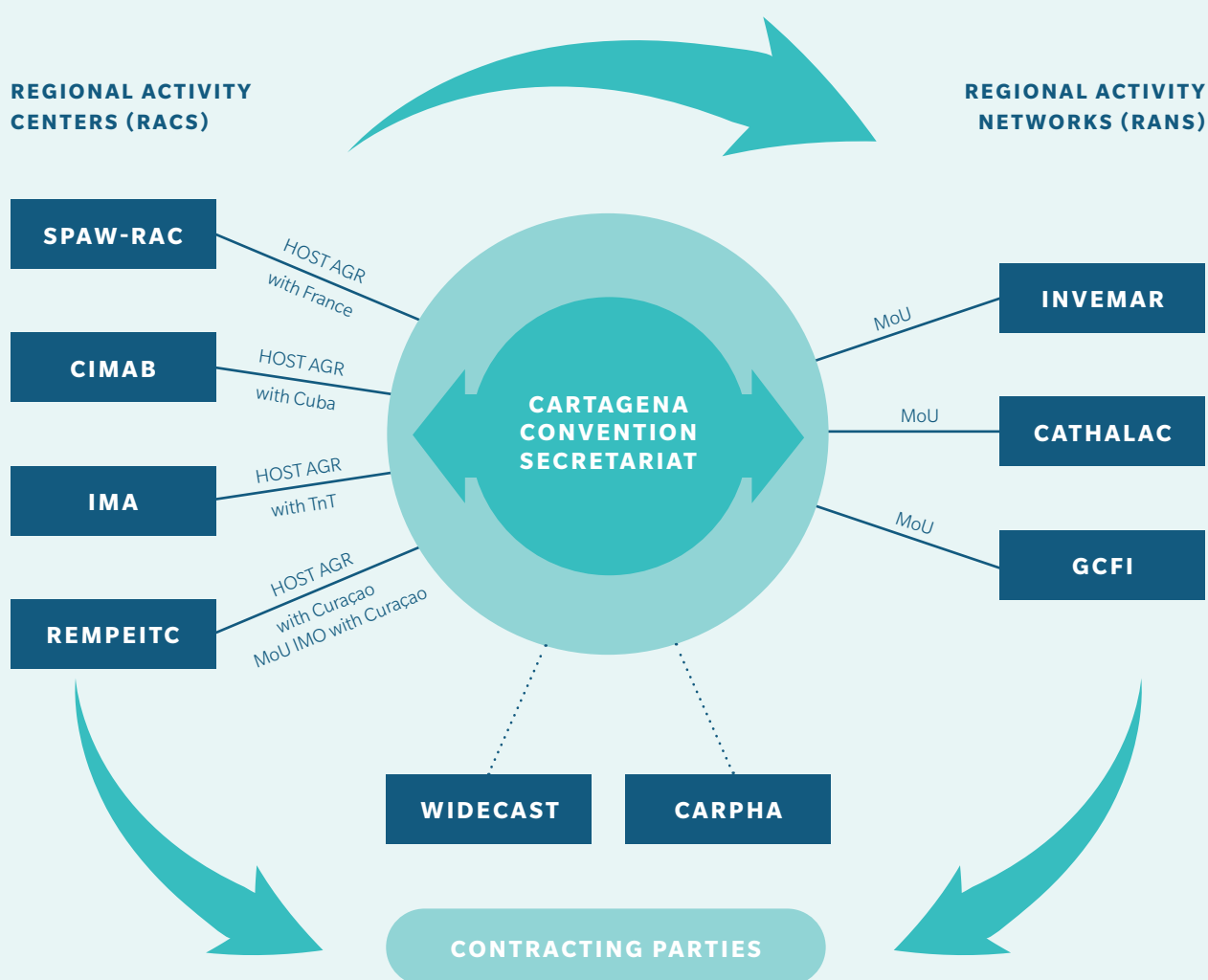
However, the LBS and SPAW Protocols seem to have developed different approaches and organisation of RANs. The Fourth LBS COP recognised four institutions as part of the RAN, namely the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI), Centro del Agua del Trópico Húmedo para América Latina y el Caribe (CATHALAC), Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) and Instituto de Investigaciones Marinas y Costeras “Jose Benito Vives de Andreis” (INVEMAR). Conversely SPAW has taken a more specialised approach, with the creation and recognition of one RAN dedicated to the conservation of marine turtles, the Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network -WIDECAST, the only currently recognised RAN for SPAW. SPAW Contracting Parties at their Eleventh Meeting, have requested that “The Secretariat and SPAW-RAC, in close consultation with SPAW Contracting Parties, and other relevant stakeholders, consider the potential costs, benefits, and operational framework of a Marine Mammal Regional Activity Network (RAN), taking into account the good results of the CARI’MAM project and network, and draft a proposal for discussion at SPAW STAC10 regarding how such a RAN could operate”. At the time of drafting the present review, this work is in progress being lead by SPAW-RAC.

Despite the current differences in the approach taken for designation of a RAN by the LBS and SPAW Protocols, a RAN could serve across the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols, even while having a focus on a given Protocol or a given thematic area of a Sub-programme and would have a direct reporting line to the associated RAC with MoUs concluded with UNEP/CEP. Such approach would also support the recognised need by Contracting Parties for greater integration between Sub-Programmes and their implementation.

Figure 2 below depicts the RAC/RAN model for the Cartagena Convention, which illustrates current arrangements adopted by Contracting Parties and the relationship among Secretariat, RACs, and RANs.

Section 5 below discusses in further detail the adequacy of the 2008 Guidelines and proposes consideration of its possible revision to closer reflect the realities of functioning and operation of RANs.

**FIGURE 2.** Current RAC/RAN model for the Cartagena Convention – Image developed by C. Vail [in consultation with the Secretariat].



**TABLE 2.** Regional Activity Network: RAN Partner Organisations and Institutional Agreements concluded with the United Nations Environment Programme and/or the Caribbean Environment Programme – Cartagena Convention Secretariat.

INSTITUTION [LEGAL STATUS]	INSTRUMENT	DATE OF SIGNATURE*	SUMMARY OF MAIN AREAS OF COOPERATION
Global and Regional Multilateral Environment Agreements			
Convention on Biological Diversity - CBD, Montreal	MoC	1997 [exact date illegible]	Collaborative arrangements between CEP and the CBD Secretariats; identify the appropriate linkages between STAC, SPAW RAC and the CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA)
Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals - CMS, Bonn	MoC	21 November 2005	Policy compatibility; Institutional Cooperation; Exchange of Experience and Information; Coordination of Programmes of Work; Joint Conservation Action; Consultation, reporting and guidance
OSPAR Commission for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic, London	MoU	16 September 2021 [by UNEP]	Marine litter, nutrient pollution, marine protected areas, habitat restorations, and ocean governance issues  Joint regional workshops and capacity building activities  Application of guidelines of preventing pollution and protecting the marine environment

INSTITUTION [LEGAL STATUS]	INSTRUMENT	DATE OF SIGNATURE*	SUMMARY OF MAIN AREAS OF COOPERATION
<b>Formally recognised as part of the RAN of the Cartagena Convention for the LBS protocol</b> <b>Decision of the Eighteenth Intergovernmental Meeting and Fifteenth Conference of Parties to the Cartagena Convention, Honduras 2019</b>			
Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute, USA [autonomous non-profit National corporation]	MoU	10 July 2020*	<p><i>LBS Protocol</i> - co-hosts of the Caribbean Node on Marine Litter Management with the Cartagena Convention Secretariat; implementation of the Regional Action Plan for the Management of Marine Litter (RAPMali); Engage private sector to achieve policy and management-based solutions to pollution; Mobilize resources through joint regional project proposals on marine litter pollution</p> <p><i>SPAW Protocol</i> - Fisheries management including Fish Spawning Aggregations, sustainable fishing communities; Existing or emerging invasive/genetically altered species and diseases that may cause harmful impacts (e.g. lionfish, Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease (SCTLD)); Sargassum influx and impacts on coastal communities. Climate change and adaptative mechanisms; regional capacity building including for youth; Opportunities to promote Blue Economy.</p> <p>Public health and environmental impacts from hurricanes and coastal/natural hazards including through hazard assessments</p>
The Water Center for the Humid Tropic of Latin America and the Caribbean - CATHALAC, Panama [International Organisation]	MoU	10 July 2020*	<p><i>LBS Protocol</i> - strengthen environmental monitoring and assessment including: Climate change modeling; Integrated water resource management; Geographic information systems</p> <p>Facilitate visualization, data and information sharing, environmental education and awareness, and capacity building in projects and activities</p>
Instituto de Investigaciones Marinas y Costeras "José Benito Vives de Andreis" – INVEMAR, Colombia [autonomous non-profit National Institute under Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development]	MoU	30 November 2020	<p>Support LBS and SPAW Protocols on monitoring and environmental assessment for scientific advice on policies and regional/ international collaboration efforts to facilitate visibility and environmental education</p> <p>Training, capacity building</p>



INSTITUTION [LEGAL STATUS]	INSTRUMENT	DATE OF SIGNATURE*	SUMMARY OF MAIN AREAS OF COOPERATION
Not formally recognised as part of the RAN of the Cartagena Convention			
Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network - WIDECAST, USA [ <i>non-profit organisation</i> ]	Not signed	Partner since early 1980's	Networking through Country Coordinators in over 40 countries and territories in the region  Country-specific 'Sea Turtle Recovery Action Plans' and Technical Reports;  Educational and public awareness materials
Sargasso Sea Commission [legal entity], Bermuda	MoU	11 May 2017 in force until March 2021	Exchange of information including <i>Sargassum</i> influx; strategy development; harmonization of work, resource mobilisation; awareness raising and stakeholder engagement
Caribbean Fisheries Regional Mechanism – CRFM [Inter-Governmental Organisation established by an Agreement of Member States of the Caribbean Community-CARICOM], Belize	MoU	10 May 2018 in force for 5 years	Implementation of Precautionary and Ecosystem-based approaches  Identification and evaluation of species for listing under the SPAW Protocol; implementation of fisheries management and recovery plans for commercially important species  Monitoring, control and mitigation of invasive species  Monitoring and management of <i>Sargassum</i> influx  Identification, establishment and management of Marine Protected Areas, to ensure essential fish habitats and sustainability of marine resources  Monitoring and management of coral reefs and mangroves  Scientific understanding and assessment of fisheries
The Ocean Foundation [not specified]	MoU	1 October 2019*	International Ocean Acidification Initiative  Sustainable Development Goal 14.2

\* Denotes “an initial term of two years from the date of signature on which is duly signed by both Parties”, but no specific provision for renewal or indication that it remains in force after the initial term.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Short-term action/Implementation:

- + Contracting Parties to reaffirm the coordination role of the RACs towards the work and operation of a RAN and the need of approval by Contracting Parties for designation of an institution as a RAN, as per current 2008 Guidelines.
- + Develop and sign MoU between the Secretariat and the Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network - WIDECAST, which has function as a RAN for decades.

### Medium/long-term action/Implementation:

- + Contracting Parties to refine and reconcile the concept of RACs and RANs, through an amendment to the current 2008 Guidelines, to closer reflect their evolution in terms of role and operations since the Guidelines were adopted in 2008, e.g. regarding “Definitions” and “Establishment”.
- + Workplans for RANs to be developed via close consultation with RACs and the Secretariat, with definitions of roles, targets and indicators, aligned with workplans of each Sub-programme under the Convention, and with the goals, expertise and capacities of RAN’s organisations.
- + Explore opportunities for the possible creation of new RACs/RANs to further focus the scope of action for programme implementation and active engagement of partners within the institutional framework of CEP.

In addition to the recommendations offered above by the present review, a summary of recommendations emanating from interviews with partner/RAN organisations are presented below given their relevance to the goals of this review, which are also in alignment of those offered by the present review.

### **CONSOLIDATED SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS BY RANS/ PARTNER ORGANISATIONS**

#### Enhancing the role of RANs and collaboration among RANs

- Focus the CEP Strategy to align with programme goals and target, determining appropriate collaborative arrangements for RAN-designated organisations that advance achievement of those goals and targets .
- Establish the RANs to work cooperatively as a network of organisations, as they mostly work directly with the RACs/Secretariat and assigning tasks to the network to improve collaboration and programme synergies.

#### Financial sustainability of RANs

- Diversify financing mechanisms and initiatives, such as the establishment of an independent Fund/Trust dedicated solely to CEP/Cartagena Convention but unlike the Caribbean Trust Fund (CTF), would not depend on contributions from Contracting Parties. Such a Fund/Trust would complement, not replace, the Caribbean Trust Fund, and would support core Secretariat functions and initiatives that ensure progress towards achieving agreed targets.

## **FINANCIAL ASPECTS**

### **Resource mobilisation and financial sustainability of RACs and RANs**

Both the Host Country Agreements and the 2008 Guidelines for the Establishment and Operation of RACs and RANs include provisions recognising that RACs and RANs will not be funded by the Caribbean Trust Fund (CTF). Further the 2008 Guidelines state that “...Any institution wishing to participate in a RAN or to become a RAC must be willing to do so at their expense. Moreover, because a RAC must be financially self-sustaining, any proposed RAC institution must have a demonstrated ability to raise the necessary funds to finance its running costs as a RAC and to attract donor funding for project implementation that are consistent with the objectives of the Cartagena Convention and its relevant protocols.”

Indeed, all four RACs of the Cartagena Convention have not drawn funds from the CTF for their maintenance, operation of premises, and staffing. Exact figures of resources from the CTF used for implementation of workplans over time were not readily available for the purpose of this review. However, given the trend of

reduced contributions to the CTF over time and serious shortfall of funding, reliance has increased on non-CTF resources for programme implementation. RACs have different levels of financial commitment based on their often-diverse functionality, reflecting their different institutional natures: i.e., not all are solely dedicated to operating as a RAC.

Furthermore, not all RACs are fully operational, as is the case of RAC-IMA, while RAC-CIMAB is a self-funded institution that has demonstrated its ability to secure necessary funds from various avenues for the implementation of projects and activities. All LBS Protocol/AMEP-supporting RACs have developed their Strategy for programme delivery. Such strategies would benefit from greater transparency, including a detailed breakdown of human and financial resources specifically allocated to RAC activities, and amounts actually secured versus those being sought or forecasted within a biennium. SPAW-RAC would need to develop such a Strategy for implementation of the Protocol's programme workplan. Similarly, reporting on specific programme activities that may be supported by Host Governments is desirable, as in the case of SPAW-RAC where the Government of France has contributed about USD 167,000 per year between 2014 and 2020, however these funds were re-allocated from the overall functioning of SPAW-RAC.

Despite the long-standing recognition of RANs as an institutional component of the CEP system, their potential has yet to be fully tapped as well as mapping the modalities of their contributions. For example, the Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network (WIDECAST) has led successful conservation efforts on behalf of sea turtles for over 25 years as an effective RAN under SPAW. Various achievements include Sea Turtle Recovery Action Plans (STRAPS), for over 20 Member countries, dozens of Management Guidelines and best practice documents, and proactive involvement, mostly volunteer, of diverse stakeholders at national and local levels. Fundraising efforts on the part of the Network's Executive Director have averaged USD 700,000 to USD 2,000,000 yearly for the last two decades. WIDECAST funding base is diverse with 50% of funds received from Government entities (USA and others, as well as intergovernmental entities), 22% from private foundations (mostly in the USA), and 11% from other nonprofit organisations (such as the World Wildlife Fund). Corporations contribute about 7%, with individuals and AZA members (public zoos/aquaria) contributing about 5% each. Sixty percent of donors are repeat contributors, underscoring both the satisfaction that donor partners feel in supporting the work and the significant extent to which new contributors join each year. These funds are devoted to project implementation in the region, coordination costs, and an annual general meeting of the RAN that currently includes about 100 participants from over 30 countries. There are no overhead costs reported for this operational RAN. Activities of WIDECAST have resulted in protection measures for species and habitats, collaborative research and reporting, enhanced public awareness, and increased capacity in civil society and management agencies. These activities and outcomes directly support the objectives of the SPAW Programme. Lessons learned from this RAN suggest that long-term coordination and exploration of opportunities for joint programming are key to sustaining commitment and engagement in the face of limited resources.

It is clear that RACs and RANs are instrumental assets in resource mobilisation, both human and financial, and present vast opportunities to expand this role to engage with non-governmental organisations and the private sector to secure funding and support.

Such roles should be an integral part of the overall CEP Resource Mobilisation Strategy and particularly the Strategy for Private Sector Engagement, with definition of targets and in line with Contracting Parties decisions and the findings of the 2021 Strategic and Functional Review.

## Project Funds

While the AMEP and SPAW Sub-programmes have been successful in securing funds from a number of Projects via UNEP headquarters and other sources, in particular from the Global Environmental Facility over the last decade for AMEP, the role of RACs in the implementation of the AMEP Sub-programme has yet to evolve to be inclusive of project development and resource mobilisation. SPAW-RAC has received funds from similar projects via UNEP headquarters and has additionally directly mobilised financial resources for programme implementation [see Table 3]. Between 2010-2022 SPAW-RAC raised approximately USD 2.1 million versus USD 1.3 million from projects via UNEP headquarters. No exact figures are available for comparison from the other three RACs, but a breakdown of funds raised would enable a more accurate view into the sustainability of funding for RACs in general. The in-kind contributions from non-governmental organizations and industry partners are not computed on a regular basis, despite these revenue sources being important pillars for the overall financial sustainability of RACs.

## Other options for resource mobilisation

Other Regional Seas Conventions (i.e. Mediterranean, Northwest Pacific) and multilateral agreements (e.g. CMS), including several instruments under the Convention, have developed their own project support through voluntary contributions, notably CITES, Basel Convention, Stockholm Convention, and the International Whaling Commission, pointing to the need for consideration of new resource mobilisation avenues.

Such modalities could involve Governments, civil society partners, donors, and the private sector in the establishment of independent and voluntary RAC/RAN Trust Fund in support of the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols. Such a fund would complement, not replace, the CTF, funding initiatives, and/or projects that ensure progress towards achieving agreed targets, as well as supporting countries in meeting their obligations under the Convention and its Protocols.

**TABLE 3.** Strategic Planning and Financing of Regional Activity Centres, Caribbean Environment Programme

REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTRE	HUMAN RESOURCES PERMANENT* ADDITIONAL RESOURCES IN BLUE	MAIN SOURCES OF FUNDING** ADDITIONAL SOURCES IN BLUE	STRATEGIC PLAN AND FINANCING
<b>Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Information and Training Center for the Wider Caribbean, RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe, Curaçao</b>	Director  IMO consultant, Seconded by Maritime Authority of Jamaica  IMO consultant, Seconded by US Coast Guard	International Maritime Organization-IMO; Government of Curaçao  Projects funds via UNEP and other partners to be pursued	Long-term Strategic Plan 2015–2025  Budgeted workplan available [2019–2020]  Proposes to enhance co- operation with existing partners, develop new partnerships and identify mechanisms for facilitating greater in-kind support and mobilisation of new sources of funds for the implementation of activities.

<b>Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife, SPAW-RAC, Guadeloupe</b>	<p>Director</p> <p>Programme Officer</p> <p>Administrative officer</p> <p>Project personnel [researchers/experts]</p>	<p>Government of France</p> <p>Projects funds via UNEP until 2017, none since</p> <p>Mainly European Union, sporadically non-governmental organisations and other governmental agencies</p>	<p>Strategic Plan to be developed</p> <p>Budgeted biennium workplans have included additional contribution to programme implementation from the Government of France averaging USD 167,000 [NOTE - Some funds from the allocation to the overall functioning of SPAW-RAC were re-allocated to activities considering budget limitations for activities]</p>
<b>Centre of Research and Environmental Management of Transport, CIMAB [Centro de Investigación y Manejo Ambiental del Transporte], Cuba</b>	<p>Director</p> <p>Project manager</p> <p>Support personnel from the Financial Accounting, Human Capital, Scientific and Logistics Admin. departments</p> <p>Project personnel [researchers/experts]</p>	<p>Government of Cuba</p> <p>Projects funds via UNEP and other partners to be pursued</p>	<p>Strategic Plan 2021–2030</p> <p>Proposes expansion of capabilities to attract external funding for the implementation of national and regional projects</p>
<b>The Institute of Marine Affairs, IMA, Trinidad and Tobago</b>	<p>Director</p> <p>Deputy Director</p> <p>Support personnel; as of 2022, there are a total of 36 personnel in research from a total of 91 staff</p>	<p>Government of Trinidad and Tobago</p> <p>Application of funds earned on consultancy projects, counterpart funding on sponsored or grant funded projects</p>	<p>Strategic Plan 2019–2024 does not provide sufficient information on the operationalization of the RAC and called for Institute's obligations to the RAC on a phased basis on short (1–2yrs, 20%), medium (2–4yrs, 40%) and long-term (4–6 yrs, 60%) for implementation of the Strategy</p> <p>Budgeted workplan 2021–2023 of USD 325,000</p> <p>Proposes to expand contributions through increased grant/donor funded research projects and/or creating of a business unit, sale of products derived from research activities, and attraction of sponsorships</p>

\*Indicates positions funded by respective host Governments of RAC. SPAW-RAC staff is solely dedicated to SPAW programme implementation, whereas RAC-REMPEITC, RAC-CIMAB and RAC-IMA, some personnel assigned to the RACs may also discharge functions associated with the work of their institutions or the implementation of other Conventions.

\*\*Indicates main sources for maintenance and staffing of RACs only, do not include activity/workplan implementation, except in the case of SPAW-RAC and RAC-REMPEITC where support from IMO also includes implementation of RAC's workplan.

## 5. CURRENT GUIDELINES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT, HOSTING, AND FUNCTIONING OF RACS AND RANS

Considerable efforts have been devoted by the Secretariat, Contracting Parties, and by observer partner organisations in the developing the concept of RACs and RANs over decades. A number of draft versions of guidelines were prepared and revised by Meetings of Contracting Parties to guide their establishment and operation until the current 2008 Guidelines were adopted [See Table 4]. Notably, the expanded role of non-governmental organisations and civil society in the final version was deemed critically important to the strengthening of Regional Activity Centres.

The Guidelines are not adhered to in every respect and deserve closer follow-up from the Secretariat and Contracting Parties in their implementation because most provisions remain valid, such as sections addressing the objections and functions of RACs and criteria for selection of RAC and RAN institutions. While the current 2008 Guidelines remain adequate, in practice, the operations and functioning of RANs in particular would benefit from adjustments to encompass greater flexibility and realities in terms of operations and roles.

RANs are defined as in the current 2008 Guidelines as –

*“a network of technical institutions and individuals (including e.g. governmental, intergovernmental, non-governmental and academic and scientific) that provide input, peer review, and expertise through the relevant RAC, in a specific scientific or technical area of expertise to increase the level and depth of cooperation and sharing of expertise in the CEP region”....*

A RAN may be constituted in the Wider Caribbean Region by a RAC, when the circumstances necessitate their creation. Institutions and individuals within the RAN must be well known in their area of expertise and be willing to provide advice and input free of charge, unless arranged otherwise. Based on the experience of the Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network - WIDECAST, which has been a partner RAN since the 1980's, an efficient operating RAN may require solid long-term coordination, which may be beyond the capabilities or desirability of commitment from the RAC.

Hence the current 2008 Guidelines, while generally adequate, would benefit from an update to closer reflect the evolution of the Convention and lessons learned in the functioning and operations of RACs and RANs.

In particular, there is a need to refine and reconcile the concept of RACs and RANs to be flexible and accommodate slightly different, but not mutually exclusive options, to closer reflect their evolution in terms of roles and operations since the Guidelines were adopted in 2008, especially regarding “Definitions” and “Establishment.”

**PROPOSED DRAFT WORDING WHICH MAY BETTER DEFINE THE CURRENT MODEL AND DEFINITION OF A RAN**

a] An institution [national/regional/IGO/NGO/Academia], which may also be proposed and hosted by a Contracting Party, that [i] leads implementation of a specific thematic area/scope of a Protocol/Workplan/Project [e.g. WIDECAST with defined objectives and structure for conservation of sea turtles] [ii] and/or supports implementation of global/international initiatives in the region to assist Contracting Parties in meeting those obligations. [e.g. GCFL with defined objectives, as a co-host of regional node for marine litter Action Plan - RAPMALI]

The institution takes the lead in the coordination of associated activities in the region, in network with partner organisations/experts.

b] An institution [national/regional/MEA/IGO/NGO/Academia] that has been actively involved in supporting the work of the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols and may be recognized as a RAN, without having a focused and structured role in supporting implementation of a specific thematic area/scope of a Protocol/Workplan [e.g. INVEMAR, CATHALAC].



**TABLE 4.** Benchmarks of the timeline in the adoption of the current 2008 Guidelines for Establishment and Operation of Regional Activity Centres and Regional Activity Networks for The Cartagena Convention. A history of the development of the Guidelines is contained in its Annex 1 [Document UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.28/INF.5. Rev 1.]

MEETING OF CARTAGENA CONVENTION [INTERGOVERNMENTAL-IGM / CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES-COP]	DOCUMENTS OF RELEVANCE TO THE PROCESS OF ADOPTION OF THE 2008 GUIDELINES FOR RACS / RANS	DECISIONS RACS / RANS - SUMMARISED*
<p><b>6<sup>th</sup> IGM/3<sup>rd</sup> COP</b></p> <p><b>Kingston, 16–18 November 1992</b></p> <p><b>UNEP (OCA)/CAR IG.10/5</b></p>	<p>Concept Paper for Regional Activity Centres and Regional Activity Networks – UNEP (OCA)/CAR WG.10/3</p> <p>Priorities for the Biennium Workplan of the SPAW Regional Programme and the Role of WIDECAST - presented by the Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Recovery Team and Conservation Network-WIDECAST – UNEP (OCA)/CAR WG.10/INF.5</p>	<p><b>Annex V</b></p> <p>1. Approves recommendations of the Tenth Meeting of the Monitoring Committee and Special Meeting of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties [in Annex IV; 2. Support the proposal of by the Government of France to establish and host a RAC in order to facilitate the future implementation of the SPAW Protocol; 3. Requests the Secretariat to formulate the appropriate terms of reference for the administrative, technical and financial operation of this RAC, as well as its precise mandate to be presented to the Second ISTAC Meeting before submission to the 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Monitoring Committee and Bureau of Contracting Parties]</p> <p>11. Requests the Secretariat to initiate actions with the Government of France on the establishment of a RAC for SPAW, while waiting decisions on the terms of reference by the next IGM/ COP Meeting.</p>
<p><b>7<sup>th</sup> IGM/4<sup>th</sup> COP</b></p> <p><b>Kingston, 12–14 December 1994</b></p> <p><b>UNEP (OCA)/CAR IG.12/7</b></p>	<p>Proposed Legal Framework for the Administrative Technical and Financial Operations of RACs and RANs-UNEP (OCA)/CAR IG.11/7</p> <p>Revised Draft Terms of Reference for the Development of a Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife in the Wider Caribbean-UNEP (OCA)/CAR IG.11/9</p>	<p><b>Annex V</b></p> <p>4. Adopts the Revised Draft Terms of Reference for the Establishment of a Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife in the Wider Caribbean UNEP (OCA)/CAR IG.11/9 as amended by the meeting – APPENDIX VIII</p> <p>7. Adopts the Draft Legal Framework Arrangement for the Administrative, Technical and Financial Operations of RACs and RANs - UNEP (OCA)/CAR IG.11/7 as amended by the meeting – APPENDIX VII and to use this document as guidelines</p>

<p><b>10<sup>th</sup> IGM / 7<sup>th</sup> COP</b></p> <p><b>Montego Bay, Jamaica, 7–11 May 2002</b></p> <p><b>UNEP(DEC)/CAR IG.22/8).</b></p>	<p>Concept Paper for Establishing Coordinating Regional Activity Centres and Regional Activity Networks of the Caribbean Environment Programme UNEP(DEC)/CAR IG.22/9). [as per recommendations of the 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Monitoring Committee and Special Bureau of the Contracting Parties, San Jose, 9–13 July 2001 and Decision VIII of the 1<sup>st</sup> COP of the SPAW Protocol]</p> <p>It provides an update of the 1992 Concept Paper UNEP(OCA)/CAR WG.10/3).</p>	<p><b>Decision II</b></p> <p>1. Endorses the Concept Paper UNEP(DEC)/CAR IG.22/9), amended as per comments received by the Secretariat and further requests comments to be submitted.</p> <p>2. Establishes an open ended intersessional working group to revise the Guidelines for operations of RACs and RANs and report back to the 11<sup>th</sup> IGM.</p>
<p><b>Further revisions of the updated 1992 Concept Paper UNEP(DEC)/CAR IG.22/9 were subsequently submitted for consideration of the and received input from:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the 11<sup>th</sup> IGM (UNEP(DEC)/CAR IG.24/INF.7) and a new open ended intersessional working group</li> <li>• a conference paper to the 3rd Meeting of STAC of the SPAW Protocol UNEP(DEC)/CAR WG 29/CRP.4.</li> <li>• the 12<sup>th</sup> IGM at Montego Bay, 29 November–2 December 2006</li> </ul>		
<p><b>13<sup>th</sup> IGM / 10<sup>th</sup> COP</b></p> <p><b>St. John's, Antigua and Barbuda, 9–12 September 2008</b></p> <p><b>UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.28/4</b></p>	<p>“Results and Recommendations of the Open Intersessional Drafting Group on the Guidelines for the Operations of the Regional Activity Centres (RACs) and the Regional Activity Networks (RANs) for the Cartagena Convention” (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.28/INF.5)</p> <p>Guidelines for Establishment and Operation of Regional Activity Centres and Regional Activity Networks for the Cartagena Convention UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.28/INF.5.Rev.1</p>	<p><b>Decision IV</b></p> <p>Adopts the “Guidelines for the Operations of the Regional Activity Centres (RACs) and the Regional Activity Networks (RANs) for the Cartagena Convention” as modified in this meeting.</p> <p>Accepts the proposal to establish REMPEITC-Caribe in Curaçao as a Regional Activity Centre (RAC/ REMPEITC-Caribe) within the framework of the Caribbean Environment Programme and to create a REMPEITC Steering Committee for the purpose of providing guidance and support to the activities carried out by the Centre;</p> <p>Adopts the terms of reference and functions of a Marine Pollution Emergency Information and Training Regional Activity Centre for the Wider Caribbean Region (RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe) attached hereto at Appendix II;</p> <p>Adopts the Terms of Reference of the REMPEITC Steering Committee attached hereto at Appendix II</p>

\* Decisions included in this table pertain only to the process leading up to the adoption of current 2008 Guidelines. For a compilation of additional IGM/COP Decisions please see Annex 1.

# ANNEX 1

## DECISIONS OF COP MEETINGS RELATING TO RACS AND RANS

Eleventh Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP) to the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) in the Wider Caribbean Region, virtual, 27 July 2021

3. Request the Secretariat and the RACs to strengthen the integration between the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS) and the SPAW Protocol including cross-representation of experts between Working Groups, as appropriate, and in accordance with the relevant Terms of Reference.
5. Urge Contracting Parties to respond to the requests of the Secretariat to nominate experts to the Working Groups established by the Contracting Parties as according to the Terms of Reference.

Ninth Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) to the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) in the Wider Caribbean Region, virtual, 17–19 March 2021, and 14–15 April 2021

### RECOMMENDATION III

#### **Programme of Work and Budget 2021–2022**

3. The Secretariat continue to integrate activities under the Assessment and Management of Environmental Pollution (AMEP) and SPAW Work Programmes, as appropriate, and further recommends that Contracting Parties encourage greater integration of the Sub-programmes in the implementation of work plans for the 2021–2022 biennium

### RECOMMENDATION VII

#### **Sargassum**

Taking note of the Report of the Secretariat, “Sargassum White Paper 2021: Turning the Crisis into an opportunity” (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.42/INF.35), as well as the “Report of the Sargassum Working Group” (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.42/7);

3. Contracting Parties request that the CEP Secretariat increase collaboration and joint programming between the SPAW and LBS Protocols, in the context of the SPAW Sargassum Working Group.

### RECOMMENDATION X

#### **Emerging Issues**

3. The Secretariat and SPAW-RAC encourage collaboration among Contracting Parties; the Regional Activity Centre-Regional Marine Pollution Emergency, Information and Training Centre (RAC REMPEITC); the shipping

industry; and other stakeholders, as appropriate, to reduce the risk of coral disease spread via ballast water, biofilms and wastewater.

#### RECOMMENDATION XI

##### **Species**

8. The Secretariat and SPAW-RAC, in close consultation with SPAW Contracting Parties, and other relevant stakeholders, consider the potential costs, benefits, and operational framework of a Marine Mammal Regional Activity Network (RAN), taking into account the good results of the CARI'MAM project and network, and draft a proposal for discussion at SPAW STAC10 regarding how such a RAN could operate.

Fifth Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) to the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities in the Wider Caribbean, Virtual, 15–17 March 2021

#### RECOMMENDATION II

##### **Workplan and Budget**

4. Contracting Parties support new and/or enhanced partnerships between the Secretariat and relevant organizations including Global Multilateral Environmental Agreement (MEA) Secretariats to facilitate work plan implementation building on recently developed MOUs and expanding the Regional Activity Network (RAN). This should include synergies especially with the chemicals cluster of Conventions.

5. Contracting Parties endorse efforts by LBS RACs to develop their own Strategies and Work plan and invite Contracting Parties to provide additional input through the Secretariat to the LBS RACs by April 30, 2021 to enable submission of final draft strategies for approval at the 5th LBS COP and the 19th IGM.

6. Contracting Parties welcome the ongoing efforts to integrate activities under the AMEP and SPAW Work Programmes and encourage greater integration of the Sub-programmes in the implementation of the work plan including greater interaction among the existing four RACs of the Secretariat.

7. Given the overall situation of the budget and Caribbean Trust Fund (CTF), Contracting Parties propose that the overall budget for the Secretariat and implications be considered during the Cartagena Convention COP XVI and that a comprehensive presentation on the financial status be made including what project funding will be available and what resources will be needed by the Secretariat from the CTF for effective programme and project implementation

#### RECOMMENDATION IV

##### **Monitoring And Assessment**

1. Contracting Parties establish new OEWS sub-groups as appropriate with special consideration given to nutrients including nutrient discharge standards, Integrated Water Resources Management/Freshwater, LBS/SPAW Integration (Sargassum), and remote sensing with consideration of inclusion of experts, such as academia, private sector, etc, recommended by the Focal Points.

5. Secretariat maximize the use of the LBS RACs to provide regional training for ongoing and new projects within their technical areas of competence.

#### DECISION III

##### **Governance**

4. Requests that the Secretariat, in collaboration with the four (4) Regional Activity Centers (RACs), UNEP HQ and members of the Regional Activity Networks (RANs), conduct a detailed review and analysis of the architecture of the general operations and funding source, and the organization with the Secretariat of the RACs and RANs including reviewing the current guidelines and associated decisions and host agreements for the RACs.

#### DECISION VI

##### **RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe**

3. Requests the Secretariat, RACs and other partner agencies to actively explore opportunities for replicating and upscaling training for detection of oil spills using satellite remote sensing technology as well as for other emerging pollutants.

# ANNEX 2

## CITATIONS, MAIN REFERENCES, AND DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

### Caribbean Environment Programme

Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region and its Protocols. 2012. Booklet prepared by the Regional Coordinating Unit of the United Nations Environment Programme, Caribbean Environment Programme. [Extracts from Article 15 of the Convention and Articles 9, 22, and XIII, respectively of the Oil Spills, SPAW, and LBS Protocols, referring to institutional arrangements].

*Article 15 of the Convention - INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS* 1. The Contracting Parties designate the United Nations Environment Programme to carry out the following secretariat functions: (a) To prepare and convene the meetings of Contracting Parties and conferences provided for in articles 16, 17 and 18; (b) To transmit the information received in accordance with articles 3, 11 and 22; (c) To perform the functions assigned to it by protocols to this Convention; (d) To consider enquiries by, and information from, the Contracting Parties and to consult with them on questions relating to this Convention, its protocols and annexes thereto; (e) To co-ordinate the implementation of cooperative activities agreed upon by the meetings of Contracting Parties and conferences provided for in articles 16, 17 and 18; 9 (f) To ensure the necessary co-ordination with other international bodies which the Contracting Parties consider competent. 2. Each Contracting Party shall designate an appropriate authority to serve as the channel of communication with the Organisation for the purposes of this Convention and its protocols.

*Article 9 of the Oil Spill Protocol - INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS* The Contracting Parties designate the Organization to carry out, through the Regional Coordinating Unit when established and in close cooperation with the International Maritime Organization, the following functions: (a) Assisting Contracting Parties, upon request, in the following areas: (i) The preparation, periodic review and updating of the contingency plans referred to in paragraph 2 of article 3, with a view, inter alia, to promoting the compatibility of the plans of the Contracting Parties, and (ii) Publicizing training courses and programmes; (b) Assisting Contracting Parties upon request, on a regional basis, in the following areas: (i) The co-ordination of regional emergency response activities, and (ii) The provision of a forum for discussion of such activities and related topics; (c) Establishing and maintaining liaison with: (i) Competent regional and international organizations, and (ii) Appropriate private entities conducting activities in the Wider Caribbean Region, including major oil producers, refiners, oil spill clean-up contractors and co-operatives, and oil transporters; 33 (d) Maintaining a current inventory of emergency response equipment, materials and expertise available in the Wider Caribbean Region; (e) Disseminating information on the prevention and combating of oil spills; (f) Identifying or maintaining means for emergency response communications; (g) Encouraging research by the Contracting Parties, competent international organizations and appropriate private entities on oil spill-related matters, including the environmental impacts of oil spills and of oil spill control materials and techniques; (h) Assisting the Contracting Parties in the exchange of information pursuant to article 4; and (i) Preparing reports and carrying out other duties assigned to it by the Contracting Parties.

*Article 22 of the SPAW Protocol - INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS* 1. Each Party shall designate a Focal Point to serve as liaison with the Organization on the technical aspects of the implementation of this Protocol. 2. The Parties designate the Organization to carry out the following Secretariat functions: (a) convening and servicing the meetings of the Parties; (b) assisting in raising funds as provided for in Article 24; (c) assisting the Parties and the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee, in co-operation with the competent international, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in: 62 - facilitating programmes of technical and scientific research as provided for in Article 17; - facilitating the exchange of scientific and technical information among the Parties as provided for in Article 16; - the formulation of recommendations containing common guidelines and criteria pursuant to Article 21; - the preparation, when so requested, of management plans for protected areas and protected species pursuant to Articles 6 and 10 respectively; - the development of co-operative programmes pursuant to Articles 7 and 11; - the preparation, when so requested, of environmental impact assessments pursuant to Article 13; - the preparation of educational materials designed for various groups identified by the Parties; - the repatriation of illegally exported wild flora and fauna and their parts or products; (d) preparing common formats to be used by the Parties as the basis for notifications and reports to the Organization, as provided in Article 19; (e) maintaining and updating databases of protected areas and protected species containing information pursuant to Articles 7 and 11, as well

*as issuing periodically updated directories of protected areas and protected species; (f) preparing directories, reports and technical studies which may be required for the implementation of this Protocol; (g) co-operating and co-ordinating with regional and international organizations concerned with the protection of areas and species; and (h) carrying out any other function assigned by the Parties to the Organization*

*Article XIII of the LBS Protocol - INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS 1. Each Contracting Party shall designate a focal point to serve as liaison with the Organisation on the technical aspects of the implementation of this Protocol. 2. The Contracting Parties designate the Organisation to carry out the following Secretariat functions: (a) convene and service the meetings of the Contracting Parties; (b) assist in raising funds as provided for in Article XVI; (c) provide such assistance that the Scientific, Technical and Advisory Committee may require to carry out its functions as referred to in Article XIV; (d) provide the appropriate assistance as may be identified by the Contracting Parties to facilitate: (i) the development and implementation of the plans, programmes and measures necessary to achieve the objectives of this Protocol; (ii) the development of incentive programmes to implement this Protocol; (iii) the development of information systems and networks for the exchange of information for the purposes of facilitating the implementation of this Protocol, as referred to in Article VIII; and (iv) the development and implementation of environmental education, training and public awareness programmes, as referred to in Article XI. (e) communicate and work with the Caribbean Environment Programme on activities relevant to the implementation of this Protocol; (f) prepare common formats as directed by the Contracting Parties to be used as the basis for notifications and reports to the Organisation, as provided in Article XII; 95 (g) establish and update databases on national, sub-regional and regional measures adopted for the implementation of this Protocol, including any other pertinent information, in keeping with the provisions of Articles III and XII; (h) compile and make available to the Contracting Parties reports and studies which may be required for the implementation of this Protocol or as requested by them; (i) cooperate with relevant international organisations; (j) provide to the Contracting Parties a report which shall include a draft budget for the coming year and an audited revenue and expenditure statement of the preceding year; and (k) carry out any other functions assigned to it by the Contracting Parties.*

Guidelines for Establishment and Operation of Regional Activity Centres and Regional Activity Networks for the Cartagena Convention. 2008. Twelfth Intergovernmental Meeting on the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme and the Ninth Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region Montego Bay, Jamaica, 29 November–2 December 2006. UNEP(DEC)/CAR IG.24/CRP.9 Rev.1.

Nineteenth Intergovernmental Meeting on the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme and Sixteenth Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region Virtual 28 to 30 July 2021 WORKPLAN AND BUDGET FOR THE CARIBBEAN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME 2021-2022 BIENNIUM. UNEP(DEPI)/CAR IG.45/3 Rev.1

SPAW-RAC 2019-2020 Activity Report Operations and budget. 2021. Ninth Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) to the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) in the Wider Caribbean Region. Virtual meeting, 17–19 March 2021

## Mediterranean Action Plan

Regional Stakeholders Consultation Meeting to contribute to the preparation of the Ministerial Declaration of COP 21 Athens, Greece, 24–25 October 2019, UNEP/MED WG.477/4

Meeting of the MAP Focal Points on the Medium-Term Strategy (2022-2027) Teleconference, 13–15 April 2021 Report of the Meeting, UNEP/MED WG.504/5\*

Meeting of the MAP Focal Points on the Medium-Term Strategy (2022-2027) Teleconference, 13–15 April 2021 Agenda Item 3: UNEP/MAP Mid-Term Strategy 2016–2021: Draft Evaluation Report Draft Evaluation of the UNEP/MAP Mid-Term Strategy (MTS) 2016-2021, UNEP/MED WG.504/3

Decision IG.19/5 “Mandates of the Components of MAP”, UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.19/8 Annex II

Meeting of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols Istanbul, Turkey, 18–19 June 2009  
DRAFT MODEL HOST COUNTRY AGREEMENT, UNEP/BUR/69/Inf.3

Fifth Meeting of the Executive Coordination Panel Tunis, Tunisia, 26–27 February 2009 HOST COUNTRY AGREEMENT TEMPLATE AND MANDATES OF MAP COMPONENTS, UNEP(DEPI)/MED ECP.5/6

Decision IG 17/2: Procedures and mechanisms on compliance under the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.17/10 Annex V

Regional Stakeholders Consultation Meeting to contribute to the preparation of the Ministerial Declaration of COP 21 Athens, Greece, 24–25 October 2019, Conclusions and Recommendations, UNEP/MED WG.477/4

### Northwest Pacific Action Plan

Seong-Gil Kang, Yoon Young Back, Jeong-Hwan Oh, Si-Yeon Lee, Chang Gyun Kim [draft, Case study].  
Regional Co-operation between the NOWPAP member states on marine pollution preparedness and response in the Northwest Pacific Region.

The Twenty-third NOWPAP MERRAC Focal Points Meeting (FPM) and the Fifteenth Competent National Authorities (CNA) Meeting for NOWPAP Regional Oil and HNS Spill Contingency Plan. Video conference, 7–8 July 2021. UNEP/IMO/NOWPAP/MERRAC/FPM 23(2021)/4

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