THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

BIOPAMA

From Knowledge to Action for a Protected Planet

Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Development

Policy Landscape Analysis for the Caribbean

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Acronyms

ABAS	Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS
ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific
AOSIS	Alliance of Small Island States
BIOPAMA	The Biodiversity and Protected Area Management Programme
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CBS	CARICOM Biodiversity Strategy
CENRPF	CARICOM Environmental and Natural Resources Policy Framework
CEP	Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP)
COTED	Committee on Trade and Economic Development
CPAG	Caribbean Protected Areas Gateway
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
GBF	Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework
HLPF	High-level Political Forum
IAS	Invasive and Alien Species
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LBS	Land-based Sources
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreements
MMA	Marine Managed Area
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MSDCF	Multi-Country Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plan
NR	National Reports (under the CBD)
OACPS	Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States
OAS	Organization of American States (OAS)
OECM	Other Area-based Conservation Measures
OECS	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
OECS-BEF	OECS Biodiversity and Ecosystems Management Framework
ORMACC	IUCN's Regional Office for Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean
PA	Protected Area
PAME	Protected Area Management Effectiveness
RAC	Regional Advisory Centre
SAMOA	Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SGD2040	Revised St George's Declaration of Principles for Environmental Sustainability
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SPAW	Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNEP-CAR/RCU	United Nations Environment Programme Caribbean Regional Co-ordinating Unit
UWI	University of the West Indies
VNR	Voluntary National Review

Executive Summary

The Biodiversity and Protected Area Management Programme (BIOPAMA II) is an initiative of the Organisation of ACP States financed by the European Union's 11th European Development Fund (EDF), and jointly implemented by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (JRC) and the University of the West Indies (UWI) at the regional level. BIOPAMA's aim is to improve access to, and the availability of, relevant data and information, as well as building the capacity to use this information and knowledge for enhanced decision-making and management of protected areas (terrestrial and marine). BIOPAMA II will finalise its operations in the Caribbean region at the end of 2024.

This biodiversity conservation policy landscape analysis, commissioned by BIOPAMA II Caribbean, provides an updated one-stop consolidated overview and analysis of the Caribbean policy landscape for biodiversity conservation and SDGs 14 & 15 specifically; assesses the gaps, progress and priorities of selected key biodiversity-related policies within the Caribbean region and their alignment global biodiversity targets and relevant Sustainable Development Goals; and identifies opportunities and provides recommendations for strengthening biodiversity conservation across the Caribbean and the scaling up and enhanced sustainability of BIOPAMA II key outcomes.

The document is divided into 3 main parts:

PART 1: CONTEXT

This part includes Chapters 1 and 2 which provide a background of the geopolitical and biodiversity context of the Caribbean, presents the geographic and political scope of the analysis, and provides an overview of the key intergovernmental organisations and international and regional environmental agreements relevant to the Caribbean.

PART 2: POLICY LANDSCAPE

Chapters 3 and 4 present the policy landscape relevant to biodiversity conservation and Sustainable Development Goals 14 and 15 in the Caribbean. Chapter 3 identifies and provides an overview of the relevant key policies occurring at a regional (Caribbean), subregional (Eastern Caribbean) and national level. Chapter 4, analyses these polices for their alignment with each other and with global frameworks, identifies any key gaps in policies, provides an overview of progress towards global biodiversity-related targets, identifies challenges for policy implementation and assesses biodiversity conservation priorities across regional, subregional and national levels.

PART 3: RECOMMENDATIONS

In this part, Chapter 5 identifies pathways for enhancing biodiversity conservation across the Caribbean. It provides recommended actions and key activities for supporting the scaling up and sustaining BIOPAMAs outcomes. Finally, based on the policy analysis and priorities, it presents priority investment requirements for enhancing biodiversity conservation across the region.

Recognising that this analysis is a text heavy document, for ease, a summary of the key findings and messages under each part is provided. In the summaries, elements such as key figures or tables that occur in the main text will be highlighted.

A SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

PART 1: CONTEXT SUMMARY

Introduction (Chapter 1)

Geographic scope of analysis

The geopolitical context for the Caribbean is complex (see figure 1 in main text). For the purpose of this analysis, the fourteen sovereign states of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, The Bahamas, Belize, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago) and the Dominican Republic (an observer to CARICOM) have been selected for analysis.

Policy scope of analysis

At a global and inter-regional level, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, The Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), the SAMOA pathway, the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS and the Escazú Agreement are the main frameworks considered, along with relevant CARICOM and OECS natural resource/ environment and biodiversity policies. Multilateral Agreements relevant for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development in the region are also considered in the policy landscape overview. In depth analysis however focuses mainly on the GBF and SDGs 14 and 15, and regional and national biodiversity-specific strategies.

Context (Chapter 2)

The Caribbean is a biodiversity hotspot and its citizens are highly dependent on its natural resources and healthy marine and coastal ecosystems for their economic well-being. However, climate change, land change, unsustainable infrastructure development, habitat destruction, pollution and invasive species all threaten the health of the region's biodiversity and ecosystems. Implementing relevant policies is crucial to protect these important natural resources for the benefit of the Caribbean people and future generations.

Intergovernmental Mechanisms (section 2.2)

Equally as complex as the geopolitical context of the Caribbean is its intergovernmental mechanisms that develop relevant regional policies or agendas, which occur at various levels:

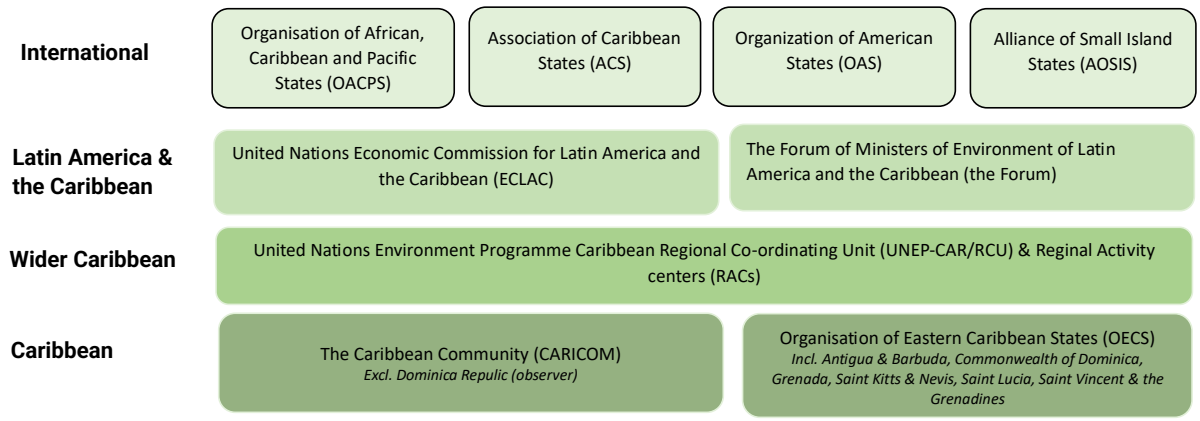

Figure showing the intergovernmental mechanisms relevant for the Caribbean at the different levels.

Multilateral Environment Agreements and Other International Intergovernmental Agreements (section 2.3)

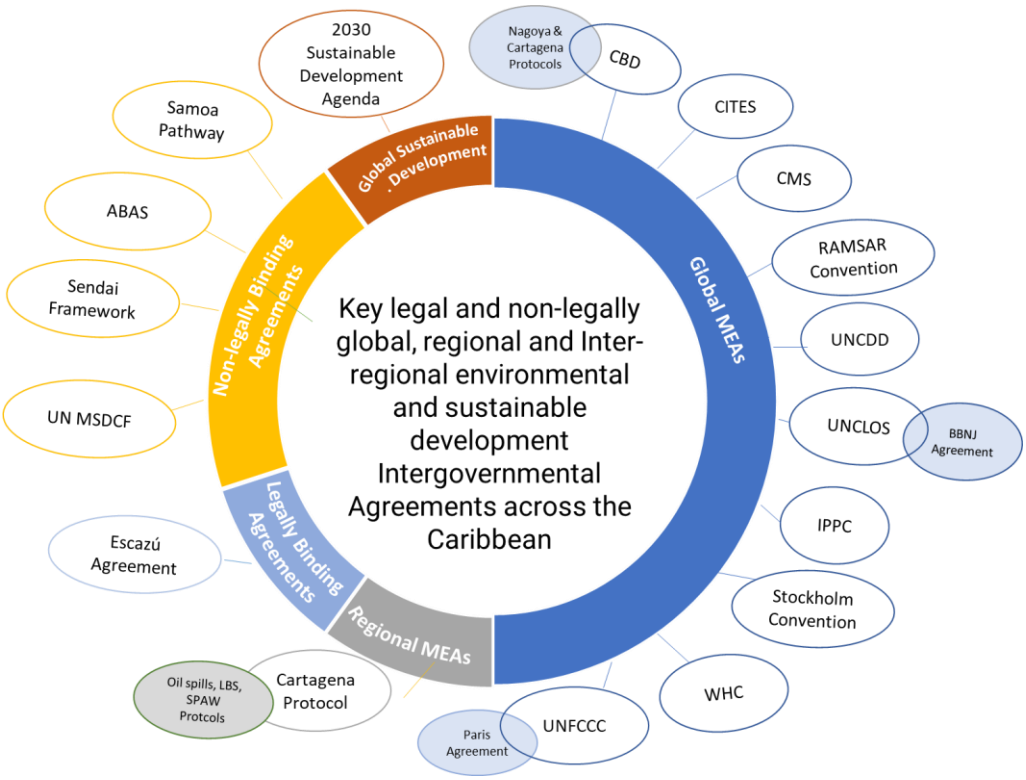

Figure showing key intergovernmental agreements related to sustainable development and biodiversity conservation in the Caribbean

Although most countries have ratified or acceded to most MEAs and other agreements, less than half of the countries have ratified or acceded to the Nagoya Protocol and the Convention on Migratory species. Only one country has thus far adopted the new BBNJ (Belize) and about 1/3 of countries have yet to ratify or accede to the Escazú agreement, SPAW Protocol and RAMSAR Convention (see table 2 in main text).

PART 2: POLICY LANDSCAPE SUMMARY

Policy Landscape (Chapter 3)

The Caribbean has developed two regional umbrella polices for the environment and natural resources. These are the CARICOM Environmental and Natural Resources Policy Framework and Action Plan 2020-2030 (CENRPF) and the OECS's Revised St George's Declaration of Principles for Environmental Sustainability (SGD 2040). Both of these are well aligned with each other as well as the global sustainable development framework and other relevant regional and inter-regional agreements. Under these umbrella documents are the corresponding regional biodiversity policies as well as common natural resource policies (e.g. for tourism, fisheries etc.) to which member States have committed to implementing through aligned national policies. Generally, and ideally national policies will be vehicles to support regional polices which in turn support the implementation of global frameworks at the regional level. The figure below, with supporting text provided in chapter 3 provides an overview of the policy landscape for the Caribbean region that supports the globally agreed biodiversity conservation and sustainable development agendas.

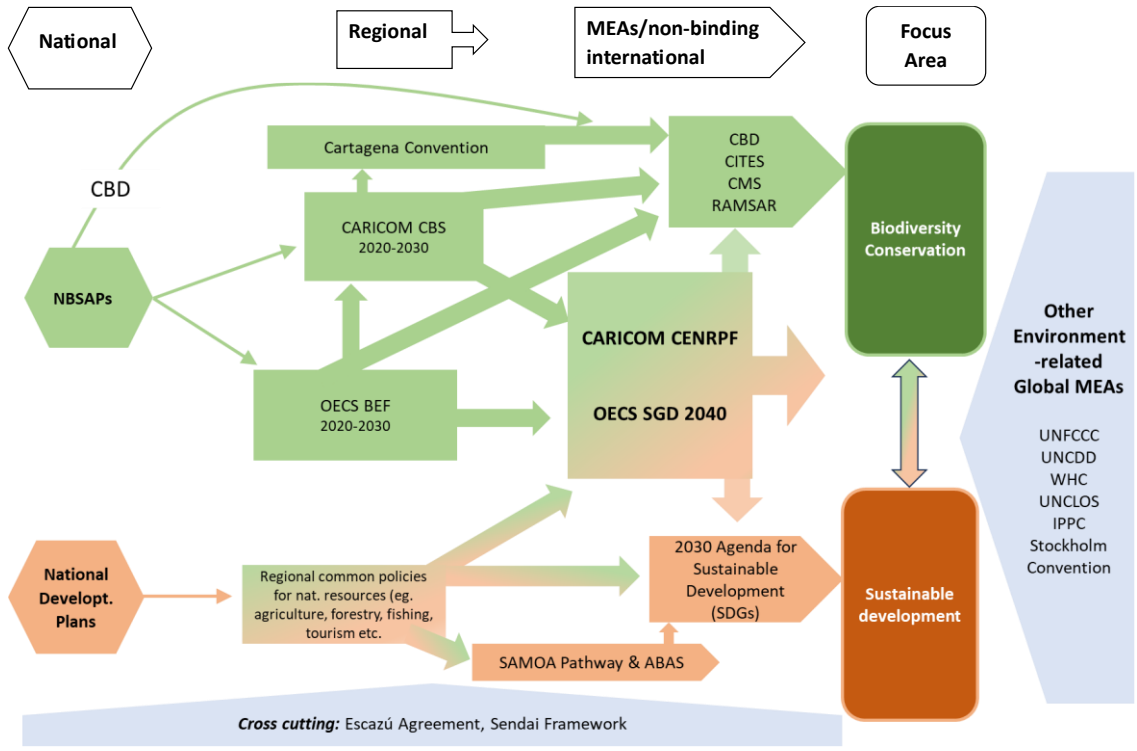

Figure showing an overview of the sustainable development and biodiversity conservation policy landscape in the Caribbean

Stakeholders (section 3.4)

Developing and implementing sustainable development and biodiversity conservation policies across the region will require the involvement of a wide range of actors and stakeholders at all levels from global to national. Even more relevant is the critical need for cooperation and collaboration across decision makers, intergovernmental agencies, government, networks, CSOs, research and academic institutions, donors and civil society, to ensure that these policies are effective and are implemented optimally. A non-exhaustive list of stakeholders and key actors along with their roles for global, regional and national policies relevant to this analysis is provided in Appendix 3 of the document.

Policy Gaps, Progress and Priorities (Chapter 4)

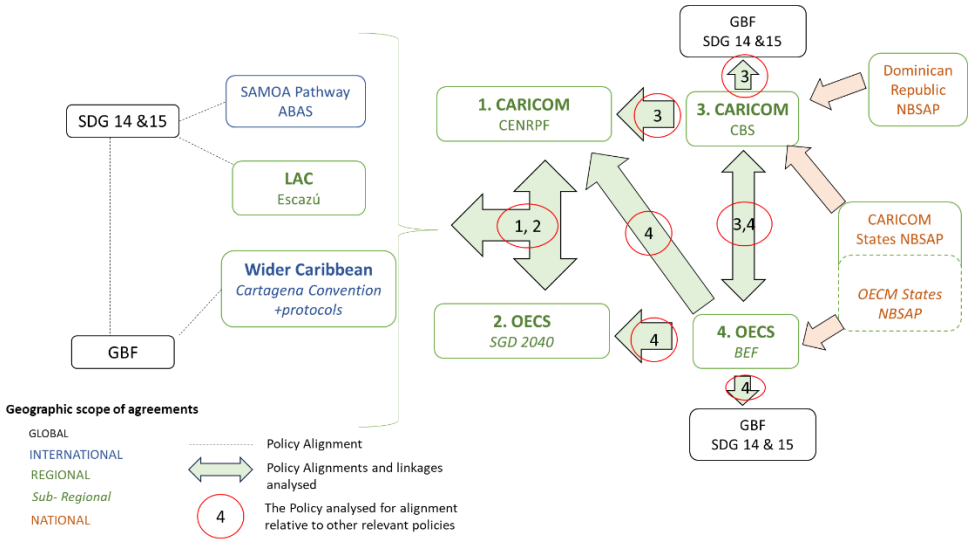

Figure showing the biodiversity-relevant policy linkages analysed for the Caribbean in this document.

Gaps

For the most part, it can be seen that there is excellent alignment between regional and global policies as well as between the regional and subregional policies assessed. The subregional (OECS) objectives related to marine planning, monitoring and transboundary ecosystem goods and services are not included at the regional (CARCOM) level, and forest- and research-related targets identified at the regional level are not included at the subregional level. Regarding specific biodiversity policies at both levels, there is excellent alignment there is however, an absence of targets and actions specifically directed at conserving endangered and endemic species and promoting genetic diversity at the subregional level.

Four key areas included in global biodiversity policies, were found to be either lacking or poorly represented in regional policies. These are:

i. Removing harmful subsidies and biodiversity regulatory context in businesses
ii. Protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures
iii. Participatory decision-making and governance
iv. Gender equality and responsiveness

Progress

Progress towards the previous decade's Aichi targets and SDGs 14 and 15 was assessed for the Caribbean region. Often analysed together with Latin America, progress can sometimes be confounded and the efforts and challenges faced by Caribbean SIDS diluted, leading to, at times, a false narrative with regard to progress in the Region. However, some studies have analysed the Caribbean region separately. For more accurate understanding of progress, priorities and contexts, separate assessments of the Caribbean region independent of Latin America should be promoted moving forward. Recent analysis of progress for the Caribbean specifically, shows that for the most part, the region follows a similar pattern as that of the global context with at least some progress being shown for most Aichi targets.

The assessment shows that for Target 2- Biodiversity values integrated, Target 6 – Sustainable management of marine living resources, Target 8-Pollution, and Target 12 -Species extinction prevented, progress has been relatively stagnant and showing little movement towards or away from the target. However, progress towards Target 10- Coral Reefs and other ecosystems vulnerable to Climate Change and Target 14 Ecosystem services and essential services safeguarded indicates that the situation is even worsening and that the region is moving further away from the target.

Similarly, there is generally good progress towards SDGs 14 and 15 in the region but with some exceptions. For example, SDG indicator 14.1-marine pollution and SDG indicator 15.2- sustainable forest management and deforestation, are showing to be moving away from its target. Further, Resource mobilization, (SDG indicators 15b, c) is continuously cited as an ongoing challenge for the Caribbean.

Policy implementation challenges

- Complex geopolitical context
- Lack of financing
- Poor biodiversity integration into other sectors
- Limited data and information
- Insufficient human resources and capacity

Priorities

Analysis of regional (CARICOM), subregional (OECS) and national level priorities, identifies three very clear high priorities across **all levels** for the thematic focus areas:

- Climate change impacts and biodiversity/ecosystem resilience,

- Invasive alien species (IAS), and
- Pollution

These are followed by:

- National capital accounting,
- Ecosystem valuation and mainstreaming, and
- Sustainable blue economy

At a national level (after climate change, IAS and pollution) the following are a priority:

- Integrated spatial planning and management, and
- Sustainable management and use of natural resources

Followed by:

- Protected Areas,
- Genetic and species conservation, and
- Data and information (also a very high priority at a subregional level).

PART 3: RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

The following pathways and recommended actions have been identified to enhance biodiversity Conservation in the Caribbean. Under each pathway, further recommendations for scaling up BIOPAMA II outcomes for the remaining programme period and for sustaining BIOPAMA's impact beyond its programme time-frame are also provided.

Pathway 1: Increasing national commitments to biodiversity conservation, in particular for marine ecosystem and species protection

Recommended Actions

i) Revise NBSAPs to align with the GBF while ensuring targets are realistic and take into account regional priorities
ii) Ratification and Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol
iii) Ratification and Implementation of the Cartagena Convention SPAW and LBS Protocols

Key activities for implementing actions

- Awareness and outreach of the Protocols and benefits of ratification
- Develop national action plans for implementing the protocols and seek out funding for their implementation
- Capacity building for inclusion of Access and Benefit sharing and addressing land-based sources of pollution in PA management plans
- Promote and support the identification and inclusion of priority MPAs on to the SPAW List
- Develop biodiversity financing plans

Pathway 2: Strengthening regional transboundary cooperation and coordination

Recommended Actions

i. Establish a regional inter-governmental biodiversity and environment agency
ii. Identify financing mechanisms, for example environmental levies and taxes to support the regional biodiversity body

iii. Ratify and implement the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement)
iv. Ratify and Implement the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS)
v. Actively engage in emerging global and regional agreements highly relevant for the Caribbean, such as the Plastics Treaty

Key activities for implementing actions

- Promote and advocate for additional support and funding for a regional entity dedicated to biodiversity conservation and the environment in the region.
- Promote the ratification of the BBNJ agreement and the CMS through the development and dissemination of awareness and outreach material.
- Provide technical and data support to individual nations for the implementation and coordination of MPA-related actions under the BBNJ

Support data collection and information sharing on key migratory species relevant for the Caribbean and in particular where protected areas and OECMs may play an important role (e.g. protecting feeding or nursery grounds)

Pathway 3: Scaling up ambition and closing policy gaps for effective biodiversity conservation

Recommended Actions

i. Scale up PA and OECM ambition
ii. Develop National Gender Action Plans for guiding the integration of gender considerations across NBSPS
iii. Establish regional policies for invasive alien species, ecosystem restoration and guidance for reducing harmful subsidies

Key activities for implementing actions

- Continue to support and promote PAME assessments for Caribbean PAs
- Develop an OECM dashboard, identifying harmonised indictors for OECM criteria and supporting the uploading and sharing of relevant data and OECM tools to all BIOPAMA countries
- Build capacity for assessing eligibility for inclusion of a managed area as an OECM across countries
- Promote the identification and harmonisation of IAS, restoration and incentives and subsidies' indicators for data collection and sharing on the CPAG conservation dashboard
- Develop and disseminate awareness and communication material for multi-stakeholders/sectors on the importance of coral reef and mangrove restoration and incentives and subsidies harmful to biodiversity

Pathway 4: Employing streamlined, inclusive and evidence-based decision-making

Recommended Actions

i. Identify critical research and data needs and develop harmonised indicators and data collection methodologies across the Caribbean
ii. Strengthen participatory and inclusive decision-making, building capacity across all stakeholders for evidence-based decision making
iii. Establish a regional database for biodiversity indicators, ensuring appropriate data access and sharing modalities

Key activities for implementing actions

- Advocate for a regional biodiversity and environment agency
- Seek out additional funding for a BIOPAMA Phase III
- Support the identification of regional research needs and harmonised indicators
- Showcase how biodiversity information can support other sectoral priorities and improve decision-making
- Bridge the science-policy interface through multi-stakeholder dialogue
- Continue to request data from countries for uploading onto the CPAG
- Develop OECM and participatory decision-making tools for access through the CPAG

Priority Regional Investment Requirements

1. The establishment and operation of an independent regional biodiversity and environment agency
2. Build human, technical and infrastructure capacity for data collection, database development, knowledge sharing, bridging the science-policy interface
3. Increase national awareness of national capital accounting, build capacity for its integration into national statistics and for its use in polices and decision-making around the blue economy
4. Scale up on-the-ground action for addressing pollution, IAS and restoration objectives
5. Support advancement towards GBF Target 3 through PAME and OECM activities

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PART 1: CONTEXT

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The Biodiversity and Protected Area Management Programme (BIOPAMA II) aims to improve the long-term conservation and sustainable use of natural resources in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries across protected and conserved areas, and surrounding communities. It is an initiative of the Organisation of ACP States financed by the European Union's 11th European Development Fund (EDF), and jointly implemented by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (JRC) and the University of the West Indies (UWI) at the regional level. Specifically, BIOPAMA II is improving access to, and availability of, relevant data and information and building the capacity of existing institutions and networks to use this information and knowledge to improve policies, decision-making and enhance the management of protected areas (terrestrial and marine) and national systems of protected and conserved areas.

BIOPAMA II supports protected area authorities in the ACP countries to address their priorities for improved management and governance of biodiversity and natural resources through regional observatories, reference information systems and action components.

The Caribbean Protected Areas Gateway (CPAG) is the regional observatory for the Caribbean, its role is to support information and knowledge management, build capacity in staff and organisations to manage this information, and provide policy guidance for better decision-making, and networking and communication. BIOPAMA II through the CPAG information platform aims to enhance policy and decision-making capacities of institutions responsible for biodiversity conservation and protected area (PA) management by making available the best possible scientific information and knowledge.

Since BIOPAMA II will finalise its operations in the Caribbean region at the end of 2024, this document aims to carry out a policy landscape analysis of biodiversity conservation supporting policies, to identify key areas where the outcomes of BIOPAMA II can be scaled up and achieve greater sustainability across the region, while also identifying opportunities for further programmes that support these objectives.

1.2 Document Purpose

The intended purpose of this document is three-fold:

a) Recognising that there exist several regional and national documents which assess the policy landscape and alignment in the Caribbean to varying degrees, and acknowledging the fast and dynamic changing global policy environment, the purpose of this document is to provide an updated one-stop consolidated overview and analysis of the Caribbean policy landscape for biodiversity conservation and SDGs 14 & 15 specifically.

b) To assess the alignment and gaps of selected key policies within the Caribbean region and with Global biodiversity-related targets. And,

c) To identify opportunities and provide recommendations for enhanced biodiversity conservation in the Caribbean and the scaling up and enhanced sustainability of BIOPAMA II key outcomes.

1.3 Geographic Scope

Defining the Caribbean region can be a complex issue as the countries it includes can depend on the geographic and political context. Often the Caribbean region is considered a subregion grouped together with countries from Latin America or even the Americas (e.g. Organization of American States). Alternatively, when addressing marine issues, the Wider Caribbean considers a different subset of countries which also includes countries not members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). The IUCN Regional Office for Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean (ORMACC) work spans 18 countries in the Caribbean region, including European overseas territories: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, The Bahamas, Belize, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Martinique, St. Martin/St. Barthélémy, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago). The Caribbean regional observatory of BIOPAMA falls under the remit of ORMACC, however its geographic scope is defined by Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) (see section 2.2.1). Figure 1 provides a graphic representation of the geopolitical classification of Caribbean countries.

For the purpose of this Policy Landscape Analysis, only the 14 sovereign CARICOM states and the Dominican Republic (a CARICOM Observer State), will be the focus of this analysis (see Figure 1). These have been selected as they are part of the ORMACC Caribbean remit, are within the geographic scope of the Caribbean Protected Areas Gateway (CPAG) and are consistently considered the Caribbean irrespective of the geopolitical context, and unlike overseas territories, as sovereign states, they are independent from other States outside the Caribbean with regard to all aspects of their administration and governance.

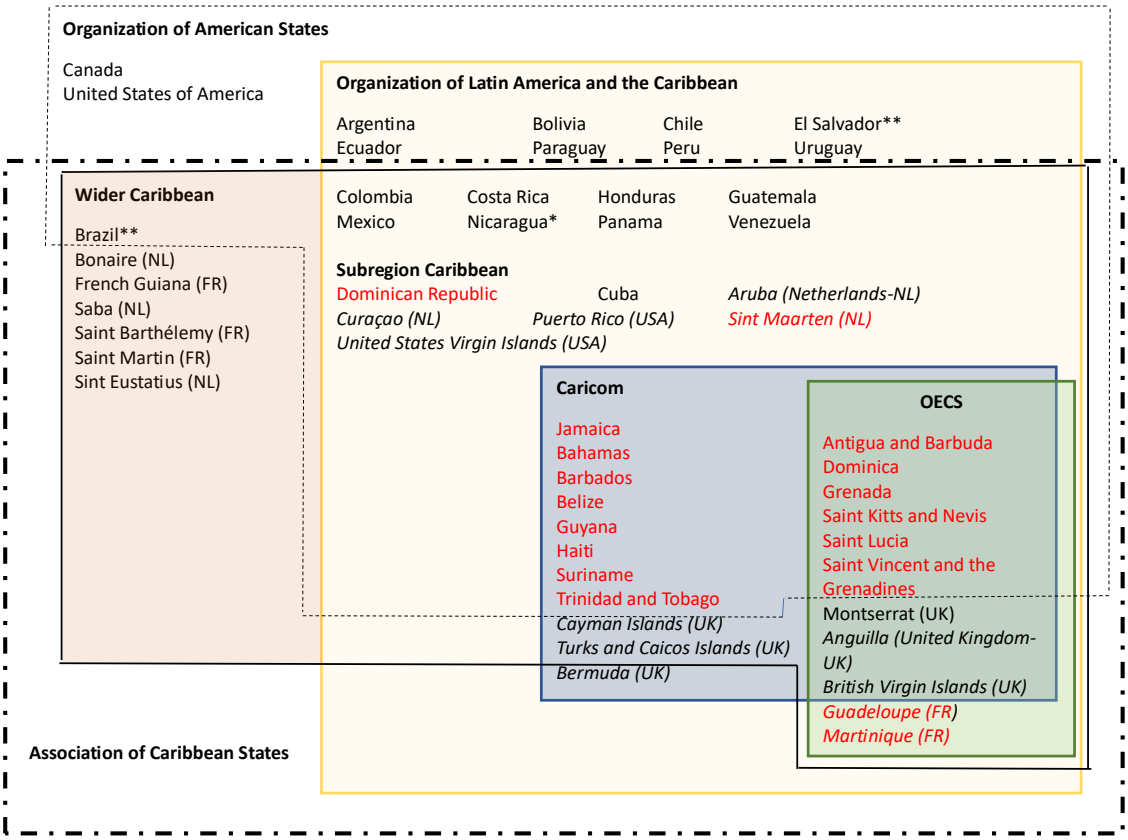

Figure 1: The geopolitical context of the Caribbean region. Those in Italics are associate member of the intergovernmental mechanisms, with those highlighted in red representing countries included in the ORMACC programme. Note: * Nicaragua is not part of the Organization of America States.** El Salvador is part of the Association of Caribbean, but Brazil is not.

1.4 Policy Scope

Sustainable development and biodiversity conservation fall under a broad mandate of environmental policies across the region and a thorough in-depth analysis of enabling policies for the full suite of Goals under 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is beyond the scope of this analysis. Part 3 however, does provide an overview of global, regional, subregional and national key environmental policies related to sustainable development and biodiversity conservation within the Caribbean, with Part 4 examining policies in more detail that are specifically relevant for biodiversity conservation only.

To that end, the in-depth policy analysis will focus on regional and national policies supporting the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 14 – Life below water and 15-Life on land.

1.5 Methodology

This policy analysis has been developed by carrying out through a desk review of documents, policies, information and knowledge management systems, relevant decisions and recommendations (see Appendix 1). Country questionnaires and interviews with selected institutions and individuals were requested to validate this desk review, however response was limited and only four of the 15 countries replied to the questionnaire and it was not possible to organise any meetings with CARICOM or OECS representatives. However, following the development of a draft document, a BIOPAMA legacy workshop was held in St Lucia between 1-4 October, where 60 participants representing 14 out of the 15 Caribbean countries within the scope for the project attended (with the exception of The Bahamas) attended. Attendees included OECS and national government representatives, non-government organisations, the private sector, research institutions and donors. During this time a summary of the findings of this analysis was presented and the proposed policy-related recommended actions (chapter x) were reviewed and validated. For the most part recommended actions from the draft were validated. However, while the original recommendations under pathway 3 were not rejected, they did require some modifications and one or two additional recommend actions were identified. Hence, the recommended actions presented here include amendments and additional actions suggested by participants of the legacy workshop.

CHAPTER 2: CONTEXT

2.1 The Caribbean

The Caribbean region is comprised of both islands and continental countries all of which are considered Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The Caribbean Islands biodiversity hotspot, one of the world's 36 biodiversity hotspots, houses incredible species richness and diversity, many of which are endemic. It includes about 11,000 plant species, of which 72% are endemic, 100% of the 189 amphibian species, 95% of 520 reptiles, 74% of 69 species of mammals (mostly bats) and 26% of 564 birds are also endemic to the region[1].

The Caribbean also supports important freshwater habitats, including rivers, streams, lakes and wetlands which in addition to supporting biodiversity, provide significant ecosystem services to the region's populations, essential for the island states that are surrounded by salt water. The region also comprises the Guiana Shield, home to the world's most pristine rainforest landscapes that stores approximately 18% percent of the world's tropical forest carbon and 20% of the world's fresh water[2].

The region, with its significant biodiversity and its large expanses of coral reefs, mangroves and seagrass, is one of the world's top tourism destinations and many of the countries rely on tourism for income. In addition, Caribbean communities and citizens depend heavily on agriculture and its natural resources for livelihoods, in particular ocean-based livelihoods. As such, ensuring a sustainable blue economy for the region is of paramount importance for biodiversity and the benefit of people.

Caribbean countries are extremely vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters. Hurricanes are a common occurrence in the region, which cause devastating impacts damaging infrastructure and natural resources. Warming seas, sea-level rises and coral bleaching are further climate change impacts that are negatively affecting biodiversity in the region.

As coastal populations and infrastructure development increases, so too do their impacts on biodiversity. Habitat destruction of marine and coastal ecosystems and pollution from land-based sources have negatively affected marine environments by smothering coral reefs, killing fish and reducing the recreational value of beaches, which in turn has an economic impact on the countries and their citizens. Further, habitat destruction from land clearing, the overexploitation of the region's resources and competition from invasive and alien species (IAS) also pose significant threats to the region's biodiversity.

Given the globally important biodiversity occurring in the region, and the region's dependency on its natural resources, along with current and emerging threats on species and ecosystems, robust and effective policies that are appropriately and timely implemented and that help meet global, regional and national biodiversity and sustainable development goals are crucial.

2.2 Caribbean Intergovernmental Cooperation Mechanisms

The intergovernmental cooperation mechanisms are as equally complex as the geopolitical complex of the Caribbean. Figure 2 shows, along with descriptions provided in the text (2.2.1-2.2.3), the various intergovernmental mechanisms that countries being considered for this analysis belong. As small states, the Caribbean region often finds itself allocated with other regions and states which have

[1] Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund: Caribbean Islands Biodiversity Hotspot: Ecosystem Profile Summary.
[2] https://www.amazonteam.org

significantly different contexts. Although such cooperation mechanisms can help drive and support the Caribbean agenda and place the region on the international stage, it is clear that at the same time there can be significant complexities and challenges as a result. For example, in some instances, Caribbean Small Island Developing States are categorised with larger, more economically prosperous countries, with significantly different contexts (e.g. Organization of American States, which include USA and Canada) which could potentially lead to Caribbean regional priorities being overpowered or diluted, and Member states finding themselves obligated to advance a common regional agenda that may or may not be fully aligned with their needs and priorities. Further, and more often than not, this also means that Caribbean countries are often beholden to a number of different agendas for the same thematic area. This issue along with other geographic and political complexities for the Caribbean are discussed further in Chapter 4.

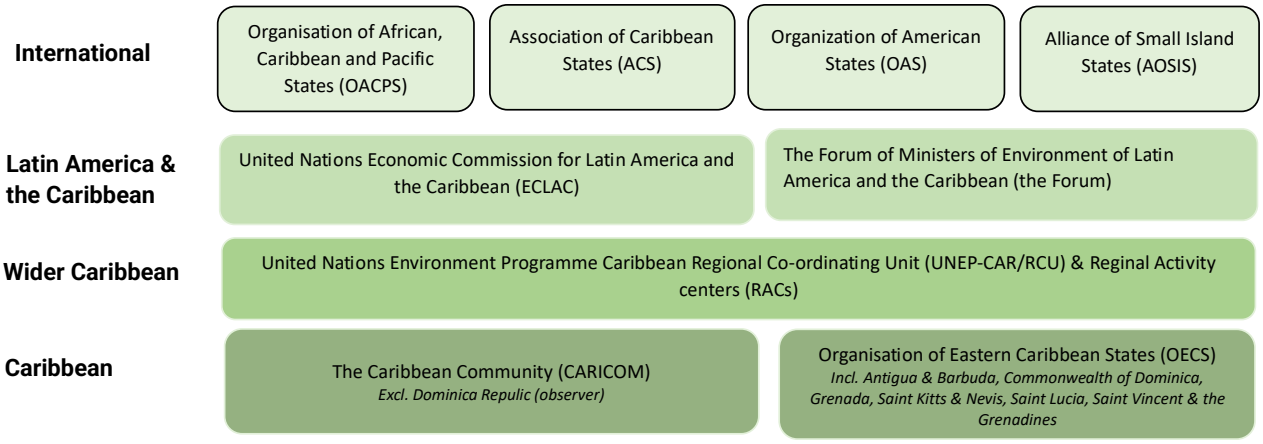

Figure 2: The different intergovernmental mechanisms relevant to the 15 countries analysed for this document.

2.2.1 International

Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS)

Established in 1975 via the Georgetown Agreement and comprising 79 African, Caribbean and Pacific States, its goal centres around the sustainable development of its Members. The **Department of Environment and Climate Action** (ECA) created in 2019 at the 9th Summit of OACPS Heads of State and Government, coordinates the Secretariat's sustainable development activities, focusing on food security and climate change. In particular the ECA is active in the area of environmental protection and coordinates activities related to the Blue Economy, giving special consideration to fisheries and SIDS.

BIOPAMA, financed by the European Union's (EU) 11th European Development Fund is an initiative of the OACP under this department. BIOSPACE is a further EU supported programme developed to contribute to the sustainable development of ACP Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and coastal countries.

Also under the OACPS, **the Caribbean Forum** (CARIFORUM) was established in 1992 and comprises the 15 Caribbean Community states, along with the Dominican Republic. CARIFORUM acts as a centre for economic dialogue with the European Union. In 2008, its members, with the exception of Guyana and Haiti, signed the *CARIFORUM-EU Economic Partnership Agreement* with the European Union to make trade and investment easier for people and businesses from the two regions.

Organization of American States (OAS)

Founded in 1948 to promote cooperation among its states, the Organization of American States is the regional forum for political discussion, policy analysis and decision-making in Western Hemisphere affairs. The OAS brings together leaders from nations across the Americas to address hemispheric issues and opportunities. Together, they seek to build cooperation among states and advance a common regional agenda on democratic governance, human rights, multidimensional security, and sustainable development.

The OAS supports member states in the design and implementation of policies, and projects to integrate environmental priorities into poverty alleviation and socio-economic development goals. The **Department of Sustainable Development** (DSD) supports OAS member States in the design and implementation of relevant policies, programs and projects.

Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)

Since 1990, AOSIS has represented the interests of 39 small island and low-lying coastal developing states in international climate change and sustainable development negotiations and processes. AOSIS acts as a lobby and negotiating voice for SIDS through the United Nations (UN) system, particularly in the area of climate change. AOSIS has also been active to ensure the specific challenges SIDS face are addressed, particularly through the implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway. However, it has no regular budget, permanent secretariat or formal charter.

2.2.2 Latin America and Caribbean Region

United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

One of five regional commissions of the United Nations, ECLAC is headquartered in Chile with a subregional headquarters for the Caribbean established in Trinidad and Tobago in 1966. ECLAC aims to promote economic and social development through regional and subregional cooperation and integration. ECLAC has issue-based coalitions for the Latin America and Caribbean region. The Regional Collaborative Platform (RCP) for Latin America and the Caribbean (RCP LAC) unites all UN entities working on development in the region to jointly respond to the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, addressing key challenges that transcend country borders. The RCP LAC prioritises joint efforts around eight areas, which includes climate change and resilience but not the environment and biodiversity specifically.

The Commission, however, addresses biodiversity under its **natural resources and infrastructure division**. In this regard, ECLAC aims to build countries' institutional capacities to devise and implement public policies and regulatory frameworks with a view to increasing efficiency in the sustainable management of natural resources and in the provision of public utilities and infrastructure services. It also strives to achieve greater policy harmonisation and coordination and to promote exchanges of best practices.

ECLAC hosts a regional knowledge management platform for the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean, and acts as a repository and reference for all information related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In 2016, the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development was established as a regional mechanism to follow up and review the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The French overseas regions of Guadalupe and Martinique and Monserrat are associate members of the ECLAC.

ECLAC Subregional Headquarters are located in **Trinidad and Tobago.**

The Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean (the Forum)

Considered among the most representative and important political gathering on environmental policies and responses at the regional level, the Forum is the region's longest standing and most important space for political dialogue and collaboration on environmental matters**.** It prepares consolidated views and inputs from the region to the United Nations Environment Assembly. Forum meetings are held every two years with intersessional meetings in between. It was established by the Ministers of Environment of the region in 1982 with UNEP´s LAC Office serving as the secretariat to the Forum.

United Nations Environment Programme Caribbean Regional Co-ordinating Unit (UNEP-CAR/RCU)

Established in 1986, UNEP-CAR/RCU is the Secretariat for the Cartagena Convention and the Caribbean Environment Programme. UNEP's Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP) is one of the UNEP administered Regional Seas Programmes and forms the programmatic framework for the Cartagena Convention – Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (see section 3.1.3).

The Cartagena Convention Secretariat is located in **Jamaica.**

A number of Regional Activity Centres (RACs) to support the implementation of the Convention and its protocols are established which provide coordinated regional and technical support to Contracting Parties. The RACs are:

- The Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Information and Training Center for the Wider Caribbean (REMPEITC-Caribe) to support the Oils spills protocol located in **Curaçao.**
- The Centre of Engineering and Environmental Management of Coasts and Bays, located in **Cuba** and the Institute of Marine Affairs located in **Trinidad and Tobago,** support the Pollution/LBS Protocol.
- The Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW-RAC) support the implementation of the SPAW protocol and is located in **Guadeloupe.**

2.2.3. Sub-Regional: Caribbean

Association of Caribbean States (ACS)

The convention establishing the ACS was signed in 1994. Its role is to act as an advisory association of nations centred on the Caribbean Basin. Its primary purpose is to be an organisation for "consultation, cooperation and concerted action" for its member countries. Its framework provides a forum for political dialogue where areas of common interest and concern that may be addressed at the regional level are identified along with their solutions. It aims to promote regionalism across Member States. ACS has identified 5 key areas of concerns for the region, and although biodiversity loss and ecosystem integrity are not explicitly mentioned, sustainable tourism and disaster risk reduction- areas where biodiversity and ecosystem conservation plays a critical role- are considered.

Its secretariat is located in **Trinidad and Tobago.**

Caribbean Community (CARICOM)

CARICOM was created in 1973 with the signing of the Treaty of Chaguaramas. This treaty was later revised (2002) to allow for the eventual establishment of a single market and a single economy. It has four pillars of work: economic integration; foreign policy coordination; human and social development; and security. It houses several institutions under its remit, although there is no specific environment arm of CARICOM, it has a **Caribbean hub programme on capacity building related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements** *(MEAs*). The aim of this Programme is to empower key stakeholders to address environmental challenges and to increase the benefits from improved environmental management at the national and regional levels. Under this programme, CARICOM has recently developed the first ever regional Biodiversity Strategy (see Chapter 3) for Member States.

CARICOM Headquarters are located in **Guyana.**

Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)

Established in 1981, seven eastern Caribbean countries signed the Treaty of Basseterre and agreed to cooperate and promote unity and solidarity among its Members. The Treaty was revised in 2010 to create an economic union between the seven OECS countries. In addition to the seven founding members, an additional four countries are associate members and these include Martinique and Guadeloupe, both French overseas territories falling under the IUCN ORRAC mandate. The OECS has five strategic pillars with the most relevant to biodiversity being *to enhance capacity to leverage natural systems for socio-economic development.*

The OECS ***Environmental Sustainability Division*** *(ESD*) is responsible for the region's biodiversity matters and is committed to implementing the strategic actions of the Revised St George's Declaration of Principles for Environmental Sustainability in the OECS (hereinafter called SGD2040). Falling under this division is the **OECS Biodiversity Ecosystems and Ecosystem Programme** which supports the implementation of regional and international agreements and Sustainable Development Goals, in particular SDG 14 and 15.

More recently, in 2019, OECS Member States and the Commission established an **OECS Biodiversity and Ecosystems Management Committee (BEMC**), to provide regional technical, legal, and institutional guidance for the protection of biodiversity and ecosystems.

OECS headquarters are located in **St. Lucia.**

2.3 Multilateral Environment Agreements and Other International Intergovernmental Relevant Agreements

Table 1 provides a summary of the relevant global and regional MEAs and other international agreements to which the individual countries have ratified or acceded to[3].

2.4.1 Sustainable Development

In 2015, the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** which is a plan of action to collectively and holistically bring "peace and prosperity for people and planet now and in the future" was adopted by United Nations Member States. At the centre of the agenda are 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which recognise that in order to achieve sustainable development there is a need to achieve economic and social well-being in harmony with nature. The Sustainable Development Goals are a

[3] Status as of June 2024

global call to action and are the overarching framework through which countries align their sectoral agendas. Particularly relevant to biodiversity conservation are:

SDGs 14 -Life Below Water. This goal aims to *conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development* and,

SDG 15 – Life on Land. This goal is to *protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss*.

2.4.2 Multilateral Environment Agreements

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the leading authority that sets the global environmental agenda and is responsible for implementing the environmental aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals within the UN system. Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) are the main mechanisms used for addressing environmental issues globally and form the legal basis as a result of multilateral processes to guide global, regional and national action on environmental issues. MEAs focus on five thematic areas: biological diversity, chemical and waste, climate and atmosphere, environmental governance, land and agriculture, and marine and freshwater.

Countries that are signatories to an MEA are called Parties and at regular intervals a Conference of Parties (COP) for that MEA meet, where decisions such as approving strategic or action plans, are made. Parties also assign a national focal point for that MEA which acts as a liaison between the country and the MEA secretariat.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and its associated protocols along with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) can be considered among the most important MEAs for biodiversity and ecosystem protection globally, including for the Caribbean. In 2022, Parties to the Convention adopted a new global biodiversity framework "The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework" (GBF) which sets out the internationally agreed global biodiversity action agenda until 2030, and long-term biodiversity goals for 2050, and acts as the overarching biodiversity framework for all countries that have ratified the CBD. There is only one regional MEA for the Caribbean specifically, and that is the Cartagena Convention. Figure 3 provides an overview of the relevant MEAs for the Caribbean with a brief description of each of them provided in **Appendix 2.**

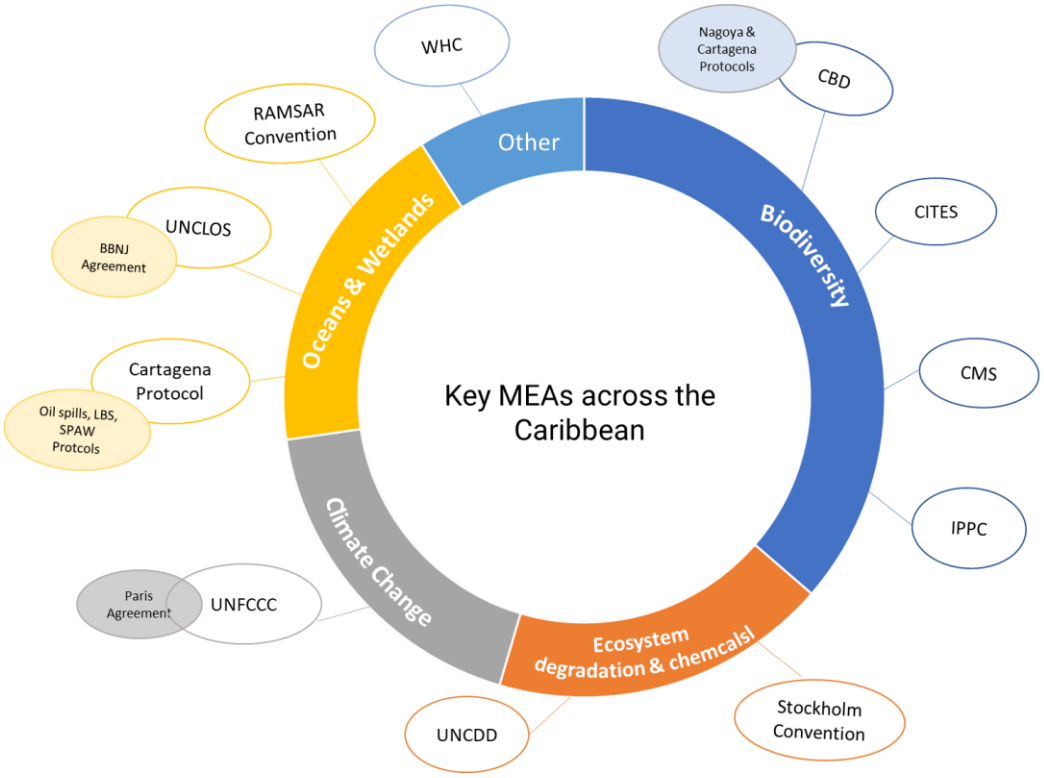

Figure 3: Key MEAs for biodiversity conservation in the Caribbean

Unlike the other environment-related MEAs (see Figure 3), RAMSAR and the World Heritage Convention (WHC) are MEA's administered by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) not UNEP.

The United Nations serves the English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean from offices that represent the Organisation's Secretariat, Specialized Agencies, programmes, funds and other entities, and that operate at regional, sub-regional and country levels. Their work is coordinated through a network of six hubs based in Belize, Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago. UNEPs subregional office in the Caribbean is located in **Jamaica.**

2.4.2 Other International Intergovernmental Agreements

2.4.2.1 Legally Binding

The **Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement)** is the first international treaty in Latin America and the Caribbean concerning the environment, and the first in the world to include provisions on the rights of environmental defenders. It is a relatively new treaty that was adopted in 2018 and came into force in 2021. It aims to guarantee the rights of access to environmental information, public participation in the environmental decision-making process and access to justice in environmental matters. ECLAC acts as technical secretariat. In 2020, ECLAC-OECS signed an MoU to establish and Enhanced Programme of Action on the Escazú Agreement.

2.4.2.2 Non-legally Binding

The Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway (SAMOA Pathway) is an internationally agreed, programme of action for SIDS. Recognising that SIDS are "a special case" for sustainable development due to their unique and particular vulnerabilities, the Pathway was an outcome of the 3rd Conference on Small Island Developing States held in 2014. The SAMOA Pathway addresses priority areas for SIDS, ensuring that regional context (i.e. Caribbean) is considered and calls for urgent actions and support for SIDS to achieve their sustainable development goals. It provides a blue print for action on a wide range of issues which include climate change, disaster risk reduction and the sustainable use of marine resources. The Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLLS) based in New York is the lead agency for the SAMOA Pathway.

At the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States leaders adopted the "**Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS: A Renewed Declaration for Resilient Prosperity**" (ABAS) and pledged to help SIDS achieve their priorities over the next 10 years. Through the Agenda, countries reiterated their commitment to the timely and full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework as well as other internally agreed frameworks and instruments. They also committed to scaling-up biodiversity and ocean-based action, building resilience to disasters, and strengthening data collection, storage and analysis. To further support the latter, they also committed to support a "SIDS Centre of Excellence", which aims to facilitate SIDS peer-to-peer learning through innovation-and-technology and to build capacity and narrow the digital divide. The implementation of the ABAS will be led by the SIDS themselves, with support from UNDESA and UNORHLLS to build capacity for its implementation and monitoring. The ABAS also requests the UN Secretary-General to potentially establish a single SIDS dedicated entity at the UN Secretariat to further support the ABAS implementation.

The **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (Sendai Framework)** is a global agreement to reduce, prevent and respond to disaster risks across the globe. It provides a roadmap for how countries can address and reduce disaster risks and losses. It is a voluntary, non-binding agreement and recognises that the State has the primary role to reduce disaster risk in cooperation with other stakeholders. There is a Sendai Framework Voluntary Commitments (SFVC) platform for stakeholders to share information about committed actions and from which progress can be monitored. The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction UNDRR, is the lead UN agency for the coordination and implementation of the Sendai Framework.

The UNDRR Office for the Americas and the Caribbean is located in **Panama**.

The ***United Nations Multi-Country Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UN MSDCF)*** is the business plan for UN agencies, funds and programmes in the English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean for the period January 2022 to December 2026. The MSDCF supports work related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the SAMOA Pathway and other international development aspirations, and the national development plans of the individual countries in this sub-region. The framework is nationally executed under the overall coordination of the respective Government co-ordinating authorities in each of the MSDCF signatory countries with support from UN regional offices.

Table 1: Legally binding and non-legally binding intergovernmental environmental agreements relevant for the Caribbean region**.**

**AB-Antigua and Barbuda; B-Bahamas; BB-Barbados; BE- Belize; D-Dominica; DR-Dominican Republic; G-Grenada; GY- Guyana; H-Haiti; J-Jamaica; SKN-St. Kitts and Nevis; SL-St. Lucia; SVG- St. Vincent and the Grenadines; S-Suriname; T-Trinidad and Tobago*

Agreement	Description	Country*														
		AB	B	BB	BE	D	DR	G	GY	H	J	SKN	SL	SVG	S	TT
Multilateral Environmental Agreements																
Global																
2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	A global call to action for sustainable development through 17 SDGs. SDG 14 and 15 are the most relevant for biodiversity conservation	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)	The global framework for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, including fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Nagoya Protocol (*signed but not ratified/acceded)	A supplementary agreement to the CBD, it provides the legal framework for the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.	√	√				√	*	√			√	√			
Cartagena Protocol	Another supplementary agreement to the CBD for the safe handling, transport and use of living modified organisms (LMOs) resulting from modern biotechnology that may have adverse effects on biological diversity, taking also into account risks to human health.	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
CITES	A framework governing the international trade of wild fauna and flora	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√
CMS	Also known as the Bonn Convention, is for the conservation and sustainable use of migratory animals and their habitats	√					√									√
RAMSAR + CariWet *(No. of Ramsar sites provided)*	A framework for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.	1	1	1	1		6	1			4		2		1	3
UNCLOS *(*also signed BBNJ treaty; r= ratified BBNJ)*	A framework establishing rules governing all uses of the oceans and their resources	√ *	√ *	√	√ *r	√ *	√ *	√	√	√	√	√	√ *	√ *	√	√
UNFCCC	An overall framework for intergovernmental efforts to tackle the climate change. Building on the Convention, the Paris Agreement is a legally binding treaty to limit global warming	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
UNCDD	An agreement to address desertification and the effects of drought	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
IPPC	A treaty to protect the world's plants, agricultural products and natural resources from plant pests	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

Agreement	Description	Country*														
		AB	B	BB	BE	D	DR	G	GY	H	J	SKN	SL	SVG	S	TT
Multilateral Environmental Agreements																
WHC	A Convention to identify, protect and preserve cultural and natural heritage around the world that is considered to be of outstanding value to humanity	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Stockholm Convention	A global treaty to protect human health and the environment by eliminating or reducing the release of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) into the environment.	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√
Regional Latin America and Caribbean (International)																
Escazú Agreement *(nr= signatories but not yet ratified)*	A regional treaty to protect access to environmental information, public participation in environmental decision-making process and access to justice in environmental matters.	√			√	√		√	√	√ nr	√ nr	√	√	√		
Regional Wider Caribbean (International)																
Cartagena Convention	A Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√
Cartagena Convention-SPAW protocol	A regional agreement for the protection and sustainable use of coastal and marine biodiversity in the Wider Caribbean Region.		√	√	√		√	√	√				√	√		√
Land-based sources pollution protocol (LBS)	A protocol under the Cartagena Convention to mitigate marine pollution from land-based sources of pollution' specifically targeting domestic wastewater and agricultural non-point sources of pollution.	√	√	√	√		√	√	√		√		√			√
Non-legally Binding International Intergovernmental Agreements																
SAMOA Pathway	An internationally agreed, programme of action for SIDS to support their sustainable development	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Sendai Framework	A global agreement to reduce, prevent and respond to disaster risks across the globe.	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
The Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS)	Adopted at the 4th International conference for SIDS by leaders, the ABAS is "A Renewed Declaration for Resilient Prosperity". Leaders committed to supporting SIDS achieve the priorities, which includes scaling up biodiversity and ocean-based action.	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
UN MCSDF	A framework to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the SAMOA Pathway and other international agreements in the English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean	√	√	√	√	√		√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√

PART 2: POLICY LANDSCAPE

CHAPTER 3: BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT POLICY LANDSCAPE

3.1 Regional Policies and Strategies

3.1.1 CARICOM Policies

CARICOM Environmental and Natural Resources Policy Framework and Action Plan 2020-2030 (CENRPF)

Recognising the important role that the environment and natural resources play in economic, social and environmental development across the Caribbean, the first ever Caribbean Community Environment and Natural Resources Policy Framework (CENRPF) was launched at the Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States in May 2024. The Policy Framework, aligned with the region's commitments, has been approved by the community's Environment Ministers and is the **umbrella policy for the sustainable management and use of environmental and natural resources,** with which all relevant CARICOM policies will be aligned.

The CENRPF provides guiding principles and long-term goals which give an overarching framework for the protection, conservation and sustainable use of the environmental and natural resources of the Community and its Member States. It identifies four thematic areas (land and soil, forest resources, water resources, ocean and marine resources) around which Policy Framework Action Plans and general interventions at the regional and/or national level will be developed. The Community Secretariat, through its Sustainable Development Directorate- supported by the relevant CARICOM institutions- has the responsibility for the day-to-day oversight and implementation of the CENRPF. Progress made in the implementation of the Policy Framework and its Action Plans will be reported to the Community's Committee on Trade and Economic Development (COTED).

CARICOM Biodiversity Strategy (CBS)

During the 103rd Special Meeting of the CARICOM COTED, held in 2022, the CARICOM Secretariat was mandated to align the draft CARICOM Biodiversity Strategy (CBS) with the GBF, CENRPF, National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and other regionally-related strategies. In 2023, the CARICOM Secretariat Sustainable Development Programme under the Caribbean Hub sub-component of Phase III of the Programme for Capacity-Building related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries (ACP MEAs III), finalised the CBS in accordance with the COTED mandate.

The aligned CBS is the framework to assist Members of CARICOM in their implementation of the GBF and its principal guiding policy framework is the CENRPF. The CBS does not establish new commitments for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and natural heritage, but rather consolidates key priorities and goals that have previously been identified and endorsed at the national and/or regional levels and places a greater focus on resources that are of community-wide concern such as transboundary resources. The CBS covers the period 2023-2030 and includes both short-(2024)

and long-term (2030) targets. Considering the regional context for biodiversity as well as the region's socio-economic, political and geographic profile, the CBS has identified 5 Goals and 14 objectives.

Other Relevant CARICOM Policies for Sustainable Development

- CARICOM Common Agricultural Policy (2011)
- CARICOM Common Fisheries Policy (CCCFP)
- CARICOM Blue-Green economy strategy
- CARICOM Blue Economy Strategy
- CARICOM Regional Food and Nutrition Security Policy

3.1.2 OECS Policies

St. George's Declaration of Principles of Environmental Sustainability (SDG2040)

In 2001, in an effort to ensure that the contexts and priorities of OECS Member States are reflected in response to global environment policies, the St. George's Declaration of Principles for Environmental Sustainability (SGD) in the OECS was signed by the Ministers of the Environment to create a bridge between national and global policy arenas. The Declaration sets out the broad framework to be pursued for environmental management in the OECS region.

The SGD was first revised in 2006 where principles and actions were translated into goals, targets and indicators, and aligning these, wherever possible, to the targets and commitments made under the major multilateral environmental agreements. In 2022 this was further revised to ensure alignment with OECS and Member States' priorities, evolving global MEAs and to respond to current priority environmental problems and opportunities for nature-based solutions in the Eastern Caribbean. This revised St. Georges Declaration of Principles for Environmental Sustainability (SGD 2040) reaffirms the commitment of the OECS Commission to support OECS Member States to achieve sustainable development and aims to minimize environmental vulnerability, improve environmental management and protect the region's natural resources. It further recognises that fulfilment of this commitment requires decisive action locally, nationally, regionally and globally. The SGD2040 recognises that although each Member State has its own vision, policies, tools and approaches, joint and collective action will amplify efforts to building a resilient society and environment.

The Islands Systems Management (ISM) Framework, which purports that integrated planning and management is critical if the islands are to become economically, socially and ecologically resilient, provides the foundation for the SGD 2040 agenda. The Agenda's call for action for sound environmental management in the Eastern Caribbean focuses on six strategic priorities (oceans and fisheries; climate and disaster resilience, biodiversity and ecosystems, land and water, sustainable energy, and chemicals pollution and waste) and a number of key enabling and transformative actions. It is **the umbrella policy for sustainable development and biodiversity conservation** in the East Caribbean.

OECS Biodiversity and Ecosystems Management Framework 2020-2030 (OECS-BEF)

The OECS-BEF addresses biodiversity and ecosystem common regional issues rather than individual country specific interventions which through a multi-country approach will improve financial, human and technical efficiency. The framework intends to guide the development of regional projects and programmes as well as strategic alliances with development partners to ensure that actions translate into meaningful and needed impact. Through a coherent approach it is envisioned that the Framework will enhance and strengthen individual Member States' biodiversity conservation strategies and action plans and support them in meeting their obligations under relevant international commitments, such as the GBF and SDGs 14 and 15.

Arising around the same time as the CARICOM Biodiversity Strategy, the OECS-BEF aims to enhance the most OECS-relevant priorities from the CBS as well as respond to biodiversity-related directives outlined in the SGD 2040 and the OECS Development Strategy – Environment Chapter (ODS–e). The Framework is centred around five main themes (ecosystem conservation, invasive species and biosecurity, climate resilience, access and benefit sharing, and mainstreaming biodiversity) each with an objective, and associated actions, targets and indicators.

The implementation of this Framework will be carried out by the OECS- Environmental Sustainability Division, supported by the Biodiversity and Ecosystems Management Committee (BEMC) which is comprised of national biodiversity focal points.

Other Relevant OECS Policies for Sustainable Development

- 2019-2028 OECS Development Strategy: Shaping our Shared Prosperity
- Eastern Caribbean Regional Ocean Policy (ECROP) 2013 Revised 2021
- OECS Common Tourism Policy- Under Review

3.1.3 Cartagena Convention Strategies and Action Plans

Regional Strategy for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region – 2023-2030

The Cartagena Convention is the only legally binding regional agreement for protecting, sustainably developing, and using the region's coastal and marine resources. In 2017, at the Seventeenth Intergovernmental Meeting on the Action Plan for the CEP and Fourteenth Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region, Parties to the Convention requested the Secretariat to update the outdated Strategy for the Cartagena Convention and CEP. This updated strategy aims to provide a framework to strengthen and streamline countries' efforts in meeting their obligations under the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols by providing a framework for regional policy coordination mechanisms for governance of the marine environment in the Wider Caribbean.

The framework's vision to achieve healthy, resilient and biologically diverse coastal and marine ecosystems for human well-being is centred around four overarching goals and four strategic objectives: Pollution Prevention, Reduction and Control; Marine Biodiversity Conservation and Management; Knowledge Management, Coordination and Communications; and Governance, Circularity and Sustainable Economies. It will be implemented by Contracting Parties with support from the Convention's Secretariat.

UNEP-SPAW Regional Strategy and Action Plan for the Valuation, Protection and/or Restoration of Key Marine Habitats in the Wider Caribbean 2021 – 2030 (RSAP)

The RSAP is a tool developed by the Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) Sub-Programme of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) – Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP) to support conservation and sustainable use of coastal and marine ecosystems in the Wider Caribbean. It prioritises transboundary issues related to coral reefs, mangroves and seagrass beds that affect multiple countries and that would benefit from a regional approach. The Strategy is structured around four interdependent strategic pillars (ecosystem health and resilience, sustainable use, governance and partnerships and, enabling systems and capacity) with corresponding goals and ten objectives that guide action between 2021 and 2030.

The RSAP is aligned with several relevant global and regional commitments such as the GBF, SDGs- in particular SDG 14- the Cartagena Convention and its protocols, as well as the CBS and SGD 2040. It recognises that for successful implementation it requires joint effort by national, sub-regional, regional and intergovernmental stakeholders and broad-based participation by government agencies, civil society, the private sector and the research/academic community.

Overall, the SPAW Sub-programme, supported by the Regional Activity Centre for the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife for the Wider Caribbean Region (SPAW-RAC), will coordinate delivery of the RSAP and its regional activities. Key regional agencies however, will be engaged in delivery of the RSAP at the regional and sub-regional levels. Member States will be responsible for implementation at the national and local levels, and partnerships with stakeholders from civil society, the private sector and academia will further support the strategy, which will be crucial for its effective implementation.

3.2 National Policies

The number, type and focus of national policies are all unique to each countries' contexts, priorities and global and regional commitments. Table 2 presents key national polices related to sustainable development and biodiversity along with the relevant national focal point institutions.

3.2.1 Biodiversity Conservation

National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans

In order to harmonise efforts across the globe in meeting global biodiversity targets, countries are requested by the CBD to submit National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plans (NBSAPs) that are aligned with targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). These NBSAPs are widely considered as the overarching framework for shaping a country's biodiversity conservation and ecosystem health protection actions, which are for the most part, led by the ministries, departments, and technical agencies with responsibilities for natural resource management, conservation, and the environment. At COP15, following the adoption of the current GBF, Parties were requested to update and submit their revised and aligned NBSAPs with the new 23 targets and the vision, by COP16. All 15 States considered for this analysis are Parties to the CBD and are therefore obliged to update their NBSAPs. While some countries have current NBSAPs (see table 2), it is unlikely that all 15 States will have revised or updated their NBSAPs by the requested time-frame. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), through action and support are engaging in a programme to support the revision of NBSAPs for Parties. Although work to revise NBSAPs is underway in many countries, as of yet, none of the 15 States have an updated and aligned NBSAP.

Protected Areas and Other effective Area-based Conservation Measures

Policy relating to Protected Areas (PAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) are addressed differently across the countries with policies relating to national protected areas systems/networks largely embedded in legislation, NBSAPs and/or other policies. Some countries do however have overarching polices/ strategies pertaining to Protected Areas, these can include mandates for their establishment, expansion, governance and management. Table 2 shows that across the States only Belize and St. Vincent and Grenadines have current Protected Areas System Plans, with others having outdated Plans or current drafts in progress and many without any specific strategy.

Target 3 of the GBF states *"..by 2030 at least 30 per cent of terrestrial, inland water, and of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are effectively conserved and managed through ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, recognizing indigenous and traditional territories where applicable, and integrated into wider landscapes, seascapes and the ocean, while ensuring that any sustainable use, where appropriate in such areas, is fully consistent with conservation outcomes, recognizing and respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, including over their traditional territories".*

Other effective area-based conservation measures allow countries to meet this Target 3 of 30 x30 without expanding their protected areas system/network as defined by IUCN categories. Although mentioned in the Aichi Target 11, the potential for OECMs along with their adapted definition, is a relatively recent and emerging issue. As such, there are currently no polices at a global, regional or national level that address OECMs specifically. However, much work is progressing in this regard with the IUCN Word Commission on Protected Areas, along with the CBD developing various definitions and guidelines for their application, which will support their integration into NBSAPs.

3.2.2 Sustainable Development

Unlike NBSAPs, there are no requirements for an overarching sustainable development policy. The concept of National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) was proposed in 1992 where countries were called upon to integrate economic, social and environmental objectives into one strategically focused "blueprint" for action at the national level. However, with few countries submitting a NSDS, it was later considered that a "blueprint" approach for national sustainable development strategies is neither possible nor desirable. It was agreed, that the particular title applied to a national sustainable development strategy is not important, as long as the underlying principles characterising a national sustainable development strategy are adhered to and that economic, social and environmental objectives are balanced and integrated. Although countries do not necessarily label them as "national sustainable development strategies", generally all the underlying core principles are deeply embedded in the various multi-sectoral national policies. However, most countries irrespective of their title do have an overarching national policy with the SDGs at the core of their mandate. This is usually in the form of a national development strategy or green and blue economy strategies. Table 2 highlights which of the 15 States has an overarching national development policy that supports the nation in meeting their SDG goals.

3.3 Biodiversity Environment/Sustainable Development Policy Stakeholders and Key Actors

Developing and implementing sustainable development and biodiversity conservation policies across the region will require the involvement of a wide range of actors and stakeholders at all levels from global to national. A non-exhaustive list of stakeholders and key actors relevant for the global, regional and national policies relevant to this analysis is provided in Appendix 3. It is evident from the table, that to effectively develop and implement polices at any level requires the cooperation and collaboration of multi-stakeholders ranging from decision makers, intergovernmental agencies, government, networks, CSOs, research and academic institutions, donors and civil society. The table provides a description of each stakeholder- their primary relevant policies and their expected roll with regard to the policies identified.

Table 2: A summary of national biodiversity and development policies by country along with CBD and SDG focal points**.**

Country	NBSAP	PA Policy	National Development Policy	CBD Focal Point	SDG Focal Point
Antigua and Barbuda	2014-2025	Draft Protected areas system plan	Medium-Term Development Strategy 2016 to 2020; Sustainable Island Resource Management Zoning Plan;	Department of Environment, MoHWE	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
The Bahamas	2001	Bahamas National Trust Strategic Plan 2018-2022	The National Development Plan. Vision 2040	Department of Environmental Planning and Protection	
Barbados	2020-2030		National Strategic Plan of Barbados 2006-2025.	Ministry of Environment and National Beautification, Green and Blue Economy	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Investment of Barbados
Belize	2016-2020	National Protected Areas System Plan 2015-2025	Horizon 2030: National Development Framework for Belize 2010-2030	National Biodiversity Office	Ministry of Forestry Fisheries and Sustainable Development
Dominica	2014-2020	National Parks and Protected Areas Act, Draft National Protected Areas System Plan (2021-2031)	National Resilience Development Strategy 2030	Ministry of Environment, Rural Modernisation and Kalinago Upliftment	Ministry of Finance, Economic Development, Climate Resilience and Social Security
Dominican Republic	2011-2020	Ley Sectorial de Areas Protegidas, NO. 202-04	Estrategia Nacional de Desarrollo Sostenible 2010-2030	Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales/ Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources	Comisión Interinstitucional de Alto Nivel para el Desarrollo Sostenible/ High Level Interinstitutional Commission for Sustainable Development
Grenada	2016-2020	Grenada Protected areas system Plan 2009-2019	National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP), 2020-2035	Ministry of Climate Resilience, the Environment, and Renewable Energy	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Business and CARICOM Affairs
Guyana	2012-2020	Protected Areas Act, 2011. National Protected Areas System Plan (xx -xx)	Low Carbon Development Strategy 2030	Environmental Protection Agency	Minister of Foreign Affairs
Haiti	2020-2030		Country Strategic Plan 2024-2028	Ministère de l'Environnement	Ministère des Affaires Etrangères
Jamaica	2016-2021	Protected Area System Master Plan Jamaica 2013-2017	Vision 2030 Jamaica – National Development Plan	Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation	Sustainable Development Goals Secretariat, Planning Institute of Jamaica
Saint Lucia	2018-2025	A Systems Plan for Protected Areas in Saint Lucia 2009; a new one has been developed and will be shortly approved.	Medium Term Development Strategy 2020 - 2023	Department of Sustainable Development-Ministry of Education, Sustainable Development, Innovation, Science, Technology and Vocational Training	
St. Kitts and Nevis	2018-2025	National Conservation and Environmental Management Bill, 2020	National Development Planning Framework (2023-2037)	Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment, Climate Action and Constituency Empowerment	
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	2015-2020	National Parks and Protected Area System Plan 2024-2028	National Economic and Social Development Plan (2013-2025)	Sustainable Development Unit, MOHWE	
Suriname	2012-2016		Multi-Annual Development Plan 2022-2026	Ministry of Spatial Planning and Environment	

Trinidad and Tobago	2017-2022	National Protected Areas Policy (2011) and the National Protected Areas System Plan (2018)	The National Development Strategy of Trinidad and Tobago 2016-2030	Ministry of Planning and Development

3.4. Linkages with Global Frameworks

Generally, and ideally, policies should be aligned from a national level through to the global level. A detailed analysis of policy alignment for biodiversity conservation is carried out in chapter 4. Figure 4 provides an overview of policy linkages from the national to the global level, via regional polices for the globally agreed biodiversity conservation and sustainable development agendas.

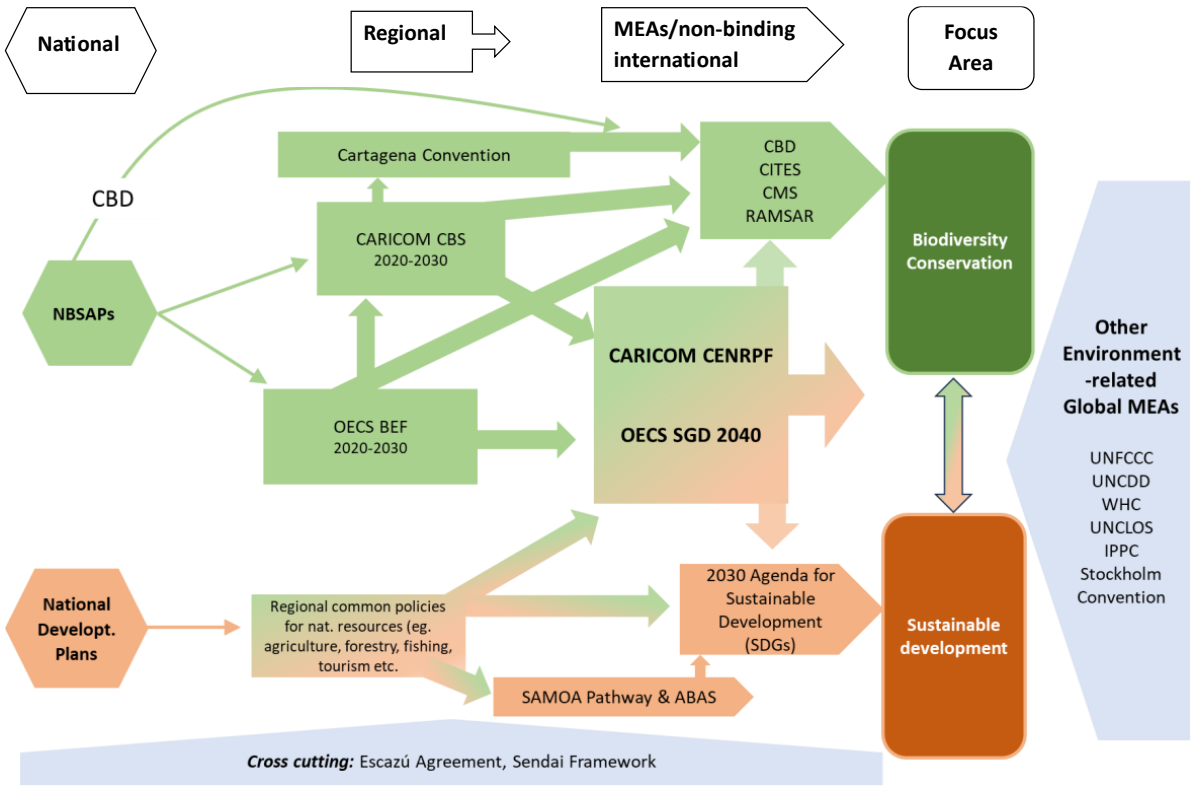

Figure 4: The policy landscape for achieving global biodiversity and sustainable development agendas across the Caribbean.

CHAPTER 4: REGIONAL BIODIVERSITY POLICY ANALYSIS: Linkages, Progress, Priorities and Gaps

The 17 SDGs traverse a broad spectrum of thematic areas and typically embedded into the relevant sectoral policies. This section will examine in more detail policies directly relevant to biodiversity conservation and as such will address SDG 14 and 15 only. Figure 5 below highlights the policies and alignments that will be analysed in more detail in this chapter.

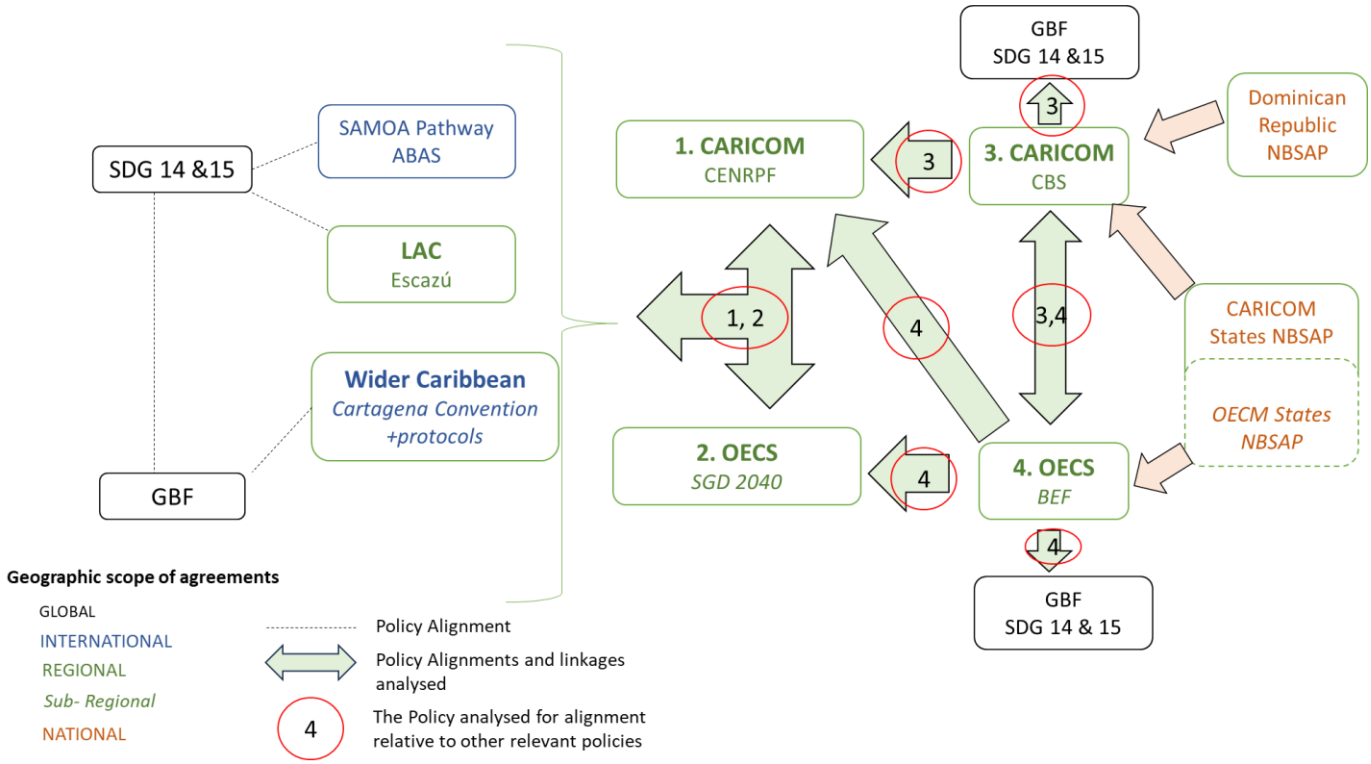

Figure 5: The biodiversity-relevant polices linkages analysed for the Caribbean**.** *The umbrella policies will be assessed for alignment at the global level (1), and against each other (2); the CBS will assessed against the GBF, SDGs 14 & 15 and the CENRPF, as well as and its alignment with the OECS-BEF (3).Lastly, the OECS-BEF will also be assessed for alignment with the GBF, SGDs14 &15, SGD2040 as well as its alignment with the CBS (4).*

4.1 Policy Alignment

Aligning polices can often present challenges, as individual countries and regions can vary in their contexts and thus priorities. Global policies, therefore tend to provide more broad overarching guiding frameworks under which regions and countries can adapt. As seen in section 1.3, the geopolitical complexity of defining the Caribbean region can be challenging, and as SIDS, present yet another nestled cluster and context of the countries. With regard to relevant policies, there are global frameworks (i.e. the whole world), international frameworks (intra-regional policies between countries

with shared or common factors such as SIDS or designated cluster of regions such as LAC) and regional and subregional frameworks considering different geographic areas. Caribbean policy alignment will be assessed centring around four regional polices - the regional and subregional umbrella policies for the environment and natural resources - CENRPF and SGD2040 and the regional and subregional biodiversity policies - CBS and OECS-BEF. Gaps and differences identified will be discussed in section 4.1.3.

4.1.1 Regional and subregional policy alignment

Policies can be aligned either directly or indirectly. For the purpose of this analysis direct alignment is examined. For example, if a particular policy target/objective identifies "sustainable management of fish resources", and another policy "sustainable consumption" or "small-scale fisheries' access to resources", the policies for this purpose would not be considered directly aligned as it does not mention "small scale fisheries" or "sustainable consumption" specifically, even though it is clear that the former could encompass the latter. Table 3 provides a summary of directly aligned targets/objectives across the policies analysed, with their indirect alignment considered in the subsequent discussions and conclusions.

For the most part, it can be seen that there is excellent alignment between regional and global policies as well as between the regional and subregional policies assessed. Further discussions of more broad policy alignment with global frameworks are provided in the individual policy documents and appendix 4 provides policy target/objectives alignment tables for each of four regional policies examined.

CENRPF and SGD2040 alignment

As a subregional policy, the SGD2040 is highly aligned with the CENRPF, however, it recognises that the OECS comes with its own set of priorities to address its subregional unique contexts. Unlike the SGD2040, the CENRPF doesn't specifically address actions related to the monitoring of coastal and marine areas (SGD2040 Ocean and Fisheries (OF) objective OF2), the integrated planning for marine space (OF5) and the transboundary management of ecosystem goods and services (Biodiversity and Ecosystem (BE) objective BE1). And, at an OECS level, specific forest-related targets (CENRPF thematic area 2) and research targets (CENRPF actions 4.3,4.4) are lacking.

CENRPF and CBS alignment

The CENRPF and CBS as expected, are fully aligned. Although the CBS does not have a specific objective for wildlife, trade and genetic diversity, and research, these are addressed under its long and short-term actions across several objectives. Similarly, despite no direct objectives for indigenous community participation or forests in the CBS, these are also considered under key actions across various CBS objectives. Where it appears that alignment is lacking, between CBD objectives and CENRPF thematic actions, through the CENRPF guiding principles and means of implementation, critical issues are aligned between the policies.

SGD2040 and OECS-BEF alignment

The OECS-BEF is highly aligned with the SDG2040. Again, while several aspects of alignment are embedded in the means of implementation, enabling environments, guiding principles and/or actions, unlike the SGD2040, the OECS-BEF does not directly identify targets pertaining to the participatory

management of marine and coastal resources (OF6), sustainable fisheries management and use (OF11,2) and the mainstreaming of traditional knowledge (BE6).

CBS and OECS-BEF alignment

Both regional biodiversity strategies are highly aligned, but with a notable absence in the OECS-BEF of targets and actions specifically directed at conserving endangered and endemic species and promoting genetic diversity (CBS objective 1), although indirectly these will be addressed under ecosystem protection targets.

Table 3: A summary of the alignment of global and regional biodiversity conservation policy alignment

	GBF Targets	SDG 14 & 15 Indicators	SAMOA Clusters	ABAS sections	ESCAZÚ Articles	Cartagena Articles	SPAW Protocol Articles	CENRPF Thematic focus area actions	CBS Objectives	SGD 2040 Objectives	OECS-BEF targets
CENRPF Thematic areas	1-3; 5-14; 16-22	15.1-15.3; 15.5-15.9;14.1,.2,.4,.6; 15a,b,c; 14a,c	53-58; 69; 91,92, 94, 95,	B26.ii; C30. ic; ii, iii,	5,6,11	5-9,	4,5,10,12,17		1-14	OF1,3,4,9,11; BE2,4,5; LW2,3; CDR5	1.2-4; 2.1-.3; 3.1-2; 4.1, 4.2; 5.1
CBS objectives	1-4;6-11;13-14;16-21	14.1-4;15.1-2; 15.4-6;15.8-9;15a,b						1.1-1.2; 4.2; 5.1, 5.3, 5.5-5.9; 5.12; Mol*		OF4,8-11; BE1-4; LW1,2,3; EA*	1.1-1.4; 2.1-2.3; 3.4; 4.1;4.2; 5.1-5.3
SGD 2040	1-3; 6-8-14; 16-17; 19-22	14.2-4; 14.7; 14a; 15.1-6, 15.8,15.9; 15a,b	58a,b,d,e; 91a;92;95a,b, c		5,6,11	5-9,	12,16	4.2; 5.7; 5.1-5.2; 5.5; 5.9-5.10; guiding principles; Mol*	2-7; 9-11		1.1;1.3; 2.1-2.3; 3.1-3.4; 4.1-4.2; 5.1-5.2
OECS-BEF targets	1-3;6-8;11;13-14;17;19;21	14.1-.3; 14.5;14.7;14a; 15.1-.4; 15.6;15.8;15.9						1.1; 4.1; 4.2; 5.2, 5.3, 5.5 5.6, 5.9	2,3,4,5,6,7,8, 9,10, 13,14	OF1,2,3,4,8,9, 12; BE1,2,3,5; LW1,2	

4.1.2 Alignment with Global Frameworks

Alignment with SDG 14 &15

All four policies are aligned with SDGs 14 and 15 (Appendix 4) with some gaps. Both regional umbrella policies and the CARICOM biodiversity strategy do not explicitly mention the establishment of marine protected areas (SDG 14.5) and all four policies lack specific small-scale fisheries targets (14b). While the CENRPF has targets related to incentives for sustainable fishing it does not specifically address removing harmful subsidies and this target is not addressed at the OECS level or in the CBS (SDG 14.6). Similarly, while at the CARICOM level, there are wildlife trafficking and trade-related targets (SDG 15.7, 15c), these are not reflected at a subregional OECS level.

Alignment with Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

At the CARICOM level, the CENRPF and the CBS are highly aligned with the GBF (Appendix 4), with few targets not addressed in at least in one of the policies. However, none of the four policies address GBF Target 5- *Biodiversity and Business* or GBF Target 23- *Gender equality and responsiveness.* Of the four policies only the CBS addresses targets/objectives related to genetic diversity and extinction *i.e. GBF* Target 4 -*Species Extinction, Protect Genetic Diversity, and Manage Human-Wildlife Conflicts.* Although all OECS states are part of CARICOM, they do also have their own set of priorities specific to their context. At an OECS level, less emphasis is placed on targets related to subsides and incentives (GBF Target 18).

Neither the CBS nor the OECS-BEF address resource harvesting or trade directly i.e. GBF Target 5-*Ensure Sustainable, Safe and Legal Harvesting and Trade of Wild Species* albeit wildlife management and trade is identified as a cross-cutting focus area in the CENRPF (5.4). Both biodiversity policies unlike their regional umbrellas do not have targets that support GBF Target 12 – *Green spaces and urban planning* and aspects of GBF Target 22- Indigenous communities and participation in decision making, are either absent or weak.

While both policies have indirect actions related to protected areas (PAs), only the OECS-BEF mentions PAs specifically in one of its targets with regard to their role in enhancing climate change resilience. Neither policy addresses GBF Target 3 specifically and there is a lack of targets across the board for meeting 30x30 through either PAs or OECMs, as well as PA management effectiveness and connectivity targets, despite the CENRPF identifying PA management as a cross-cutting area.

Alignment with other global/international frameworks

Since the CBS and OECS-BEF are highly aligned with their respective regional and subregional umbrella policies for the environment and natural resources, and given the Samoa Pathway, the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS), the Escazú Agreement and the Cartagena Convention are cross cutting polices, only the CENRPF and SGD2040 were analysed for alignment. Table 3 shows that both policies are aligned with these global and international agreements.

The SGD2040, recognises that participatory decision-making is both a challenge and a critical enabling action. However, despite participatory management being highlighted in both policies, they both fall short of explicitly referencing or providing any concrete actions or targets for enabling, promoting or empowering society to engage in participatory governance and decision-making specifically, which is a critical article outlined in the Escazú agreement (Article 7- *Public participation in the environmental decision-making process*).

4.1.3. Policy Gaps

It can be considered that at both a regional (CARICOM) and subregional (OECS) level, policies are well aligned with each other and relevant global frameworks. Recognising that the OECS has its own set of priorities and given its context (i.e. all islands with small landmasses and large marine areas) within the region, although very aligned with CARICOM, the sub-regional OECS places a greater more direct emphasis on monitoring and integrated spatial planning for the marine area, as well as transboundary management of ecosystem services. On the other hand, CARICOM in addition to small islands with large marine areas, also includes non-island states such as Guyana and Suriname, both of which have high forest coverage and significant indigenous populations. It is not surprising therefore that CARICOM has explicit forest resources and indigenous community related targets/objectives. Such observations however do not imply that either policy do not indirectly address these issues under a broader framework or target, but rather that there is a greater emphasis on these focal areas at their respective levels to represent their unique contextual needs and priorities. At both levels, although PAs are considered under their actions, there are no explicit targets for PAs in particular either in coverage or management effectiveness.

Regarding alignment with global frameworks, four key areas stand out where the regional policies are either lacking specific targets, or may be considered poorly represented. These are:

1) Removing harmful subsidies and biodiversity regulatory context in businesses
2) Protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures
3) Participatory decision-making and governance
4) Gender equality and responsiveness

Table 4 provides a comparative overview of key thematic focus areas for each of the four regional policies and the GBF. A further analysis of the alignment of these policies with the region's and members states' priorities and needs, along with policy recommendations are presented in section 4.3 and chapter 5 respectively.

Table 4: A comparative analysis of regional focus areas with the GBF

Key focus Areas	CENRPF	SGD 2040	CBS	BEF	GBF
Access to information					
Resource mobilization					
Participatory management					
Evidence-based decision					
Monitoring/ data collection					
Coordination, harmonisation etc.					
Enhance resilience of ecosystems and biodiversity					
Restoration					
Access and Benefit Sharing					
IAS and Biosafety					
Sustainable development, management conservation, ecosystems, and their goods and services					
Socio-economic benefits					
Capacity building for management					
Mainstreaming biodiversity					
Integrated water and watershed management					
Sustainable use of biological resources					
Land use planning					
Reduce pollution					
Promotion of sustainable livelihood/commercial opportunities					
Research					
Combat land and natural habitat degradation					
Wildlife management and trade					
Indigenous knowledge and IC participation and consideration					
Protected Areas					
Species management/conservation					
Protecting ecosystems					
Addressing impacts of CC on biodiversity					
Traditional Knowledge					
Urban spaces (T 12)					
Businesses					
Reduce harmful incentives					
Participation in decision making					
Gender					

4.2 Policy Implementation Progress

4.2.1 Policy reporting requirements

4.2.1.1 Global Frameworks

Convention on Biological Diversity: Global Biodiversity Frameworks

Article 6 of the CBD states that Contracting Parties must periodically report on measures taken for the implementation and their effectiveness in meeting the objectives of the Convention. Just as NBSAPs are the main instrument for implementing the Convention at the national level, national reports (NRs) are the main instrument for monitoring and reviewing the implementation of the Convention and the Global Biodiversity Framework. The intervals for determining when national reports are due are taken at the meetings of the Conference of the Parties. In 2016, at COP 13 requests were made for Parties to submit their sixth national reports according to adopted guidelines and templates by December 2018. An online reporting tool is also available to countries for reporting on progress toward global and national biodiversity targets.

All 15 countries analysed for this report have submitted their 6NRs.

In line with the current Kunming-Montreal GBF, Parties were requested[4] to submit their seventh national report in 2026 and their eighth national report in 2029 which should include headline and, other appropriate indicators adopted in decision 15/5 and follow the guidelines and templates provided in annex II CBD/COP/DEC/15/6.

Sustainable Development Goals

As part of its follow-up and review mechanisms, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development encourages member states to conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels. These national reviews are expected to serve as a basis for the regular reviews by the high-level political forum (HLPF), and as per paragraph 84 of the 2030 Agenda, these reviews should be voluntary, state-led and involve multiple stakeholders. The Voluntary National Review (VNR) is a process through which countries assess and present national progress made in implementing the 2030 Agenda, providing a snapshot of where the country stands in achieving its 17 SDGs. These VNRs are presented at the HLPF. There is no set template for VNRs however, guiding principles and a structure which countries are encouraged to follow are provided.

The Bahamas, Dominican Republic, Guyana, and Jamaica have all submitted 2 VNRs (2018/2019 and between 2021-2023). All others with the exception Haiti, who has yet to submit, have submitted 1 VNR: St. Lucia (2019), Trinidad & Tobago and St. Vincent & the Grenadines (2020), Antigua and Barbuda (2021), Dominica, Grenada and Suriname (2022), Barbados and St. Kitts and Nevis (2023), and Belize (2024).

4.2.1.2 CARICOM

Caribbean Community Environmental and Natural Resources Policy Framework

The CENRPF intends to be translated into Action Plans which will identify specific actions to be undertaken within a particular timeframe. Generally, Action Plans will cover a period of four years with supporting two-year Business Implementation Plans. Countries will report to the Committee on Trade

[4] CBD/COP/DEC/15/5

and Economic Development (COTED)-Environment on Framework and Action Plan implementation progress, focusing on prioritised activities carried out during the reviewing period, the status of implementation, challenges, outputs, outcomes, and priorities identified for the next reporting period. In addition, an independent evaluation will be undertaken at the end of each Action Plan Cycle to assess results, effectiveness and performance. As a very new policy, countries have yet to develop their corresponding Action Plans and thus do not have any immediate reporting requirements in this regard.

CARICOM Biodiversity Strategy

The CBS is as a regional mechanism to address national biodiversity gaps and priorities which are articulated in countries' NBSAPs. As a regional policy, the CBS aims to support Members and associated Member States for harmonised action and implementation of their NBSAPs and other biodiversity-related MEAs. Although the framework identifies short and long-term targets, countries are not expected to provide additional reporting requirements but rather progress toward regional targets will be assessed through individual country national reports to the CBD (see section 4.1.1.1).

4.2.1.3 OECS

SGD2040

The OECS Commission has developed a Reporting Framework for the SGD 2040, which describes the overall approach and provides guidance for reporting progress. The Reporting Framework is centred around three "levels" of reporting which will require different types of data and analyses to produce the information required. In addition, the OECS commission has further prepared guidelines for preparing reports for each of these three levels. Overall, it will be the Commission through its Environmental Sustainability Cluster (ESC) that will be responsible for coordinating SGD2040 reporting requirements, with other institutions -described below- having direct reporting responsibilities at the various levels.

Level 1 reporting aims to examine the extent to which OECS Member States are executing activities towards achieving the SGD2040 Outcomes. At this level countries report against specific "Progress Measures" that are identified in Schedule 1 of the Reporting Framework. Progress Measures are either a numeric value, or a selection from a set of pre-defined options and represents the primary source data for monitoring and evaluation, reporting basic measures of activities and outputs. It is at this level where most of the primary data required is generated and therefore it requires strong coordination and collaboration among the OECS Commission and Member States as well as at a national level. Reporting at this level will require the submission of online forms.

National agencies will have primary responsibility for submitting the progress measures and ensuring the quality of the data. Level 1 reporting will occur annually unless otherwise agreed by the Commission and Member States.

Level 2 reporting builds on Level 1 and uses both qualitative and quantitative data. This level will provide more in-depth interpretation of data and analysis of specific Strategic Priorities. It will also include where appropriate, progress towards the achievement of objectives and provide recommendations for outcome or progress measures adjustments when required. Reports submitted to Convention Secretariats or development partners can support this level reporting. Level 2 reporting will require cooperation of Member States, the OECS Commission, or partner agencies engaged in implementing SGD 2040 activities, with the Commission providing significant support.

Unless agreed otherwise, each Strategic Priority will be subject to a Level 2 analysis every 2 to 3 years.

Building on level 1 and level 2 reporting, **Level 3** will provide a comprehensive in-depth analysis of progress made towards the Vision, Goals and Objectives of SGD 2040 as well as recommendations for the future consideration. A greater focus on impact of the Transformative Agenda of SGD 2040 will be

placed during this reporting period and will likely require additional research and/or additional primary data collection and analyses supported by additional expertise secured by the Commission. Level 3 reporting will occur every 5 years.

As a relatively new policy, thus far level 1 reporting has yet to commence by Member States.

OECS-BEF

In keeping with the programming cycle of the OECS Commission, the OECS-BEF will be implemented through a series of annual programmes which will be reviewed and assessed annually. Annual reports documenting progress towards OECS-BEF targets will be the responsibility of the OECS Environment and Sustainability Cluster (ESC). Further participatory reviews will be conducted every 3-5 years by the OECS ESC which will allow for ongoing learning and adaptation or updating as needed, which will be followed by a final independent evaluation.

These regional and global reporting requirements provide a key entry point for scaling up the IUCN BIOPAMA programme's outcomes and ensuring their sustainability (see chapter 5)

4.2.2 Progress towards global biodiversity targets[5]

The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and its targets were adopted in 2022 to replace the previous decade's Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its 20 Aichi Targets. Caribbean countries, like most Member States, have yet to align and revise their NBSAPs with the current GBF. Furthermore, the first report on progress towards the 23 GBF Targets is not expected until 2026. In negotiations for these revised global targets, progress towards, and the achievement of, the 2011-2020 Aichi Targets were considered.

At the global level, some progress of varying degrees, for most targets, was made, however no Targets were fully achieved. Targets 9-Invasive alien species prevented and controlled; Target 11-Protected areas; Target 16 -Access and Benefit Sharing; Target 14-Biodiversity strategies and action plans; Target 19- Sharing information and knowledge; and Target 20- Mobilizing resources, were however partially achieved.

One of the many challenges of having Caribbean countries clustered with Latin American countries is assessing progress of the region towards global targets. All CARICOM countries and non-CARICOM Caribbean countries are considered SIDS. SIDS with their specificities have their own unique challenges, needs and the geographical contexts compared to continental countries, of which Latin American comprises. Therefore, considering their progress together can confound and dilute efforts and challenges faced by Caribbean SIDS, which is why regional efforts to understand and analyse progress for the Caribbean subregional specifically are critical[5]. **Appendix 5** provides a dashboard of progress of the Latin American and Caribbean region towards each of the 20 Aichi Targets[6] at its mid-term. It shows that for the most part, the region follows a similar pattern as that of the global context with most targets showing at least some progress. It also shows however that for Targets 2,6,8,12, progress is stagnant and showing little movement towards or away from the target with Targets 10 and 14 indicating that the situation is even worsening and that the region is moving further away from the target.

An overview of the Caribbean context related to these challenging targets is provided below.

[5] UNEP/CARICOM 2018. The State of Biodiversity in the Caribbean Community: A review of progress towards the Aichi Targets.
[6] UNEP-WCMC (2016) The State of Biodiversity in Latin America and the Caribbean: A mid-term review of progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. UNEP-WCMC, Cambridge, UK

4.2.2.1 Progress towards selected targets[5]

Target 2- Biodiversity values integrated (Stagnant)

Mainstreaming biodiversity and balancing economic and environmental well-being remains challenging in the region. There have been efforts across the region to integrate biodiversity into a number of sectoral policies, as well as growing calls to incorporate biodiversity considerations into decision-making leading to an increased interest in ecosystems valuation and natural capital accounting across the region. However technical and financial capacity along with data-related challenges continue to pose barriers for countries in achieving this target fully (section 4.2.3).

Target 6 – Sustainable Management of Marine Living Resources (Stagnant)

Most CARICOM countries, have relatively large exclusive economic zones in comparison to their land area unsurprisingly therefore, a sustainable blue economy is at the forefront of regional priorities and has resulted in a number of regional and national polices for the sustainable use of marine resources as well as species protection measures (e.g. bans on shark hunting and protecting turtle species). Indicators for this target include fish stock populations. In the Caribbean, increasing natural hazards and other negative impacts of climate change (e.g. coral bleaching, ocean acidification, sea warming) profoundly impact marine ecosystems which can result in fish stock population declines. In addition, Invasive alien species (IAS), in particular the lionfish, are a major threat to the Caribbean waters. IAS can outcompete or predate native fish species thus causing a decline in populations. These other factors along with the fact that there are no regional harmonised efforts to monitor fishing methods, by catch or yield means that for a large part data is insufficient to truly understand if supporting policies are being implemented effectively and therefore whether progress towards this target can be accurately measured for the region (UNDESA 2022)

Target 8-Pollution (Stagnant)

Approximately 80% of marine pollution in the Caribbean comes from land-based sources with solid waste (comprising 12% of plastics) and wastewater the most prominent sources (Diaz et al. 2019). Agricultural run-off, oil spills and industrial activities also contribute to the marine pollution problem. There are a number of regional policy frameworks addressing marine pollution, for example, the Cartegena Convention and its protocols (e.g. LBS protocol) which most CARICOM states have ratified (Table 1) and the Eastern Caribbean Regional Ocean Policy (ECROP). In addition, countries have made efforts to combat marine pollution from land-based sources by strengthening national legislation e.g. bans on single use plastics, and establishing water and wastewater management infrastructure. Despite efforts, marine pollution remains a significant challenge for the region with political will, financial resources and technical capacity being amongst the biggest barriers in addressing this issue across the region (Diaz et. al. 2019).

Target 10 Coral Reefs and other ecosystems vulnerable to Climate Change (*Moving away from target*)

The Caribbean Region represents only 1% of Earth's marine environment, but hosts 10% of the world's coral reefs[7]. Although significant regional coverage, the Caribbean has the highest levels of coral cover decline globally and Caribbean coral are classed as critically endangered (SCBD 2020). Coral reefs are particularly vulnerable to climate change e.g. coral bleaching as a result of warmer sea temperatures, and these impacts worsen this already highly stressed ecosystem in the region as a result of pollution, physical damage, IAS and overfishing, among others. The Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network - Caribbean has been active in supporting coral reef initiatives across the region. They have developed

[7] https://gcrmn.net/caribbean/

guidelines for coral reef biophysical monitoring and are currently planning to develop a report on the *Status and Trends of Caribbean Coral Reefs* to update the now outdated version which analysed data only until 2012. As human stressors continue to increase in the region along with climate change impacts, it remains a challenge for countries to preserve and restore these and other vulnerable ecosystems. As for other Aichi Targets there are several cross-cutting challenges and barriers which are hindering progress (section 4.2.3).

Target12 -Species extinction prevented (Stagnant)

Seven (7) percent of all Caribbean species are globally threatened, this includes almost 75% of amphibian species, 30% of reptile species, 25% mammals, 9.7% bird species and 3.6% of all fish species (20% Cartilaginous fishes)[8] and populations continue to decline, with many thought to be very close to extinction. Of the groups of endemic species in the Caribbean that have been assessed for extinction risk (IPBES 2018), more than half are thought to be at risk. The SPAW Protocol to the Cartagena Convention requires Parties to take measures to protect, preserve and manage in a sustainable way threatened or endangered species of fauna and flora, and to adopt cooperative measures to ensure the protection and recovery of endangered and threatened species of flora and fauna listed in Annexes I, II and III of the Protocol. Six out of the 15 countries in our analysis have yet to adopt this protocol.

The establishment and spread of IAS (and other problematic species, genes and diseases) have been implicated in extinction risk in the Caribbean (IPBES 2018). Diseases, climate change and natural hazards, pollution, habitat degradation, unsustainable development and the overexploitation of natural resources, are all threats to the region's biodiversity. Despite efforts and actions taken by many of the Caribbean countries[9] to protect species and even bringing back a number of species from almost extinction (e.g. the Antiguan racer in Antigua and Barbuda and the White cay rock iguana in The Bahamas), the rapid economic and population growth occurring in the Caribbean along with increases in unsustainable consumption and infrastructure development, continues to put pressure on species' populations. This, along with other regional challenges, (section 4.2.3) such as limited inter-sectoral cooperation and biodiversity integration, limited capacity and financial resources, and limited awareness and lack of understanding of the socio-economic and cultural values of biodiversity to human well-being among decision-makers, need to be addressed urgently if many species' trajectory towards extinction is to be reversed.

Target 14 Ecosystem services and essential services safeguarded (Moving away from target)

The main ecosystem service that is of most concern among CARICOM Member States is the provision of fresh water. Many of the insular countries of CARICOM are experiencing water stress and scarcity, which will only be further heightened by climate change (UNEP, 2016b). Although some regional and national efforts are ongoing such as the enactment of relevant legislation, implementation of participatory water and watershed management and protecting and restoring ecosystems, integrated water resources management remains a priority for CARICOM States[10] which includes the protection and restoration of water-related ecosystems such as mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, lake etc. as well as building technological capacity to improve water quality.

Aichi Target 11/GBF Target 3- Protected Areas (Progress -but insufficient)

[8] CEPF Ecosystem Profile: The Caribbean Islands Biodiversity Hotspot.
[9] UNEP/CARICOM 2018. The State of Biodiversity in the Caribbean Community: A review of progress towards the Aichi Targets.
[10] CENRPF

At a regional level, the Caribbean has exceeded its Aichi Target 11 of 17% terrestrial and inland waters' protected areas coverage, with 12 out of the 15 countries exceeding this target (Table 5).

Including CARICOM overseas territories into the analysis for marine protected areas, the region can also be considered to have met its MPA Target of 10%. However, on closer inspection, it is evident that this is entirely attributed to the French overseas territories of Martinque and Guadeloupe (99.8% and 99.4% MPA coverage respectively) as Table 5 clearly shows that only 1 of the 15 CARICOM sovereign States has actually reached (exceeded) that target-Belize- and that for the most part with the exception of The Bahamas (7.6% coverage), countries fall well below the 10 target.

Target 11/GBF Target 3 however do not only include coverage into its targets but also representativeness, connectivity and management effectiveness. Little data is available on the representativeness and connectivity of the PAs, however data shows that although most countries do carry out management effectiveness assessments (PAMEs), typically it is for less than 50% of their PAs and of these, less than half the countries repeat the assessments (Table 5).

Table 5: PA coverage in the Caribbean for Terrestrial PAs (TPA) and Marine PAs (PAs)

	% Coverage[11]				
Countries	**TPAs**	**MPAs**	**SPAW List**	**% PAME**	**Repeat PAMEs**
Antigua and Barbuda	19.9	0.3		13.3	
The Bahamas	36.6	7.6		66.7	
Barbados	1.3	0.01			
Belize	37.4	14.8	3	54.6	60
Dominica	21.9	0.1		14.2	1
Dominican Republic	26.1	14	4	23.8	35
Grenada	10	0.1	1	58.3	1
Guyana	8.6	0		100	3
Haiti	8.6	1.7		10	
Jamaica	16.1	0.7		14.3	8
Saint Lucia	22.9	4.4			
St. Kitts and Nevis	18.7	0.7			
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	21	0.2	1	26.5	2
Suriname	14.8	1.4		94.1	
Trinidad and Tobago	30.6	0.05			
Average	18.4	3.1		43.3	

4.2.3 Progress towards Sustainable Development Goals' 14 and 15 indicators[12]

Figure 6 below provides an overview of the Caribbean sub-region of LAC. It shows that for SDGs 14 and 15, the region is progressing well towards meeting its SDG indicators 14.5, 14.7, 15.4 and 15.7 but is moving away from indictors 14.1, 15.2, 15a and 15.b.

[11] BIOPAMA country profiles-2022 and CPAG dashboard https://thecpag.org/
[12] Half way to 203 ELCLA….

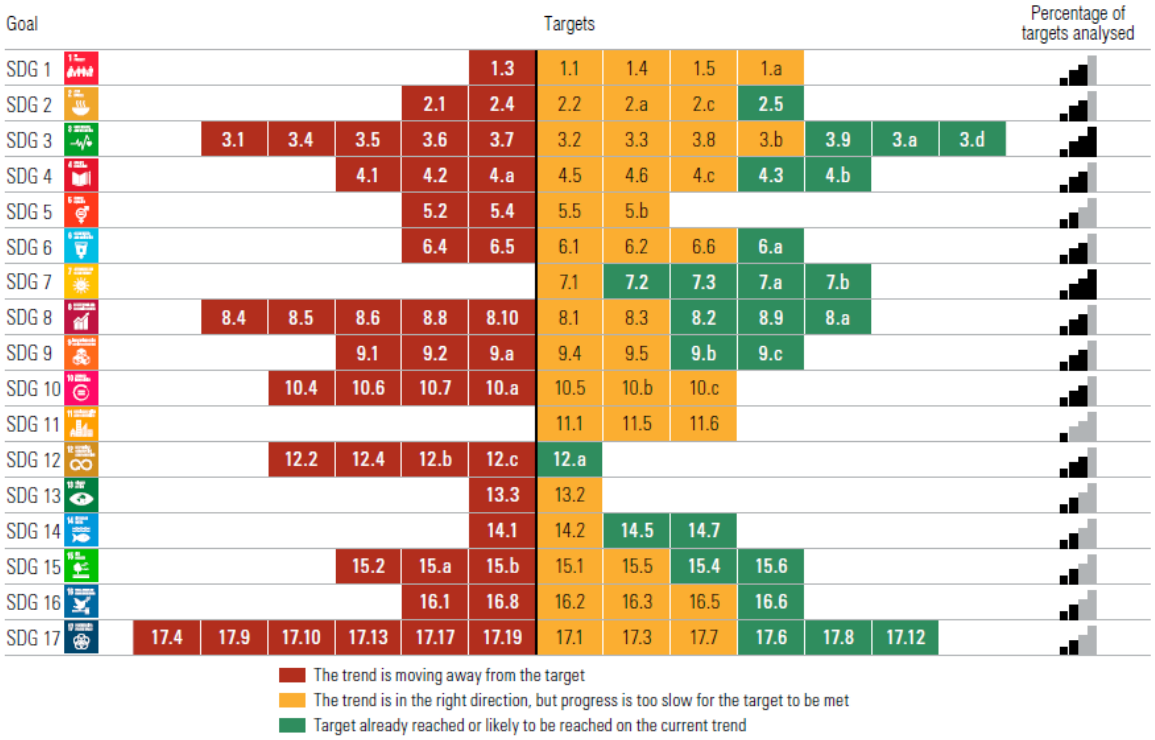

Figure 6: A summary of progress towards SDGs for the Caribbean (source: *Halfway to 2030 ECLAC)*

SDG indicator 14.5 mirrors Aichi Target 11, citing "*By 2020, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law.*." There are a number of potential reasons as to why this indicator is reported as achieved under the SDGs and not achieved under the Aichi Target 11. Firstly, as shown in section 4.2.2.1, whether or not 10% has been achieved can depend on the countries included in the analysis. And secondly, and more likely, SDG 14.5 does not explicitly mention PAs, rather conserved areas. The Caribbean region has many Marine Managed Areas (MMAs) focused on promoting sustainable fisheries, some are nationally designated MPAs while others are not. Under the CBD, nationally designated PAs as defined by IUCN are only considered, and conservation areas that do not meet this definition are not included. MMAs not legally designated PAs therefore may be included in the national review of the SDGs, however as the Caribbean is clustered with Latin America countries there is no detailed explanation as to how this finding has been specifically reached. Once again this highlights the complexities in understanding the Caribbean regional context as it may differ in reporting requirements, geographic context and whether overseas territories are included or not. It further supports the notion that the formal designation of OECMs within the Caribbean may play an important role in achieving current global biodiversity targets, specifically Target 3 of the GBF, and that MMAs could play an important role in this regard.

As a region that depends heavily on its marine and coastal resources for its GDP and local livelihoods from tourism, fisheries and other blue economic activities, ensuring the sustainable use of marine resources is paramount. The sustainable use of natural resources is deeply enshrined in the treaties of Chaguaramas and Basseterre of CARICOM and OECS respectively. For example, the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas establishing the Caribbean Community calls on states to promote and develop policies for sustainable development (Article 152f), and includes provisions for sustainable tourism (Article 55) and sustainable fisheries (Article 60,2e) among others. In response to this, significant progress has occurred across the region with regard to **Indicator 14.7**-sustainable use of marine resources. The region has developed several regional policies supporting sustainable use of marine resources such as the Caribbean Community Common Fisheries Policy (CCCFP) which has sustainable fisheries at its core, and the 2020 Caribbean Sustainable Tourism Policy Development and Framework (CSTPDF). In

addition, at a regional level several initiatives to protect fisheries resources in particular are underway (see discussion on Aichi target 6). Interestingly however, as for marine conservation areas, at a LAC level, the sustainable use of marine resources (Aichi 6) is reported as stagnating demonstrating the potential for diluting Caribbean efforts when clustered with the Latin America countries, it does however acknowledge that data is limited for this particular target.

Although the Caribbean is more widely known for its exceptional marine and coastal ecosystem, the Caribbean has numerous mountains and volcanoes which provide essential ecosystem services. Across the region efforts have been made to protect this fragile and important ecosystem and the region is well on track to achieve **SDG indicator 15.4**, through protected areas or other means. For example, the Shekerley Mountains Management Area in Antigua and Barbuda, the Morne Trois Pitons National Park and World Heritage Site in Dominica, the Blue and John Crow Mountains PA and World Heritage Site in Jamaica and the Le Hotte Biosphere reserve in Haiti.

Regarding access and benefit sharing (**SDG indicator 15.6),** despite only four of the 15 countries acceding to or ratifying the Nagoya Protocol to date, some progress is being made across the region. There have been projects executed that are supporting countries to increase uptake of the Nagoya Protocol and to build capacity for effective implementation of access and benefit-sharing (ABS) systems. Many of the countries that have enacted the Nagoya protocol have already developed ABS policies (e.g. Guyana) or systems (Antigua and Barbuda), and even those not yet acceded to the Protocol still have national measures that regulate access to genetic resources via permit systems- albeit some limitations of these systems have been noted. CARICOM is expected to play a large role in supporting Member States in ABS-related activities.

On the flip side, **SDG indicator 14.1**-marine pollution, appears to be moving away from its target. The region has several enabling policies towards addressing marine pollution, for example the Cartegena Convention and its Land-based Sources of Pollution Protocol, to which most Caribbean countries have ratified. However, addressing marine pollution remains a challenge for the region despite efforts (see Aichi target 8 discussion). Solid waste and wastewater are the most prevalent sources of marine pollution in the Caribbean and as populations, coastal cities, and tourism continues to grow in the region so too will the scale of the problem. For an in depth discussions on marine pollution in the Caribbean, progress, efforts, impacts and challenges see (Diez. et al. 2019).

One of the largest discrepancies between the Latin America and Caribbean sub-regions is its forest cover, with the Caribbean housing only 1% of the regions forest cover[13], but punching above its weight for mangrove cover, housing 12% of the world's mangroves (UNEP, 2016b). **SDG indicator 15.2-** sustainable forest management and deforestation, is reported as moving away from the target. Considering the sub-regions separately, many of the Latin American countries have among the highest deforestation rates in the world, whereas all CARICOM countries are amongst the lowest, even the continental countries belonging to CARICOM[14]. In fact, studies have shown that there has been a net increase in forest cover between 2010 and 2015 in the Caribbean largely as a result of agricultural land abandonment (FAO 2015) and several reforestation efforts in the region (e.g. Barbados, Jamaica and Saint Lucia) (UNEP 2016b). On the other hand, the Caribbean is thought to have amongst the highest loss of mangroves globally (Rull 2022), rising sea levels as a result of climate change are a key factor in accelerating losses from anthropogenic threats. It's clear that forest type and sub-regional considerations are complex and can confound understanding of progress towards this SDG indicator.

Resource mobilization, **SDG indicators 15b,c** is continuously cited as an ongoing challenge for the Caribbean region and remains a key barrier for implementing policies effectively cross the region. This barrier and other challenges for implementation are discussed in more detail in section 4.2.3 challenges.

[13] https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/static/files/sdg15_c1900734_press.pdf
[14] https://www.globalforestwatch.org/

Table 6 below provides country specific data on progress towards SDG 14 and 15. The SDG index score is a measurement (% of SDG achievement) of the total progress towards achieving all 17 SDGs. A score of 100 indicates that all SDGs have been achieved.

Table 6: SDG index and SDG 14 AND 15 progress and status for Caribbean countries[15]

		SDG 14		SDG 15		
Country	**SDG index score**	**Status**	**Progress**	**Status**	**Progress**	**National SDG monitoring indicators**
Antigua and Barbuda	N/A	Major challenges remain	Stagnating	Significant challenges remain	Stagnating	No
The Bahamas	63.73	Major challenges remain	Stagnating	Major challenges remain	Stagnating	No
Barbados	69.19	Major challenges remain	Moderately improving	Significant challenges remain	Stagnating	Yes
Belize	65.55	Major challenges remain	Stagnating	Major challenges remain	Stagnating	No
Dominica	N/A	Major challenges remain	Moderately improving	Major challenges remain	Decreasing	No
Dominican Republic	73.12	Significant challenges remain	Stagnating	Significant challenges remain	Stagnating	No
Grenada	N/A	Major challenges remain	Stagnating	Major challenges remain	Stagnating	No
Guyana	66.73	Major challenges remain	Moderately improving	Challenges remain	Moderately improving	No
Haiti	52.68	Major challenges remain	Decreasing	Major challenges remain	Moderately improving	No
Jamaica	69.51	Major challenges remain	Stagnating	Major challenges remain	Stagnating	Yes
Saint Lucia	N/A	Major challenges remain	Stagnating	Major challenges remain	Stagnating	No
St. Kitts and Nevis	N/A	Major challenges remain	Stagnating	Major challenges remain	Stagnating	No
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	N/A	Significant challenges remain	Moderately improving	Major challenges remain	Decreasing	No
Suriname	70.01	Challenges remain	Stagnating	Major challenges remain	Moderately improving	No
Trinidad and Tobago	61.83	Major challenges remain	Stagnating	Major challenges remain	Stagnating	No

[15] https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/profiles

4.2.3 Policy Implementation Challenges

4.2.3.1 Geopolitical

As shown in the above sections, the region's geopolitical diversity can significantly impact how the Caribbean's efforts, priorities and progress are understood. For example, it can be seen that where efforts have been made (e.g. reducing deforestation and reforestation) these can be overshadowed by their larger Latin American counterparts' trends and despite efforts progress can be perceived as moving away from deforestation targets. Similarly, in areas where the LAC region is perceived as doing well e.g. MPA coverage, when examined independently, the Caribbean is far from advancing this target. As SIDS, which come with their own unique context, it's also unsurprising that their priorities may differ from their Latin American counterparts with more emphasis on the blue economy and fresh water for example. Further, since they can also be clustered with other groupings such as the Americas, the Wider Caribbean and other SIDS globally, harmonising approaches, cooperation and financing presents further challenges and can potentially lead to fragmented work and programmes across the different countries. These dilutions, differences and challenges demonstrate the importance of examining the Caribbean regional context independently if progress, priorities and challenges are to be truly understood.

Unlike for climate change where the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) acts as a regional mechanism to address climate change issues, there is no single entity for the Caribbean that addresses biodiversity conservation specifically. However, there are regional cooperation efforts ongoing e.g. CARICOM, OECS and UN Environment CAR/RCU, and the aim of the CBS is to address regional challenges to biodiversity conservation as well as to promote harmonised action.

4.2.3.2 Finances

Given the geopolitical diversity of the region and the lack of a single entity for biodiversity conservation in the region, donors rarely fund all countries and this can make it challenging to fund and comprehensive regional programmes for conserving biodiversity. Further, CARICOM countries are considered middle income countries and therefore can face several challenges meeting eligibility criteria for many grants, and if they do, limited capacity for grant writing or financial management and inter-sectoral competition for funds can pose additional challenges. That said, for some funding mechanisms such as the GEF for example, many Caribbean countries have been relatively successful in attaining grants to address biodiversity issues. At a national level, there still remains a perceived conflict between development and the environment, and it continues to be a challenge to balance infrastructure and economic needs with biodiversity conservation. In addition, the region faces significant and repeated impacts from natural hazards and hence large recovery costs, national budgets therefore are seldom prioritised for biodiversity conservation and protection. There also exists large economic discrepancies across Caribbean countries, in particular between sovereign states and overseas territories. For example, Martinique accounts for more than half of the combined GDP of the OECS[16], which can result in disproportionate levels of effort as a result of financing for biodiversity protection, as evident when considering MPA coverage. Such inequalities across the region result in varying degrees of progress towards biodiversity targets occurring in countries across the region. Lack of financing has continuously been cited as among the biggest challenges facing countries in implementing their NBSAPs[17] and limited financial capacity for addressing biodiversity threats was recently reiterated as a key concern of Environment Ministers at the 112th Special Meeting of the COTED on The Environment and Sustainable Development[18]. In responses from the country

[16] Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Gap analysis report for the Biodiversity and Ecosystems Management Framework and associated Strategic Action Plans

[17] Report on Sub-regional dialogue on national biodiversity strategies and action plans for the Caribbean countries Georgetown, Guyana 15-17 April 2024

[18] https://caricom.org/region-raises-concerns-over-institutional-financial-capacity-to-confront-environmental-challenges/

questionnaires sent to all 15 countries analysed, lack of finances was consistently cited as the number 1 barrier to effective biodiversity conservation policy implementation (n=4).

4.2.3.2 Biodiversity integration

The importance of "*...pursuing a balance between economic growth, social well-being and the health of the environment...*" and "*...the maintenance of a balance between healthy environment and economic development..*" is recognised and highlighted in both the SGD2040 and CENRPF.

Although efforts are underway to mainstream biodiversity into productive, economic and financial sectors across the region (see Table 7) it remains challenging given sectors' different interests, priorities and needs (Alvarado 2022). A lack of awareness on the values and importance of biodiversity to these sectors still remains a present a barrier to effective mainstreaming and encouraging these sectors to appreciate the interconnectedness of healthy intact biodiversity to their priorities. Underpinning this, is the availability of evidential and convincing ecosystem valuation and other important data, and limited national capacity for the economic valuation of natural resources and natural accounting as well as data collection and management as a whole (see 4.2.3.3). Essential for developing a blue/green economy, there is however, growing interest and prioritisation of valuing the regions natural resources and incorporating natural capital accounting into national statistics and planning and to ensure appropriate decision-making.

Inadequate inter-sectoral cooperation, ineffective, inconsistent or even conflicting policies and a lack of priority given to private sector engagement and fiscal measures harmful to biodiversity, are further barriers to effective biodiversity mainstreaming in the region.

Lack of collaboration and cooperation among government departments and agencies has been identified as a significant obstacle to effective environmental and biodiversity management in CARICOM countries (Bizikova et al., 2015) and is reiterated as a key barrier to biodiversity conservation by respondents of the country questionnaires.

Table 7: Levels of biodiversity and protected areas integration into other sector policies (questionnaire respondents n=4)

	Biodiversity Considerations				PA Considerations			
Policies	**Fully**	**Partially**	**Not**	**No Policy**	**Fully**	**Partially**	**Not**	**No Policy**
Climate change	75	25	0	0	75	25	0	0
National /sustainable development	100	0	0	0	75	25	0	0
Disaster Risk reduction	50	0	50	0	50	0	50	0
National land use planning	75	25	0	0	50	50	0	0
Marine spatial planning	50	25	0	25	50	25	0	25

4.2.3.3 Data and Information

The importance of data and information for decision-making and environmental management is evident across all relevant regional policies assessed. Despite this, lack of appropriate data continues to hinder effective biodiversity conservation across the region. This lack of data can affect the uptake of biodiversity conservation into other sectors, political and donor support for biodiversity conservation as well as the effective monitoring and evaluation of biodiversity protection measures. A major reporting challenge as evident from discussions in section 4.2.2 and highlighted in the Caribbean's State of the Environment Report, is the availability of harmonised indicators and/or quantitative data to

measure progress towards global, regional and national targets. In general, insufficient data for biodiversity conservation and decision-making, which is a collective issue facing SIDS globally (UNDESA 2022) as well as individual Caribbean Countries[19] remains a significant challenge.

These challenges related to data and information in the region largely stem from limited human, technical and financial capacity for data collection and management, and inadequate data sharing mechanisms. All respondents to the country questionnaires cited lack of data for decision making and action as one of their top five barriers to biodiversity-related policy implementation.

4.2.3.4 Human resources and capacity

Over the past two decades, the Caribbean has experienced a significant outward migration thought to be largely attributed to geographical isolation, limited resources, vulnerability to climate change impacts, socio-economic fragility, and a lack of opportunities, particularly for the youth (UNDESA 2023). This has resulted in significant "brain-drain" i.e. where skilled professionals leave their home countries and is of major concern for Caribbean countries. Skills shortages are recognised in the SGD2040, which emphasises the need for enhanced support for skills' development programmes and better access to existing skills bases. As a result of this "brain-drain", coupled with limited finances as a contributing factor, many countries face human resource shortages to effectively implement policies and programmes on the ground and therefore rely on external experts or project-based implementation. Relying on project-based implementation means that both interventions and capacity building initiatives are rarely institutionalised and are thus not sustainable. Further, there is a lack of proper capacity-building needs and priorities' assessments and linkages between capacity-building actions required in the other sectors to enhance biodiversity mainstreaming (Alvarado 2022).

4.2.3.5 Summary

The challenges presented here are aligned with the responses received from country questionnaires. It's clear that such barriers and challenges are interlinked and that addressing any of them, will in turn impact positively on other challenges. For example, improved data and capacity will support greater biodiversity integration into other sectors. Increasing finances can support data and information collection and management and increase capacity for effective policy implementation, and a stronger regional presence for biodiversity conservation, would significantly support countries in addressing all challenges identified.

4.3 Priorities

Priorities were identified at regional level i.e. CARICOM and the Caribbean, a subregional level i.e. OECS, and at a national level. Documents were analysed and "key priorities" specially labelled as such in these documents were extracted and allocated a specific thematic focus area which was determined by the author. It is recognised that this therefore lends itself to some bias and subjectivity on the authors part, however by using the same criteria and focus areas for all documents, attempts were made to increase the objective allocation of priorities to particular focus areas. The documents analysed for this purpose at the different levels were as follows:

- SAMOA Pathway -*Regional and national*
- Antigua and Barbuda SIDS Agenda -*Regional*
- Caricom Biodiversity synthesis report and strategy -*Regional*
- CARICOM Secretariat regional workshop in Saint Lucia in September 2022- *Regional*

[19] Report on Sub-regional dialogue on national biodiversity strategies and action plans for the Caribbean countries Georgetown, Guyana 15-17 April 2024

- BIOPAMA Regional inception meeting for the Caribbean 2018: Meeting Report -*Regional and national*
- OECS Blue Economy Strategy -*Subregional*
- OECS Biodiversity and Ecosystems Management Framework and gap analysis- *Subregional*
- NBSAPs analysed in OECS-BEF Gap analysis-*National*
- Desk top review of NBSAPs that are current -*National*

At a national level, priorities identified above are all pre-adoption of the current GBF and even before the conclusion of the global Aichi targets. In order to include current priorities and to assess any differences, individual questionnaires were sent to the national focal point institutions in each of the 15 countries to assess their current priorities, especially as they relate to the new GBF.

Table 8 provides a summary of priorities at the different levels according to different thematic areas. By counting the number of times a particular focus area was identified in the different documents, a priority starring system was developed. Areas with *** indicates the highest of priorities, followed by ** and then *. Where zero stars are awarded, it indicates that there were no explicit references to that thematic area for that level in the documents assessed, but it does not imply that these were not a priority, merely that they were not as high a priority as other focus areas and so were not explicitly highlighted. These priorities were then assessed against objectives and targets, as well as key actions and essential factors for implementation, identified in the CBS and OECS-BEF as well as against the current GBF Targets.

The table shows three very clear high priorities at all levels for the thematic focus areas- climate change impacts and biodiversity and ecosystem resilience, invasive alien species, and pollution. These are followed by national capital accounting, ecosystem valuation and mainstreaming, as well as a sustainable blue economy, which are also prioritised at a regional, subregional and national levels.

At a national level (after climate change, IAS and pollution), integrated spatial planning and management, along with the sustainable management and use of natural resources are highly prioritised. These are followed by PAs, genetic and species conservation and data and information. Of these, at the subregional level, data and information is a focus area that is considered the highest priority.

Table 8: A summary of thematic focus area priorities across the Caribbean at a reginal, subregional and national level

Thematic Focus Area	Regional	Subregional	National	NBSAPs analysed in BEF gap analysis	Desk review of current NBSAPs	Questionnaire GBF priorities (no. respondents/ countries n=4)	CBS	OECS-BEF	GBF Targets
ABS	**	**			*	2			13
Awareness			**	***	***				
Capacity	**	**			*				20
Climate change impacts/resilience	***	**	***	***	**				8, 11
Data and Information	*	***	***	*	**				21
Financing	***		**			1			19
Gender	*				*	1			23

Thematic Focus Area	Regional	Subregional	National	NBSAPs analysed in BEF gap analysis	Desk review of current NBSAPs	Questionnaire GBF priorities (no. respondents/ countries n=4)	CBS	OECS-BEF	GBF Targets
Genetic diversity/species conservation			**	*	**	2			4,
Green urban spaces						1			12
Habitat change	*			*	**	1			1,
Harmful subsides									18
IAS and biosafety	***	**	***	***	***	2			6, 17,
Integrated land/water management & planning	**		***	***	***	1			1, 11
IPLC & traditional knowledge	*		**	*	*				22
Marine pollution/other pollution	***	***	*	***	***	**1**			7,
Natural Capital Accounting & ecosystem valuation/ mainstreaming	*	***	***	**	*				14
PA establishment /management		*	**	**	***	1			3,
Policy		**	*	**	*				15
Public participation			**	*					
Restoration		*	*	*		1			2,
Sustainable consumption and production					**				16,
Sustainable blue economy	***	*	**	***	*				1,
Sustainable tourism	*			**					
Sustainable use and management of resources			***	***	***	2			5, 9, 10
Transboundary Cooperation	**		*						

4.3.3 Priority Considerations in Polices

It is evident that for the most part both the CBS and OECS-BEF are well aligned with identified regional, subregional and national priorities.

Although there are national high priority areas that have not been identified as priorities at regional and subregional levels for example, awareness and the sustainable management and use of resources, these have been considered in the recently developed CARCIOM and OECS biodiversity strategies. Their absence is likely attributed to these particular areas requiring a more national rather than regional

approach, and from the NBSAPs it can be seen many are already well incorporated into priorities at a national level.

Further, other areas perhaps not considered a high priority for biodiversity conservation e.g. sustainable production and consumption (SPC) and sustainable tourism is largely due to the fact that they are considered priority focus areas in other policies and therefore are not considered explicitly here to avoid duplication of efforts and policy overlap[20]. Tourism however can be considered addressed indirectly through the thematic areas of a sustainable blue economy and the sustainable use and management of resources.

While both regional biodiversity policies have actions related to protected areas (PAs) and genetic diversity and species conservation, only the BEF mentions PAs specifically in one of its targets with regard to their role in enhancing climate change resilience and only the CBS has a specific target for genetic diversity and species conservation, despite both areas being highlighted as key national priorities. Neither policy however addresses GBF Target 3 specifically and there is a lack of targets across the board for meeting 30x30 through either PAs or OECMs, as well as PA management effectiveness and connectivity targets, despite the CENRPF identifying PA management as a cross-cutting area.

At a regional level it appears that access and benefit sharing are considered a higher priority than at a national level, also evident by the fact that only six of the 15 countries analysed have ratified the Nagoya protocol to date. However, it is likely that as capacity building efforts for access and benefit sharing increase across the region, and as counties align their new NBSAPs with the GBF targets, this focus area may increase in priority across individual countries and more countries will ratify the Protocol.

[20] CBS synthesis report

PART 3:
RECOMMENDATIONS

CHAPTER 5: PATHWAYS FOR ENHANCING BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION IN THE CARIBBEAN

The policy analysis clearly shows that financial, human and technical resources are very much a key barrier for effective biodiversity conservation in the Caribbean. As such, securing financing and increasing human resource numbers and capacity are crucial cross-cutting needs to implement all of the recommendations provided below. The recommendations provided here, are specific recommendations related to biodiversity policies at the different levels to support the achievement of global, regional and national biodiversity goals across the Caribbean.

5.1 Pathway 1: Increasing national commitments to biodiversity conservation, in particular for marine ecosystem and species protection

Ratifying or acceding to global and regional frameworks demonstrates the commitment of individual countries to shared and agreed objectives and actions. Although the Caribbean with its small and already complex positioning in the global arena, may at times be overwhelmed with the different commitments, actions and reporting requirements, more often than not Secretariats to these Conventions and MEAs provide opportunities for further support in helping advance their agendas. As a result, Caribbean countries should be selective in which frameworks and conventions they become party to in order to avoid committing to actions that are not a priority for the country or region. At the same time, countries should seek opportunities and key entry points that will help advance their agendas and potentially increase external support for implementing frameworks to which they have committed. It is crucial however, that while ratification is a first step, the capacity and funds to implement these frameworks must go hand in hand with the political will and support of national governments, Convention Secretariats and other stakeholders for their effective implementation. Although Caribbean countries have ratified or acceded to most of the main global and regional frameworks, there are gaps in some critical accompanying Protocols that are fully aligned with regional and national priorities and would help strengthen the regions efforts in meeting its global biodiversity goals.

5.1.1 Recommended Actions

i) <u>Revise NBSAPs to align with the GBF while ensuring targets are realistic and take into account regional priorities</u>

At COP 15, Parties to the CBD were required to update their NBSAPs in alignment with the GBF. Many countries through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), early action and support programme are in the process of doing this. While it is necessary to align NBSAPs with the GBF, this process should be done in participation with multi-stakeholders and should be done giving due consideration to national priorities as well as the feasibility of achieving global targets within their country. Countries should not commit to global targets if, from the onset it is likely the global target will not be met, for example, many countries feel that 30% is too ambitious for their context.

That said its important to not be under ambitious and to find a a balance between feasibility and an ambitious but attainable, if not challenging, goal. Furthermore, it's also likely that of the 23 targets some will not be a priority for the countries as for setting targets, a balance between country priorities and the 23 global targets should be sought.

ii) Ratification and Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol

The **Nagoya Protocol** on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity, is an international agreement which aims at sharing the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources in a fair and equitable way. Analysis has shown that increasingly, in particular at a regional and international level, access and benefit sharing (ABS) in becoming a high priority for the Caribbean as well as being an important target (Target 13) of the GBF. However, also a target in the previous decade, to date only 6 out of the 15 countries analysed have ratified this Protocol. In response to this there continues to be calls for countries to ratify the Nagoya Protocol at various levels.

For example, at the XXI Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean October 9-12, 2018 in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Ministers agreed to "Encourage commitments and alliances involving indigenous peoples and local communities, protected by the countries' biological diversity and traditional knowledge, to promote the effective implementation of the Nagoya Protocol to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) of the United Nations". This call was once again repeated at the XXIII Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean in 2023, with Ministers encouraging the Member States of Latin America and the Caribbean to promote dialogue regarding the National Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) systems within the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Nagoya Protocol.

In 2019, the OECS Biodiversity and Ecosystems Management Committee (BEMC) also recommended to the Council of Ministers that those countries which had not yet signed the Nagoya Protocol should be encouraged to do so, to further the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits of genetic resources in the region.

The Protocol would help provide a strong legal basis and transparency for both providers and users of genetic resources, emphasising the rights of local communities and indigenous people. The OECS, CARICOM and the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS, all acknowledge the important roles and contributions of indigenous peoples and local communities as custodians of biodiversity. This protocol provides an entry point for scaling up engagement with, and participation of, indigenous and traditional communities in biodiversity conservation as well as providing opportunities to measure qualitative ways in which indigenous communities and women can benefit from biodiversity (UNDESA 2022), areas which could be strengthened in the regional biodiversity strategies (Chapter 4).

iii) Ratification and Implementation of the Cartagena Convention SPAW and LBS Protocols

As SIDS, with large marine exclusive economic zones far exceeding the size of their land mass, Caribbean nations have an extremely high dependence on their marine environment. It is critical therefore that individual countries and the region as a whole are able to conserve and sustainably manage their marine ecosystem. The Caribbean islands are a biodiversity hotspot and the region houses numerous endemics, endangered and threated marine species and habitats. Rapid and unsustainable development and resource use practices are severely threatening the marine environment across the region. These human threats are even further exacerbated by the increasing impacts of climate change, severely affecting the frequency and intensity of natural disasters among other impacts such as sea level rises and warming. Although for the most part, regional policies are well aligned with global biodiversity targets and SDGs 14 and 15, some gaps or weaknesses are evident. For example, regional policies lack specific small-scale fishery targets and objectives related to

removing harmful subsidies, and while species extinction is addressed in the CBS, neither strategy explicitly addresses wildlife harvesting. Findings also show that specific protected areas and OECM targets towards achieving GBF Target 3 are also somewhat weak, even though establishing new PAs does not appear to be a priority for the region, targets ensuring existing ones are managed effectively and increasing their connectivity especially for MPAs could be improved. An analysis of progress in the region towards global targets, showed that there remains a significant challenge in addressing marine pollution and protecting fragile ecosystems, in particular coral reefs. It also showed varying degrees of success with regard to the sustainable use of living marine resources. Given these challenges and somewhat limited progress in some areas, its unsurprising to find that protecting vulnerable ecosystems to climate change impacts, pollution, and advancing a blue economy, are key priorities across the region. The need to strengthen ocean protection has also been recognised in the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS, where Members committed to scaling-up biodiversity and ocean-based action. One way in which countries could achieve this is by advancing the Cartagena Convention and ratifying the associated key protocols on specially protected areas and wildlife (SPAW) and land-based sources of Marine Pollution, (LBS) which would provide a legal framework and additional support for the enhanced protection of the marine environment, especially as coastal development and blue economy aspirations and actions for the region increase.

The **SPAW Protocol**, is a protocol dedicated to biodiversity protection. It is a regional agreement for the protection and sustainable use of coastal and marine biodiversity in the Wider Caribbean Region. It provides provisions for the establishment of marine protected areas (MPAs) and the protection of fragile marine ecosystems and endangered and threatened species, as well as for their sustainable use. The UNEP Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP) as the Secretariat to the Cartagena Convention along with the SPAW-RAC, supports countries in meeting the Protocol's obligations. There are no direct financial obligations for the Parties in joining the Protocol, on the contrary, by joining SPAW, countries will receive direct assistance for the management and protection of coastal and marine resources from the SPAW-RAC at the request of Parties. In addition, through ratification, opportunities for partnerships and coordination as well as funding will be available. Under the Protocol (Article 7), MPAs of particular importance can be placed on the SPAW List. The SPAW List places these MPAs as a priority by Parties for scientific and technical research, mutual assistance and their protection. Of the nine countries in this analysis who are Parties to this Protocol, collectively, there are 10 nationally designated MPAs listed under the SPAW Protocol.

The **LBS Protocol** is a regional agreement for the prevention, control and reduction of marine pollution of the Caribbean Sea from land-based sources and activities. The Protocol provides general obligations and a legal framework for regional cooperation as well as four operational Annexes that list land-based sources and activities of greatest concern to the marine environment; provide guidelines for the development of regional standards and practices for addressing pollution from LBS; and establishes regional effluent limitations for domestic sewage. The Assessment & Management of Environmental Pollution (AMEP) programme under the UNEP/CAR, supports countries in the Wider Caribbean to implement the LBS Protocol. In ratifying the LBS Protocol, countries will benefit from increased recognition and awareness of efforts to prevent, control and reduce marine pollution and can increase opportunities to access financial and technical support for implementing LBS pollution actions identified in the regional biodiversity strategies.

5.1.2 Key activities for implementing actions

- Carrying out awareness and outreach activities of the Nagoya, SPAW and LBS Protocols and the benefits of ratification to countries
- Develop national action plans for implementing the protocols and seek out funding for their implementation

- Building capacity across MPA mangers for the inclusion of access and benefit sharing and addressing land-based sources of pollution in PA management plans
- Promoting and supporting the identification and inclusion of priority MPAs onto the SPAW List using data and information available on the CPAG platform as well as promoting and supporting management effectiveness assessments for priority MPAs
- Develop biodiversity finance plans

Key partners: Ministries of Environment, MPA managers and management authorities, IPLC; NGOs/CBOs; UNEP-CAR/RCU; SPAW-RAC; Institute of Marine Affairs

5.2 Pathway 2: Strengthen regional transboundary cooperation and coordination

Biodiversity management in the Caribbean occurs at different policies and institutional layers and scales. Nationally, government agencies have the primary responsibility for biodiversity conservation and are supported by local and international partners. As seen (section 4.2.3), the geopolitical complexities of the Caribbean region can present challenges in how biodiversity conservation efforts progress and priorities are understood and addressed across the countries. In addition, there is often a fragmented approach to conservation across the region due to donors rarely funding all countries, large economic discrepancies across the countries and a lack of data and harmonised indicators for reporting requirements and decision-making. This fragmented approach to biodiversity conservation coupled with the geographic nature of countries (i.e. large distances between them) and the significantly large, shared ocean space in the Caribbean, mean that addressing the many transboundary threats to biodiversity such as climate change impacts, pollution and IAS requires a robust and effective regional approach. The establishment of CARICOM and the OECS demonstrate the regions efforts for scaling up transboundary cooperation. Despite this, progress towards several global biodiversity targets and transboundary issues remain challenging. There is a need therefore to seek out avenues and opportunities to strengthen regional transboundary cooperation and coordination for biodiversity conservation specifically, so that Caribbean countries and the region as a whole can more efficiently and effectively address global commitments and address transboundary threats to biodiversity.

5.2.1 Recommended actions:

i) Establish a regional inter-governmental biodiversity and environment agency

At a regional level, a number of efforts can be observed in addressing transboundary biodiversity issues as well as regional cooperation mechanisms. Several organisations play a role in addressing biodiversity conservation through divisions and departments (see chapter 3) and the UN Environment CAR/RCU administers the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols, with international partners supporting efforts in the region.

There are several Caribbean Community institutions for specific thematic areas that exist as separate legal entities with their own governance arrangements. Currently institutions exist that represent regional interests and support regional and national action on climate change (CCCCC), disasters and emergencies (CDEMA), agricultural health and food safety (CAHFSA), public health (CARPHA), renewable energy (CCREEE) and the private sector (CPSO), among others. While both CARICOM and OECS through the COTED-Environment and Environmental Sustainability Division respectively, play a lead and important role in the region for biodiversity conservation, there is no specific technical inter-governmental agency responsible for biodiversity or the environment specifically that can scale up action and coordinate regional support.

Many other regions across the globe have specific intergovernmental technical agencies responsible for environmental matters, for example the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), the North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC) and the South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP). A single regional entity representing Member Sates' biodiversity and environmental interests would significantly assist in addressing many of the biodiversity conservation challenges facing Caribbean SIDS, and as a consequence could provide the region a stronger voice on the global stage, ensuring all Member States' priorities and needs are considered and supported.

CARICOM, already an intergovernmental cooperation mechanism for 15 states and 5 overseas territories with several of the regions' legal entities falling under them, and already adopting and demonstrating aspirations for a regional approach to biodiversity conservation (along with the OECS) through the development of its CARICOM Biodiversity Strategy, are well placed to promote, support and even oversee the establishment of such a coordination mechanism. A regional coordination mechanism for biodiversity and the environment could support capacity building, regional cooperation, fundraising and the harmonisation and management of environmental data, as well as representing the region in the multitude of global, international and regional areas that exist for such matters. This could help remove some of the burden for individual small nations, which currently face overwhelming numbers of meetings, reports and responsibilities regarding global and regional agreements, and who often have many other very high priorities and needs in addition to the environment and have limited human, technical and financial capacity. However, in order to do so, significant financial support would be required to achieve this. For example, in 2022 the budget for SPREP was approximately $35 million[21], compared to CARICOM as a whole entity, which received approximately $20 million from Member states plus an addition 3.8Million (approx.) from partners for its annual operations[22].

CARICOM is already playing a lead and critical regional role in the global stage[23] and is committed to supporting coordination of efforts across the Region to meet the obligations of International and Multilateral Agreements as well as the SGD2040[24]. For example, it represented Caribbean interests in the negotiations on the recently adopted Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement), is leading the Nagoya Protocol efforts in the region, and is the coordinator of the Caribbean hub for the EU and UNEP funded African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Multilateral Environmental Agreements Project. More recently, and presenting a timely opportunity, at the fourth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI 4) of the CBD, Parties selected CARICOM as one of 18 regional organisations to host a regional support centre to help boost the implementation of the GBF, through science, technology and innovation. Support can include (but is not limited to) sharing scientific knowledge, data, expertise, resources, technologies, and building technical capacity to Member States for achieving the GBF Targets.

A more permanent regional coordination mechanism dedicated to addressing biodiversity conservation and environment issues in the Caribbean is essential if marine resources in particular are to continue to support the well-being of current and future generations across Caribbean countries; and if global, regional and national level biodiversity targets are to be met.

ii) <u>Ratify and implement the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement)</u>

[21] https://www.sprep.org
[22] CARICOM Annual Report 2021
[23] https://caricom.org/caricoms-role-crucial-in-shaping-the-future-of-oceans/
[24] CARCIOM Strategy 2020-2030

The BBNJ Agreement (also known as the High Seas Treaty)[25] is an international agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. After two decades of intense negotiation, this legal binding instrument was adopted at the 5th Intergovernmental Conference on Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction in 2023[26]. The Agreement addresses four main issues: i) Marine genetic resources, including the fair and equitable sharing of benefits; ii) Measures such as area-based management tools, including marine protected areas; iii) Environmental impact assessments; and iv) Capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology, and sets out the framework for ensuring the health and resilience of ocean ecosystems and in achieving a greater balance across nations to participate in and benefit from activities in areas beyond national jurisdiction. Although adopted with 91 signatories to the Agreement- including 7 of the 15 countries assessed for this policy analysis - it requires 60 Member States for it to enter into force. Currently only 8 States have ratified the Treaty since its adoption, including one Caribbean State- Belize- which was the third country globally to ratify it.

CARICOM was a leading participant and contributor in the BBNJ negotiations, which was the first time CARICOM participated as a regional group under Law of the Sea related negotiations (Hassanali 2023). As SIDS and a region with limited capacity but high dependency on ocean resources, it is critical that regional cooperation is strengthened so that Caribbean countries can effectively conserve and sustainably manage ocean spaces beyond their jurisdiction. Through its provisions i.e. establishing a funding mechanism and institutional arrangements, a Clearing-House Mechanism and a secretariat, this Agreement is well placed to provide a pathway for securing support for Caribbean countries in addressing major gaps in ocean government and management across the region. In this regard, CARICOM is well-placed to be the leading institution for the region[27].

Capitalising on evident high level political support for a coordinated approach to ocean governance in areas beyond national jurisdiction, CARICOM Foreign Ministers at the Council for Foreign and Community Relations (COFCOR) mandated the formation of a Multi-Stakeholder Advisory Group (MSAG) to support and guide countries towards ratification and early implementation of the Treaty. Further, the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations (DOALOS) is committed to providing tailored technical assistance at the national level in identifying and addressing challenges and opportunities in becoming parties to the Agreement[28].

This BBNJ Agreement presents an opportunity for the Caribbean region to become the first region across SIDS and the world, to collectively ratify the Treaty and to be a model for others in regional ocean governance and management. Open until September 2025 for signatures, early ratification/accession to the Treaty should be seen as a priority for Caribbean countries so that through CARICOM their voices can be amplified during the first COP where a number of key decisions for the BBNJ Agreement going into the future will be made (Hassanali 2023).

iii) Ratify and Implement the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS)

The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS, also known as the Bonn Convention) is an international agreement that aims to conserve terrestrial, aquatic and avian migratory species throughout their range. The CBD to which all 15 countries analysed are Party, acknowledges that migratory species are unique components of global biodiversity and has declared CMS to be its lead partner on conservation and sustainable use of migratory species.

The Caribbean region is an important route for many migratory species. It is estimated that between 2 and 5 million individual birds take part in a biannual migration through Central America and the Caribbean and given their large marine and coastal areas, small islands are particularly important

[25] https://www.un.org/bbnjagreement
[26] A/CONF.232/2023/4)
[27] https://caricom.org/caricoms-role-crucial-in-shaping-the-future-of-oceans/
[28] General Assembly resolution 77/321

marine corridors and pathways[29]. In addition, the diverse marine ecosystems occurring in the Caribbean provide nursery grounds or feeding areas for several migratory species, such as sharks, whales and marine turtles, which offer prime nature tourism attractions. The region has several shark (e.g. Shortfin Mako Shark (*Isurus oxyrinchus*), whale (e.g. Humpback Whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*), bird (e.g Semipalmated Sandpiper (*Calidris pusilla*), and reptile (e.g. the Green Turtle (*Chelonia mydas*)) species listed on the CMS appendices. The conservation of migratory species depends on transboundary cooperation to ensure their survival beyond their territories and to address their threats. Migratory species are essential for the health and functioning of ecosystems and as a consequence the well-being of Caribbean citizens.

Species conservation has been identified as a priority at a national level, with regional policies limited in addressing this. Only, three out of the 15 countries are Party to CMS. Ratifying or acceding to this Convention would help strengthen national commitments for species conservation and enhance support to the region and facilitate regional cooperation through the Conventions secretariat for the conservation of these important migratory and for many, endemic species.

iv) Actively engage in emerging global and regional agreements highly relevant for the Caribbean, such as the Plastics Treaty

In 2022, during the UN Environment Assembly, Heads of State, Ministers of Environment and other representatives agreed to end plastic pollution and to that end, develop an international legally binding agreement. Negotiations are ongoing with an aim to have a global Plastics Treaty by the end of 2024. Plastic pollution is a significant threat to the Caribbean's biodiversity and human health and well-being. Already several initiatives are ongoing to reduce and eliminate plastic pollution in the region. CARICOM has already adopted a regional strategy for the management of marine litter and microplastics and several Caribbean countries have adopted relevant measures and polices such as banning single use plastics (SUPs) (Clayton et al. 2021). It is crucial that the region strengthens its contributions to the negotiations on the emerging Plastic Treaty to ensure that regional contexts, in particular for SIDS are considered and integrated into this Treaty. As a significant threat and thus a regional and national priority in the Caribbean, countries should ensure that any relevant emerging Treaties such as the Plastics Treaty are supported and ratified by Members. As for the BBNJ agreement, CARICOM are expected to play a large role in amplifying the region's position on the global stage through negotiations and supporting the region's sensitisation and awareness of this Treaty.

5.2.2 Key activities for implementing actions

- Promote and advocate for additional support and funding for a regional entity dedicated to biodiversity conservation and the environment in the region.
- Identify financing mechanisms, for example environmental levies and taxes to support the regional biodiversity body
- Promote the ratification of the BBNJ agreement and the CMS through the development and dissemination of awareness and outreach material.
- Provide technical and data support to individual nations for the implementation and coordination of MPA-related actions under the BBNJ
- Support data collection and information sharing on key migratory species relevant for the Caribbean and in particular where protected areas and OECMs may play an important role (e.g. protecting feeding or nursery grounds)

[29] CARICOM Factsheet: CMS and the Caribbean https://www.cms.int/sites/default/files/document/Caricom%20Fact%20Sheet%20Conservation%20of%20Migratory%20Species%20of%20Wild%20Animals_final.pdf

Key Partners: CARICOM, OECS, Ministries for Environment and Fisheries, MPA managers and management authorities, International NGOs, UN entities; UNEP-CAR/RCU

5.3 Pathway 3: Scaling up ambition and closing policy gaps for effective biodiversity conservation

Chapter 4 highlighted some key gaps in national and regional policies regarding biodiversity conservation and global targets. The request by the CBD to Parties to update their NBSAPs in line with the GBF targets represents a critical opportunity to strengthen areas aligned with national and regional priorities where otherwise their attention is either absent or poorly represented in the policies analysed.

5.3.1 Recommended Actions

i) Scale up PA and OECM ambition

Target 3 of the GBF calls for at least 30% of land, water and oceans to be effectively conserved through ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMS). While many countries have already stipulated that the 30% target is unfeasible, scaling up ambition doesn't not mean scaling up to 30% PA coverage necessarily. Recent discussions at the subregional dialogue on national biodiversity strategies and action plans for the Caribbean countries (April 2024) highlighted that the establishment of new PAs across the Caribbean region is not a priority, but rather improving the management effectiveness of existing ones[30].

Both regional biodiversity policies have indirect actions related to protected areas (PAs), however only the OECS-BEF provides for PAs in one of its targets and this is in relation to its role in climate change resilience. There are no targets that address Target 3 of the GBF specifically, either for coverage or effectiveness. There is opportunity therefore for countries to scale up ambition for PAs and OECMs in their revised NBSAPs. For example, developing targets for improved management effectiveness of existing PAs, increasing connectivity between PAs and considering the designation of existing non-PA conservation efforts across the region as OECS.

The evaluation of Protected Area Management Effectiveness (PAME) is essential for monitoring PA effectiveness and is a critical element of adaptive PA management. BIOPAMPA II CPAG hosts a PAME dashboard which provides information on PAME assessments across the region and provides essential information and resources, such as PAME assessment tools, which can support countries in carrying out PAMEs. To date only 11 of the 15 countries have completed any PAMEs for their PAs, and of those, only 7 have repeated these PAMEs for at least one PA. Countries should be encouraged to include the carrying out of systematic PAME assessments, in particular baseline assessments for their PA network in revised NBSAPs.

As mentioned, a potential area for the Caribbean to scaling up ambition towards Target 3 are the consideration of OECMs, which is an issue where the region requires more support[31]. OECMs provide an opportunity to recognise and account for biodiversity outcomes of area-based measures that are not recognised as protected areas. The Caribbean has a number of Marine Managed Areas that promote sustainable fisheries, these and other area-based management tools could play an important role in this regard and could help the region achieve the 30x30 GBF Target without having to expand and establish new protected areas. Targets around OECMs, such as their identification and inclusion towards Target 3 should be considered.

[30] BIOPAMA summary report on the subregional dialogue on national biodiversity strategies and action plans for the Caribbean countries Georgetown, 15–17 April 2024
[31] CBD Report on the subregional dialogue on national biodiversity strategies and action plans for the Caribbean countries Georgetown, 15–17 April 2024

Targets for Caribbean PAs could also include enhancing their protection through the SPAW List or re-zoning to include more strictly managed areas within PAs. Global recognition for Caribbean efforts could be increased by aiming to have key sites meet the IUCN Green List Standards, where PAs are recognised as achieving ongoing results for people and nature in a fair and effective way. In doing so, both programmes could potentially offer opportunities for additional financial support for their enhanced and continued protection due to their special status.

ii) Develop National Gender Action Plans for guiding the integration of gender considerations across NBSPS

Globally it is well recognised that women and girls face disproportionate impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss. Supporting Target 23 of the GBF i.e. ensuring gender equality and a gender-responsive approach for biodiversity action, several international organisations, forums and intergovernmental decisions have reiterated this important sentiment. For example, at the IUCN Mesoamerican Regional Conservation Forum (April 2024), Members highlighted the need for increased action to enhance gender-responsive implementation of biodiversity goals and recognised that Gender justice and women's empowerment is critical to achieve effective conservation and for building a more resilient and sustainable future. COP 3 Decision III/4 of the Escazú Agreement urges Parties to promote the full and effective participation of women and to incorporate a gender-equality perspective into the implementation of the Agreement. At both a CARICOM[32] and SIDS[33] level, women are also recognised as drivers of change and their crucial role in biodiversity conservation and management, in particular in playing a transformative and multiplier effect on sustainable development and economic growth in SIDS.

Despite this growing recognition, significant gaps still remain in current regional biodiversity strategies around GBF Target 23. Countries should therefore consider strengthening language and ambition in revised NBSAPs to ensure gender-responsive action is included across key targets in particular for capacity building, decision-making, resource use and access and benefit sharing targets. Scaling up ambition should be guided by these national gender action plans, as each country has different gender dynamics and these must be taken into consideration.

iii) Establish regional policies for invasive alien species, ecosystem restoration and guidance for reducing harmful subsidies

Invasive alien species (IAS) are among the biggest threats to biodiversity, crop and/or livestock production, human and/or animal health, and economic development in the Caribbean and are implicated in 86% of island species extinctions (Witt et al. 2024). Lionfish *Pterois spp.,* are among the most prolific IAS across the Caribbean and have severely impacted reef fish populations which in turn affect coral reef ecosystems; extremely fragile ecosystems already struggling in the face of climate change.

The significant threat and thus the high priority placed across Caribbean countries and the region for managing and preventing/removing IAS is highly evident in regional and national biodiversity frameworks and targets related to IAS. There are a number of ongoing initiatives in the region to support progress towards IAS targets. These include a number of projects and research around IAS, for example, the GEF project "Preventing COSTS of Invasive Alien Species (IAS) in Barbados and the OECS"; networks and platforms such as the Caribbean Invasive species Network and its information portal; and long-term monitoring programmes such as the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network-Caribbean. Discussions are also currently underway for the establishment of a Regional IAS Trust Fund. Several regional strategies and action plans for addressing IAS exist in the region, for example, the OECS

[32] Caribbean Biodiversity Strategy
[33] ABAS (paragraph 10)

Invasive Alien Species Regional Action Plan (2016-2025) and the Regional IAS Strategy and Action Plan (currently under revision). Countries have also developed national IAS strategies and action plans e.g. The National Invasive Alien Species Strategy and Action Plan (NIASSAP) for Jamacia. However, many of these strategies are outdated and there is no single regional policy on IAS and biosecurity- essential since pathways for IAS are shown to be transboundary-, and national overarching policies and regulatory frameworks are limited. Furthermore, a survey of the current state of biosecurity at ports of some Caribbean countries showed that in the countries surveyed none had a single agency with overall responsibility for biosecurity (Richards and Ramnanan 2020).

It is crucial that to address this growing and transboundary threat to Caribbean nations, considerations must include the development and updating of national and regional legislation, regulations and policies to prevent the entry of IAS, and to collectively, in a coordinated approach, manage and irradicate IAS that do occur in the region.

At the XXI Meeting of the Forum of the Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean (The Forum) in 2018[34], Members were invited to take concrete actions for the **restoration** of ecosystems at the national and regional level and to integrate them into policies and plans. In response to this, at the XXII Meeting of the Forum, an Action Plan for the Decade on Ecosystem Restoration- aimed at reverting the negative impacts of degradation- was agreed. More recently, the Forum of Ministers (XXIII Meeting) reaffirmed their commitment to the restoration of the ecosystems and called upon Member States to develop activities for the implementation and updating of the Action Plan for Ecosystems Restoration[35]. The Action Plan is in line with the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030, which was born out of a recognition that none of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals can be achieved unless a significant effort in ecosystem restoration is implemented globally. The Action plan is centred around three pathways: i) a regional movement, ii) generating political support, and iii) building technical capacity, and aims to provide a framework where restoration policies, plans and projects are advanced and thus revert the negative impacts of degradation. The scarcity of legislative and policy mechanisms across the region specific for ecosystem restoration was identified as a key barrier to achieving the Action Plan's vision.

Restoration is embedded in habitat protection and resilience targets and actions across regional biodiversity policies and in the GBF Target 2. In the Caribbean, coral reef and mangrove restoration will be particularly important, as these are habitats under severe threat and have suffered significant loss (Chapter 4). Mangrove and coral reef restoration will not only result in numerous biodiversity and human well-being benefits, but have also been shown to be a much cheaper alternative to artificial coastal defences and are considered a highly cost-effective nature-based solution to disaster mitigation, recovery and adaptation (Resilient islands 2019). Counties and the region should ensure that there is sufficient enabling legislation and policies that support restoration efforts across the Caribbean and provide for greater restoration ambition in the region by including specific targets that are aligned with global restoration targets, e.g. Target 2 GBF: Restore 30% of all Degraded Ecosystems, into NBSAPs and relevant regional strategies.

In addition to restoration and other focus areas, Decision 4 at the XXIII Meeting of the Forum of the Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, encouraged Member States to implement efforts to identify and eliminate, gradually eliminate or reform **incentives,** including **subsidies** harmful to biological diversity. This is an area which is limited in its representation and priority across regional biodiversity policies and in its progress under the Aichi Targets, but is a key target in the GBF- Target 18. The issue of reforming incentives schemes and mechanisms to be more favourable to the environment has been addressed by some countries as part of their efforts to move towards Green Economies but focus tends to lean more towards positive incentives and less about removing harmful subsidies. However, there are significant moves in the region towards this global target especially in the fisheries sector. In 2022, the global World Trade Organization Agreement on Fisheries

[34] XXI Meeting of the Forum. 2018.Decision 4: Innovative solutions to enhance the benefits of biodiversity and ecosystems.
[35] XXIII Meeting of the Forum. 2023.Decision 4 Biodiversity

Subsidies was adopted. This Agreement aims to restrict harmful subsidies, which are considered a key contributor to overfishing of the world's fish stocks. Specifically, it prohibits subsidies for illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, for utilizing overfished stocks, and for fishing on the unregulated high seas. To date[36], CARICOM Regional Fisheries Mechanism Member States: Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Haiti, and Saint Lucia have ratified this agreement. Caribbean countries, CARICOM and OECS should ensure that other sectors such as the forestry or agriculture sectors also adopt any relevant global and regional legally binding agreements to reform harmful subsidies and ensure there are enabling regulatory frameworks available at both the national and regional level. An essential first step in this regard would be to identify and evaluate existing systems of subsidies and incentives and since most incentive and subsidy mechanisms do not fall under biodiversity-related Ministries and departments, awareness raising and cooperation will be crucial to strengthen legal and policy frameworks towards such targets.

The three areas highlighted here are amongst the most pressing thematic areas for the Caribbean that require new, revised or enhanced regulatory frameworks to advance towards global, regional and national biodiversity targets. However, as for all policy recommendations, it follows that any development or revision of legislative and policy mechanisms, must go hand in hand with instruments to ensure their effective implementation.

5.3.2 Key activities for implementing actions

- Continue to support and promote PAME assessments for Caribbean PAs
- Develop an OECM dashboard, identifying harmonised indictors for OECM criteria and supporting the uploading and sharing of relevant data and OECM tools to all BIOPAMA countries.
- Build capacity for assessing eligibility for inclusion of marine managed areas as an OECM across countries
- Promote the identification and harmonisation of IAS, restoration and incentives and subsidies' indicators for data collection and sharing on the CPAG conservation dashboard
- Develop and disseminate awareness and communication material for multi-stakeholders/sectors on the importance of coral reef and mangrove restoration and incentives and subsides harmful to biodiversity

Key Partners: CARICOM, OECS, Ministries for Environment, Agriculture, and Fisheries, MPA managers and management authorities; Caribbean Invasive Alien Species Network; Caribbean Invasive species Network; Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network; University of West indies; CANARI; Private sector; CARIWA - Caribbean Women's Association

5.4 Pathway 4: Employing streamlined, inclusive and evidence-based decision-making

Data, information and knowledge are essential for supporting decision-making, adaptive management, technical capacity and reporting, including meeting global reporting requirements. However, at all levels, lack of data and various challenges around the collection, management and sharing of data have been consistently cited as a major challenge for the Caribbean region, in particular as a barrier to for effective biodiversity conservation.

[36] June 2024

Lack of data on technology, tools, practices to build resilience, how to monitor changes in biodiversity and the socio-economic benefits of biodiversity conservation have been identified as major challenges for SIDS (UNDESA 2023). Data-related challenges were further highlighted at the 4TH SIDS conference where the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS: A Renewed Declaration for Resilient Prosperity (ABAS paragraph 19) where the significant challenges SIDS face in data collection, analysis, technical and institutional capacity, which in turn hinders evidence-informed policy making, monitoring progress and accessing development financing were reiterated.

At a regional level, Caribbean countries identified lack of harmonisation in monitoring indicators, limited capacity in their use as well as the reluctance of some agencies and institutions to share data and information as key challenges in meeting their NBSAP reporting requirements[37] and in delivering effective biodiversity conservation[38].

In response to these challenges, the identification of harmonised indicator's, a greater capacity for data collection and management, and ensuring data sharing have all been identified as key priorities at the international, regional and national level for the Caribbean.

5.4.1 Recommended actions:

i. Identify critical research and data needs and develop harmonised indicators and data collection methodologies across the Caribbean

Many countries in the region have just started or are yet to start their processes of updating national biodiversity strategies and action plans, including revising or setting national targets in alignment with the Framework. However, basic species inventories, valuation data and monitoring data are lacking across many countries and the incompatibility of datasets and monitoring indicators make it challenging for integrating such information into regional datasets. This has led to the OECS-BEF calling for a regional biodiversity research agenda inclusive of research on marine, terrestrial, coastal and freshwater ecosystems to be developed as well as a regional database. In addition to identifying and closing data gaps, there is a need for greater regional collaboration and cooperation to harmonise key indicators especially as they relate to the GBF and the call by CBD COP15 to revise NBSAPs provides a key opportunity to do this. Further, the new regional biodiversity strategies, which call on Member States to report on indicators provides an opportunity for the region to develop harmonised indicators to monitor the implementation of these two Strategies from the onset. A regional inter-governmental biodiversity and environment agency as identified in 5.2.1 supported by NGOs and initiatives such as BIOPAMPA II could support cooperation efforts to identify and harmonise indicators. Furthermore, with the identification of research needs at a national level, regional research needs could be promoted among universities in the region such as the University of West Indies, technical organisations like CANARI and international NGOs. Building capacity and securing funding to support data collection and regional cooperation will be essential to meet these data gaps and ensure data and information is collected in a harmonised manner that can be scaled up from a national to regional level.

ii. Strengthen participatory and inclusive decision-making, building capacity across all stakeholders for evidence-based decision making

The importance of the systematic collection of environmental and natural resources and using the best available science, knowledge and evidence of the natural, social, and economic processes to inform policy and to pursue evidence-based decision making (EBDM), has been highlighted across all regional policies assessed. Evidence-based decision-making is enshrined in the Treaty of Chaguaramas where Members are obliged to take into account scientific and technical data, and environmental conditions

[37] Subregional dialogue on national biodiversity strategies and action plans for the Caribbean countries Georgetown, 15–17 April 2024

[38] Country questionnaires

when making environment-related decisions, and Island Systems Management principles- the foundation of SDG2040-also require the use of sound science and best practice, inclusive of local and traditional knowledge, for decision-making. The generation, storage and easily accessible and use of biodiversity information and data for decision-making is a key objective of the CARICOM Biodiversity Strategy (objective 9) and using biodiversity and ecosystem assessments, inventories and monitoring and sharing this knowledge to inform decision-making and guide management actions is a key target in the OECS-BEF (Target 1.1.). Further, to pursue a blue economy- a key priority for the region- it will require the integration of natural capital accounting and ecosystem valuation into economic decision-making.

In addition to evidence-based decision making, at a global level there is a call to ensure that decision-making is inclusive across stakeholders. The Escazú agreement aims to guarantee the rights of access to environmental information (Article 5) as well as public participation in the environmental decision-making process (Article 7) and these have been reiterated in the GBF Target 22 "*Ensure Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice and Information Related to Biodiversity for all*". Although the need for EBDM and to scale up the collection, harmonisation and sharing of data and information is prioritised in regional biodiversity strategies, inclusive decision-making is rather weakly represented across the policy targets (chapter 4). Participants at the Guyana workshop[39] however, recognised the importance of employing a whole-of-society approach to achieve global biodiversity targets and representatives of indigenous peoples and local communities, women, and youth highlighted the importance of their inclusion into decision-making processes including for national target setting and NBSAP revision. At the most recent COP3 for the Escazu Agreement, Parties were requested to develop plans and road maps for the national implementation of the Escazú Agreement as soon as possible. Through these national roadmaps and plans and the development of revised NBSAPs, whole-of society participation in decision-making and their access to information can be strengthened. Further efforts are also required to close the science-policy interface and to promote environmental data in other sectors' decision-making processes.

iii. <u>Establish a regional database for biodiversity indicators, ensuring appropriate data access and sharing modalities</u>

Many countries in the region do not have a monitoring system in place to monitor the implementation of NBSAPs or regional policies, and a lack of harmonised data collection and management systems across agencies can make data sharing difficult. There is a need therefore to develop (or strengthen an existing one) a region-wide database to facilitate the effective tracking of progress towards regional and national biodiversity goals and for building capacity for data-sharing mechanisms within and across countries.

The need for a regional database is strongly highlighted across the policies with targets for database development identified in both regional biodiversity strategies. Such a database should be linked to relevant global, regional and national databases, and include data and information generated by all Caribbean stakeholders as well as other relevant information from other regions (e.g. SIDS).

There exist several regional databases and knowledge portals for various thematic areas, for example, climate change, the CCCCC has an open access repository for climate change data and information. There is the Caribbean Resilience Knowledge Platform – hosted by CANARI- a collaborative online space to capture, showcase, access and advance the latest knowledge on climate justice and resilience for the Caribbean region; and the Caribbean Climate Knowledge Portal (CCKP) which showcases climate resilience initiatives being carried out by organisations throughout the Caribbean. While there are several biodiversity related-databases that hold Caribbean-relevant information, for example, the Regional Environmental Monitoring Data Portal (REMDAP) developed under GEF-IWEco Project, and the Statistical knowledge management hub for SDGs in Latin America and the Caribbean, the OECS and ECLAC are currently collaborating to establish a Regional Environmental Information System (REIS) and

[39] Sub-regional Dialogue on National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, and Workshop on Target 3 of the GBF for the Caribbean Countries 15-19 April 2024 - Georgetown, Guyana

several countries host environmental information systems (e.g. Antigua and Barbuda, St. Lucia), this can lead to fragmented and incompatible and possibly even conflicting datasets. There is an urgent need therefore to develop a one-stop shop with harmonised indictors and regional information on best practices and trends that are available to policy makers and stakeholders and can support countries in meeting their biodiversity/environment-related reporting requirements at all scales.

The BIOPAMA II initiative's main objective is to collate and provide most up-to-date, accurate and salient data and information for better decisions. Through the establishment of a Caribbean Protected Areas Gateway (CPAG) knowledge platform and the development of tools such as the Conservation Tracking Dashboard, which tracks progress of the Caribbean region towards critical biodiversity and conservation targets and PAME assessment tools which help build capacity for carrying out management effectiveness assessments, BIOPAMA is well placed to support the scaling up of this already existing database which has recently been handed over to OECS to host as the programme nears its end date. A regional database would provide opportunities for stakeholders to access key information to better build their capacity for decision making; would support data sharing and harmonisation across the countries, would help countries with global, regional and national data sharing and avenues for public participation. It would be more efficient to strengthen an existing regional database rather than developing new initiatives and have such a knowledge platform under a regional coordination entity for biodiversity and the environment established as recommended in 5.2.1 above. This regional database could support integration of natural capital data into national statistics databases to promote biodiversity mainstreaming across sectors and thus increase political support for biodiversity conservation.

5.4.2 Key activities for implementing actions

The BIOPAMA II programme's objective is to "make the best available science and knowledge available for building capacity to improve policies and better decision-making on biodiversity conservation, [and] protected areas management". As the programme is coming to an end in 2024 there are a number of actions where BIOPAMA can continue to support and that would support the sustainability of its outcomes.

- Advocate for a regional biodiversity and environment agency across CARICOM, OECS, countries and donors
- Seek out additional funding for a BIOPAMA Phase III to support the operationalisation of this regional entity and the advancement and alignment of the CPAG to updated NBSAPs and the new regional biodiversity strategy reporting requirements.
- Support the identification of regional research needs and harmonised indicators for regional and global reporting requirements including gender-based indicators
- Hold inter-sectoral meetings to showcase how biodiversity information can support other sectoral priorities and improve decision-making
- Build capacity across the region for standardised methods of data collection
- Support bridging the science-policy interface through multi-stakeholder dialogue focusing on research institutions and policy-makers
- Continue to request data from countries for uploading onto the CPAG
- Develop OECM and participatory decision-making tools for access through the CPAG

Key Partners: CARICOM, OECS, National Ministries, CANARI, University of West Indies, Donors, civil society

5.5. Priority Regional Investment Requirements

1. The establishment and operation of an independent regional biodiversity and environment agency.

2. Build human, technical and infrastructure capacity for data collection, database development, knowledge sharing, bridging the science-policy interface and inclusive decision-making.
3. Increase national awareness of national capital accounting, build capacity for its integration into national statistics and for its use in polices and decision-making around the blue economy.
4. Scale up and advance on-the-ground action for addressing pollution, IAS and restoration objectives.
5. Support advancement towards GBF Target 3 through PAME and OECM-related activities.

APPENDICES

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Appendix 2: Multilateral Environmental Agreements

A2.1 Global

The **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)** and it's protocols- the Cartagena and Nagoya Protocols, provide the global framework for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, including fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources. The CBD is arguably the most important MEA for biodiversity and ecosystem protection globally. In 2022, at COP15, Parties to the Convention adopted a new global biodiversity framework **"The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework" (GBF)** which sets out the internationally agreed global biodiversity action agenda until 2030 which is centred around 23 Targets (appendix 3) as well as four long-term biodiversity goals for 2050. In order to implement this framework and to harmonise efforts across the globe, countries are requested by the Convention to submit National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plans (NBSAP) that are aligned with the GBF targets (section 2.3). The CBD 2030 Global Biodiversity Framework with its 4 Goals (to 2050) and 23 Targets serve as an overarching framework for action and cooperation for all the biodiversity-related MEAs.

The **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora** (CITES) is the MEA that governs the international trade of wild fauna and flora. It aims is to ensure that the international trade of wild animals and plants does not threaten the survival of the species. It does this by providing for certain controls for international trade in specimens of selected species to certain controls. The species covered by CITES are listed in three Appendices, according to the degree of protection they need and all import, export, re-export and introduction of species covered by the Convention has to be authorized through a licensing system. CARICOM is working together with the CITES Secretariat to support the implementation of the Convention across the Caribbean. In particular, they have been working together to build capacity for the implementation of the Electronic CITES (eCITES) permit management which has been developed to improve the implementation of the Convention by using technologies to simplify compliant trade and to combat illegal trade. eCITES includes the electronic application and issuance of CITES permits, the control and authentication of CITES permits and reporting, as well as the electronic exchange of permit information between Countries.

The **Convention on Migratory Species (CMS),** also known as the Bonn Convention, is an MEA that provides a global platform for the conservation and sustainable use of migratory animals and their habitats. CMS brings countries together and lays the legal foundation for internationally coordinated conservation measures throughout a migratory range. Migratory species threatened with extinction are listed on Appendix I of the Convention. Migratory species that need or would significantly benefit from international co-operation are listed in Appendix II of the Convention. Currently, only 3 of the 15 Caribbean countries are signatories to this Convention.

The **Conventions on Wetlands**, more commonly referred to as the Ramsar Convention, recognizes the important role of wetlands for human health. Although a Wetland Convention, the term wetland includes a number of different types of water bodies under its definition, for example it includes rivers, lakes, swamps, coastal lands, peatlands, fish ponds and rice paddies among others. The Convention has a number of Ramsar Regional Initiative's to support the effective implementation of the Ramsar Convention and its Strategic Plan. The ***Caribbean Wetlands Regional Initiative (CariWet***) was established to facilitate the implementation of the Ramsar Convention in the Caribbean. There is a total of 22 Ramsar sites across 10 Caribbean countries (Table 1).

The **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)** adopted in 1982 is a framework for the world's oceans and seas and establishes rules governing all uses of the oceans and their resources. Very recently in June 2023 a new agreement under UNCLOS on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement) was adopted. The BBNJ Agreement is the third implementing agreement to UNCLOS. Belize is the first and currently only Caribbean nation to officially ratify this BBNJ Agreement.

The **United Nations Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC**) is the most relevant MEA for climate change. The Convention sets an overall framework for intergovernmental efforts to tackle the climate change. The Paris Agreement[40] builds on this and is a legally binding international treaty to limit global warming. It calls on Parties to submit Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) which is a county's strategy outlining their proposed actions and targets to reduce their Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions.

The **United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification** is the only legally binding international agreement linking environment and development to sustainable land management, which was established in 1994 to address desertification and the effects of drought. The UNCCD Text includes five annexes, to support regional implementation, of which the LAC region is one of the annexes.

The **International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)** is an intergovernmental treaty established in 1951 to protect the world's plants, agricultural products and natural resources from plant pests. The IPPC is ratified by 185 contracting parties that collaborate to develop, adopt and promote the application of International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs) as a main tool to safeguard global food security, facilitate safe trade and protect the environment. The IPPC is the only international convention and reference organization dedicated to developing plant health standards. The Secretariat is hosted by FAO

The **World Heritage Convention (WHC)** adopted by UNESCO in 1972, provides for the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity. This Convention links the concepts of nature conservation and the preservation of cultural properties. World Heritage sites (WHS) are considered to belong to all across the globe irrespective of where they are located. The Caribbean has 12 WHS across 10 countries. Of the 12, four are natural WHS (AB; B; D; SL) and one is mixed natural/cultural (J). The OECS is currently seeking to establish a network of WHS in order to enhance the management and preservation of the region's invaluable cultural and natural heritage.

The **Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (Stockholm Convention)** is a global treaty to protect human health and the environment from harmful chemicals. The Stockholm Convention, which was adopted in 2001 and entered into force in 2004, requires Parties to take measures to eliminate or reduce the release of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) into the environment.

A2.2. Regional Wider Caribbean (International)

The **Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (Cartagena Convention)** is the only regional MEA for the Caribbean. The Convention was adopted in 1983, and is one of UNEPs 13 Regional Seas Programmes. Parties to the Convention agree to protect, develop, and manage their common waters individually or jointly. The Convention is supported by three technical Protocols on Oil Spills, Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) and

[40] The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international treaty to limit global warming, adopted by 196 Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2015. The agreement calls on Parties to submit Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) which is a county's strategy outlining their proposed actions and targets to reduce their Greenhouse Gas emissions.

Land Based Sources of Marine Pollution (LBS). The SPAW protocol is particularly important for biodiversity as it forms the regional agreement for the protection and sustainable use of coastal and marine biodiversity in the Wider Caribbean Region. The SPAW protocol has four main focus areas these are: Marine Protected Areas and Wildlife; Threatened and Endangered Marine Species; Marine and Coastal Ecosystems; and Guidelines for Protected Areas and Species

UNEPs Regional Coordinating Unit (UNEP-CAR/RCU) is the Secretariat to the Cartagena Convention with Regional Activity Centers (RACs) supporting Protocol implementation by providing technical support and expertise to assist Contracting Parties in meeting their obligations to the Convention and its Protocols.

The Cartagena Convention Secretariat is located in **Jamaica** with the SPAW-RAC located in **Guadaloupe**

APPENDIX 3: Stakeholders and Key Policy Actors

Stakeholder	Type of Institution	Description	Key policies	Policy maker	Policy implementer	Decision-making process	Policy implementation support: Technical	Capacity building	Financing	Dialogue (consultation)
International										
Organization of American States (OAS)	Intergovernmental	Regional forum for political discussion, policy analysis and decision-making in Western Hemisphere affairs	All	x	x					
Association of Caribbean States (ACS)	Intergovernmental	An advisory association of nations centred on the Caribbean Basin. It was formed with the aim of promoting consultation, cooperation, and concerted action among all the countries of the Caribbean coastal area.	SDGs; Sendai							x
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean -natural resources and infrastructure division (ECLAC-NRID)	Intergovernmental	To this end, ECLAC works to build countries' institutional capacities to devise and implement public policies and regulatory frameworks with a view to increasing efficiency in the sustainable management of natural resources and in the provision of public utilities and infrastructure services. It also strives to achieve greater policy harmonization and coordination, to promote exchanges of best practices at the subregional and regional levels in these areas and to make best use of experiences at the global level.	SDGs; GBF, CENRPF; SGD2040; CBS; OECS-BEF					x		x
Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)	Intergovernmental/Research & Academia	An intergovernmental organization established to improve the interface between science and policy on issues of biodiversity and ecosystem services.	GBF				x			x
Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) Caribbean Sub-Regional Office	UN agency	A specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger and improve nutrition and food security.	IPPC; Nagoya protocol; SDGs				x	x		x

Stakeholder	Type of Institution	Description	Key policies	Policy maker	Policy implementer	Decision-making process	Policy implementation support: Technical	Capacity building	Financing	Dialogue (consultation)
Joint Research Centre of the European Commission	Intergovernmental	The European Commission's science and knowledge service provides independent, evidence-based knowledge and science, supporting EU policies. Together with IUCN BIOPAMA and the university of West indies jointly implements the BIOPAMA II programme	SDGs; GBF				x			x
Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network -Caribbean (GCRMN-Caribbean)	Network	A global network of scientists, managers and organisations that monitor the condition of coral reefs throughout the world, operating through 10 regional nodes, one of which is the Caribbean. It is led by a Steering Committee (SC) composed of fifteen regional experts and is co-chaired with RAC-SPAW and UNEP-CEP. The GCRMN - Caribbean seeks to be instrumental as an information and exchange platform centre for monitoring groups and relevant actors of the whole region.	GBF; Cartagena Convention +protocols; ocean policy framework				x			
United Nations and specialized agencies	Intergovernmental		All	x			x	x	x	x
IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA-Marine)	CSO	One of the seven Commissions of voluntary individual specialists that contribute expertise to global conservation goals develop and provide scientific, technical and policy advice and advocate for biodiversity and ecosystem conservation	GBF				x			
International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)	Research & Academia	An independent policy research institute for sustainable development	SDGs				x			x
European Union (EU)	Donor	A supranational political and economic union of 27 member states that are located primarily in Europe. Several environment-related agreements with the Caribbean and provides funds for programmes	All	x	x	x				x
Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF)	Donor	A joint program of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, the European Union, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan and the World Bank to protect the world's biodiversity hotspots,	GBF, CBS; OECS-BEF						x	

Stakeholder	Type of Institution	Description	Key policies	Policy maker	Policy implementer	Decision-making process	Policy implementation support: Technical	Capacity building	Financing	Dialogue (consultation)
Global Environmental Facility	Donor	A multilateral family of funds dedicated to confronting biodiversity loss, climate change, and pollution, and supporting land and ocean health. Funds are available to developing countries and countries with economies in transition to meet the objectives of international environmental conventions and agreements.	All						x	
Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)	Donor	An international development finance institution providing the largest source of development financing for Latin America and the Caribbean							x	
Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)	Donor	An agency that supports the socioeconomic development, recovery or economic stability of developing regions.	SDGs; GBF				x	x	x	
L'Agence Française de Développement (AFD)	Donor	A public financial institution that implements the policy defined by the French Government.	SDGs;gbf		x				x	
World Bank	Donor	An international financial institution that provides loans and grants to the governments of low- and middle-income countries for the purpose of pursuing capital projects	SDGs						x	
Regional										
Caribbean Community CARICOM	Intergovernmental	The CARICOM Secretariat administers the Programme for Capacity Building related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements (ACP-MEAs).	All	x	x					
Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM)	Intergovernmental	An inter-governmental organization with its mission being "to promote and facilitate the responsible utilization of the region's fisheries and other aquatic resources for the economic and social benefits of the current and future population of the region. CRFM administers several specific regional fisheries management plans,	SDGs, CCCFP; CENRPF; SGD2040	x	x					
Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO)	Intergovernmental	The Caribbean's tourism development agency to provide services and information necessary for the development of sustainable tourism for the economic and social benefit of the Caribbean people	SDGs, CENRPF; SGD2040	x	x					

Stakeholder	Type of Institution	Description	Key policies	Policy maker	Policy implementer	Decision-making process	Policy implementation support: Technical	Capacity building	Financing	Dialogue (consultation)
Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)	Intergovernmental	an International Inter-governmental Organisation dedicated to regional integration in the Eastern Caribbean.	SDGs; GFS; SGD2040;OECS-BEF	x	x					
UN Environment Office for Latin America and the Caribbean	Intergovernmental	The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the leading global authority on the environment and administers most MEAs. UNEP works closely with its 193 Member States and representatives from civil society, businesses, and other major groups and stakeholders to address environmental challenges through the UN Environment Assembly, the world's highest-level decision-making body on the environment.UNEP's Latin America and the Caribbean Office is one of six regional offices and is working to build more resilient livelihoods through healthy ecosystems.	MEAs	x	x		x	x	x	x
Caribbean Public Health Agency – Environmental Health & Sustainable Development (CARPHA-EHS)	Intergovernmental	CARPHA is a public health umbrella under which issues requiring a regional response can be addressed to prevent disease, to promote and protect health in the Caribbean. The EHS department supports the Caribbean's sustainable development agenda by playing a lead role in key areas related to environmental management for optimal public health.	SDGs; Cartagena Protocol	x	x					
Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC)	Intergovernmental	Coordinates the Caribbean region's response to climate change and is the regions focal point for all climate change issues in the Caribbean. It is a repository and clearing house for regional climate change information and data and provides climate change-related policy advice and guidelines to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Member States through the CARICOM Secretariat.	Paris agreement				x	x		x
UNEP Caribbean Regional Co-ordinating Unit (CAR/RCU)	Intergovernmental	The Secretariat for the Cartagena Convention and the Caribbean Environment Programme.	MEAs; Cartagena Convention and protocols		x		x			

Stakeholder	Type of Institution	Description	Key policies	Policy maker	Policy implementer	Decision-making process	Policy implementation support: Technical	Policy implementation support: Capacity building	Policy implementation support: Financing	Policy implementation support: Dialogue (consultation)
Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency (CAHFSA)	Caricom Agency	Plays a coordinating and organizing role for the establishment of an effective and efficient regional sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) regime and executes on behalf of Member States regional SPS actions and activities.	Cartagena protocol on biosafety	x	x					
Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA)	Caricom Agency	A regional inter-governmental agency for disaster management in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). Responsible for the coordination of emergency response and relief efforts to Participating States that require assistance	Sendai	x	x					
OECS Environmental Sustainability Division	OECS Division	Implementing the strategic actions contained in the Revised St George's Declaration of Principles for Environmental Sustainability in the OECS (hereinafter called SGD 2040)	GBF; SGD2040; OECS-BEF		x					
Global Water Partnership Caribbean (GWP-C)	Network	1 of 13 Regional Water Partnerships (RWPs) of the Global Water Partnership (GWP) Organisation, a worldwide network of partners all working to achieve sustainable water resources management.	SDGs, CENRPF; SGD2040				x			x
Birds Caribbean	Network	An international network of actors committed to conserving Caribbean birds and their habitats in the insular Caribbean (including Bermuda, the Bahamas and all islands within the Caribbean basin).They aim to achieve this through awareness raising, promoting sound science, and empowering local partners.	GBF; CMS				x	x		
Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism (CAST - CHTA)	Network	Provide tourism enterprises with sustainability resources, best practices, and support through CHTA committees for advocating sustainable advances within the Caribbean hotel and tourism sector	SDGs; CENRPF; SGD2040			x	x			x
Caribbean Invasive Alien Species Network (CIASN)	Network	A collaboration of national, regional and international organisations engaged in the field of invasive alien species control, whose objective is to reduce the potential threat posed by IAS to health and livelihoods; to intra-regional and international trade; and to the Caribbean's endemic biodiversity and priceless ecosystems	GBF; IPPC;			x	x			x

Stakeholder	Type of Institution	Description	Key policies	Policy maker	Policy implementer	Decision-making process	Policy implementation support			
							Technical	Capacity building	Financing	Dialogue (consultation)
Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organisations (CNFO)	Network	A network of small-scale fisherfolk and their organisations, operating in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), whose aim is to develop a sustainable and profitable industry through networking, representation and capacity building.	SDGs (14), CENRPF; SGD2040; CCCFP			x		x		x
Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network (WIDECAST)	Network	Facilitates regional capacity to ensure the recovery and sustainable management of depleted sea turtle populations.	CBS; OECS-BEF				x	x		x
Caribbean Organisation of Indigenous Peoples (COIP)	Network	To promote the Social, Political, Cultural and Economic welfare of the Indigenous Peoples of the Caribbean Region.	SDGs; GBF; Nagoya protocol			x				x
Dominican Environmental Consortium (CAD)	Network	A non profit membership organization, made up of governmental, non-governmental and international institutions, linked to the environmental and natural resources sector. Its vision is to be the entity of excellence and recognized as a sustainable institutional platform, which strategically executes projects and programs, that participates in national environmental policy and plays a leading role in environmental conservation in the Dominican Republic	GBF, CENRPF; SGD2040; CBS; OECS-BEF			x				x
Windward Islands Farmers' Association (WINFA)	Network -CSOs	A people-centred non-governmental organization that represents, protects, and promotes the interest of thousands of farmers across the Windward islands and Martinique in a continued struggle to improve the farm, family, community, and national conditions.	CENRPF; SGD2040			x				x
Caribbean Network for Integrated Rural Development (CNIRD)	CSO	An independent, regional non-governmental organisation whose focus is on networking with national and sub-regional intermediaries based in the Caribbean region, established with a view to help promote and advance the process of rural transformation in the Caribbean, especially as regards youth and women..	SDGs,			x				x

Stakeholder	Type of Institution	Description	Key policies	Policy maker	Policy implementer	Decision-making process	Policy implementation support: Technical	Capacity building	Financing	Dialogue (consultation)
Caribbean Policy Development Centre (CPDC)	CSO	A voice for the NGO community and their beneficiaries on key socio-economic and other development issues.	SDGs, CENRPF; SGD2040; CCCFP			x				x
Caribbean Youth Environmental Network (CYEN)	CSO	A non-profit network organization dedicated to improving the quality of life of Caribbean young people by facilitating their personal development and full involvement in all matters pertaining to the environment and sustainable development.	All			x				x
CARIBSAVE	CSO	CARIBSAVE is a partnership between the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) and the University of Oxford. The CARIBSAVE Partnership addresses the impacts and challenges surrounding climate change, tourism, the environment, economic development and community livelihoods across the Caribbean Basin, using an integrated and holistic approach.	SDGS; Paris agreement, CENRPF; SGD2040				x			
Conservation International (CI)	NGO	An international NGO working to spotlight and secure the critical benefits that nature provides to humanity. They work all over the Caribbean with several offices located in various countries across the region	GBF; CBS; OECS-BEF				x	x	x	x
IUCN ORMACC	NGO	A membership Union of government and civil society organisations working to advance sustainable development and nature conservation. IUCNs regional office for Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean	GBF; CBS; OECS-BEF	x			x	x		x
The Nature Conservancy (TNC).	NGO	An international NGO whose mission is to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. They work all over the Caribbean with several offices located in various countries across the region	GBF; CBS; OECS-BEF				x	x	x	x
Caribbean Regional Committee (CRC)	CSO/Network	Established under ORMACC, coordinates and collaborates with members of the IUCN in the insular Caribbean facilitates the engagement of all members in the participation in thematic priorities.	GBF, CBS; OECS-BEF							x

Stakeholder	Type of Institution	Description	Key policies	Policy maker	Policy implementer	Decision-making process	Policy implementation support: Technical	Capacity building	Financing	Dialogue (consultation)
Eastern Caribbean Coalition for Environmental Awareness (ECCEA)	CSO	An independent non profit making organisation to coordinate and implement regional conservation programmes and the development and preparation of project proposals for national environmental and non governmental organizations, grass roots movements and communities. ECCEA has observer status at UN and International Conventions that govern the environment, wildlife, sustainable development and tourism	MEAs; CENRPF; SGD2040;CBS;OECS-BEF				x			x
Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI)	Research & Academia	Provides research and development services to the agricultural sector of Caribbean countries as per needs identified in plans, policies and priorities.	IPPC; CENRPF; SGD2040				x	x		
Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI)	Research & Academia	A non-profit technical institution that carries out research, policy influence and capacity building for participatory natural resource governance in the Caribbean.	SDGs, GBF, CENRPF, SGD2040			x	x			
University of The West Indies (UWI),	Research & Academia	Execution of programmes in Environmental & Natural Resource Management. The Trinidad and Tobago campus delivers an MSc. Programme in Biodiversity Conservation. The Jamaica campus houses a Biodiversity Centre and a Marine Laboratory. The Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES) at the Barbados campus is a regional. A co-implementor of the BIOPAMA II programme	CENRPF; SGD2040; CBS; OECS-BEF				x	x		x
Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)	Donor	A development bank that helps Caribbean countries finance social and economic programs in its member countries.	SDGs, CENRPF; SGD2040						x	
Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (CBF),	Donor	A regional umbrella environmental fund that implements innovative solutions and consolidates regional conservation impacts in the Caribbean through a range of financial instruments.	GBF						x	
Philanthropic organizations	Donor	Nonprofit nongovernmental entities that use donated funds to support initiatives	All						x	
National										

Stakeholder	Type of Institution	Description	Key policies	Policy maker	Policy implementer	Decision-making process	Policy implementation support			
							Technical	Capacity building	Financing	Dialogue (consultation)
National Ministries (and agencies) for Natural Resources/Sustainable development (fisheries, agriculture tourism, etc.)	Government		SDGs, common regional polices; CENRPF; SGD2040	x	x					
National Ministries (and agencies) for land use planning	Government		SDGs	x	x					
National Ministries of Environment	Government		MEAs	x	x					
National Ministries of Finance and planning	Government		All		x					
National Ministries of statistics	Government		All		x					
Biodiversity conservation protected areas agencies/departments	Government		GBF, CBS; OECS-BEF		x	x				
Biodiversity networks	Network		CBS; OECS-BEF				x	x	x	x
National and local natural resource and environment CSOs	CSOs		All			x	x	x	x	x
International Conservation NGOs	CSO		GBF, CBS; OECS-BEF				x	x	x	x
National Universities and research institutions	Research & Academia		All				x			x

Stakeholder	Type of Institution	Description	Key policies	Policy implementation support						
				Policy maker	Policy implementer	Decision-making process	Technical	Capacity building	Financing	Dialogue (consultation)
Donors	Donors		All						x	
Indigenous communities	Civil Society		All			x				x
Wider public	Civil Society		All							x
Resource users	Civil Society		CENRPF; SGD2040; CBS; OECS-BEF			x				

Appendix 4: Policy Alignment

A4.1 CARICOM Environment and Natural Resources Policy Framework Alignment -CENRPF

Focus Areas	GBF Targets	SDG 14 & 15 Indicators	SAMOA Clusters	ABAS sections	ESCAZÚ Articles	Cartagena Articles	SPAW Protocol Articles	CBS objectives	SGD 2040	OECS-BEF targets
Guiding principle: E*ncourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available*					5				BE4; LW3	
Means of Implementation/Enabling actions	19, 21				5, 6,11			9, 10, 11, 12		
1. LAND AND SOILS		**15**								
1.1 Sound environmental and sustainable development principles incorporated into land use planning and allocation	1							2		1.4
1.2 Combat land degradation, restore degraded land and soil, and develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure	1, 2	15.3	92					2		
2. FOREST RESOURCES SDG 15		15	**94**	**C.30. i.c**				3		
2.1 Promote the sustainable development, management and conservation of forest resources	10	15.2								
2.2. Promote projects and programmes to support the sustainable management of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation	10	15.2								
2.3. Encourage public and private sector participation in the development and application of technology; the implementation of incentives for forestry development to stimulate investment in the forestry sub-sector and promoting commercialisation of natural forest products in a sustainable manner	18,									

Focus Areas	GBF Targets	SDG 14 & 15 Indicators	SAMOA Clusters	ABAS sections	ESCAZÚ Articles	Cartagena Articles	SPAW Protocol Articles	CBS objectives	SGD 2040	OECS-BEF targets
2.4. Invest in human resource development as well as enhancing the institutional capabilities to design and implement forest management systems	20									
3. WATER RESOURCES -SGD 6; NOTE 1 AND 2 NOT WITHIN SCOPE										
3.3 Integrated water resources and watershed management	1			B.26ii						
4. OCEAN AND MARINE RESOURCES		**14**	**53-58**	**C.30. ii.**					OF4	
4.1 Reduce marine pollution from all sources in particular land-based activities	7	14.1				5-9		8		1.2
4.2 Promote the sustainable management and protection of marine and coastal ecosystems (especially coral reefs, seagrass beds and mangroves), strengthen their resilience and carry out restoration while promoting the use of Ecosystem Based Adaptation (EbA) approaches and methodologies, and in particular, Coastal Ecosystem Based Adaptation (CEbA).	2, 8, 11	14.2						6, 2	OF3, OF9,OF11	1.3
4.3 Promote the strengthening of marine scientific research and development of the associated technological capacity	20	14a					17			
4.4 Engage the CARICOM institutions to advance research in critical areas		14a					17			
5. CROSS CUTTING 4.7 Management, Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity		**14, 15**		**C.30. iii**						
Specific priority focus areas										
5.1 Access and Benefit Sharing	13	15.6	91					5	OF1	4.1, 4.2
5.2 Biosecurity and biotechnology	17							7	BE2	2.2, 2.3
5.3 Climate Change research							17	6	CDR5	3.1
5.4 Wildlife management including illegal trade	5	15.7,					10			
5.5 Invasive alien species	6	15.8	95				12	7	BE2	2.1-2.3
5.6 PA management (terrestrial and/or marine)	3	14.2					4,5	2,6		3.2

Focus Areas	GBF Targets	SDG 14 & 15 Indicators	SAMOA Clusters	ABAS sections	ESCAZÚ Articles	Cartagena Articles	SPAW Protocol Articles	CBS objectives	SGD 2040	OECS-BEF targets
5.7 Measures for the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of biological resources	9	14/15						3, 13	OF10, OF11	
5.8 Reduce the degradation of natural habitats; halt the loss of biodiversity	1	15.5		C.30 iii				1,2		
5.9 Mainstreaming biodiversity	14	15.9		C.30. iii. a				4	BE5; LW2	5.1
5.10 Local and traditional knowledge and Indigenous communities' participation and consideration	22			C.30. iii. e					BE5	
5.11 Sustainable consumption and production	12, 16	15.1 /14.4/ 14.6	69						OF4	
5.12 MEAs alignment /Regional coordination		15.1; 14c						13, 14		

A.4.2 Revised St. George's Declaration # of Principles for Environmental Sustainability -SGD204

Focus Areas	GBF Targets	SDG 14 & 15 Indicators	SAMOA Clusters	ABAS sections	ESCAZÚ Articles	Cartagena Articles	SPAW Protocol Articles	OECS-BEF objectives	CENRPF Thematic area	CBS objectives
Means of Implementation/ enabling actions		**15a,b**			**5,6,7,11**					
OCEAN AND FISHERIES										
GOAL: Sustainably manage the coastal and marine resources of the Eastern Caribbean to optimise the potential of a blue economy, ensure resilience and adaptation to climate impacts, and protect and restore the marine ecosystems of the region										
OF 1: Ensure access and rights to utilize marine resources.	13	14.7, 14.4; 15.6	58e					4.1, 4.2	5.1	5
OF 2: Monitor and secure the coastal and maritime areas of the Eastern Caribbean States.	1,3	14.2						1.1		

Focus Areas	GBF Targets	SDG 14 & 15 Indicators	SAMOA Clusters	ABAS sections	ESCAZÚ Articles	Cartagena Articles	SPAW Protocol Articles	OECS-BEF objectives	CENRPF Thematic area	CBS objectives
OF 3: Restore, maintain and improve ecosystem integrity of the marine space in the Eastern Caribbean.	2	14.2	58a					1.3	4.2	
OF 4: Optimise the contribution of the marine resources of the Eastern Caribbean to socio-economic development	9	14.7	58b,d,e					5.2	5.11	3
OF 5: Adopt integrated approaches to managing marine space in the Eastern Caribbean	1	14.2						1.4		
OF 6: Increase ocean stewardship, awareness, participation and wellbeing of the citizens in the management of coastal and marine resources in the Eastern Caribbean.	22						16		Guiding principle	
OF 7: Strengthen resilience measures to guard against negative climate induced coastal changes.	8	14.3						3.3	4.2, 5.3	
OF 8: Employ best available evidence for a Blue Economy	21	14a						1.1	MOI	9
OF 9: Increase informed decision making through the collection and management of statistics on fisheries resources and productions	21							1.1	MOI	9
OF10: Sustainably manage the fisheries resources of the Eastern Caribbean.	,9	14.4	58d,e						4.2, 5.7	3
OF 11: Achieve the sustainable use of fisheries resources	9	14.4	58d,e						4.2, 5.7	3
OF 12: Strengthen adaptation to climate change and disaster risk management in fisheries	8		92					3.4		
BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEMS										
GOAL: Healthy and resilient biodiversity and ecosystems in the Eastern Caribbean provide goods and services that support socioeconomic development										

Focus Areas	GBF Targets	SDG 14 & 15 Indicators	SAMOA Clusters	ABAS sections	ESCAZÚ Articles	Cartagena Articles	SPAW Protocol Articles	OECS-BEF objectives	CENRPF Thematic area	CBS objectives
BE 1: Secure, restore, and optimise the contribution of ecosystem goods and services across transboundary landscapes and seascapes to achieve socio-economic development of the Eastern Caribbean.	11	14.7						1.3		2
BE 2: Minimise the threats to the Eastern Caribbean from invasive alien species, such as sargassum seaweed, and enhance biosafety and biosecurity.	6	15.8	95a,b,c				12	2.1-2.3	5.2, 5.5	7
BE 3: Build the Eastern Caribbean's biodiversity and ecosystems resilience to climate change and natural hazards.	8	14.3	92					3.1-3.3	4.2	6
BE 4: Equip stakeholders for participatory management of biodiversity and ecosystems while protecting their rights and benefits.	22		91a						Guiding Prinicple	11
BE 5: Integrate Biodiversity and ecosystem valuations into national development policies and poverty reduction strategies.	14	15.9						5.1	5.9, 5.10	4
BE 6: Mainstream and upscale traditional knowledge in biodiversity management in the Eastern Caribbean	21								5.9, 5.10	
CHEMICALS, POLLUTION AND WASTE (CPW)										
GOAL: Integrated approaches to chemicals and waste management through sustainable consumption, production and management practices that reduce waste and pollution in the environment										
CPW 1: Implement an integrated approach to waste management nationally and regionally	7						5-9	1.2		
CPW 2: Promote and develop the circular economy nationally and regionally	16									
LAND AND WATER										
GOAL: Improved and sustainable use of land and water resources aimed at reducing land degradation and enhancing maintenance of biodiversity and water resources										

Focus Areas	GBF Targets	SDG 14 & 15 Indicators	SAMOA Clusters	ABAS sections	ESCAZÚ Articles	Cartagena Articles	SPAW Protocol Articles	OECS-BEF objectives	CENRPF Thematic area	CBS objectives
LW 1: Strengthen land and water sector governance, planning, and administrative systems towards increasing resilience to the impacts of climate change.	8	15.1--15.5; 14.2-14.3	58a					3.3	4.2	6
LW 2: Mainstream sustainable natural resources management strategies into national development.	9,10,14	15.9						5.1	5.9	4
LW 3: Enhance participatory management for land and water resources using partnerships and capacity building approaches	20							5.1	Guiding principle	10

A4.3 CARICOM Biodiversity Strategy -CBS

Focus Areas	GBF Targets	SDG 14 & 15 indicators	CENRPF Thematic area	SGD 2040	OECS-BEF Targets
Goal 1: To conserve biodiversity to protect natural heritage and assets.					
Objective 1: To conserve species, particularly endangered and endemic species, and maintain and bolster genetic diversity including the diversity of genetic resources for food and agriculture throughout the region.	4	15.5	5.8		
Objective 2: To secure ecosystem goods and services, protecting, maintaining or restoring key ecosystems, within national or across transboundary landscapes and seascapes, including using spatial planning approaches.	1, 2, 3, 11	14.2, 15.1, 15.4 15.5, 15.6	1.1,1.2, 4.2, 5.6, 5.8	BE1	1.3, 1.4,
Goal 2: To sustainably use ecosystem goods and services					
Objective 3: To support sustainable biodiversity-based sectors, livelihoods and enterprises including on the management of common regional resources.	9, 10, 18	14.4, 15.2	5.7	OF4, OF10, OF11	5.2
Objective 4: To mainstream biodiversity within sectoral, national and regional plans as well as national budgets, accounting and reporting systems.	14	15.9	5.9	BE5, LW2	5.1
Goal 3: Access to and the fair and equitable sharing of arising out of the utilisation of the region's genetic resources					
Objective 5: To benefit from digital sequence information (DSI) on genetic resources, emphasizing that any benefits arising from the use of DSI on genetic resources should be shared in a fair and equitable way.	13	15.6	5.1	OF1	4.1, 4.2
Goal 4: To address biodiversity threats from intra-Caribbean transboundary issues and external sources					
Objective 6: To build the resilience of the region's biodiversity to climate change and natural hazards	8	14.3	4.2, 5.3	BE3, LW1	3.4
Objective 7: To protect the region against invasive alien species as well as biosafety, and biosecurity threats.	6, 17	15.8	5.2, 5.5	BE2	2.1-2.3
Objective 8: To protect marine, coastal and terrestrial biodiversity, including from pollution and land use change.	7	14.1	4.1		1.2
Objective 9: To ensure generation, storage and use of current, multi-source biodiversity information by Caribbean biodiversity managers, using accessible mechanisms in suitable formats for decision making.	21		MOI	OF8, OF9	1.1
Goal 5: To build an enabling regional environment to manage biodiversity.					
Objective 10: To develop and implement a coordinated regional approach to the implementation of the CBS through partnerships among governments, academia, civil society, private sector, regional and global agencies.			MOI	LW3	5.3
Objective 11 To equip Caribbean stakeholders with the capacity, entry points and mechanisms for participatory management of biodiversity while protecting their rights and benefits.	20		MOI	BE4	

Objective 12: To enhance regional resource mobilisation for biodiversity conservation sustainable use and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits.	19	15a,15b	MOI	EA	
Objective 13: To harmonise regional and national legal, policy, regulatory and fiscal frameworks to promote the sustainable use of Caribbean biodiversity.	14, 16, 18		5.7, 5.12	EA	5.3
Objective 14: To establish coordinated planning, monitoring, evaluation, learning and reporting systems for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.			5.12	EA	5.3

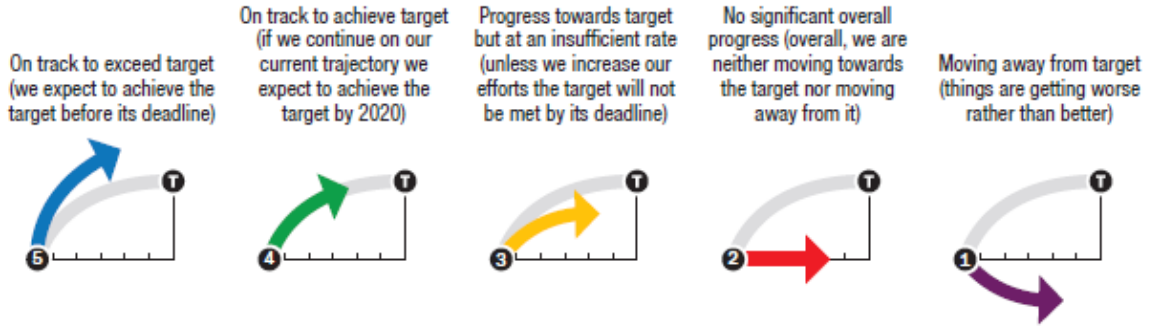
A4.4 OECS Biodiversity and Ecosystems Management Framework -OECS-BEF

Focus Area	GBF Targets	SDG 14 & 15 indicators	CENRPF Thematic area	SGD 2040	CBS objectives
Objective 1: To secure ecosystem goods and services through protecting, maintaining or restoring keyecosystems, while emphasising pollution abatement, within national or across transboundary landscapes and seascapes					**2**
1.1 Biodiversity and ecosystem assessments, inventories and monitoring conducted, and knowledge shared and used to inform decision-making and guide management actions	21			OF2,8,9	9
1.2 Pollution reduction measures implemented across the region	7	14.1	4.1	CPW1	8
1.3 Terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems protected and restored to provide critical ecosystem services	2,3,11	14.2, 15.1-4	4.2	BE1, OF3	2
1.4 Land use planning, fiscal measures, and other tools used to support management of terrestrial biodiversity and ecosystems	1, 19		1.1	OF5	2
Objective 2: To protect the OECS region against invasive alien species, biosafety and biosecurity threats					**7**
2.1 OECS-IAS Regional Action Plan (2016-2025) implemented	6	15.8	5.5	BE2	7
2.2 National legislation and regulations strengthened to address IAS and implement the CBD Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety	6	15.8	5.2, 5.5	BE2	7
2.3 Initiatives to manage IAS and LMOs of priority concern evaluated and scaled up and out where appropriate	6,17	15.8	5.2, 5.5	BE2	7
Objective 3: To build the resilience of the region's biodiversity to climate change and natural hazards					**6**
3.1 Research, information sharing and analysis of existing data on the impacts of climate change on the ecosystems and biodiversity of the OECS region advanced	21	14a	5.3	BE3	
3.2 Protected area networks used as a tool to enhance resilience of biodiversity and ecosystems to climate change	3	14.5	5.6	BE3	
3.3 Regional initiatives developed to address the impact of climate change and natural hazards on biodiversity	8	14.3		BE3, LW1	
3.4 Policy and institutional frameworks developed or updated to support adaptation of species and ecosystems to the impacts of climate change	8	14.2		OF12	6
Objective 4: To equip OECS stakeholders with the capacity, entry points and mechanisms for participatory management of biodiversity and ecosystems while protecting their rights and benefits					**5**

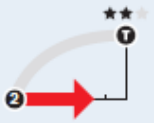
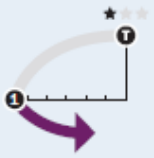
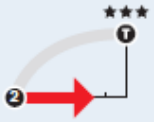
4.1 Advance ratification of the Nagoya Protocol amongst OECS MS	*13*	15.6	5.5	OF1	5
4.2 Develop and implement a regional ABS model policy and guidelines	*13*	15.6	5.5	OF1	5
Objective 5: To assess and integrate biodiversity and ecosystems information and values into national development processes					
5.1 Biodiversity and ecosystem values assessed and incorporated into EIAs, SEAs and economic and financial decision-making	14	15.9	5.9	BE5, LW3	4
5.2 Alternative economic development options that protect biodiversity and ecosystems tested and promoted	10, 18	14.7		OF4	4
5.3 Regional, national and sectoral policies and plans					10, 13, 14

Appendix 5: Dashboard of Latin American and Caribbean regional progress towards the Aichi Targets

Source: *UNEP-WCMC (2016) The State of Biodiversity in Latin America and the Caribbean: A mid-term review of progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. UNEP-WCMC, Cambridge, UK.*



Target	Notes	Progress
Target 1 - Awareness increased	Available information in the region is not sufficient to make a definitive analysis of progress towards this target. However, it is known that there is significant effort in some countries; for example about half of the country reports analysed by the CBD show evidence of implementing environmental education programmes.	★☆☆
Target 2 - Biodiversity values integrated	The integration of biodiversity values in decision making is variable in the region. Although countries do report some progress and environmental impact assessment (EIA) legislation is widely developed, the reality on the ground is often favouring development decisions. Data to accurately measure progress are, however, often lacking.	★☆☆
Target 3 - Incentives reformed	Some countries are involved in payment for ecosystem services (PES) schemes such as REDD+ and water PES, and are developing "green economy" or natural resource accounting initiatives which aim to provide positive incentives for conservation. There is less evidence of reforms of negative incentives for conservation in the region. It seems unlikely that this target will be fully achieved unless additional actions are taken.	★★☆
Target 4 - Sustainable production and consumption	There are few available data on the progress towards sustainable consumption and production in the region, although around half of the countries report they are making progress. However, it seems unlikely that progress is sufficient to meet the target.	★★☆
Target 5 - Habitat loss halved or reduced	Within the region there has been significant progress in terms of reducing the rates of forest loss, for example rates of tropical forest loss have been falling in Brazil and Peru. However, rates of habitat loss in other biomes are still high. In comparison, mangrove cover has increased in the region.	★★★
Target 6 - Sustainable management of marine living resources	There are very few data to track this target in the region. The total catch from certified fisheries increased up to 2012, but has declined in recent years. There is also evidence of significant illegal fishing in the marine areas in the region. Although data are poor it seems that this target is not currently on track to be met.	★☆☆

Target	Notes	Progress
Target 7 - Sustainable agriculture, aquaculture and forestry	The development of schemes for sustainable agriculture, aquaculture and forestry have been progressing, although slowly, in the region. Forest certification increased up to 2010, but has been stable since that time. For agriculture and aquaculture information is not available across the whole region.	
Target 8 - Pollution reduced	The region faces challenges to meet this target in large urban areas where pollution is severe and also impacts on local rivers and downstream marine areas. Water treatment facilities are often inadequate to cope with the scale of the challenge. Nutrient loading is also causing damage in agricultural areas of the region.	
Target 9 - Invasive alien species prevented and controlled	Invasive alien species are an issue in the region; with plants invading some offshore islands and introductions of mussels and fish. Considerable programmes of eradication of invasive aliens are taking place, but prevention and control is hard to achieve.	
Target 10 - Pressures on vulnerable ecosystems reduced	Coral reefs are vulnerable to climate change and the other pressures have not been mitigated in the region. Given the multiple threats to coral reefs and the ongoing climate change in the region, it seems that the region is probably moving away from the target.	
Target 11 - Protected areas increased and improved	The region has developed an extensive protected area network, consisting of state and community and private reserves. This protected area network is also increasing in effectiveness in many countries in the region.	
Target 12 - Extinction prevented	The IUCN Red List Index shows that species are moving towards extinction in the region, with a worrying increase between 2008 and 2012. This is despite considerable effort being made by countries to improve the conservation status of threatened species, and a number of local successes – especially on islands.	
Target 13 - Genetic diversity maintained	There are important centres of crop and animal diversity in the region (especially in areas of ancient human civilisation). This diversity is somewhat threatened by modernisation of agriculture, but there are many actions underway to safeguard the genetic diversity of domesticated species in the region.	
Target 14 - Ecosystems and essential services safeguarded	Although rates of forest carbon loss are being reduced, the region is still losing natural capital and the service of climate stabilisation. Water services from the major rivers are highly valued, but extensive plans for dams will affect some of the natural regulating ecosystem services provided by rivers, and water resources are declining. There has been a general increase in agricultural area, a decrease in undernourished people, driven by the replacement of natural capital by anthropomorphic capitals.	
Target 15 - Ecosystems restored and resilience enhanced	There is very little information from the region to allow this target to be tracked. As such we are not able to say if progress is being made and we have left the target progress blank.	Insufficient data to assess progress
Target 16 - Nagoya Protocol in force and operational	Countries in the region are making good progress towards the ratification and implementation of national legislation around the Nagoya protocol. Although not every country in the region will meet the target, many will.	
Target 17 - NBSAPs adopted as policy instrument	Some countries in the region produced their NBSAPs within the 2015 deadline. However, the majority did not, although they are expected to complete them in the coming years.	

Target	Notes	Progress
Target 18 - Traditional knowledge respected	This region contains numerous indigenous people's groups with considerable traditional knowledge. There is legal protection of many of these indigenous groups and their knowledge. However, many indigenous languages – the main transmission mechanism for traditional knowledge – are threatened with extinction due to the dominance of teaching and use of Spanish, English and Portuguese.	
Target 19 - Knowledge improved, shared and applied	The region has an increasing capacity for creating and sharing knowledge on biodiversity and applying it in the field. Various data sharing platforms have been created and these are being incorporated into the global GBIF platform.	
Target 20 - Financial resources from all sources increased	The region receives considerable funding from the international community based on its very high rates of biodiversity and expanding protected area network, although this has declined in recent years. In addition the countries in the region also provide significant conservation finance, although this is harder to track. Overall there is progress towards this target, although additional funding is always required.